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Douglass' Monthly, January 1861, Vol.III, NO. VIII

Extracted on Apr-23-2024 11:18:07

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[[column 1]]
Speaking of the different reports of the meeting, the Tribune's correspondent says:

The Tribune's report of the riot is the best I have seen, and is indeed the only report of the attempted attack upon Mr. Phillips after the meeting in Joy Street. The Traveller had a very good report of the evening meeting, but most of the accounts were more or less colored with friendship for the rioters.-The Post's report professes to be verbatim, and is in general fair, but Mr. Douglass's report upon Fay is omitted purposely. Fay had remarked that a negro slave-driver is the most cruel in the world. 'Yes, Sir,' said Douglass, 'and for the precise reason that a Northern Douglass is inconceivably meaner than a Southern slaveholder.' I don't think Mr. Fay is a rapid reasoner, but he seemed to understand this allusion. Some say he hung his head and blushed, but I do not credit this.

Another correspondent says:

Setting aside all view as to the original intentions of the meeting, and leaving out the question of the propriety of holding it at all, I am bound to say that the conduct and temper of the negroes and their companions were throughout incomparably better and more manly than those of their opponents. They resisted nothing, except when personally attacked, and in the two affrays which occurred, they were not the aggressors. And when Douglass did fight, he fought rather better, on the whole, than any of his well-educated opponents, and cleared his way through the crowd that assailed him in a way that Tom Sayers would have taken off his hat in honor to. The Tremont Temple meeting, however, had to be broken up. That was determined upon. The Mayor was appealed to, and, after sundry vacillations, directed that the hall should be cleared by the police. Up to this time, the efforts of the police had been vigorously applied to the suppression and extinction of the party which had called, and whised to hold, the meetin. The only persons harshly treated were the negroes and their associates-the very ones who had engaged the hall, and were accountable for the payment for its use.

LETTERS SENT TO THE CONVENTION.

Among the letters received by the Committee, and which were intended to be presented to the Convention, we print the following :

LETTER FROM SENATOR WILSON.

Natick, Nov. 27, 1860.

GENTLEMEN :-I have received your invitation to meet n a Convention, to be held in Boston on the 3d of December, 'a number of young men, unconnected at this time with any organization,' and 'to address them in reply to the question,' 'How can American Slavery be abolished?'

You say in your note of invitation, 'that the anniversary of the death of



John Brown, who, in the 2d of December, 1859, was killed for attempting to decide this problem in the mode that he believed to be the most efficient, is an occasion peculiarly appropriate for the discussion of our duty to the race for whom he suffered, and more especially for the un-foiling of practical methods for achieving the holy object he desired to attain bby his des-cent on Harper's Ferry.'

Abhorring slavery in every form, loving equal and impartial liberty for all men, I am ever ready to exercise all the powers of the Constitution of our country to relieve the na-tion from all connection with, and all respon-sibility for, slavery, by prohibiting it wher-ever it exists, or can exist, under the exclusive authority of the Federal Government;- and I am also ever ready to use all means sanctioned by law, humanity and religion, to persuade our countrymen of the slaveholding States to 'undo the heavy burden,' and 'let the oppressed go free ;' but I am utterly opposed to all appeals by whomsoever made, to force and violence.

Ours is a government of constitutions and laws-a government of the people, by the peo-ple, for the people. Not therefore to the rifle nor the pike should the friends of the slave
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[[column 2]]
appeal, but to the heart, the conscience, the reason, and the enduring interests of the people of the slave States, upon whom rests the responsibility of slavery in the States.

While I accord to John Brown sincerity of motive, unselfish devotion, and unsurpassed courage, I deplore and condemn his armed invasion of Virginia. Were it in my power to do so, I could not consent to attend your meeting, for I cannot by an act of mine thus associate in any degree the issues concerning slavery with John Brown's lawless descent upon Harper's Ferry.

Yours truly, Henry Wilson.
James Redpath, Esq., and others.

Letter from the Hon. J.R. Giddings.
Jefferson, Ohio, Nov. 19, 1860.

My Dear Sir:- You inquire, 'How can American Slavery by Abolished!'

I answer, by the advancement of Christian civilization; by the operation of truth and justice upon the public conscience. A thousand agencies are in operation to effect this object. I look upon the constant and increasing pressure of truth upon the public mind, awakening the public conscience to the crimes, the barbarism of slavery, as the only mode of effecting that object. To effect this, many agencies are at work. Appeals are to be made to the religious, the moral and political feelings of the people. Our electors, politicians and statesmen must be aroused to the great work. In that department I have long labored, and feel that in so doing I have best performed my own duty.

John Brown moved in a different sphere of thought and of action. Looking at the subject, he came to the conclusion that he would best subserve the cause of humanity by exciting the slaves to action and physical effort to attain their own liberty.

