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EMANCIPATION ORATION,

BY DR. EZRA R. JOHNSON,

AND

P O E M,

BY JAMES M. WHITFIELD,

DELIVERED AT

PLATT'S HALL, JANUARY 1, 1867,

IN HONOR OF THE

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S

PROCLAMATION OF EMANCIPATION.

1864.



SAN FRANCISCO:

PUBLISHED AT THE ELEVATOR OFFICE.

1867.

EMANCIPATION ORATION

BY DR. RICHARD R. JOHNSON

AND

P. O. M.

BY JAMES M. WHITFIELD

PRINTED AT

TO

THE BRANNAN GUARDS;

THE FIRST SUCCESSFULLY ORGANIZED MILITARY COMPANY OF COLORED MEN IN CALIFORNIA,

THIS ORATION IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

30

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

EMANCIPATION ORATION

1864

RAY HARRISON

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF

1867

ORATION

DELIVERED BY

DR. EZRA R. JOHNSON.

MR. PRESIDENT, FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS :—Time's measured tread, with all its blessings, has brought us to behold another happy New Year. We joyfully greet you ; millions of our race join in the chorus, and sound the loud timbrel, for our people are free. Assembled in this spacious and popular edifice, within whose walls the deep, mellow voice of our peerless advocate, the lamented Rev. T. Starr King was wont to be heard captivating his hearers by his matchless eloquence, and others of equal note, who from this forum have, with trumpet tones, denounced slavery and oppression. It is fitting, then, that we should once more consecrate this house to the service of a cause so sacred. These stars and stripes are emblems of freedom. We behold a beautiful spectacle—this immense gathering of the people, composed of the respectable and intelligent members of society, without regard to cast or color.

Many long and weary years have we labored to disabuse a corrupt and iniquitous public sentiment, that raised its imperious head to the clouds, vainly hoping to thwart the design of "Him who is thundering in the Heavens for the oppression of the poor : for the sighing of the needy I will arise ; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him."

We love the earth on which we first drew the vital air, and beheld the light of Heaven ; and the same soil is sacred when we know it embraces the dearest relatives of life, and contains in its bosom the ashes of our ancestors, and on its surface the Temple of our God. The misfortunes that have been accumulating upon our heads, and threatened to over-

whelm us, are fast disappearing. Time, hallowed and gracious, now lifts the clouds which oppress us, and we will rise above our calamities.

We were delighted with the scene on the line of march of the long and imposing procession. The gorgeous display received encomiums that filled the heart with gladness. It was truly an ovation of which any people might be proud. All have done well. There was a marked feature in the procession that deserves a passing notice. The appearance of a well-drilled military company was a novelty that took the people by surprise. Their soldierly bearing attracted special attention, and received well-deserved praise. Their bronzed faces exhibited unmistakable resemblance of those brave boys in blue who went to the war, and during a long, well-fought battle, never took a prisoner. We give them a hearty welcome, and we hope that they may be overshadowed with the olive branch during life; but if our country is imperiled, may they, at the first tap of the drum, be willing and ready to obey the orders of their superior officers.

We are happy to meet you on this joyous occasion. Let us all join to make this Festival of Freedom worthy of the day and hour. The fires of liberty are burning on the altar of every heart. The fiat from the throne of eternal justice has gone forth, and our race, despite the machinations of our enemies, will soon enjoy all the heaven-born rights that a barbarous and inhuman perversion of justice has so long withheld from us. This is our natal day. We offer our congratulations on the great blessings which we derive from the act of which this day is the anniversary, and the blessings which Heaven has bestowed upon our country and people. Especially have we, the proscribed minority, the high priests of freedom, who have been battling for more than fifty years for the destruction of American slavery, the great enemy to the principle inaugurated on the first of January, 1863, the right of self-government, the right of every individual to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Never had we occasion to thank God and take courage more heartily than to-day. God has been our leader, and we have passed through the Red Sea, and now rejoice that Canaan is in view.

We have met to celebrate the anniversary of the most

beneficent and memorable event in the history of the world—ancient or modern—the emancipation of 4,000,000 bondsmen by ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the first President of the FREE United States of America ; the consummation of a great act of justice and humanity, the wisdom of which has compelled the civilized world to acknowledge its unparalleled magnitude.

One year after the immortal Lincoln had promulgated the Proclamation of Freedom, a most remarkable spectacle was seen in the City of Washington. The President's reception on New Year's Day had heretofore been exclusively allotted to meet white citizens in the executive mansion. The appearance of colored persons was an event that surprised and provoked the multitude of negro-haters, who crowd the doors on such an occasion. The people waited until the number of white visitors diminished, then they strengthened their resolution and made bold to enter the hall. Some of them were richly dressed, while others wore the garb of poverty, but alike intent on seeing the man who had set our people free. They pressed forward until they beheld the stately form of the President. An eye-witness says : " For nearly two hours Mr. Lincoln had been shaking the hands of the 'sovereigns,' and had become excessively weary, and his grasp became languid ; but here his nerves rallied at the unwonted sight, and he welcomed this motley crowd with a heartiness that made them wild with exceeding joy. They laughed and wept, and wept and laughed, exclaiming through their blinding tears, ' God bless you ! ' ' God bless you, Abraham Lincoln ! ' ' God bress Massa Linkum ! ' "

We have not forgotten the sensation caused by the first sound from Sumter, when enthusiasm blazed high and bright ; when bells rang out and flags waved, and the people rose as one man to cheer on the troops.

