





LETTER FROM HON. N. H. WHITING.

MARSHFIELD, July 20, 1865.

CHARLES K. WHITFIELD, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—When I saw you in Boston a few days ago, I gave you permission to advertise me as one of the possible speakers at the celebration of Emancipation in the West Indies, which you propose to hold at Abington on the first of August. As the time approaches, I find that my health and voice are not sufficient to justify me in the attempt to speak in the open air; and, as the best substitute I can offer, I send you on paper the substance of what might have been said in speech, had the "divinity that shapes our ends" made time and circumstance of that complexion.

The auspicious event in the world's progress which we have commemorated now for many years, has, at last, been overshadowed, and, at least partially, eclipsed by the great deliverance which the stern necessities of war have wrought in these terrible four years, for black men, and for white men as well. The stirring apothegm of our martyr President, "If liberty is not wrong, then nothing is wrong," was affirmed of a system which rests on the monstrous postulate that there is, or may be, something in a man—everything, indeed, that makes him a sentient, ever-prophetic creature—which does not belong to him—nor subject to his volition, nor to be used for his benefit—but is the property of another, subservient to the interest or caprice of his owner. That system, so tersely described by John Wesley as "the iron of all villanies," has been broken and pulverized by the iron hammer of war which had been invoked by its friends to rivet more strongly its fetters, and extend its weary chain, with the slave-coil, across the continent and around the world.

We sing psalms to-day, then, not merely for the liberation of eight hundred thousand, but for four millions of slaves, as the immediate result of the great convulsion through which we have just passed. The yawning gulf of "chaos and old night" opened at our feet; and it could only be closed by the sacrifice of untold thousands of the nation's most precious children. That fruitful parent of all our woes is dead. On us and our children is placed the responsibility of seeing that it never has a resurrection. The Declaration of "Public Law" has gone forth, wherever the stars and stripes of the American Union float on the breezes of heaven, "that all men are born free." It is affirmed with an emphasis like the sound of many waters, in contradistinction from the infamous postulate which slavery went forth to battle against the civilization of the age;—it is proclaimed that there is something in every man, constituting the inherent, essential qualities of his human nature, which belongs to himself, and which cannot be bought and sold in the market, or made to minister to the cupidity and avarice of another.

The part of the great problem now lying unsolved immediately before us is to determine what is that something which belongs to every man. Is it not a right to the best use of all the faculties God has given him—the right to choose the form of government which he shall live? the right to home and family—to free thought, free speech, and free worship? The right, in fine, to everything essential to growth and happiness which the Commonwealth can furnish? This is what we have claimed for the slave. So ours, in its last analysis and result, is a complete and universal reform. Thus our work is but just begun. The Reformer can truly say, with Emerson, that "As an *act of God* with *no past* at his back." With him nothing is completed while anything remains to be done. His work is that of criticism of the actual, and a perpetual demand for the realization of the ideal. But his is ever the attitude of hope, not of despair. His appeal is for justice always and everywhere. With the Hindu of Eastern story, he says, "I leave to Right as the sure ladder that leads up to God; to him I acknowledge and accept the pole that is done; but he is on the alert to point out the rocks and quicksands that still lie along the pathway of the man and the nation. He rejoices, with a joy that can find no verbal expression, in that new morning of freedom before which the night of slavery is rapidly falling away; but he says, "To avenge there are still some lurid streaks in the expanding sunlight which are ominous of future tempests and convulsions in the 'reconstructed' Union." And this brings me to the string upon which I conceive we are to sound in our "rub-a-dub agitation" of the present hour—that is the question of equal, or negro suffrage.

We owe the negro far more than we can ever pay for the victory we now enjoy. When our part was begun, it was predicted that whichever party succeeded in securing the assistance of the negroes would surely conquer. The peculiar nature of the conflict enabled us to see and act upon this "military necessity" first. And we have won. But I venture to say that the valor and endurance of all the white soldiers we sent into the field, though perhaps never exceeded in the history of the world, and coupled with the marvellous resources which the Government has otherwise developed and brought into play, would not have been sufficient, and the rebels would have succeeded in their nefarious work of breaking the Union into fragments, if the armed hand of the element of weakness in the South was the slave. The element Abraham Lincoln, of blessed memory, acted upon, and attached to the loyal cause; and so the hour of victory came, and the nation is saved.

