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“THE TIGER”

Thousands of those in sympathy with Marcus Garvey and rooting for him in his splendid fight in a Federal Court for justice and the vindication of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the year 1923 were angered at the prosecuting attorney's reference to the great leader as “The Tiger.” For, be it said in parenthesis, Mr. Garvey before the bar of American justice was fighting primarily not for Marcus Garvey, but for the good name and the very life of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the greatest organization among Negroes, as far back as the mind can travel.

“Gentlemen,” said Assistant District Attorney Mattucks to the jury, winding up a splenetic oration, “shall we set the tiger loose?” And the gentlemen didn't. They released Mr. Garvey's co-defendants, Messrs. Garcia, Tobias and Thompson, but they decided to cage “the tiger.”

We have no doubt Mr. Mattuck's appeal to the prejudice of the jury was as effective with them as he wished it to be—chills must have run down the spines of those twelve good white men and true at the sight, conjured up for them, of a man of Marcus Garvey's breed and brains at the head of awakened millions of black men. But however happy the epithet, “The Tiger,” was to a malignant prosecution, however distasteful the term to thousands of black men who were hoping against hope that Marcus Garvey would receive a square deal, we confess to no perturbation over the jungle appellation. Rather do we regard “The Tiger” as a splendid cognomen by which this remarkable leader of men may well be known in the days to come. **For Marcus Garvey is the Tiger of Africa as assuredly and as completely as Georges Clemenceau is the Tiger of France.**

When war came and France's existence as a great nation was threatened, it needed a strong hand, an alert mind, a man of stern patriotism and adamant will to steer the ship of state. Party strife was buried; then none was for the party and all were for the state: The best must rule. And Clemenceau was chosen. As premier of France, nay, dictator, civil and military forces were under his control. Generals took their cue from him or went into the discard. Unfettered, the greatest confidence reposed in him, he spoke for a whole nation in the life-and-death conferences in which he partook with the forces that had come to aid. He clawed remorselessly at the enemies of the common weal. He was satisfied with nothing but 100 per cent. efficiency, 100 per cent. patriotism. He put backbone in his people. The professional hecklers he silenced, and he consigned the moral weaklings to prison cells. He tackled every problem, every crisis, with a contagious optimism. **He was a god to his countrymen, and they surnamed him “The Tiger of France.”** Today, his duty well done, his hand grown unsteady with advancing years, he no longer grasps the helm, but his unconquerable spirit still animates France. In his humble cottage by the sea daily he receives tokens of the love and esteem and gratitude of his countrymen. Tale of the slightest ache that comes to mar his bodily comfort is front page news for the world. Of such timbre, of such girth are tigers made.

It was peculiar that Mack and Mattuck, both Jews, should have figured in Garvey's trial as judge and prosecuting attorney, respectively. It was as if some cynical master mind had decreed that members of a universally despised (though secretly respected) group should lead the assault on the newly reared citadel of the most despised (and secretly feared) race. It was as if some super-showman had arranged to furnish a blase world with the startling, if sorry, spectacle of Judge Mack, one of the staunchest supporters of Zionism (Palestine for the Jews), and Mattucks, a progressive young Jew, virtuously hustling the protagonist of African nationalism (Africa for the Africans), to prison confinement for the maximum term possible under the law.

Mattuck, ambitious young Hebrew, using every wile, spurning no methods, however questionable, to convince twelve 100-percenters (who all the while, under their breaths, must have been muttering curses of prejudice that it was given to two Jews to influence them in their decision) that the greatest living Negro was a common felon, was a droll situation.

Mattuck did his task well; he sent Garvey to Atlanta; he grieved a race. And still through him, unwittingly, his venerable fathers sent one word of cheer to that race.

“Tiger!” We thank thee, Jew, for giving us that word.—THE EDITORS.

