

"The Fearful Odds Against The Slave," Rochester (NY) Frederick Douglass' Paper, May 25, 1855
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For Frederick Douglass' Paper.
THE FEARFUL ODDS AGAINST THE SLAVE.

[We heartily welcome (as our readers will) to our columns the letter from our intelligent and right-hearted Correspondent—"A New York Merchant"—and we will thank him for further favors in the same direction.—Ed.]

There is no man, whose face to me, is more objectionable, than *him* who sneers at the down-trodden slave. The highwayman, the gambler, the pirate, may have their redeeming qualities, circumstances of temptation, irresistible to them, may have made them what they are, but when we see an enlightened statesman, a clergyman, an editor, or any other person whose position gives them influence, particularly when they have been educated out of the poisonous influences of slavery, exerting their talents and power for motives of gain, or ambition, to sneer at the poor slave, then do we see a villain in the shape of a man, whose highest principle is policy, and who is ready to sell himself at any time, for any purpose, no matter how vile, provided there is gold enough to buy him. He may enjoy the outward respect of the world, but whoever reflects upon his character will never trust him, except in a limited way. Look at an Editor who will daily sneer at the friends of the slave, in order to secure southern patronage—or the clergyman who will quietly tell you that the Bible sanctions slavery, merely because his congregation contains some half a dozen men of property who are engaged in the domestic slave trade itself, or whose business is with the south!! and then you have before you an unprincipled wretch who is only awaiting a market in order to sell himself for some other purpose, if possible, still more vile.

The fearful odds against the slave, no one whose heart is not made of stone can contemplate without an emotion. Robbed of himself, of his wife, his children, all his earnings, past and future, he has nothing left him 'with which' to buy sympathy. His master, on the other hand, steals the earnings of the slave, and with those very earnings he builds himself a fine mansion, furnishes a beautiful table, with every attending luxury, and thus builds up for himself hosts of friends, who are led thus to admire slavery, and describe it as a blessed institution, while the poor slave has not a cup of cold water to call his own. As the world goes, is not this fearful odds against the slave? Did the world ever witness a contrast more formidable? We see the master selling his crop in Charleston, raised by the unpaid toil of his slaves, and then travelling north with his pockets lined with his robbery, everywhere received with open arms, and he as liberal as a prince! while the poor slave is seen without a crust in his pocket, or a friend

to guide him, and flying before the blood-hounds and men-catchers, endeavoring to get possession of himself by flying to the land of the free. Upon this picture can our humanity and our religion look, without a shudder? If so, what is our humanity? what is our religion? If our churches can look upon *this* and see no wrong, are our churches of any use? Would not the divine example of our Savior be better followed, if we sell the churches, and dismiss the clergymen, and appropriate the saving thus made, to aid the poor slave to escape? If there is no duty due to the slave in his affliction, then is there any duty due to the poor of our own church?—If duty requires us to provide free churches for the destitute in New York, that they may have religious instruction, is there no duty for us to perform towards the poor slave who is dumb and cannot plead his own cause? If hereafter equity should decide that we have overlooked our duty to the slave, will he not have against us a most fearful account? He will say, I was dumb and could not even award the praise of men, and whatever ye did for me while I was in bondage, must have been without even a hope of pecuniary reward.

Who is not struck with the change in favor of the slave during the past twenty years? Who is there now, who is insane enough to dare predict how much will be accomplished in twenty years more. The result will far outreach the expectations of the most sanguine. North of Maryland opposition has not only ceased, but the whole north are becoming united against slavery. In Delaware Theo. Parker is giving lectures with as much freedom as can be done in Massachusetts. Soon will this state separate herself by emancipation from slavery. Virginia, Kentucky and Maryland are nearly ripe for the harvest.—The future is full of hope; no cause ever had more encouragement, or was victory ever more sure. The whole north once united and every door thrown open to the slave and closed against the man stealer, who can realize this change?—Who can describe the heavenly sounds of joy that will ring through the north, as the slaves are seen leaving their prison houses by hundreds and thousands, and gaining their freedom, not by fire and sword, but by peaceable emancipation of themselves; quietly forgiving their masters their wrongs, and leaving them in quiet possession, without a slave to make them afraid?—

In all this change the master will be benefited, as his lands without the slave will be worth more than lands and slaves together; and the masters and their families will no longer be infernalized with slavery, while the blacks have been brutalized.

The south must at once pass laws, giving unconditional emancipation to the slaves, or a general stampede must come, and Canada will be peopled by the slaves, who, if justly emancipated, would remain on the plantations and work for fair wages, which would not cost the planter as much as the slave system in cash, and yield him twice the amount of labor; as then he would pay in proportion to the work done. Then he would have all the benefit of the colored population without its evils.

My clergyman has got on the top of the fence. Last Sunday he actually prayed for the down-trodden in bondage. He did not say whether he meant the Hungarians or our Southern slaves; if the latter, then he went a step further than he ever did before. My pew costs \$800; interest and yearly taxes amount to \$125; collections for various charitable objects during the year, viz: Missionaries, Schools, Hospitals, Provisions &c., &c., for the whites, without any special consideration for the blacks, say \$150 more; making \$275. This latter sum would enable twenty slaves to escape from bondage—would enable them and all their posterity to own themselves, to learn to read and to hear of the Bible, which they never yet have done. To benefit these twenty so much, it strikes me, is more of a religious duty than all the benefit I can ever get from a clergyman who is afraid to take part with the slave. Therefore I shall sell the pew and appropriate the \$275 to doing just what I think the Savior would do if now on earth, in preference to attending such a church. My clergyman is a very clever man, and would, no doubt, if differently situated, be an open friend of the slave; but how can he, while in his broad aisle there are parishoners in the southern trade, whose united wealth amounts to over six millions dollars. O how I wish the poor slave had such rich friends.

A NEW YORK MERCHANT.

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands

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