

FREEDOM IN THE WEST INDIES: BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Delivered at College Grove, College Hill, Poughkeepsie, NY on August 2, 1858

“*Emancipation Day*” celebrated Britain’s abolition of slavery August 1, 1834

Excerpt from John W. Blasingame, *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, Yale University Press, 1979
Compiled by Bill Jeffway for *Celebrating the African Spirit & Dutchess County Historical Society*, 2021

We have met today in your hospitable and beautiful city to celebrate no common event. No deed of partial and selfish patriotism claims our homage on this occasion. No towering monument is to rise here in honor of any naval or military heroism. We come among you to rejoice but not over the warlike conqueror, nor his fallen foe. We meet to proclaim neither the glory of the one, nor the shame and disgrace of the other. Our intents are charitable, not wicked.

Physical courage has its uses, and I would not disparage it or those who have distinguished themselves in the exercise of it. It has played an important part in the cause of Liberty as well as Slavery; but I am not here on this sacred day to explain its office, trace its history, or to applaud its merits, either in the abstract or in the concrete. Without rejecting or calling in question the right of an enslaved people to gain their freedom by a resort to physical force, we present to you, in the great fact which brings us here, a happier result, a nobler warfare, a holier strife, than any which have distinguished the most successful conqueror. To see a giant wrong like Slavery literally falling before the arms of truth and love made mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, must ever be more grateful to human contemplation than to behold the hard-hearted, persistent and inflexible tyrant perishing amid the flames of his own kindling and falling amid the clash and glitter of carnal weapons.

Thank God, there is nothing in the associations of this day to revive national antipathies, ancient or modern. For aught that properly belongs to this occasion, the hot embers of human hate may slumber forever in the depths of oblivion. No hand is here to stir them—no breath is here to blow them into life and flame. The event we celebrate naturally addresses itself to the highest and most ennobling attributes of human nature. The annals of the world show no brighter page than that on which West India Emancipation is written. It is an exhibition of conscience, a manifestation of Christian virtue—an acknowledgment of duty—a confession and a renunciation of profitable sin at great expense, on a grand and commanding scale, by a great nation. It is this which surrounds the event we celebrate with a halo of dimless glory, brighter and more enduring than the stars that fret the hollow sky.

After long years [of] patient labor on the part of Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce and their noble associates; after repeated defeats in Parliament and out of Parliament; after coldness, indifference, sneers and persecution, had become abashed and silenced by the power and majesty of sincere and earnest devotion to a great principle; after the

abolition sentiment had spread from individuals to multitudes all over the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the voice of the nation was united in one earnest and determined demand for the realization of a merciful, just and beneficent measure, we behold the statesmen of the British monarchy at last moved to action; and against all devices for delay which ingenuity and subtlety could invent; against all the frightfully augmented and magnified dangers which conscious guilt could suggest; against all the Satanic and selfish appeals addressed to human prejudice and pride; against all excuses and protests which insolent oppressors know how to wield when their power is about to be wrenched from their cruel grasp —I say, against all these, and after all these, we behold the British Parliament calmly proceeding to dissolve the relation of master and slave in the British West Indies, and to make freedom the law of Britain for all time. In reward of time well spent, of means well employed, of measures well directed and energetically prosecuted, and in answer to the ascending prayers of all the God-fearing and man-loving Christians, of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, on the morning of the 1st of August, 1834, eight hundred thousand colored members of the human family were instantly declared free, emancipated; and this vast multitude, as if at the voice of God, the trump of the Archangel, rose from Slavery as from the grave, lifting their scarred and mutilated bodies up as from the jaws of death and hell. The account given of the scene in the West Indies on the 1st of August, is the most affecting and thrilling I ever read. The very thought of it now sends the blood in quicker pace around the circuit of my system. They had been ranked, as our slaves are, with the beasts of the field, rated with bales of goods and barrels of rum, driven before the taskmaster's lash, marked and branded, bruised and wounded, robbed and plundered, but all at once they learn that their bondage is ended, the taskmaster is dismissed, the whips and chains are buried; they are no longer slaves, but free men and women. The effect upon them must have been electrical. I can well believe that they staggered and fell down, rose up, ran about, shouted, laughed, cried, sung, prayed, as they are described as having done, by Thome and Kimball.

We are here again to congratulate our brethren of the British West Indies upon their peaceful disenthralment, and to tender them the assurance that we the oppressed, and our friends in the United States generally, watch with the deepest interest their career in the new life upon which they have entered. We are here to acknowledge and manifest our gratitude to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, for the merciful deliverance of that people. We are here, too, to bless the memory of the noble men, through whose wise, unwearied, and disinterested labors this grand result was wrought out, and to hold up their pure and generous example for admiration and imitation throughout the world. But above all our profoundest wish, our intensest desire, our chiefest aim, is to make this ever memorable day in some small measure the means of awakening a deeper interest in the cause of the fettered millions in our own land. We think it nothing unreasonable to ask the citizens of this Republic to be as true to liberty, to be as just, as

generous, and as Christian like all the subjects of the British monarchy have shown themselves to be in this great act of Emancipation.