It was then the colored people assembled in public meetings in various parts of the country, and volunteered their services to aid our government in suppressing the rebellion. What reply did we receive ? We were insultingly and disdainfully told that this is the white man's country and the white man's war ; that our aid was not needed, and would not be accepted. We remember the battle of Bull Run, when the rout of our forces became general and complete, and a

retreat of the fragment of our army was determined upon, and the stragglers did push on from the battle-field to Washington without halting. Campaign after campaign followed with equal disastrous results, and our government began to look with distrust, fearful that the military science of our enemies would prove an impregnable barrier to their repeated attacks. The people had been so long governed by those who always ignored the rights of our race that nothing but rivers of blood, acres of maimed, ghastly, dying, and dead men, could convince our rulers that the vitalizing element must be introduced into the army before victory could be achieved. It was not decided that colored men could become an integral portion of the army until 1863. The initiative of raising colored regiments in the free States was taken by Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, and subsequently other free States sanctioned their enlistment. The enlistment of colored refugees in the rebel States was prosecuted without much difficulty, and soon we had near 200,000 men in the field. Their heroism and loyalty stands unrivalled. They have erected an unperishable monument that should illuminate the pages of history, and be read by the coming millions of our race, and be valued as the greatest legacy bequeathed to them through the sublime career of our noble braves. We have the gratification to know that President Lincoln acknowledged the value of our troops. He believed that the country could not be saved without their aid.

The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the recognition of Hayti and Liberia, the repeal of the fugitive slave law, and the employment of colored men in the army, gave serious offense to the pro-slavery party of the country. When the President met some prominent western men in 1864, he asked them if the black men who then assisted the Union prisoners to escape were to be converted into our enemies, in the vain hope to gain the good will of their masters; if so, said he, we shall have to fight two nations instead of one. Mr. Lincoln was unwilling to conciliate the South by such means, and he considered their success inevitable, provided the labor of four millions of black men were placed into their side of the scale. He said, if they should abandon all the forts, then garrisoned by black men, and take two

hundred thousand men from their side, and put them in the battle field or corn field against them, they would have been compelled to abandon the war in three weeks. There were men base enough to propose to the President the policy to return to slavery the black warriors of Port Hudson and Olustee, and then win the respect of the masters they fought. Should I do so, said Mr. Lincoln, I should deserve to be damned in time and eternity. Come what will, he added, I will keep my faith with friend and foe ; but no human power can subdue this rebellion without the use of the emancipation policy, and every other policy calculated to weaken the moral and physical forces of the rebellion, and he rejoiced that freedom had given him 200,000 men raised on southern soil.

When the appeal to the noble men of our race was made to defend the nation's cause, its honor, and our firesides, we felt that very great sacrifices were required of them. The rebels had threatened immediate death to our men if taken prisoners. It needed strong minds and willing hearts to face that terrible issue. The wife was asked to give her husband, the mother her darling boy, the tearful youth his father, and all their loved ones. As they went forth we bid them God speed, and hasten the day when the country would be at rest.

Our hearts were filled with sorrow and sympathy for our brave men who fell on the battle-field. We did watch their course with intense and peculiar interest. for we believed their character abounded in those noble and excellent qualities of which the country and the times stood so much in need ; and when they were ordered to some very dangerous post, we feared that they would be cut off in the morning of their useful life. What heroic devotion, and how sublime the spectacle of these patriotic men offering their lives with such cheerful bravery, to achieve the freedom of our cruelly oppressed race.

When distinguished officers from the higher walks of life consented to enter upon the perilous duties and lead our forces, the military horizon seemed dark and lowery. These brave men, who were dearly beloved by their relatives and friends, and endeared for their gentle, refined, and conscientious natures, were willing to suffer, die, and be buried with

God's despised poor. It was then the timid, time-serving politicians of the North, and the secession sympathizers and negro-haters of the West, put forth their indignant protest against the policy to arm black men. Their reasoning was contradictory and absurd. They first declared that they would never countenance such an atrocity as to look on quietly and allow black Union men to shoot down white rebels. They said their feigned courage would ooze out before the glistening bayonets of the defiant enemy, and their very appearance on the battle-field would demoralize the whole army, as white men would never consent to fight side by side with those untutored sons of toil and oppression. They finally decided that the negro would not fight, that the project would prove a complete failure, and end in ruin and disgrace. They however did soon prove our persecutors to be false prophets and blind guides. Never in the history of the world can there be found a record of nobler achievements than was displayed by our Spartan heroes; and the historian will fail to find in the catalogue of our valorous defenders, a more pure and heroic soul than Col. Shaw of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. There was a peculiar tie that bound him to life, for he had been married but a few weeks before he accepted the position assigned him. He arose above the nefarious custom of the times when he declared that it was his purpose to treat all gentlemen the same, whatever their complexion might be.

It may be remembered, on that memorable night Col. Shaw had command of the first storming column at the assault on Fort Wagner, and led the regiment in person, while the enemy opened upon them with shot, shell, and canister, which wounded many of their best officers and men; they faltered not, but cheered and shouted as they advanced—Col. Shaw springing to the front and waving his sword, shouted "Forward, my brave boys!"—and they were soon engaged in a hand in hand conflict with the enemy. He was one of the first to scale the walls. He stood erect to urge forward his men, and while shouting for them to press on, he was shot dead, and fell in front of the fort with twenty of his men lying dead around him.

"His gallant soul had passed away, his brave, young life was spent."

A colored citizen of Boston has generously contributed five hundred dollars to assist in the erection of an equestrian statue to his memory. Posterity will revere his name.

The color-bearer deserves a passing notice. Sergeant John Wall, of Company G, carried the flag in the First Battalion, and when near the fort, fell into a ditch. The guard could not stop for him, but Sergeant William H. Carney, of Company C, caught the colors, carried them forward, and was the first man to plant the stars and stripes upon Fort Wagner. He saw the men falling back; himself severely wounded in the breast; he brought the colors off, creeping on his knees, pressing his wounds with one hand, and with the other holding up the emblem of freedom. The moment he was seen crawling into the hospital with the flags still in his possession, his wounded companions, both black and white, rose from the straw upon which they were lying, and cheering him until exhausted, they could shout no longer. In response to this reception, the brave and wounded standard-bearer said: "I but did my duty; the dear old flag never touched the ground." That veteran and battle-scarred hero now fills an important office in the municipality of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

The 54th Massachusetts Regiment deserve much praise for their manliness in refusing the pittance of seven dollars a month that was offered to them by the government, and also the balance of their dues appropriated by the State of Massachusetts.

