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*Anacostia Community Museum Archives*

## **Douglass' Monthly, December 1861, Vol. IV, NO. VII**

Extracted on Apr-18-2024 12:44:49

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[[column 1]]  
SPEECH OF GENERAL JIM LANE.  
[[short line]]

The following speech was delivered by Gen. JIM LANE, U. S. Senator from Kansas, in the camp at Springfield, Mo., in response to a visit and serenade from the 25th Indiana Regiment, on the evening of October 31st:

GENTLEMAN AND FELLOW-SOLDIERS:—The reception of this compliment was as far from my expectations as from my deserts. I am aware that these demonstrations are not intended so much for me as for the Kansas Brigade; yet I should be the first to appreciate and acknowledge any honors which come from the noble State of Indiana. Can I forget Indiana? Never! (Cheers.) 'If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning.' It was the place of my birth, and is the place of my mother's grave. Indiana has given me Legislative, Executive, Military and Congressional honors; she has nursed me as a good mother brings up her child; and let my heart grow cold, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, when I cease to be grateful or fail to speak well of my benefactors. (Cheers.) But the home of my adoption, toils and strife, is Kansas. She was a prairie waste when first I set foot upon her soil, but through desperate odds she has fought her way up into the sisterhood of States, and already her little army has become famous throughout the nation for its bravery and patriotism. For Kansas I have wrestled as the mother when she brings forth her first born. (Cheers.) Indiana as a part of the past is enshrined in my heart. Kansas, as the living present, absorbs my thoughts and sways my destiny. Once I obeyed the voice of Indiana, and honored her; now I go at the bidding of Kansas, and love her. (Cheers.) But, gentleman, I am proud and happy to see the two sisters of our glorious Union striking hands with each other on the soil of rebellious Missouri, determined that our united blows shall crush out this most wicked and causeless rebellion, and preserve the national heritage left us by our fathers.

Gentleman, I shall not conceal the fact that in one respect I differ from some of my compeers in command, as to the mode of warfare which is best calculated to bring this wretched contest to a speedy, durable and honorable close. The point of difference refers, of course, to slavery—the cause of all differences—the Pandora's box from which have issued all our national troubles. My creed is, Let slavery take care of itself. (Cheers.) If it can survive the shock of war, let it live, but if between an upper and nether mill stone it be ground to powder, and the winds drive it away, it is not for me to gather up the dust again. I do not propose to make war upon slavery, but upon rebels, and in the meantime to let slaves and slavery take care of themselves. An oligarchy more cruel and proscriptive than ever scourged and cursed a nation, ancient or modern, has brought on this war FOR slavery; and if we are required to protect, or in any way help slavery, then we are required to co-operate with the enemy, to help him, to defend him, and work for the same end. Can we place ourselves thus in alliance with our deadly and barbarous foes and, at the same time, conquer them, subdue them, crush them? When lesser contradictions are reconciled, we will think of harmonizing this. War, at least, is a terrible calamity to a



nation. In all the country through which we have passed mails are stopped, schools are suspended, churches are turned into hospitals for the sick and wounded, and general demoralization prevails. Protract the war one year, and desolation, moral and material alone would mark the track of armies. Justice, humanity and mercy require that the conflict should be terminated as soon as possible with the least practicable shedding of blood. Astonishing as it may seem to you, gentlemen from Indiana, it is a fact we have repeatedly demonstrated, that a heavier blow is dealt to the realm of Secessia in the abduction or freedom of a slave than in the killing of a soldier in arms. Yes, and I may

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put the truth in a still stronger light: abduct from the same family a slave, and kill a son in arms, and the loss of the slave will be regarded as the greater misfortune—the calamity for which there is no healing balm. I could bring up more than a thousand witnesses, whose observation and experience qualify them to speak of the truthful candor of my remarks. If, then, by allowing a slave to fall into the wake of the army and find the priceless boon of freedom, we avoid bloodshed, save property from destruction, and strike death dealing blows upon the head and front of this rebellion, does not ever good and just consideration require that this policy be adopted? This war is for slavery; let us make it the mighty engine for slavery's destruction, and the rebels will soon cry 'enough.' (Cheers.) They will see that, like Saturn in the fable, they are eating their own children, and will consent to cut short the repast. Every guaranty that is given to slavery by the Government strengthens the rebels in their course.