How long may we ask, shall it be the standing reproach and shame of the American Government that while England is exerting her mighty power, and her all-pervading influence, to emancipate mankind from Slavery, and to humanize the world, the American Government is taxing its ingenuity, and putting forth its power, to thwart and circumvent this policy of a great and kindred nation? Only a few weeks ago the American people were placed in a most disgraceful and revolting position. We were made the patrons of pirates, the protectors of the vilest band of robbers and murderers which the sea ever floated-I mean the slave traders of the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight. Our Government virtually gave notice not merely to slave traders, but to all manner of sea pirates that the American flag is broad enough to cover them all, and that the American arm is strong enough to defend them all. Mr. Buchanan virtually gave notice to all the Spanish, American and Portuguese stealers of men that they have only to run up the stars and stripes, when pursued by an honest man-of-war, to be safe from pursuit. The American flag would shield them, if loaded to the gunwales with human flesh for Cuba and Texas. Talk about the law of nations-talk about the freedom of the seas the rights of independent nations! Who does not know that this is all a refuge of lies? Who believes that our opposition to the exercise of the right of visit by England arises mainly out of our respect for the law of nations, or our regard for the freedom of the seas? Who is there so dull in the discernment of motives of State, as not to know that the real explanation of our belligerent assertion of the freedom of the seas-our opposition to the right of visit, is that England is an Anti-Slavery nation-while we are a slaveholding and slave-trading nation? But for this, the men-of-war of both nations would move as fraternally to the Gulf of Mexico to put down the Slave-trade, as the Niagara and Agamemnon proceeded to the middle of the Atlantic to lay down the electric wire. A slaveholding Government cannot consistently oppose the Slave-trade; it is the logical and legitimate deduction of Slavery-and the one is as hateful as the other. They are twin monsters, both hatched in the same polluted nest. Slavery and the Slave trade together constitute what the pure-minded and pious-hearted John Wesley denominated the sum of all villianies. But to return. I rejoice to see before me white people as well as colored people to-day; for though this is our day peculiarly, it is not our day exclusively. The great truths we here recognize, the great facts we here exhibit, and the great principles which truth and fact alike establish, are world-wide in their application, and belong to no color, class or clime. They are the common property of the whole human family.

It is natural that I should attempt on this occasion something like a defence of Emancipation in the West Indies, and perhaps you expect this at my hands. You know it has been charged that the West India "experiment" - "experiment," that is the word-is a failure; and you would doubtless wish to know what answer can be made to this charge. I shall make short work with it, for I believe that my esteemed and eloquent friend,

Henry Highland Ganet, made this charge the subject for your consideration on a similar occasion in this city last year.

One word as to the propriety of calling West India Emancipation an experiment. I object to it. I take it that this is one of the tricks of Slavery, and is of a piece with the character of that fraudulent business. There is obviously no more reason for calling West India Emancipation an experiment than for calling the law of gravitation an experiment. Liberty is not a device or an experiment, but a law of nature dating back to man's creation, and if this fundamental law is a failure, the responsibility is not with the British Parliament, not with the British people, but with the great Author of this law. Slavery is the experiment in this case. God made man upright, but man has sought out many inventions, and Slavery is one of them. It is an experiment by which men seek to live without labor, to eat bread by the sweat of another man's brow, to get gold without digging it, and to become rich without using one's own faculties and powers to obtain riches. This is the real experiment.

But in answer to the charge that West Indian Emancipation is a failure, I frankly admit that in some respects it has failed. It has failed to keep Slavery in the West Indies under the name of Liberty. It has failed to change the name without changing the character of the thing. The negroes have really been emancipated, and are no longer slaves. Herein is the real failure. Emancipation has failed to keep negroes out of civil office, it has failed to keep them out of the jury box, off the judge's bench, and out of the Colonial Legislature, for colored men have risen to all these stations since Emancipation. It has failed to keep the lands of Jamaica in the hands of the few and out of the hands of the many. It has failed to make men work for a planter at small wages, when they can work for themselves for larger wages. In a word, West Indian Emancipation has failed just as putting new wine into old bottles or sewing new cloth upon an old garment, will fail. The failure is not with the new, but with the old-not with the present, but with the past. Plain enough it is, to common sense and common reflection, that liberty cannot prosper upon the old conditions and with and by the old methods and machinery, which are adapted to a state of Slavery. The old plantation system of the Southern States of the American Union, grow out of, and are adapted to Slavery. They belong to feudal ages, and to feudal circumstances, where the land and the people are alike owned by a few lordly proprietors. In such circumstances, where the toiling masses are all sacrificed to a limited and privileged class of slaveholders, it is easy to keep up great establishments and flourishing estates. The explanation of the failure of West India emancipation will become very clear if these facts are kept in mind.