They did not heed the advice of friends or the threat of enemies, notwithstanding many of them had families to support, while their money had been withheld for more than six months. They voted not to accept a dollar until the justice of their claim was acknowledged by the Secretary of War, and sanctioned by Congress. The end of justice was attained, and they, together with all the colored volunteers, received the same compensation that was given to the white soldiers.

In the thunder storm and sharp crash of terrible battle, mid blood, carnage and death, a vision of childhood, of the sweet heaven-time of life, came over our colored heroes. They hoped it was death, coming as no king of terrors, but as

a beautiful flower-crowned child, bidding them welcome to the great halls of the laurel-wreathed dead—those who died for their country.

We gave twenty thousand precious lives of our race to save the life of the nation. We now demand of the government a fulfillment of its pledge. We will labor incessantly until we obtain all the rights and privileges that are enjoyed by the Caucassian race. We are prepared to solve the great problem that will establish our social rights. Equality before the law will unshaft the calumnious darts of our enemies. The ballot is soon to become our pedestal. The four corner-stones of our new edifice, upon which civil society is to be built, are the church, the school-house, the press, and the ballot. Then our career of usefulness will emit a vivid light. We will raise our standard high, and labor to become the peers of the dominant race.

If we read ancient history aright, there has been a period in the history of our race when they equalled, if not excelled, the other existing nations of the globe. How presumptuous in any other to declare our race intellectually inferior to any other portion of mankind. We need only look back a few hundred years to see in what a humble condition the Saxon race was placed. They have not much to boast of, for the time was when the proud Norman claimed him as a slave, and the name of Saxon dog, and his brass collar, are still to be found on the pages of English history.

Tell us not that we are intellectually inferior, when we belong to a race to whose ancestors a Solon, a Plato, a Pythagoras, were sent for instruction. Tell us not that we cannot inculcate knowledge because we wear the hue and hair of St. Augustine, of Syphaeum, of Cyren, of Origen, of Tertulleanus, those early fathers of the Christian Church, who were revered as the most venerable of men, and whose writings are laboriously pondered by our learned divines. Tell us not that our intellectual capacity is so limited that we are not qualified to cast an intelligent ballot, when Greece and Rome drew directly, and all modern Europeans and their descendants, indirectly, the sum total of their knowledge and literature from our race.

The employment of those assumed physiological and psychological expounders will soon expire by limitation, and the theoretical dogma of negro inferiority will become so unpopular that its advocates will be compelled to hold their peace, or mantle their faces in shame and confusion, under the genial rays of an enlightened public opinion. Free speech is the germ of our history, and the corner-stone of our power.

An event, showing the spirit of the times, deserves special notice. J. Milton Turner, of St. Louis, Missouri, a colored orator and fearless champion, has been canvassing the Southern States for "Equality before the law." He passed through several of these States like a blazing meteor. Upon his arrival at Little Rock, Arkansas, Governor Murphy ordered the firing of eleven guns, and went out to meet him in person. By invitation of the Governor, Mr. Turner addressed an audience of near two thousand in the rotunda of the Court House. His subject was "Equality before the law." He spoke for two hours and a half, amid the vociferous cheering of his audience. The report says, one would have thought, to see that ebony negro speaker on the stand with Governor Murphy and other dignitaries of the State, with a large majority of rebels in his audience, fearlessly demanding of Arkansas rebels the equality of all men before the law, that Little Rock had changed its geographical locality, and was now situated some where in Massachusetts.

It is now seventy years since the renowned navigator and eminent merchant, Capt. Paul Cuffee, of Westport, Massachusetts, felt aggrieved by being shorn of his right to vote. He was one of the wealthiest men in that town, and he was highly respected by the Society of Friends, of which he was a prominent minister. Capt. Cuffee offered his vote at a town meeting, and it was rejected. Believing that taxation should depend on representation, he refused to pay his tax. The town commenced a suit against him, and lost the case; an appeal was made to the Supreme Court of the State, and the Court decided in Capt. Cuffee's favor, and placed the great seal of approval upon the legal right of colored men to enjoy equal political privileges. Similar cases are now pending in New Jersey, and we feel sanguine that the Supreme Court of the United States will interpret the law, based upon

the civil rights bill, so as to secure to colored men equal political rights in every State and Territory in the Union.

Twenty-five years ago your speaker was one of the regularly nominated candidates of the Liberty Party from Bristol County, Massachusetts, for a seat in the Senate of that State. Our ticket was supported by a full vote, but we failed to elect. The friends of freedom and equal rights did not despair. They frequently placed the names of colored men on their ticket, with like results ; and now, after a long and well-fought battle with the ballot, we have gained a glorious victory. We rejoice with our friends in the east who have unfurled their banner, which may be seen floating high in the air, on which is inscribed in letters of light—"Equal and exact justice to all men."

They have set an example that will ere long be followed by the progressive party until every city and town will send forth their most intelligent and worthy men as legislators, regardless of creed or color.

Our enemies are wrathful, and they use epithets unsparingly on the devoted heads of our friends in Boston (the Athens of America) because the most aristocratic ward—containing the greatest amount of wealth and cultivated intellect—have elected a colored man to represent their interest in the Legislature ; and because Charlestown has sent Edward G. Walker, a colored lawyer, to the same place.

Lieutenant Charles H. Mitchell, he who "led the men to battle in a wild and desperate fight," is an industrious and intelligent printer, and a veteran soldier of the late war, who has won his epaulets by gallant service, and lost a leg in an engagement with the rebels before Richmond. He doubtless is a man of ability. No colored man could occupy a place of trust and emolument unless he possessed superior qualifications. We do assure our enemies that this act of wisdom and justice is only a drop before a copious shower. They must conquer their prejudices and become resigned to the action of the great progressive party, whose purpose it is to elevate the whole human race. Our ambition is not special, but geographical. We intend to struggle with all the power that mind and matter can produce, to fit ourselves for the higher duties of life. We are not content to remain supinely be-

cause a colored man has been admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States, and colored jurymen to sit in courts of justice in the North. We expect to see the day when a colored man will occupy a seat as Associate Judge in the Superior Court, and an equally worthy white man as Chief Justice in the same tribunal.