Of this we pronounced the negro his liberty. Shall he have it in fact, or only in form? It is proposed to have him, with this name alone, at the mercy of the white population of the rebellious States, smarting under their defeat, and exasperated to madness by the knowledge that their overthrow has been accomplished by the aid which their former slaves gave to the national cause.—It is proposed to leave these faithful and indispensable auxiliaries in such hands, without homes, without land, without any law in whose protection and administration they have any voice, literally bound hand and foot, with not even the poor protection which the interest and lurking humanity of the former master gave them.

Against this be it ours to protest, as an act of injustice as cruel, of meanness so despicable, that it may well be called the crowning shame of the age. No man and no people can ever prosper after consenting to it. Now is the time to cry aloud on this subject. We can not protect the emancipated blacks now, in the first flush of conscious triumph, when gratitude for our salvation is unchecked by the cupidity of personal or party interest, we shall never voluntarily do so. It can only be wrung from our heart's blood, or that of our children.

I make no account of this plea of State Rights in the name of national justice to the negro. There are no States. They deliberately committed suicide. There is nothing left but so much territory belonging to the nation, and sundry defeated rebels, without one national or State right to be tried and punished for their crimes. The machinery of those States can never be put in motion again except by the consent of the Government against which they rebelled. Never was a clearer case. We used to say we were not responsible for the treatment of the blacks at the South. That plea can never be entered again. Of all the people on the planet, we are just the ones who have this matter in charge. In the name of good faith, common honesty, and the public safety, let us see to it that whoever is left "out in the cold" under the new order of things, it shall not be the only thoroughly loyal people in the rebellious South. They are the heavy night of doubt, and almost of despair, which so often shad down on the Union cause, those black faces were always the symbol of loyalty and truth. The curses of all that is good will light upon us if we leave them in their hour of need to the tender mercies of the "mean whites" of the South, and the meaner "copperheads" of the North.

Nobody should be forsaken or neglected who has done anything to aid the Union in its mortal peril; but it is especially our mission as reformers—as abolitionists—to see that justice is done to those poor black men, who, though laboring under the terrible disabilities of relentless prejudice and grinding servitude, by their sublime patience, courage and fidelity made it possible for the nation to live.

We flatter ourselves with the notion that the result of the conflict through which we have just passed is the triumph of democracy—of the people—over despotism and caste. This gives it not merely a national, but a human and world-wide significance. Thus our star becomes a cynosure of hope and promise to the struggling people everywhere. But let us have no more of that sham democracy which, with niggardly selfishness, confines itself to snarling at the aristocracy of birth, or wealth, or literature,—"I am as good as you," and at the same time despises the poor of other races and nations. Give us rather that genuine life—that pure democracy—which goes down to the bottom of society, and, in the spirit of the Great Reformer, whose light streams through the centuries from the cross of Calvary to the outcast and oppressed of all races and climes, says, "YOU ARE AS GOOD AS I. You are a man and a brother. You are an heir to the sublimer possibilities of activity and achievement than ever prophet dreamed or poet sang. Come up, my poor brother! Enter and take possession of your inheritance." This is the true democracy. How much of it is to be embodied in the life of this nation? It wants to save it, and make it commensurate with the wants of the human race? The answer is with each and all. The problem is the "riddle of man." The duty of life is to aid in its solution.

Yours in that work,  
N. H. WHITING.

THE JEFF. DAVIS MEETING.

The New York Post publishes the following statement of Robert Brown, one of the students who attended the Jeff. Davis meeting in that city the other day.

"State of New York, City and Co. of New York, ss."

Robert Brown, of said city and county of New York, being duly sworn, deposes and saith: On Monday, the 31st of July, 1865, he attended a meeting in this city, having received an invitation to the following terms: "You are invited to meet, with several gentlemen, at the offices 19 and 20, in the house No. 9 Broad st., on Monday, the 31st instant, at 4 P. M., to devise means for the fair and equal representation of freemen and associates, so that whatever happens, justice may be done. You are invited to meet, with several gentlemen, at the offices 19 and 20, in the house No. 9 Broad st., on Monday, the 31st instant, at 4 P. M., to devise means for the fair and equal representation of freemen and associates, so that whatever happens, justice may be done. You are invited to meet, with several gentlemen, at the offices 19 and 20, in the house No. 9 Broad st., on Monday, the 31st instant, at 4 P. 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The Liberator.