The complaint is, you are aware, that certain great estates which were once prosperous and flourishing, have greatly declined since the abolition of Slavery. I do not dispute the fact; all, or nearly all that is alleged at this point, may be freely admitted, but I deny that the failure of these estates proves emancipation to be a failure. On the contrary, they prove that a new order of things adapted to a state of freedom is indispensable to the

growth and prosperity of these Islands. It is no proof that the people of Egypt are not as well off now as they were in the days of the Pharaohs, because no more pyramids are seen rising to meet the Eastern sky. It is no proof that the people of England are not as well off now as they were in the feudal ages, because huge castles with towers and turrets, walls and battlements, are not seen rising in different parts of the British Islands. It is no proof either that Britain is declining because most of those old piles, belonging to a semi barbarous age are fast crumbling to ruin. So neither is it any proof that the West Indies are declining because the old plantation system of other days is giving place to small farms-as is the case in Jamaica and elsewhere.

But it is said that the emancipated negroes will not work-that it is absolutely necessary to import Coolies to the West Indies to supply the places of the slaves on the plantations and estates which were once flourishing. I do not dispute a word of it. It may be all just as the slaveholders would have it, and I answer in a similar manner to that already adopted. You cannot get men to work on plantations for a lordly proprietor when they can do as well, and better, for themselves in other ways. I will not assume that Yankees are a lazy, good-for-nothing set, because we are compelled to import Irishmen to dig our canals and grade our railroads. They find employment more congenial-better suited to their taste; and so will the Irish when they are here a while. Grading railroads and digging canals are well enough in the absence of anything better. The same is true of plantation labor. I have no doubt that the negroes are lazy-it is not an uncommon fault of some men who are not negroes. Thackeray remarks very truly that, as a general rule, men are about as lazy as they can afford to be. This rule is perhaps as true under a tropical sun as in a temperate climate.

It is said that the morals of the people of Jamaica are deplorably low. This too I frankly admit. So are the morals of our Slave States. So were the morals of Jamaica before the act of emancipation; so are they in all slave countries. Slavery and low morals go together. It is a low morality that permits one man to enslave another. I would not apologize for the shocking state of morals in Jamaica, but this I may do, show that Slavery, more than all other causes, must account for it. Liberty shall not bear the blame, when Slavery is the real offender. You cannot expect that a people cradled in Slavery, and sunk to the condition of brutes, in the eye of the law, will have a very high opinion of the marriage Institution immediately succeeding physical emancipation. The British Parliament could remove the fetters off the bodies of the bondmen-but not from their souls. That is a work for time, for religion, and for education. The moral habits of a people cannot be changed in a day-perhaps not for generations. Jamaica is now good ground for missionary reforms, not for malicious reproaches. Let those who paint her moral and religious destitution, and content themselves by assuming that West India Emancipation is a failure, exert themselves to send good men there with the Bible, with knowledge, with purity, and with order, and no doubt the good seed thus sent will bring forth good fruit. This work is now being done by England and Scotland, and by the

American Missionary Society, of which Lewis Tappan, Esq., is Secretary. Mr. Loren Thompson, who has been a Missionary in that island for many years, is now in this country, asking for means to help forward the good work of the moral and mental elevation of the people. Let him be sustained in his endeavors. Far more creditable and becoming will this be, than standing aside and giving aid and comfort to American dealers in the bodies and souls of men by denouncing Emancipation as a failure. But I promised to make short work of these objections, and will keep my promise. It is well to bear in mind an important truth here.

Whether men should be slave or free, does not depend upon the success or failure of freedom in any given instance. Some things have been settled independently of human calculation and human adjudication. One of these things is, that every man has by nature a right to his own body, and that to deprive him of that right is a flagrant violation of the will of God. This is settled. And if desolation and ruin, famine and pestilence should threaten, Emancipation would still be the same urgent and solemn duty that it ever was. When the God of all the earth ordained the law of freedom, He foresaw all its consequences. Do right though the Heavens fall. We have no right to do evil that good may come, nor to refrain from doing right because evil may come.

This celebration comes opportunely just after your National Anniversary. It laps on and supplies a deficiency, in the exercises of that day. It takes up the principles of the American Revolution, where you drop them, and bears them onward to higher and more beneficent applications. American Slavery, with its millions of slaves and mountains of gold, is a most captivating power, a great corrupter of men, as well as institutions. Few of our great public men, have been able to withstand its fascinations. Strangers and citizens alike fall before it. Our Doctors of Divinity seem especially susceptible and alive to its charms. For it they readily find a warrant in the Bible. It has seduced and bribed American orators into the most shameless contraction, mutilation and falsification of the Revolutionary principles of American Freedom and Independence. What your brave fathers intended for the whole world, some of the most distinguished orators in America would confine to a section, a latitude, a climate, a soil-or would abandon altogether at the bidding of the great slaveholding abomination. Principles which your fathers intended to apply to all mankind, to bless and benefit all mankind, their sons, meanly and wickedly, in the cowardliness of their souls, limit to one race, to one complexion, to one type of features, to one variety of men. Before they can tell you whether a man ought to be free, they want to know the color of his cuticle, and the texture of his hair. They read the Declaration of American Independence with exceptions. They read the Bible with exceptions-and while they are careful to include themselves, they are careful to exclude all others.