The advanced step will be taken whenever a majority of voters become convinced that their interests will be best promoted by electing legislators selected from our people. There are persons present who will live to see colored men occupying seats as Representatives in Congress, and also fillign other places of honor in the gift of the people. It is the purpose of God to elevete all mankind. The cause of liberty will go forward until our race are brought to enjoy equal rights in all the land.

The colored people of the South highly prize divine worship, and they are not backward in their ecclesiastical relations. They will soon support their own schools. Their ability to acquire knowledge is conceded, and their faculty of discerning and distinguishing ideas is not surpassed by the whites. They will ere long be admitted to all the privileges of citizens, and they will need the ability to defend themselves. Every man's house is his castle, and every man should have a musket, because every man will be a soldier and a voter in this Republic.

There is no tenable theory of impartial suffrage which does not recognize the arming of every man in defense of the State. One of the most important amendments now necessary to our system is the universal omission of the word "white" in the clause regulating the militia. The colored man has shown, in the war, that he has the courage and the intelligence to fight; and in future we shall not hear of so many cowardly murders of freedmen by their old masters' daughters, when it is known that in every cabin there is a fowling-piece or a rifle, to keep hawks, or bears, or other beasts of prey from the door.

During the existence of legalized slavery, the opinion was stereotyped that the bondman, if liberated, would not work, as he possessed a constitutional love for ease, and an insuperable aversion to toil. The same objections were urged against the

Emancipation Proclamation by the rebel Commissioners at the famous interview on board the *River Queen* at Hampton Roads. They said that slaves, having always been accustomed to an overseer, and to work upon compulsion, if they should be suddenly freed, the act would precipitate not only themselves, but the entire Southern society into irremediable ruin; as no work would be done, nothing would be cultivated, and both blacks and whites would starve. Mr. Lincoln replied: "He admitted that they ought to know a great deal better about the matter than he did, for they had always lived under the slave system." The quaint and characteristic episode about the Illinois drover and his swine, was both amusing and unanswerable. The rebels changed the conversation; doubtless they were convinced that the President possessed firmness in the "right, as God gave him to see the right," even if they failed to endorse the righteous conclusions of that great and good man.

We have an abundance of overwhelming testimony that utterly demolishes the sophism of our enemies. Colored men are now engaged from the Potomac to the Rio Grande in agricultural interests, and in rebuilding many thousand houses. Without their mechanical skill and industry the waste places would not soon be filled as they now are with beautiful and substantial edifices, such as are being erected by our skillful artizans.

A fact in support of our statement is given by a gentleman in New Haven, Connecticut, who recently visited Richmond, Virginia. He says: "My ramble was upon the capital square. Here I met a few loungers of various grades; they were all white—native, Irish, and German. The white laborers complained of no work. 'What! no work, when half of Richmond is being rebuilt?' 'Yes, no work; for a white man has no chance here; they will hire a dozen old slaves to one white man. Yes, sir; there is no chance for a poor white man here.'"

Mr. Noyes had noticed, while viewing the new stores and warehouses going up in the midst of acres of ruins, that the laborers were nearly all black, and no part of the building was erected without their aid—stone-cutters, layers of stone and brick, carpenters, workers upon iron fronts, caps and cor-

nices, tinnets, layers of slate, &c., &c., and that acres of buildings of the latest New York styles are now being erected over the burnt district, and a large majority of the laborers and artisans are black.

The acquisition of knowledge should be our great aim. Let us strive to equal and excel our brethren in the South. We need more mechanics and tradesmen among our people. Parents should not neglect to do their duty to their children. They must be willing to make many sacrifices to complete this design. We should not be content for our sons and daughters to walk in our footsteps, and engage in precarious employment, such as we have been compelled to pursue. We should give our children a liberal education, then a trade suited to their physical and mental capacity. These are two powerful incentives to action, and when acquired, they will lay a foundation for future usefulness. They will then possess a lever that will assist them to batter down the strong walls of pride and prejudice, that have stood so many years between us and our advancement. Their mechanical skill and intellectual qualities will possess intrinsic value, and open the highway to respectability, influence, and wealth. Then they will shed upon our community and people a scientific grandeur that is imperishable by time, and it will drown in oblivion's cup our moral impotency.

“ Watchman, what of the night ? ” There is a significance in the recent verdict rendered by the people at the polls. With an aggregate majority of three hundred and seventy-five thousand votes, they have declared the great fact, that in future our government will be united in its policy, great in its strength, and no longer intimidated or impeded by the selfish arrogance of a petty planterdom. We have come to an era of great ideas and great creeds, such as rarely overtake nations in history. We have elected a radical Congress, that will crush the tyrannical rule of the conquered but unyielding aristocracy of the South, and raise to the topmost pinnacle of manhood every loyal subject that will seek protection under the defensive armor of our giant Republic. The great Union Party of Freedom remind one of Samson's wife. Having discovered the secret of President Johnson's strength, they have shorn him of his locks. The political knife and the tourni-

quet have maimed him for life. His apostacy, petty expediency, and small politics, will no longer be regarded as possessing any influence aside from the one-man power which his accident has been clothed with. The evils against us that he has propagated, by encouraging cruelty, hatred, ignorance, and depravity among unconverted rebels, will measurably disappear before the superior intelligence, industry, and humanity of our Congressional doctors, who can not be excelled in the knowledge of their profession. They will cauterize before they heal. The great principles of free labor, scientific reforms and culture, the enlargement of capital, the feeding and teaching the poor, will become a deep seated duty of the friends of progress, and they will labor to promote this great and holy end, which is, in reality, the shield of the poor, and the practical side of Christianity. Henceforth the Radical Union Party must rule. Must is a hard nut, but southern teeth must crack it, whether they wish to or not. They may shuffle and quibble, but to the decree of fate they must yield. Delay will render it more certain. The industrious freeman who now owns a little farm, and has realized one or two thousand dollars the past year, will soon need a plantation. The rural nobility will give place to higher nobility. Social culture, based on mud-sills, must make way for mud-sills themselves; for lo! the sills which they buried are not dead timber, neither do they sleep or rot; they were fresh saplings, and with the reviving breath of spring, and at the gleam of the sun of freedom, they will shoot up into brave, strong life.

