

## THE LIBERATOR.

LETTER FROM FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

The following manly and cogent letter, addressed to the editor of the N. Y. Tribune, and published in that paper a few weeks since, we intended to lay before our readers at an earlier period than this, but its publication has been unavoidably deferred by the great pressure of other interesting matter. How vulgar, small and contemptible does the editor of the New-York Express, in contrast with the redeemed 'chattel personal,' Frederick Douglass!

GLASGOW, (Scotland,) April 15, 1846.

MR. GREELEY:

MY DEAR SIR—I never wrote nor attempted to write a letter for any other than a strictly anti-slavery press; but being greatly encouraged by your magnanimity, as shown in copying my letter written from Belfast, Ireland, to the Liberator at Boston, I venture to send you a few lines, direct from my pen.

I know not how to thank you for the deep and lively interest you have been pleased to take in the cause of my long neglected race, or in what language to express the gratification I feel in witnessing your unwillingness to lend your aid to 'break a bruised reed,' by adding your weight to the already insupportable burden to crush, the feeble though virtuous efforts of one who is laboring for the emancipation of a people, who, for two long centuries, have endured, with the utmost patience, a bondage, one hour of which, in the graphic language of the immortal Jefferson, is worse than ages of that which your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose.

It is such indications on the part of the press—which, happily, are multiplying throughout all the land—that kindle up within me an ardent hope that the curse of slavery will not much longer be permitted to make its iron foot-prints in the lacerated hearts of my sable brethren, or to spread its foul mantle of moral blight, mildew and infamy, over the otherwise noble character of the American people.

I am very sorry to see that some of your immediate neighbors are very much displeased with you, for this act of kindness to myself, and the cause of which I am a humble advocate; and that an attempt has been made, on the part of some of them, by unrepresenting my sayings, motives and objects in this country, to stir up against me the already too bitter antipathy of the American people. I am called, by way of reproach, a runaway slave. As if it were a crime—an unpardonable crime—for a man to take his inalienable rights! If I had not run away, but settled down in the degrading arms of slavery, and made no effort to gain my freedom, it is quite probable that the learned gentlemen, who now brand me with being a miserable runaway slave, would have adduced the fact in proof of the negro's adaptation to slavery; and his utter unfitness for freedom! 'There's no pleasing some people.' But why should Mr. James Brooks feel so much annoyed by the attention shown me in this country, and so anxious to excite against me the hatred and jealousy of the American people? I can very readily understand why a slaveholder—a trader in slaves—one who has all his property in human flesh, blinded by ignorance as to his own best interest, and under the dominion of violent passions engendered by the possession of discretionary and irresponsible power over the bodies and souls of his victims—accustomed to the inhuman sight of men and women sold at auction in company with horses, sheep and swine, and in every way treated more like brutes than human beings—should repine at my success, and, in his blindness, seek to throw every discouragement and obstacle in the way of the slave's emancipation. But why a New-York editor, born and reared in the State of Maine, far removed from the contaminated and pestilential atmosphere of slavery, should pursue such a course, is not so apparent. I will not, however, stop here to ascertain the cause, but deal with fact; and I cannot better do this than by giving your readers a simple and undisguised statement of the motives and objects of my visit to this country. I feel it but just to myself to do so, since I have been denounced by the New-York Express as a 'glib-tongued scoundrel,' and gravely charged, in its own elegant and dignified language, with 'running a muck in greedy-eared Britain against America, its people, its institutions, and even against its peace.'

Of the low and vulgar epithets, coupled with the false and somewhat malicious charges, very little need be said. I am used to them. Their force is lost upon me, in the frequency of their application. I was reared where they were in the most common use. They form a large and very important portion of the vocabulary of characters known in the South as plantation 'negro drivers.' A slaveholding gentleman would scorn to use them. He leaves them to find their way into the world of sound, through the polluted lips of his hired 'negro driver'—a being for whom the haughty slaveholder feels incomparably more contempt than he feels toward his slave. And for the best of all reasons—he knows the slave to be degraded, because he cannot help himself; but a white 'negro driver' is degraded, because of original, ingrained meanness. If I agree with the slaveholders in nothing else, I can say I agree with them in all their burning contempt for a 'negro driver,' whether born North or South. Such epithets will have no prejudicial effect against me on the mind of the class of American people, whose good opinion I sincerely desire to cultivate and deserve. And it is to these I would address this brief word of explanation.