CELEBRATION OF WEST INDIA EMANCIPATION.

On the 11th of August, as usual, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society called together the friends of freedom to celebrate the anniversary of the emancipation of West India slaves in 1834, by the British Government.

Rev. SAMUEL MAY called the meeting to order, and proposed the following list of officers for its acceptance:

President—ELBRIDGE SPRAGUE, of Abington. Secretaries—JAS. M. W. YERRINGTON, CHARLES K. WHITFIELD.

Finance Committee—ROBERT F. WALLCUT, BRIGGS ANDREWS, SAMUEL DREW, N. B. SPOONER, J. G. DODDS.

The vote being called for, these officers were unanimously chosen.

Mr. SPRAGUE, President of the meeting, having taken the chair, prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. TOMLINSON, of Plymouth.

SPEECH OF REV. SAMUEL MAY.

The First of August has been a Saint's Day with the Anti-Slavery people of America for full thirty years past, being observed by them more uniformly and generally than in England itself.

In past years, we have been taught and encouraged by the successes of Emancipation in the British West India Islands. For, notwithstanding the unfavorable and hostile influences under which that "experiment" was made, for an experiment the world generally regarded it every candid mind has admitted that, as a humane measure, as a social and economical reform, as a triumph of justice and right over cruelty, barbarism and crime, it has been a perfect success.

Today, we have little reason to go to the West India Islands, or anywhere out of our own country, for an example of the happy and prosperous working of Emancipation. Our nation has tried for itself the experiment on a grander scale, and (I am faint to think) on a more just and comprehensive basis, than any other nation has done.

We look to West India Emancipation with another object to-day. It yet has its lessons to teach us. But whereas heretofore we have been taught and stimulated by its grand idea and its essential success, to-day we should take warning by its mistakes, and consequent partial failures.

But I must close, and would say in closing that the great and uniform lesson we learn from West India emancipation is that slaveholders cannot be trusted with the rights and welfare of their former slaves.

100,000. But for popular education, in a population of half a million, only \$20,000 per annum is voted! The result is, that the great bulk of the black people of Jamaica are, as regards mental culture, in a state but little removed from that in which slavery left them thirty years ago; that only two blacks have ever sat in the legislature of the colony; that, out of the hundreds of magistrates on the island, there are not more than four black men holding commissions of the peace; that among the ninety-odd ministers of the Established Church in the island, there is only one black minister;—and he is said to be without an incumbency;—and in the civil service of the colony only a single negro, and he holding only the subordinate post of tide-waiter in the custom-house.

It is even more instructive and more full of warning to note how the civil and electoral rights of the freed population of the West India Islands have been dealt with. "Shortly after emancipation took place, an election-law was passed by the Jamaica legislature, giving the elective franchise to owners of freeholds of the annual value of six pounds sterling and upwards (about \$30). Under that law a considerable number of the freed blacks became entitled to vote; but as the negro in numerous instances showed quite a disposition to think and act for himself as a voter, or at any rate to follow other leaders than the men of the old dominant party, it was discovered that the law was a great deal too liberal, and after various other attempts the happy expedient was hit upon of imposing a tax on the suffrage, besides retaining the property qualification for it. This tax is two dollars and a half a year, in addition to any other taxes which a man may have to pay. But mark the unbecoming meanness of the matter! All persons paying taxes to the amount of seven dollars and a half, and upwards, are exempted from the tax on the elective franchise. So it happens that the voting tax falls exclusively on the poorer class, and the wealthy and well-to-do are relieved from it entirely!

Very differently has our American "experiment" been commenced. At the first tidings of the downfall of slavery on the shores of Chesapeake Bay and the Port Royal islands, teachers and friends made ready in New England, in the Middle and North-western States, to go at once to the emancipated, and give them the welcoming hand to freedom.