We may revive our minds to the pleasant contemplation of the Radical Party ruling over a perfectly free continent, and we see in the future such a picture of national greatness as the world never before realized. The South will be willing and eager to engage the labor of our people, for there will be no cause in future for them to shun the southern clime. The native Americans, as ever directing the enterprise, one grand government, spreading from ocean to ocean, the whole every year growing more and more united through the constant increase of industrial interests and mutual needs. This, indeed, is a bright future to look forward to—and it is no idle dream. It will be something to be a colored American citi-

zen, when we can count seven million united freemen, and one hundred million in substantial wealth. Then this new generation of southerners will consider us something else than poverty-stricken, ignorant, and degraded serfs; they will learn that social merit is not conferred by being born white, on this or that piece of "sacred" dirt, but by a full development and exercise of the talents with which God has gifted us.

We are not unmindful of the debt of gratitude we owe the world long tried and true hearted friends of the oppressed. Our Wilberforce of America stands foremost in rank. This great philanthropist has given the labor of a long and eventful life in a warfare against the sum of all villianies; rising above any hope of gain or profit commensurate with the sacrifices he made in combatting such a stupendous wrong. We admire his glorious motto: "Our country is the world, and our countrymen are all mankind." The southern Legislatures offered rewards for his head amounting to fifty thousand dollars. The slave holders of Baltimore incarcerated him in a dungeon. Gentlemen of property and standing in Boston, upon collecting an infuriated mob, they broke up a female anti-slavery meeting, then they seized him, placed a halter around his neck, and dragged him through the streets; they threatened him with instant death, and his life was only saved by being cast into prison. For forty years he has been an able, uncompromising champion of the oppressed. We venerate the name of our liberator, Wm. Lloyd Garrison. He was faithfully and ably supported by a gentleman who has no superior in learning. He is a living encyclopedia of facts relating to the issues that have agitated the public mind during our long struggle. He has refused political preferment, such as his splended talents might command. He has devoted his time and contributed generously to aid our cause. He is a true beacon light, warning the people to avert danger ahead. With flashing eyes, and a voice like notes of a golden trumpet, he peals forth mastery arguments in behalf of our race. Long live Wendell Phillips, Esq.

In proximity we find the immaculate, the most profound and conscientious statesman of our time. He was stricken down in the Senate chamber by a cowardly assassin for advo-

cating the cause of the slave. He has ever been as inflexible as the sturdy oak, and as true to the cause of humanity as the needle to the pole. We refer to nature's nobleman, Hon. Charles Sumner.

Another intrepid and incorruptible guardian of our rights may be seen leading the rank and file that belong to our forces, and are now engaged in defending the citadel of freedom. They may be surrounded with hostile troops, but the brave old commander will never capitulate. Although bending under the weight of three score and ten years, he has strength sufficient to beard traitors in their dens and shave A. Johnson in the hall.

“Where could they find another form so fit
To poise with solid sense a sprightly wit”

as the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania.

We will introduce you to an officer that has no superior in rank. He belongs to the vanguard who led the anti-slavery army, and who unfurled to the breeze a flag on which was inscribed in letters of light—“Immediate and unconditional emancipation—no protection to tyrants.” From the pre-eminent position that this gentleman occupies, we hope he will CHASE a thousand traiters from their hiding-place, and put ten thousand secession pettifoggers to flight, should they demand admission to the tribunal over which he presides, without taking the test oath of allegiance.

During the war there was one officer that had the courage to hang a rebel who dared to insult our flag. He also refused to return the slaves that had escaped from their masters. He very justly and wisely decided that this kind of property, if used for carrying on the war, should become contraband. By this decision he established a system that saved many thousand bondmen from torture and death. This officer charged upon and captured a rebel breastwork, before Petersburg, that was led by a colored division, who suffered a loss of five hundred and forty-six dead and wounded soldiers. As they lay before him, he swore an oath to himself, that his right hand might forget its cunning, and his tongue might cleave to the roof of his mouth, if ever he refrained claiming justice for these men who had laid down their lives for their country—which to them had been a country of sla-

very—in the immortal hope that they might thereby bring freedom to their race. That commanding Major-General was the gallant Benjamin F. Butler.

Our portraiture would appear unfinished if we omit to notice the worthy martyrs who laid down their lives in attestation of their love for God's poor—one of which was "willing to have all the wealth that was acquired by the bondsman's unrequited toil of two hundred and fifty years, sunk in the depths of the ocean, and every drop of blood that was drawn with the lash to be paid with another by the sword; with malice towards none, and charity to all," he built for himself the first place in the affections of our race in this country. His memory and deeds are engraven on our hearts, and coming generations will chant with joy and gladness the song of thanksgiving and praise. Peace be to the ashes of the immortal Abraham Lincoln.

We all remember the great fright that twenty-one men caused throughout our country. The whole army of regulars and volunteers were on the alert. The forces were marshaled and sent to the scene of action. The invincible army that was entrenched in the fortress at Harper's Ferry, (which they held for twenty-four hours,) were overpowered and compelled by superior numbers to surrender at discretion. The conduct of those noble and heroic men, under the most severe trial, fully developed their pure devotion to the cause of human liberty and equal rights. They struck a blow that has since proved to be the death wound to the hydra-headed monster. The leader of the expedition was a bold man in doing right. He had a higher communion with his God than is the lot of men in this age and country. The tortures and cruelties that tyrants used, had no terrors for him. The shattered arm and cruel sabre-cut on his forehead reminded him that death would soon raise the veil of the glorious future. He believed that God's wrath would soon pervade the South, and undo every burden, break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free. The prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter. The late terrible war did verify the prediction in words of fire, blood, and carnage.