The object, then, of my visit to this country is simply to give such an exposition of the degrading

influence of slavery upon the master and his abettors as well as upon the slave—to excite such an intelligent interest on the subject of American slavery—as may react upon that country, and tend to shame her out of her adhesion to a system which all must confess to be at variance with justice, repugnant to Christianity, and at war with her own free institutions. 'The head and front of my offending hath this extent, no more.' I am one of those who think the best friend of a nation is he who most faithfully rebukes her for her sins—and he her worst enemy, who, under the specious and popular garb of patriotism, seeks to excuse, palliate, and defend them. America has much more to fear from such than all the rebukes of the abolitionists at home or abroad.

I am nevertheless aware, that the wisdom of exposing the sins of one nation in the ear of another has been seriously questioned by good and clear-sighted people, both on this and on your side of the Atlantic. And the thought is not without its weight upon my own mind. I am satisfied that there are many evils which can be best removed by confining our efforts to the immediate locality where such evils exist. This, however, is by no means the case with the system of slavery. It is such a giant sin—such a monstrous aggregation of iniquity, so hardening to the human heart, so destructive to the moral sense, and so well calculated to beget a character in every one around it favorable to its own continuance, that I feel not only at liberty, but abundantly justified in appealing to the whole world to aid in its removal. Slavery exists in the United States because it is reputable, and it is reputable in the United States because it is not disreputable out of the United States as it ought to be, and it is not so disreputable out of the United States as it ought to be because its character is not so well known as it ought to be. Believing this most firmly, and being a lover of Freedom, a hater of Slavery, one who has felt the bloody whip and worn the galling chain—sincerely and earnestly longing for the deliverance of my sable brethren from their awful bondage, I am bound to expose its character, whenever and wherever an opportunity is afforded me. I would attract to it the attention of the world. I would fix upon it the piercing eye of insulted Liberty. I would arraign it at the bar of Eternal Justice, and summon the Universe to witness against it. I would concentrate against it the moral and religious sentiment of Christian people of every 'class, color and clime.' I would have the guilty slaveholder see his condemnation written on every human face, and hear it proclaimed in every human voice, till, overwhelmed with shame and confusion, he resolved to cease his wicked course, undo the heavy burden, and let the oppressed go free.

The people in this country who take the deepest interest in the removal of Slavery from America, and the spread of Liberty throughout the world, are the same who oppose the bloody spirit of war, and are earnestly laboring to spread the blessings of peace all over the globe. I have ever found the abolitionists of this country, the warmest friends of America and American institutions. I have frequently seen in their houses, and sometimes occupying the most conspicuous places in their parlors, the American Declaration of Independence.

An aged anti-slavery gentleman in Dublin, with whom I had the honor several times to dine during my stay in that city, has the Declaration of Independence and a number of the portraits of the distinguished founders of the American Republic. He bought them many years ago, in token of his admiration of the men and their principles. But, said he, after speaking of the sentiments of the Declaration—looking up as it hung in a costly frame—I am often tempted to turn its face to the wall, it is such a palpable contradiction of the spirit and practices of the American people at this time. This instrument was once the watchword of Freedom in this land, and the American people were regarded as the best friends and truest representatives of that sacred cause. But they are not so regarded now. They have allowed the crowned heads of Europe to outstrip them. While Great Britain has emancipated all her slaves, and is laboring to extend the blessings of Liberty wherever her power is felt, it seems, in the language of John Quincy Adams, that the preservation, propagation and perpetuation of slavery is the vital and animating spirit of the American Government. Even Hayti, the black Republic, is not to be spared; the spirit of Freedom, which a sanguinary and ambitious despot could not crush or extinguish, is to be exterminated by the free American Republic, because that spirit is dangerous to slavery. While the people of this country see such facts and indications, as well as the great fact that three millions of people are held in the most abject bondage, deprived of all their God-given rights—denied by law and public opinion to learn to read the sacred Scriptures, by a people professing the largest liberty and devotion to the religion of Jesus Christ—while they see this monstrous anomaly, they must look elsewhere for a paragon of civil and religious freedom. Sir, I am earnestly and anxiously laboring to wipe off this foul blot from the otherwise fair fame of the American people, that they may accomplish in behalf of human freedom that which their exalted position among the nations of the earth amply fits them to do. Would they but arise in their moral majesty and might—repent and purify themselves from this foul crime—break the galling fetters, and restore the long lost rights to the sable bondmen in their midst—they would encircle her name with a wreath of imperishable glory. Her light would indeed break forth as the morning—its brilliant beams would flash across the Atlantic, and illuminate the Eastern world.

I am, dear sir, very gratefully yours.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.