The American Republic is not very old. Only eighty-two years and thirty-one days have transpired since, in an hour of darkness and trial, it was launched on the broad sea of

national existence. The great act which gave it being was the Declaration of Independence. You all know what are the principles laid down in that great instrument. The central and most comprehensive principle there asserted is that "all men are entitled to life, liberty, and to an equal chance for happiness." The Fathers of this Republic told us, and told a then listening world, that, according to their sense, civil Government, fit for the name and fit to exist at all, should secure these fundamental rights. They pledged themselves, by implication at least, that they would establish a Government which should secure these cardinal rights, to the weakest and humblest of the American people, They not only appealed to earth, but solemnly appealed to Heaven, not only to man, but to God, They flung open their hearts for the scrutiny of the world.

I do not doubt that it was the purpose of your fathers to form just such a government as the Declaration of Independence shadows forth as the true one, and the only one which men are authorized to establish and perpetuate. They really believed in liberty, they believed in humanity, they believed in human progress and in human elevation. They readily ignored all distinctions between men in respect to rights, stated their principles in the broadest and most comprehensive terms they could command. Regarding Slavery as a transient, not a permanent feature of American society, they made no provision for the hateful thing in the Constitution. They looked upon it as an alien, and treated it as such. They nowhere tell us that black men shall be Slaves and white men shall be free. They nowhere make any distinction among men in respect to rights on account of color. They say "we, the people," never we, the white people. Neither in the Constitution nor in the Declaration of Independence, is there a single reference to the subject of color. The sentiment of the leading statesmen of that day-the sentiment of leading divines, as well as the position of the church-show that Slavery was regarded as a perishing system, only requiring the silent operation of free principles and the certain advances of time to blot it out forever.

Great is the apparent ignorance of the present generation respecting this point. Slavery has bewitched us. It has taught us to read history backwards. It has given us evil for good-darkness for light, and bitter for sweet. We have been sitting at the feet of its Calhouns and its Taney's so long that we have ceased to comprehend the elements out of which the nation sprung into existence. A Government which was expressly ordained to establish justice and to secure the blessings of liberty, we have been pathetized into thinking, was especially intended and solemnly ordained to preserve the right of one man to hold property in the body and soul of another man. The fact is, there is scarcely a single great man of Revolutionary memory who was so ignorant, and so base, and so lost to the sentiment of shame as to defend the principle of Slavery-while, on the other hand, the chief and recognized builders of the Republic, almost without an exception, openly condemned that principle. Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Monroe, Patrick Henry, Roger Sherman, George Mason, Luther Martin, and other

distinguished men of the earlier and better days of the Republic, condemned the system of Slavery as a great moral and political evil, alien to the laws of nature. But how different from this is the sentiment of the present, among our public men! What was regarded as a curse at the beginning, is now cherished as a blessing. What your fathers thought it the highest patriotism to limit, circumscribe and discourage, it is now called patriotic to nationalize, spread and protect. It has now come to pass that Freedom is the evil to be shunned, and Slavery the blessing to be sought. Those who denounced the accursed thing at the beginning, were deemed wise, humane and patriotic. Those who denounce it now, are called disorganizers, enemies of the Union, "freedom-shriekers," "negro-worshippers," infidels and traitors. The contrast is striking and instructive. The great men who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the principles of the Declaration of Independence, would to-day be banished from the councils of the nation. They would stand no chance with the Buchanans, Casses, Touceys, and Cobbs of the present day.

Pardon me; I am only stating what must be evident to all. Let me glance at another topic, or rather at another phase of the same topic. Only a few weeks ago the American people celebrated the eighty-second year of their freedom and independence. The celebration was this year quite remarkable and noteworthy, in several of its features. You know that our national birthday, like the word "Liberty" on the old-fashioned copper cent, has been regarded with increasing suspicion of late. The new-fashioned coin, now passing for a good cent, has banished the old copper and "Liberty," and some doubts have been expressed if the Fourth of July will be much longer retained among our institutions, since the principles which make that day glorious have been buried out of sight, and Slavery, with the negro's bleeding bones in his mouth, is now stamping on Freedom's grave. It was supposed that so frightful a reminder to the people of slaughtered Liberty might be gotten rid of in much the same way. But no; the Fourth of July is still celebrated, but not as a festival of Liberty. With many it is the great day selected for the assassination of Liberty. But to the late celebration. Of course, though remarkable as I have said, in some of its features, it was, in its general character, about the same as for some years past. There were not more than the customary number of accidents. The killed and wounded did not, perhaps exceed the number previously reached by similar celebrations. There was evidently a good deal of villainous saltpetre burnt; a few arms blown off-a good deal of bad whisky imbibed; perhaps in imitation of our worthy President, who, the public are informed, takes nothing in the way of liquor but old rye whisky. There was also a little fighting done. There was in fine, as a Western man would phrase it, tall drinking, tall fighting, tall swearing, and tall speech-making that day. I judge of it by the papers, and from these I infer that it was altogether a lively day, especially in certain northern localities. Among those of our public men who figured conspicuously that day, we may name (for public men are for public mention) Honorable Edward Everett, Honorable Rufus Choate and Honorable Caleb Cushing, the latter late