The crowning act of this Christian Patriot was performed when he stepped forth with a firm step and a steady eye,

evincing no signs of quaking, and he only stopped on the way to the scaffold a moment to kiss a negro child. It was the hero of Osawattamie, Captain John Brown.

A host of faithful, self-sacrificing friends have assisted us in our struggle for life and liberty. They have rendered a just account of their stewardship. Their acts are indelibly impressed on our hearts, and the good they have done for our race has been penned by the Recording Angel in that book whose leaves are sealed till the great day of judgment.

Watchman, behold the morning star! We have observed the firmament as it glows with living sapphires, and have gazed as silent worshippers in the great Temple of Creation, while the night of our expectation was transparent and the moon was absent. We now rejoice and are made glad, because we have a glimpse into the interior of the Temple of Freedom, and we can form some slight idea of its grandeur and its glory. It is our promised hope. The Sun of Justice will soon appear, and its refulgent rays will warm our hearts, invigorate our minds, and enable us to enjoy the heaven-born rights that were so long withheld from us.

We have the key and we will unlock the doors of Old Harvard. Our children who may be prepared to enter that ancient institution of learning, and other colleges and seminaries, invite them to come and commune with its classic authors. They may drink freely from the fountain of knowledge, from whence their trickles softly draw a gentle crystal stream. We have no fear of the future. We are soon to occupy prominent places in the world of letters. We will be able to furnish men of erudition, such are qualified to present the flowers of rhetoric, the embellishment of fancy, and the refinement of literature. Already the "Atlantic Monthly," which is acknowledged to be the most popular magazine in the United States, and who employ the deepest thinkers and ablest writers, find it profitable to engage colored persons as contributors to adorn its pages.

Colored men are now invited to lecture before the popular lyceum in the east. They draw full houses; winning compliments from the critics, and pleasing the most fastidious and scholarly listener; for they possess the voice, the manner, the command of speech, thought, and the imagination; and they

draw the attention of the auditors, as particles of steel are attracted by the magnet.

The world moves, and it moves fast, too. We send greeting: our sincere and heartfelt thanks to those liberty-loving members of Congress who have, by their votes, caused to be enacted a law that does remove the proscriptive barrier between colored citizens and the ballot. They have expunged from the statute a relict of barbarism, and the District of Columbia stands disenthralled, redeemed, and regenerated. The march of enfranchisement will go on, until every State and Territory have indorsed this principle of justice; thereby granting to colored men equal political privileges. Then taxation will go hand in hand with representation, and a united people will rejoice, that they live in "the land of the free and the home of the brave," whose fundamental laws are unequalled by any other government in the civilized world. All hail, the patriotic statesmen of the thirty-ninth Congress!

Venerable sires, aged matrons, young men, and blooming maidens, we hope that you have caught the inspiration; "an hour lost is an opportunity for disaster," said the great Napoleon. We entreat of you to renew your vows, and dedicate your lives to the well-begun work, that must be finished. We rely on the justice of our cause. In legal parlance, we have summed up our case, and submit it to the candid and indiscriminate consideration of the American people. They will assuredly render a verdict that will sustain us in our conclusion. We are Americans in every sense of the word—Americans by birth, genius, habits, and language. We are dependent upon American climate, American element, American government, and American manners, to sustain our American bodies and minds. We expect to enjoy all the rights and privileges of Americans—governmental, ecclesiastical, civil, social, or elemental. The claims we set up are claims of Americans, founded on an original agreement of the contracting parties, and there is nothing to show that color is a consideration of the agreement.

Our cause is sacred and divine,
 With labor and genius combine,
 We plant in human heart the seeds
 That shall grow to noble deeds;
 Our manhood ever more shall be,
 For God has set our nation free.

TO P. A. BELL, ESQ.,

A PIONEER IN THE INTELLECTUAL ELEVATION OF HIS RACE,

THESE LINES ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR.

A POEM

*Written for the Celebration of the Fourth Anniversary of President
Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.*

BY J. M. WHITFIELD.

More than two centuries have passed
Since, holding on their stormy way,
Before the furious wintry blast,
Upon a dark December day,
Two sails, with different intent,
Approached the Western Continent.
One vessel bore as rich a freight
As ever yet has crossed the wave ;
The living germs to form a State
That knows no master, owns no slave.
She bore the pilgrims to that strand
Which since is rendered classic soil,
Where all the honors of the land
May reach the hardy sons of toil.
The other bore the baleful seeds
Of future fratricidal strife,
The germ of dark and bloody deeds,
Which prey upon a nation's life.
The trafficker in human souls
Had gathered up and chained his prey,
And stood prepared to call the rolls,
When, anchored in Virginia's Bay—
His captives landed on her soil,

Doomed without recompense to toil,
 Should spread abroad such deadly blight,
 That the deep gloom of mental night
 Spreading its darkness o'er the land,
 And paralizing every hand
 Raised in defence of Liberty,
 Should throw the chains of slavery
 O'er thought and limb, and mind and soul,
 And bend them all to its control.
 New England's cold and sterile land
 Gave shelter to the pilgrim band;
 Virginia's rich and fertile soil
 Received the dusky sons of toil.
 The one bore men whose lives were passed
 In fierce contests for liberty—
 Men who had struggled to the last
 'Gainst every form of tyranny.
 Vanquished in many a bloody fight,
 Yet still in spirit unsubdued;
 Though crushed by overwhelming might,
 With love of freedom still imbued,
 They bore unto their Western home,
 The same ideas which drove them forth,
 As houseless fugitives to roam
 In endless exile o'er the earth.
 And, on New England's sterile shore,
 Those few and feeble germs took root,
 To after generations bore
 Abundance of the glorious fruit—
 Freedom of thought, and of the pen,
 Free schools, free speech, free soil, free men.
 Thus in that world beyond the seas,
 Found by the daring Genoese,
 More than two centuries ago
 A sower wandered forth to sow.
 He planted deep the grains of wheat,
 That generations yet unborn,
 When e'er they came to reap and eat,
 Might bless the hand that gave the corn;
 And find it yield that priceless bread
 With which the starving soul is fed;
 The food which fills the hungry mind,
 Gives mental growth to human kind,
 And nerves the sinews of the free
 To strike for Truth and Liberty.