This they undoubtedly had the right to do by the immutable laws of nature and nature's God. Brown was also justified by the action of our Government.

When the Algerines captured and enslaved our citizens, we sent a navy to punish them. Commodore Preble entered the harbor of Tripoli amid the thunder of cannon. The rattling of small arms, the clashing of swords and the work of immediate emancipation was carried forward by the butchery of slaveholders, who set at naught the principles of justice and liberty.

John Brown labored in a more Christian manner for the same high object-the liberty of our race. I would not have done as he did. He would not have done as I have.- Yet we have both sought the liberties of mankind, and I award to him purity of purpose and high devotion to the cause of human elevation.

Very truly, J.R. Giddings.

Letter from the Rev. E.H. Sears.
Wayland, Nov. 22, 1860.

I received your circular several days since, and a second copy has just come to hand. I take the first moment which I can claim as my own to answer it.

I know of but one thing that is to abolish Human Slavery- the same that is lifting up the masses all over the civilized world against the despotisms that were holding them down. It is the Christianity of a new age, which, freed from its old corruptions, reveals the worth, the capacities, and the sacred rights of individual men. This is God's new Messiah, descending everywhere to the millions that groan and toil. Aristocracies, oligarchies, and autocracies have their use and their day. - They conserve what of learning and civilization had been achieved, and might keep it as a sacred trust until the masses are prepared for their inheritance. But the history of the last 300 years is a record of the irrepressible conflict between the Church and State of a feudal barbarism and the spirit of truth and justice aspiring from the heart of the people. Men may persist in regarding this conflict as local and temporary, and the agitation of this or that reformer, and not as the spirit that breathes through human nature itself. They may belie this spirit; they may turn it from its peaceful course; but viewing it and counting

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its stages from the serene heights of history, no one will imagine he can arrest it any more than he can arrest the earth he stands upon as it swings him through the celestial spaces. It has wrought through the whole frame of the English Government and society, and out of England of the Tudors and the Stuarts, it has made the freest nation on the face of the earth. It has felt among the serfs of Russia; it will assuage the Austrian tyranny or destroy it, and right around the rotten throne of the Pope, it makes a young Italy, which rises immortal and shakes off the heavy tyranny of two thousand years. It emancipates the West Indies, and spite of the croakers it demonstrates emancipation to be both profitable and safe. It takes hold of the four corners of the American

Union, and tries to shake slavery out of it. We cannot stop it if we try, and the only question is, how may we help in making a clear and safe way to its achievements.

I cannot vaticinate and tell how it will be done. But there are three openings, through any one of which evidently the stifled spirit of humanity must find a release here in our American oligarchy. These are:

Violent revolution;

Peaceful Separation of the States; or,

Peaceful action under the Constitution and through the forms of the present Government.

The first I would oppose and deplore in all its forms and methods as a resort to the coarse and vulgar instrumentalities of the old barbarism, and in total disharmony with the spirit of the new age that is dawning. I would deplore it, too, for reasons of State. It is clearly of the first importance that the State sovereignties be kept whole and unbroken, for these are to preserve us from being merged in a vast centralism more dangerous to individual rights than the oligarchy that now tries to rule us. All the Eastern despotisms demonstrate this one truth, and the French experiments in government confirm it - that where there are no municipalities and corporalities - the prime integers which must never be invaded or bruised in pieces - free government is an impossibility, and men revolve in masses around the central power. - Because Italy has preserved something which faintly approximates to these unbroken organisms, her free nationalization becomes possible.

For like reasons it is clear that if any State wishes to go out of the Union she ought not to be coerced and compelled to stay in it. After a State has been subjugated by military force, it must be held by military occupation. The President must push his iron quadrangle into every seceding Commonwealth, and we shall have such a bond of Union as holds Venice to Austria. But if the State sovereignties are preserved untouched and whole, separation, if it comes, will not be anarchy, but a dissolving and recombining according to more natural and genial affinities. And then the North star would move nearer to the zenith, the Canada line would come down close to Mason and Dixon's, and the vast spreading territories could grow into sovereign States without any Federal armies to harass and butcher their people and force Lecompton Constitutions upon them. The slave barbarism would withdraw its portentous shadows from the free States, would retire inward before the advancing civilization of the age, and die of self-exhaustion in its dens.

But I do not vote for separation. If it comes, I would accept it, and make the best and most of it. But a wise forecast will not fail to see the vexing questions which would grow out of it, and the dangers of bloody fraternal strife. I am for action under the Constitution and through its forms, and thereby the denationalization of slavery. I would talk, and vote, and preach, and write, and scatter the truth thick as Autumn leaves, and trust the rest to Him who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand. It may be too late for the denationalization of slavery thro' the forms of the Constitution, but I do not believe it as yet. I do not forget the profound aphorism of Macaulay, that in proportion to the length of time the demon possesses

[[/column 3]]

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