Attorney-General under the Administration of General Franklin Pierce, whose Pro-Slavery glory is now eclipsed by Mr. James Buchanan.

Mr. Cushing was the honored orator of Old Tammany, that favored resort of all that is decent, patriotic, and Democratic, in the City of New York. Mr. Everett was favored with a select audience of Democrats (Democrats again you see) at the Revere House, over or under a dinner table-only costing \$10 a plate. Quite a democratic dinner that. While Mr. Cushing was addressing the Democracy of Old Tammany, and Mr. Everett, saying his speech at the Revere House, Mr. Choate was discharging a perfect whirlwind, (not of periods, for he don't use any, but of words), no doubt to the wonder and astonishment of the Boston Democratic Club. He talked gloriously, vain-gloriously, and furiously, for it is no trouble for Mr. Choate to talk. But what, think you, these three distinguished sons of old Massachusetts had to say on that day which was to remind us of the days when men dared to rebuke tyranny, and to look danger full in the face? What had they to say in favor of the principle of Liberty, which your fathers nobly asserted, and bravely defended with their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor? I say, what idea was made prominent? Turn to Mr. Choate, and if you can understand him, you get this idea. The Union of these States is a great blessing, and that the Northern people, in their wild devotion to liberty, are putting the Union in peril. You gather from his "glittering generalities," that there are certain forces operating in the country prejudicial to unity and nationality, and it is plain that opposition to Slavery, is in his judgment, the disturbing and dangerous force to be met, resisted and put down. Not a word against Slavery-not a word in denunciation of tyranny-not a word in sympathy with the advancement of freedom throughout the world-but nationality was beginning, middle and end with Mr. Choate. Thus the strength of the eloquent orator was spent for naught. He insists upon what is not denied he rebukes where there is no transgression-he warns where there is no danger, and leaves unsaid the only word which is in keeping with the great principles and purposes of the Declaration of Independence. It is just such a speech as any old Tory might have made against the Whigs in 1776. As they would have had your fathers seal their lips on the subject of British oppression for the safety of the union with England, so Mr. Choate would have us seal our lips on the subject of American Slavery for the sake of the Union with the South. It was a plea for silent acquiescence in all the domineering pretensions of the slave-power of the country.

A word of Mr. Everett-and only a word. Notwithstanding this man's early Bible defence of Slavery; notwithstanding his shameless declaration of a preference to fight against slaves to any other warfare, knowing no other military service in which he would rather buckle on his knapsack and gird on his sword than to put down a slave insurrection; notwithstanding his cowardly suppression of the most significant feature of the moral portrait of Washington, lest the exhibition of it should give offence to slaveholders; notwithstanding his singular desertion of the Hon. Charles Sumner and the cause of freedom in the American Senate, and his general reprehensible truckling to the dark spirit of Slavery --I, for one, had followed him with a certain degree of hope. He is a man

of great and splendid abilities, and knows what is right on the subject of Slavery, as well as any man in America. He knows that Slavery is the mistake, is the curse, the crime, the disgrace, and the shame of America. Yet in all his travels, amid the scenes through which he has passed in delivering his popular lecture on Washington, he has found nothing in this country to condemn, except a little something he calls Buncombe. That's all-a little spot called Buncombe. The enslavement of four millions of men and women is nothing to condemn; the effort making to spread the withering curse of human bondage is nothing to condemn; but only a little spot called Buncombe, a spot to which his own speech belongs-for a more palpable piece of Buncombe than this speech of his-made over the golden plates of the Revere House, and by the side of slaveholding Commissioner Ben Hallett — never found place in an American newspaper. It is national flattery on a large scale, such as few would attempt when sober, and such as could not have been expected of Mr. Everett when drunk.