Yet, planted at the self-same time
 Was other seed by different hands,
 To propagate the deadliest crime
 That ever swept o'er guilty lands—
 The crime of human slavery,
 With all its want and misery—
 The harrowing scenes of woe and pain,
 Which follow in its ghastly train.
 The same old feud that cursed the earth
 Through all the ages of the past,
 In this new world obtained new birth,
 And built again its walls of caste,
 More high and deep, more broad and strong,
 On ancient prejudice and wrong.
 The same old strife of every age,
 Inherited by son from sire,
 Which darkens each historic page,
 And sends a discord through the lyre
 every bard, who frames his song
 In praise of Freedom, Truth, and Right,
 Rebukes the gathered hosts of wrong,
 And spreads the rays of Freedom's light—
 That strife, long fought in Eastern lands,
 Was transferred to the Western strand.
 The same old seeds of endless strife,
 Deep in the Nation's inmost life
 Were sown, to yield in after years
 A plenteous crop of blood and tears.
 'Twas here the dragon's teeth were sown,
 And crops of armed men sprang up ;
 Here the Republic, mighty grown,
 Drank deep rebellion's bitter cup ;
 Here, where her founders sowed the wind,
 They reaped the whirlwind's furious blast—
 Proudly refusing to rescind
 The deadly errors of the past,
 They drew the sword, by deed and word
 To rivet slavery's bloody chain,
 And, slaughtered by th' avenging sword,
 Their bones strew many a battle plain.
 The strife of aristocracy
 In conflict with democracy,
 Was here renewed, with greater zeal,
 And danger to the common weal.
 One century and a half had flown
 When Freedom gained the first great fight ;

Defied the power of the throne,
 And bravely proved the people's might,
 When banded in a righteous cause,
 To overthrow oppressive laws.
 'Twas then, when struggling at its birth,
 To take its proper place beside
 The other Nations of the earth,
 The rule of justice was applied;
 And all mankind declared to be
 Inheritors of Liberty;
 With right to make their freedom known,
 By choosing rulers of their own.
 But when it came t' enforce the right,
 Gained on the well-contested field,
 Slavery's dark intrigues won the fight,
 And made victorious Freedom yield;
 Giving each place of power and trust,
 To those who, groveling in the dust,
 Seek to extend the giant crime
 Of Slavery through all coming time.
 The victory won at fearful cost,
 Over a mighty monarch's host,
 By which oppression's power seem'd foiled
 On the Atlantic's western shore,
 And those who through long years had toiled,
 The burden of the battle bore,
 In order that this land might be
 A home and refuge for the free,
 Were doomed to see their labor lost—
 Their victory won at fearful cost,
 Over oppression's mighty power,
 Surrendered in the trying hour;
 And made to strengthen slavery's hand,
 Ruling with iron rod the land.
 The power the warrior's hand had lost,
 The politician's skill restored;
 And slavery's votaries could boast
 Intrigue was mightier than the sword.
 But fraud and force in vain combined
 To check the progress of the mind;
 And every effort proved in vain
 T' enslave the cultivated brain.
 The same ideas the pilgrim's brought
 When first they crossed the wintry wave,
 Spreading throughout the land were fraught
 With light and freedom to the slave:

And hence where slavery bore the rule,
 It labored to suppress the school,
 Muzzle the tongue, the press, the pen,
 As means by which the rights of men
 Might be discussed, and Freedom's light
 Break up the gloom of slavery's night.
 Efforts which, in a better cause
 Had brought their authors deathless fame,
 Were made to frame oppressive laws,
 And to arouse, excite, inflame,
 The vilest passions of the throng,
 And stir that bitter prejudice
 Which makes men blind to right and wrong,
 And opens wide that deep abyss
 Where pride of rank, and caste, and race,
 Have left such marks of bitter hate,
 As nought but time can e'er efface,
 To foment discord in the State.
 But vain their efforts to control
 The aspirations of the soul ;
 For still a faithful few were found
 Who would not bend the servile knee,
 But in each conflict stood their ground,
 And boldly struck for Liberty.
 From year to year the contest grew,
 Till slavery, glorying in her strength,
 Again war's bloody falchion drew,
 And sluggish freedom, roused at length,
 Waked from her stupor, seized the shield,
 And called her followers to the field.
 And at that call they thronging came,
 With arms of strength, and hearts on flame ;
 Answering the nation's call to arms,
 The northern hive poured forth its swarms ;
 The lumbermen of Maine threw down
 The axe, and seized the bayonet ;
 The Bay State's sons from every town,
 Left loom and anvil, forge and net ;
 The Granite State sent forth its sons,
 With hearts as steadfast as her rocks ;
 The stern Vermonters took their guns,
 And left to others' care their flocks ;
 Rhode Island and Connecticut
 Helped to fill up New England's roll,
 And showed the pilgrim spirit yet
 Could animate the Yankee soul.