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too, shall we best pay back,—at least in part,—to the noble company of workers for freedom in the Old World, the debt we have owed them so long; and to all mankind an Example, in full and honorable success, of a Republic based on "these self-evident truths, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with an inalienable right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

The Trinitarian Gleo Club, a quartette of excellent singers, connected with the Trinitarian Ball Club, who had kindly given their services for this occasion, were then called upon by the President, and sang the beautiful piece entitled—"There's music in the air."

HERRY C. WAIGHT then spoke on the Ballot. The majority of the nation, he said, represented the people, and that majority could be ascertained only by the ballot. That was the sole pivot on which this Government turned. The ballot was the democratic symbol of sovereignty, and meant absolute, uncontrolled, irresponsible power in the hands of man over man.

Mr. Wright said he hoped the day would come when neither the drunkard nor the drunkard-maker would be allowed to vote. Should a man in a beastly state of intoxication, he asked, be allowed to reel to the polls, and decide by his ballot the destiny of the nation? He thought, also, that the man who would make merchandise of the ballot, and sell his vote for so much rum or so many dollars, or such a fat office, ought not to be allowed to vote.

CHARLES L. REMOND said he agreed with Mr. Wright so far as the great question of the hour was concerned—the ballot; but he was frank to say, that he expected our country and our cause would be saved before every man and woman should be made virtuous or made temperate.

AFTERNOON SESSION. After an hour spent in picnicking, in participation in the various amusements offered to the pleasure-seeker, and in social intercourse, the company again assembled at the stand, and speaking was resumed.

JOHN WETHERS, JR., Esq., of Boston, was the first speaker. He commenced by referring to the prospect before us in regard to reconstruction, and alluded to the danger of attempting to settle matters upon any other basis than that of justice and righteousness.

In conclusion, Mr. Wethers quoted a toast said to have been given by John Quincy Adams, many years ago: "Our country: may she ever be successful! But, whether successful or unsuccessful, may she ever be right!" Thank God, said Mr. Wethers, in this particular case, right and success mean one and the same thing.

SPEECH OF REV. NATHANIEL COLVER.

Rev. NATHANIEL COLVER, of Chicago, was the next speaker. He said he felt like rejoicing on this occasion. When he looked back over the past twenty years, and saw what God had wrought, his heart swelled, and he was filled with gratitude.

He desired to bring forward some of the lessons to be learned from emancipation in the West Indies. The government of Great Britain was entitled to no credit for that emancipation; it came through the struggles of a few individuals, who labored in the cause of human rights.

Another fact was developed by emancipation in the British West Indies, and that was, that freedom is not the only thing the slaves need. Who were the freed slaves? Poor, crushed human beings; ignorant, untutored; their bodies developed, but their souls stultified.

He differed from Mr. Wright in regard to the ballot. He believed that the right of suffrage was inherent in every man and woman, and that the business of every community was, not to give that right, but to guard it sacredly.

In conclusion, Mr. Colver said that while the names of those through whose instrumentality British emancipation was achieved were remembered with honor, the names of those who had breathed the storm in this country should not be forgotten.

SPEECH OF MRS. FRANCES E. W. HARPER.

Mrs. F. E. W. HARPER then addressed the audience. She said it was interesting to mark the rise and progress of any reform which had for its object the welfare and happiness of mankind, and proceeded to sketch, briefly, but in an interesting manner, the efforts for the suppression of the African slave trade, and then for the abolition of slavery itself.

She said she would live to see slavery abolished, and of you I have lived to see slavery abolished in this land; I have lived to see it go down to its grave; and now, God willing, I will live to see the negro a citizen; and then, if it please God, I will live to see twenty years more to see the working of equality and freedom in this land; and then, my friends, I will fold my hands, and with Simeon of old exclaim, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!"

God had linked the two races together, and when the South pressed the slave beneath the burden of his chains, she placed a weight upon her bosom which crippled her moral power and paralyzed her spiritual energies.

Mrs. Harper said, that what she asked of the American people was, that if they could not get indemnity for the past, they should have security for the future; how was that security for the future to be obtained? By disfranchising the colored man, by putting him at the feet of every white-washed rebel who called himself loyal?

