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Oration by Frederick Douglass Delivered on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument, April 14, 1876

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APPENDIX

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AFTER the procession arrived upon the grounds the stand was soon filled with guests. Immediately behind the speaker's stand were seated President Grant, Senator Ferry, the members of the Cabinet, and the Justices of the Supreme Court; Senators Morton, Boutwell, Spencer, Sherman, Bruce, and others of the Senate; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Conant, Hons. S. S. Cox, N. P. Banks, and other members of the House; the Japanese Minister, Sergeant-at-Arms French, Dr. C. C. Cox, Hon. W. B. Snell, Dr. J. B. Blake, the distinguished gentlemen who were to take part in the exercises, and many other distinguished personages.

The marine band, stationed at the right of the stand, opened the exercises by playing "Hail Columbia."

Prof. John M. Langston, Chairman of the National Committee of Arrangements, presided.

Bishop John M. Brown, of the African M. E. church, offered a devout prayer, during the utterance of which a solemn and reverent silence was maintained throughout the vast throng.

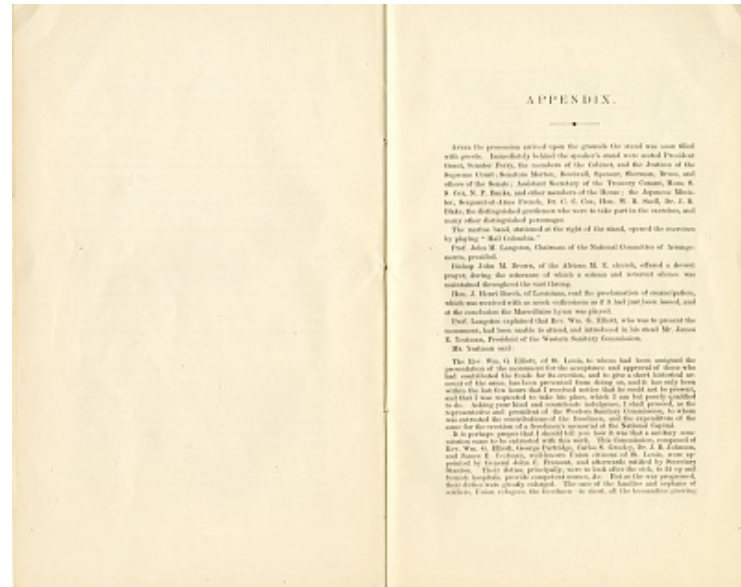
Hon. J. Henri Burch, of Louisiana, read the proclamation of emancipation, which was received with as much enthusiasm as if it had just been issued, and at the conclusion the Marseillaise hymn was played.

Prof. Langston explained that Rev. Wm. G. Elliott, who was to present the monument, had been unable to attend, and introduced in his stead Mr. James E. Yeatman, President of the Western Sanitary Commission.

Mr. Yeatman said:

The Rev. Wm. G. Elliott, of St. Louis, to whom had been assigned the presentation of the monument for the acceptance and approval of those who had contributed the funds for its erection, and to give a short historical account of the same, has been prevented from doing so, and it has only been within the last few hours that I received notice that he could not be present, and that I was requested to take his place, which I am but poorly qualified to do. Asking your kind and considerate indulgence, I shall proceed, as the representative and president of the Western Sanitary Commission, to whom was entrusted the contributions of the freedmen, and the expenditure of the same for the erection of a freedmen's memorial at the National Capital.

It is perhaps proper that I should tell you how it was that a sanitary commission came to be entrusted with this work. This Commission, composed of Rev. Wm. G. Elliott, George Partridge, Carlos S. Greeley, Dr. J. B. Johnson, and James E. Yeatman, well-known Union citizens of St. Louis, were appointed by General John C. Fremont, and afterwards ratified by Secretary Stanton. Their duties, principally, were to look after the sick, to fit up and furnish hospitals, provide competent nurses, &c. But as the war progressed, their duties were greatly enlarged. The care



of the families and orphans of soldiers, Union refugees, the freedmen—in short, all the humanities growing

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