Now, for the sake of symmetry and completeness, let me say a word of the other performance at Tammany Hall. Among the first Anti-Slavery speeches I ever heard, was one from the lips of Hon. Caleb Cushing, at Liberty Hall, in New-Bedford, Mass. It is now nearly twenty years ago. It was a passing eulogy on the lamented young Alvord, lately deceased, one of the most promising Anti-Slavery men of that day. Mr. Cushing then stood upon the old Whig platform. He was fishing for Abolition votes then, as he is fishing for Pro-Slavery votes now. But there was something in the sudden burst of grief and lamentation in which he indulged over the early death of Alvord, that cheated me for the moment into the belief that Caleb was really in sympathy with the great and beneficent aims of that rising young statesman. But it was not so. Mr. Cushing was then, as now, the same gifted, learned, crafty, unscrupulous corrupter of the public heart that he now is. His speech at old Tammany Hall would convert the great celebration of Liberty into a means of making friends for Slavery and for stirring up the bitterest and most brutal passions of the country, of every prominent and consistent friend of the principles of the Declaration of American Independence. Such is the use made of the birthday of Freedom by these three eminent public men. Under all the gauze and lace of their bewitching rhetoric, under all the high-sounding phrases of their devotion to the Union, there is veiled the hideous and hell black imp of Slavery. Sitting there on his throne of bleeding hearts, he drives, by proxy, his sable serfs to unrequited toil, keeping back the wages of the laborer by fraud and giving him nought for his work. For him, these searchers after fame and funds have no rebuke on the Fourth of July. Their bolts are forged for the head of Liberty-not for the head of Slavery. They love the Union, but not the objects for which the Union was formed. They quote the great words of the fathers, but only to excuse the sins of their children. They would preserve the form, but murder the spirit of Liberty.

"Paltering in a double sense,
They keep the word of promise to the ear, And break it to the heart."

Yet, even in this quarter, there is much to cheer and gladden the hearts of the friends of impartial freedom. Old Massachusetts does not allow such treachery to liberty to go unpunished. Under the teaching of the Sumners and Wilsons, the Parkers and Higginsons, she has put the broad brand of her condemnation upon the whole brood of poetic and brilliant panderers to slaveholding lust and love of power. She has taught them, by precept and by example, that they cannot serve two masters. If they bask in the smiles of Slavery, they must confront the frowns of old Massachusetts. She admires their eloquence, she is proud of their learning: but, having no faith in the integrity of the men, she consigns them to political oblivion. Before these three, no men in Massachusetts could have risen higher, yet no three men in that State have sunken lower. But, let us leave the old Bay State. She has done well, and promises to do better. She has sent Everett, and Choate, and Cushing to political oblivion, and driven from the bench a minion of the law for slave catching. And, above all, she is now moving for the enactment of a law which will make her soil too holy for the footprints of a slave or a slave catcher.

How stands the case in other directions? for wherever we look and wherever we listen, our eyes are greeted by the same sights, and our ears are saluted by the same sounds. Slavery and Freedom are everywhere in the field face to face in open conflict, and the war is one of extermination. Vanquish, or be vanquished, is the desperate alternative. This lesson long taught by the Abolitionists at the North, and by the extreme men at the South-is beginning to be learned by the rank and file of both parties. The contest going on just now in the State of Illinois is worthy of attention. Stephen A. Douglas, the author of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, is energetically endeavoring to hold his seat in the American Senate, and Mr. Abram Lincoln is endeavoring as energetically to get that seat for himself. This, however, is only a partial view of the matter. The truth is, that Slavery and Anti-Slavery are at the bottom of the contest. As matters now stand, Douglas has a desperate case on his hands. He is fighting at immense disadvantage. The planks of his platform are as opposite as the Kilkenny cats. He has to defend the Dred Scott decision in one breath, and popular sovereignty in the next. He has to conciliate the Democratic Party and oppose the Democratic Administration upon the only important question about which the public mind is divided and agitated. He hopes for the support of individual Republicans while he denounces the Republican Party. The doctrine of popular sovereignty holds that the Territory, while it is a Territory, and in the interim of its Territorial existence, may submit or may exclude Slavery. This doctrine is diametrically opposed to the Dred Scott decision. That decision denies the right of a Territory to exclude Slavery at all. Nevertheless, Mr. Douglas accepts the Dred Scott decision and goes on talking about popular sovereignty all the same. During the last Congress you remember that he managed to produce the impression on the country that he was about to abandon his old slaveholding policy. He gave out that he had gone as far South as he ever meant to go, and that he was quite prepared to take the consequences of this resolution. We of the North, you know, shouted aloud over this

demonstration of Mr. Douglas. He boasted thereafter that while, in 1854, he could have traveled all the way from Washington to Chicago by the light of his own effigy, that now he should receive nothing but plaudits all along such a journey.