The Empire State sent forth a host,
 Such as might seal an empire's fate ;
 Even New Jersey held her post,
 And proved herself a Union State.
 The Key-Stone of the Union arch
 Sent forth an army true and tried ;
 Ohio joined the Union march,
 And added to the Nation's side
 A force three hundred thousand strong,
 While Michigan took up the song ;
 Wisconsin also, like the lakes,
 When the autumnal gale awakes,
 And rolls its surges on the shore,
 Poured forth its sons to battle's roar.
 The gallant State of Illinois
 Sent forth in swarms its warlike boys.
 On Indiana's teeming plain,
 Thick as the sheaves of ripened grain,
 Were soldiers hurrying to the wars
 To battle for the Stripes and Stars.
 From Iowa fresh numbers came,
 While Minnesota joined the tide,
 And Kansas helped to spread the flame,
 And carry o'er the border side
 The torch the ruffians once applied
 When fiercely, but in vain, they tried
 The people of their rights to spoil,
 And fasten slavery on her soil.
 From East unto remotest West,
 From every portion of the North,
 The true, the bravest, and the best,
 Forsook their homes and sallied forth ;
 And men from every foreign land
 Were also reckoned in that band.
 The Scandinavians swelled the train,
 The brave Norwegian, Swede, and Dane,
 And struck as though Thor rained his blows
 Upon the heads of haughty foes ;
 Or Odin's self had sought the field
 To make all opposition yield.
 Italia's sons, who once had cried
 Loud for united Italy,
 And struck by Garibaldi's side
 For union and equality—

Obtained another chance to fight
 For nationality and right.
 The Germans came, a sturdy throng,
 And to the bleeding country brought
 Friends of the right, foes of the wrong,
 Heroes in action as in thought,
 Sigel, and Schurz, and many others,
 Whose names shall live among the brave,
 Till all men are acknowledged brothers,
 Without a master or a slave.
 Ireland's sons, as usual, came
 To battle strife with shouts of joy,
 With Meagher and Corcoran won such fame
 As well might rival Fontenoy.
 Briton and Frank, for centuries foes,
 Forgot their struggles, veiled their scars,
 To deal on slavery's head their blows,
 Fighting beneath the Stripes and Stars.
 From the Atlantic's stormy coast,
 Unto the broad Pacific's strand,
 Came pouring forth a martial host,
 From every portion of the land.
 They came, as flocking sea birds swarm,
 Whene'er the cloud-king mounts his throne
 And calls the warriors of the storm
 To sweep the earth from zone to zone.
 They came as come the rushing waves
 When o'er the sea the tempest raves.
 They came as storm clouds quickly fly
 When lightnings flash along the sky,
 And on the Southern plains afar
 Soon burst the thunderbolts of war.
 In quick and fierce succession fell
 The furious showers of shot and shell.
 Though East, and West, and North combined,
 And foreigners from every land
 With all that art and skill could find,
 They could not crush the rebel band.
 They clung unto th' accursed thing,
 That which they knew accursed of God,
 Nor strength, nor skill could victory bring
 With that accursed thing abroad.
 When Abraham, the poor man's friend,
 Assumed the power to break the chain.

Obey the Lord, and put an end
 To slavery's dark and bloody reign,
 To make the nation shield from harm
 Its loyal sons of every hue,
 In its defence receive and arm
 All those who to its flag were true,
 He found the touchstone of success,
 For then Jehovah deigned to bless,
 And smile upon the nation's arms,
 And give it rest from war's alarms.
 Thus men of every land and tongue,
 Of every station, every hue,
 Were found the Union hosts among,
 Enlisted with the boys in blue ;
 And all mankind should freely draw
 The prize for which their lives were given ;
 " Equality before the law,"
 To every person under heaven.
 As storms and tempests pass away,
 And leave the sun's enlivening light,
 Our war-cloud brought the opening day
 To slavery's long and gloomy night.
 As storms and thunder help to clear
 And purify the atmosphere,
 E'en so the thunders of the war,
 Driving malaria afar,
 Have purged the moral atmosphere,
 And made the dawn of freedom clear.
 From swamps and marshes left undrained
 Malarious vapors will arise,
 From human passions, unrestrained,
 Rise fogs to cloud our moral skies :
 So now, from portions of the land
 Where lately slavery reigned supreme,
 Its conquered chiefs together band,
 Concocting many an artful scheme,
 By which Oppression's tottering throne
 May be restored to pristine power,
 And those who now its rule disown
 Be made submissive to its power.
 The self-styled Moses brings the aid
 Of power and place to help them through,
 To crush the race by him betrayed,
 And every man who, loyal, true,
 And faithful to his country's laws—
 Declines to aid the tyrants cause.

Our real Moses, stretched his rod
 Four years ago across the sea,
 And through its blood-dyed waves we trod
 The path that leads to Liberty.
 His was the fiery column's light,
 That through the desert showed the way,
 Out of oppression's gloomy night,
 Toward the light of Freedom's day ;
 And, like his prototype of old,
 Who used his power, as Heaven had told,
 To God and to the people true,
 Died with the promised land in view.
 And we may well deplore his loss,
 For never was a ruler given,
 More free from taint of sinful dross,
 To any Nation under Heaven.
 And ever while the earth remains,
 His name among the first shall stand
 Who freed four million slaves from chains,
 And saved thereby his native land.
 Though Achans rise within the camp,
 And covet slavery's cursed spoil,
 Invent oppressive laws, to cramp
 The energies of men who toil
 Through hardship, danger, sickness, health,
 To add unto the Nation's wealth—
 Some Joshua shall yet arise,
 Whose hand shall extirpate the seeds
 Sown by this worst of tyrannies,
 Which ripen into bloody deeds
 Such fiendish murders as of late
 Occur in every rebel State.
 While Freedom falters, once again
 The fogs and mists begin to rise,
 And cast their shadows o'er the plain,
 Vailing the issue from our eyes,
 On which the nation yet must stand,—
 Impartial freedom through the land.
 Yet once again our moral air
 Is tainted by that poisonous breath,
 Which Freedom's lungs can never bear,
 Which surely ends in moral death.
 Then let the people in their might
 Arise, and send the fiat forth,
 That every man shall have the right
 To rank according to his worth ;
 That north and south, and west and east,
 All, from the greatest to the least,
 Who rally to the nation's cause,

Shall have the shield of equal laws.
Wipe out the errors of the past,
Nursed by the barbarous pride of caste,
And o'er the nation's wide domain,
Where once was heard the clanking chain,
And timorous bondmen crouched in fear,
Before the brutal overseer,
Proclaim the truth that equal laws
Can best sustain the righteous cause ;
And let this nation henceforth be
In truth the country of the free.

[During the delivery of the Oration and Poem the speakers were frequently interrupted by loud bursts of applause.]



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