Mr. MAY stated that a letter had been received from Hon. N. H. WHITING, who had been expected to speak, but found himself unable to address an outdoor meeting; and, on motion of Mr. Foss, it was voted, that the letter be published with the proceedings of the meeting.

SPEECH OF C. L. REMOND.

CHARLES LEWIS REMOND then briefly addressed the audience. He expressed the conviction, that whatever might be the results of emancipation in the future, so far it had failed. He believed, with Mr. Wright, that the suffrage question was to be the next great question in this country, but he did not believe that the people of this State were responsible for the wrongs to which Mr. Wright had referred.

SPEECH OF ANDREW T. FOSS.

Mr. Foss said his friend Remond had entirely changed the character of his speech. He had intended to criticize the government for its want of fidelity to freedom, but Mr. Remond had made such charges that his sense of justice was roused, and he felt obliged to defend the government.

Mr. Foss said he was glad the President's plan was working so badly. He was glad the acclamations and raptures of the South were being manifested. The scheme was working so badly, that he had every hope the President would change it.

It had been said that no good had come to the black man. Was it nothing that 200,000 black men had worn the army blue and shouldered the U.S. musket? Was it nothing that Congress had passed the Amendment to the Constitution, and that its acceptance by the people had been assured?

He agreed with all that had been said of the infamy of depriving the colored man of his vote. He did not believe the President ever intended to do it; if he did believe it, he should despise him. The President had his pet idea of State rights; that was his fetish, so to speak; but he desired that the States should establish their Constitutions in accordance with the Proclamation of Freedom, and in harmony with the great idea of human rights, that the ballot belongs to every man in the land who is amenable to the law, and has attained the requisite age.

SPEECH OF REV. SERENO E. HOWE.

Rev. S. E. Howe, of East Abington, said this day was a brighter day than ever dawned upon this country before. We had always loved to think of British emancipation; we had always rejoiced in that fact that thousands of men had leaped up free, their shackles falling off in one blessed, God-given hour; but when we thought of British emancipation, then came the remembrance of our own slaves, and we were ready to say, with Whittier, the sweetest poet, perchance, of America,—

But now, all that was past. The slave was no longer to be found, and his master was slave, a cowering, trembling, wretched being, going to Washington to ask for pardon at the hands of that Government which he had spurned and hated, and sought to crush.

Another thing which had surprised him was, that these slavesholding rebels should now claim that they had a right to decide who should and who should not vote. All the Republican newspapers were saying that there was a tremendous feeling in North Carolina and South Carolina and Virginia against the colored man's voting.

SPEECH OF WM. A. JACKSON.

WM. A. JACKSON, known as the former coachman of the Chief of the rebel Confederacy, was then introduced, and made quite a telling speech. He said he did not agree with what had been said with respect to the little progress that had been made.

He thought the people of Massachusetts had a right to say who should vote in the Southern States, and he felt very sure that if the black man was to exercise the rights of citizenship, they must be given to him by somebody else than by the Southern rebels, who had been subdued, but not converted.

SPEECH OF GEORGE W. STACY.

Geo. W. STACY, of Milford, was the last speaker. He said he felt it good to be there, to look into the faces of the people, and to hear what he had heard, and yet they were not there so much to think about West India Emancipation, as about our own day of complete jubilee.

Let us go home, said Mr. Stacy, with the determination that what we have heard shall not be lost; that the determination that God, who strengthens every good purpose, shall be honored, not in profusion, but in ceremony, but in honest and earnest lives, so that wherever we go, all that we do or say shall be in the side of that truth and righteousness which shall bring about this glorious period for which we have labored and sinned many years.

SPEECH OF REV. J. J. BOSTON.

Rev. J. J. BOSTON, of Boston, said that the determination of the government to recognize the principle by which the freedmen of the South were to be forever excluded from the ballot-box, was a step which would be forever excluded from the honor-bound to claim the country in its duty and the republic equal liberty to the colored citizens of the republic who have no other respect; argue that those who ought not to be defended the privilege of defending it, all other rights without the elective franchise, all other rights without more privileges to be held at the option of any other party; and that they will never be satisfied with any thing short of perfect and absolute equality before the law.