He was promptly denounced by the South as a renegade-a traitor. The President denounced him, and he defied the President. His friends were removed from office, and his enemies were put in. In a word, he was marked out for political destruction. He was taught to expect no quarter from his old associates in the Democratic Party. At this juncture Mr. Stephen Douglas held conversations and conferences with his old enemies, the Republicans; and the lightning from Washington told us that these conferences were mutually satisfactory. The nature of the satisfaction was not published, but for a time it was a matter of doubt as to which party had sold out, the Little Giant or the Republicans. But the tone of the Republican speeches made thereafter induced doubts as to the stability of the Republican Party. It was feared, and not without reason, that Cincinnati was to be the platform, and Douglas the leader of the Republican forces thenceforth. But just before the close of the session the spell was broken. Some rumbling sounds of danger and discontentment reached all parties from the State of Illinois. Other parties were to be consulted. Mr. Douglas was assured that however cordial Republicanism might be at Washington, Republicanism in Illinois had no terms to offer him-no proposals of peace to make him, or accept from him-and that as for his seat in the Senate he could expect no help from them in retaining that; in fact, that they should get him out of it if they could. So matters were shaped just before the close of the session.

What did the brave Douglas do? The circumstances were perplexing in the extreme. I will tell you what he did. He made the very natural-but very desperate, if not fatal move. He attempted to get back into the good graces of the old Democratic Administration. He went about it in the old fashioned way of doing such things. He made a speech-it was a queer speech-in which he wanted the past forgotten. Let bygones be bygones. The English swindle had carried - the question was settled, and the only point of difference between him and the Administration was now out of the way. Hereafter, as heretofore, he was ready to fight the battle of Democracy. I do not profess to give his words, but his ideas. Mr. Douglas was heard, as a culprit, under the gallows, is heard, with patience, and even with pity-and yet no one who heard him had their opinions altered by anything he said. Here, I take it, was the great mistake of that man's political life. He admitted his crimes, he owned his rebellious conduct but wished all forgotten, because the reasons which moved him thereto had ceased to exist. After his speech there was no expression of regret on the Republican side-none of joy and congratulation on the Democratic side. He left without a single good bye-and entered without a single expression of welcome. I say, here was the great mistake. His Kansas-Nebraska bill, with all its train of atrocities, might have been forgiven him; his repeated, virulent assaults upon the leading Republicans might have been excused upon the ground of the general hostility; his

standing by in perfect silence and permitting an armed assassin to strike down a brother Senator might have been forgiven if not forgotten. But this double treason-this attempt to cheat two great parties in a single session, right before the eyes of all, was an extravagance of political profligacy which can neither be forgiven nor forgotten while Stephen A. Douglas lives. The Democrats pitied and despised him; the Republicans felt relieved by his departure, and he went home to Illinois with a millstone of condemnation round his political neck.

Nevertheless, Mr. Douglas has money, he has talent and he has a party, and may even yet get back into the Senate of the United States. He is no trifling opponent. His zeal is quite equal to his ability, and his success would, for many reasons, be a deplorable calamity. He is one of the most restless, ambitious, boldest and most unscrupulous enemies with whom the cause of the colored man has to contend. It is for this reason that I have given him so lengthy a paragraph in my present address. It seems to me that the white Douglas should occasionally meet his deserts at the hands of a black one. Once I thought he was about to make the name respectable, but now I despair of him, and must do the best I can for it myself. (Laughter.) I now leave him in the hands of Mr. Lincoln, and in the hands of the Republican Party of Illinois, thanking both the latter, because they have nobly upheld and made prominent the principles of the Republican Party in Illinois, which seemed about to be compromised and sacrificed at the very heart of the Government.

The key-note of Republicanism in that State, at present, is given in the following extract from the great speech of Mr. Lincoln:

"We are now into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to Slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only [not] ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half Slave and half Free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved-I do not expect the house to fall-but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of Slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States-old as well as new, North as well as South." Well and wisely said. One system or the other must prevail. Liberty or Slavery must become the law of the land. And men, communities, parties, churches and public measures are ranged on one or the other side favoring the ascendancy of one or the other. But I call your attention to another speck on the political firmament. Atchison while attempting to curse Kansas with Slavery, seems about to bless Missouri itself with Liberty. A phenomenon is presented in the tone of sentiment reaching us from that Slave State. Emancipation is

openly discussed in the streets of the slaveholding city of St. Louis. Emancipation leaders are written and published in the daily journals published in different parts of the State. Emancipation speeches are made on the stump in open daylight. Emancipation candidates are run for Congress, and the same for other offices. Only a few years ago this could have been done only at the peril of life itself. I know that the chief motive of this movement is to benefit white men. I know that the moral character of the slave system is not brought into discussion, but I am willing that men should do right from any motives. Two kinds of arguments can be urged in favor of any right measure. If men will not do right from a love of principle, I am glad to have them do right from a love of the results of right doing. I look, therefore, with hope to the emancipation movement in Missouri. I know that many of the present slaves of that State would be speedily put beyond the beneficent reach of any act of emancipation which might be passed in the State. No doubt thousands would be hurried off down the river, in fetters and chains. It would be like most slave masters to do this. The same was done in this State and elsewhere, and the same would be done there. Nevertheless, Emancipation in Missouri will be great gain. Some at least, of our enslaved brethren would reap its benefits, and the accession of another free State, without the trouble of admitting her into the Union, would help on the Anti-Slavery movement immensely. It would inaugurate a new and dangerous mode of thinking and talking on the whole subject of Slavery, and lead to combinations against the Slave system in other States. Maryland, Delaware and Kentucky would follow. I make little account of the talk made of driving the colored people out of the State. This is an effort not likely to succeed. It has been threatened in Virginia and elsewhere, but the cruelty and meanness of the proposition are too gross and monstrous for the assent of even the slaveholders of Virginia. I, therefore, see nothing to discourage us in that quarter, but everything to cheer us on in the work of enlightening the public mind and winning the public heart to the side of liberty and justice.

Nevertheless, while there is much, very much, to cheer and gladden our hearts in the facts transpiring around us, while we rejoice over West India Emancipation, look with hope towards the contest going on in Missouri, and in Kansas, and infer the result of the same upon Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky; while we are surprised and thrilled by the evidences of the onward march of freedom even among the ice and snows of despotic Russia, and calculate upon the moral aid of despotism to break the fetters of slavery in this Republic, it is a matter of astonishment, and deep regret, that the Church of our country, and the Religion of our country, continue to ignore the Anti-Slavery movement —continue to give the influence of their powerful silence and indifference in support and countenance of the stealers and holders of men. All that Slavery asks as a condition of existence is, to be let alone. This condition the American Church and clergy have heretofore abundantly supplied, and are still supplying. The baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, of which our Churches have been boasting, has not consumed a single rope, or melted a single chain. Slavery stands not less firm because of the recent Revival. The

slave still raps in vain at the door of the house of God, with bleeding back and streaming eyes. The great American Evangelical Tract Society is still unable to agree that slaveholding, that the buying and selling of men and women as beasts of burden, is a sin to be opposed by the Evangelical Christians of the country. That Society has voted that the doctrine of the sinfulness of Slavery is not CALCULATED to receive the approbation of the Evangelical Christianity of the country. Great and terrible is the crime of that body against our enslaved countrymen! Deep and lasting is the shame and reproach cast upon the very name of religion! A religion which has no testimony against robbery, murder, adultery, concubinage, and every other crime known to the laws of Heaven and earth, simply because they take shelter under slavery, is a religion to be despised and spit upon, as an impudent fraud against God and man .

My friends, it must be confessed that the slaves in our land have no more dangerous an enemy than in the religious bodies of America. In this respect, the anti-slavery movement in this country differs very widely from the anti-slavery movement in England. In our country, we find religion opposed to us, quoting scripture against us, preaching sermons against us, writing books against us, pamphleteering against us; but in England, religion was allied to the cause of liberty . English Evangelical Christianity breaks fetters. American Evangelical Christianity rivets fetters . The mightiest champions of the Abolition cause stood before Britain as the ambassadors of God. They were Missionaries and Ministers of various denominations, heralds of the cross of Christ. But here the case is different. The Church only appears in the contest, with slavery in factions. The great body of American Christians are on the side of the oppressor and power. This is the saddest feature of the whole case. Yet in contemplating it, let us remember that though the CHURCH is mighty, the TRUTH is mightier; and that however opposed , and however delayed, it can never fail; that God, and humanity, time and eternity , in silence and in thunder, and in all the vicissitudes of existence , will, in the end, see Truth triumphant over all foes-sitting upon his own imperial throne ruling the world in Righteousness. That day will come; and though you and I may never see that day, I know of no better employment, no wiser disposition of our time, no better occupation, viewed from any stand-point, whether on earth or in Heaven , than that involved in honest labor for the downfall of American Slavery. It was the saying of the great THOMAS CLARKSON, in his eighty seventh year, while bending, as it were , over the edge of the grave, that he had given sixty-seven years of his life to the cause of emancipation, and if he had the same years to live again, he should give them joyfully to the same great cause.

My friends, the lesson of West India Emancipation is one of faith, hope and patient labor. The glorious event we celebrate was not achieved in a moment , without toil, without opposition, and without persecution. Gigantic and commanding as is the anti-slavery sentiment of Great Britain at the present moment, it once had its day of small things . The decision of LORD MANSFIELD, in the Somersett case, by which

slaveholding and slave catching were made impossible in England, was the result of the steady, untiring, persistent and patient labors of that purest and most clear-sighted of all the anti-slavery men in England, in his day-I mean Granville Sharpe. Slave-catching was as fashionable and as lawful in England until that decision, as it now is in the Northern States. Granville Sharpe arrested this practice, and turned against it all the crushing weight of both public and judicial opinion. But liberty there, as well as here, had its period of darkness and clouds, its moments of gloom, as well as of glory; and the resplendent victory which it has at last attained, the noble results which have followed the great achievement, should banish from our hearts and hands the "apathy of despair," and inspire us anew with increasing determination to spend and be spent, to live and die, to fall or to flourish in breaking the fetters from the limbs, not of eight hundred thousand slaves of the British West Indies, but of FOUR MILLIONS of slaves in the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.