The Kansas Brigade has met the enemy in battle, and routed him in every conflict. We have destroyed Osceolo—a sort of half town and half military post—but all these things combined have not brought the rebels so quickly to their knees as the escaping of a few hundred slaves by following the back track of the army. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, my logic teaches that we cannot defend and make war upon the same foe at the same time; and if it is the purpose of the Government to crush the rebels and prevent their slaves from stampeding, TWO armies should be sent into the field. The advance force might be called the treason-crushing army, and should be furnished with offensive weapons. The other should be called the slavery-restoring army, and should move about ten miles in the rear. It should be clad in defensive armor of tripple [sic] steel; for such is the meanness of spirit which is bred in the hearts of men by slave-breeding, slave-trading and slaveholding that the masters would creep into every place of ambush and fire upon those who were gathering up and returning their fugitive human property. It would be illegitimate for the slavery-restoring army to return the fire, as they might harm some of the pets and darlings for whom they were so generously acting. {Laughter.}—Therefore, give them the defensive armor, but no offensive weapons. Such an arrangement, novel as it might seem, must be had if slavery is to be preserved in the rear of an army, which moves with a force sufficient to crush this huge rebellion. In my opinion the second army should be as numerous as the first. Preserving slavery will cost the Government ten times as much as crushing the rebellion.

The policy inaugurated by the Kansas Brigade, which I have the honor to command, was not adopted in a moment, but is the result of much experience. In a speech, recently made in the city of Leavenworth, my feelings of indignation became wrought up to such a high pitch that I was betrayed into the use of language which was justly condemned by the religious sentiment of the country, and which, in my cooler moments,

meets my earnest disapproval. But whether excited or calm, whether my language is rough or smooth, principle and duty require that our policy be rigidly adhered to until condemned by the Government; and if it should be condemned—if the Government demand of the Brigade obedience to the behests of slavery—I shall consider the question of withdrawing from the field.

Since the rebels have failed to nationalize slavery, their battle cry is: 'Down with the Union!' Let slavery lift its crest in the air, and here I solemnly vow that, if Jim Lane is compelled to add a note to such an infernal chorus, he breaks his sword and quits the field. Let us be bold; inscribe 'Freedom to All' upon our banners, and appear just what we are—the opponents of slavery. It is certain, as if written in the book of fate, that this point must be reached before the war is over. Take this stand, and enthusiasm will

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be inspired in the ranks. In steadiness of purpose and courage, each soldier will be a Spartan hero. The spirit of the Crusader will be united with the iron will of the Roman, and an army of such soldiers is invincible. (Cheers.) These things to you, Indianians, may appear strange; but when your military education has received that peculiar cast which experience is sure to give it, and which now pertains to the Kansas soldier, then will me march should to shoulder, and victoriously, too, against the enslavers and brutalizers of men—against the traitors to the best Government in the world.

Soldiers! we have a commander in whose skill, courage and kindness of heart we may always confide. General Hunter has a Kansas education; he has suffered with us because of slavery, and he will, I know, indorse the policy I have advocated to-night.

It should be the business of Congress, at its coming session, to pass a law directing the President of the United States, by proclamation, to order the rebel States, within thirty days or sixty days, to lay down their arms and return to their allegiance; or, in default thereof, declare every slave free throughout their domains. So far as I am concerned, I hope the Almighty will so direct the hearts of the rebels that, like Pharaoh, they will persist in their crime; and then we will invade them and strike the shackles from every limb.—Provision, too, should be made for settling the Africans in Hayti, Central or South America, and let the race form a nation by itself. Liberia has served a glorious purpose, in teaching the world that these oppressed and wretched people are capable of supporting themselves and of self-government. I look upon the Republic of Liberia as the bud—yes, the full-blown hope of the whole of Africa. I wish it every encouragement and success. But it is too many thousand miles for us to transport four million slaves. This fast age has not the time and patience requisite to such a task. But our own continent has room sufficient, with soil, climate and productions suitable for the accommodation of this people who, in the mysteries of Providence, are thrown among us. Transportation to the places named may be made a practicable reality. The good of both races require their separation. Ages of oppression, ignorance and wrong have made the African a being inferior in intellect and social attainments to the Caucasian; while together we shall always have low cringing servility on the one hand, and lordly domination on the other. It is better for both that each enjoy the honors and responsibilities of a nationality of its own. In such an event our common humanity would make a vast stride toward

perfection.—As such a proclamation might have the effect to liberate the slaves of many loyal citizens, I would cheerfully give my consent to have them paid out of the National treasury for any loss they might sustain. Let us dare to do right, trusting to the principle that right makes might; and the Great Republic, once the wonder of the world, will emerge from these troubles purer, wealthier and stronger than ever. These are among the reasons why 'Freedom to All' is the watchword of the Kansas Brigade. Would to God I could publish it throughout the army and to the whole nation! Let the wind waft it over the prairies of the West, let the thunder of our cannon speak it in the ears of traitor tyrants, let the mountains of Pennsylvania, Virginia and New England echo it to their whole people, let the ground swell from earth to heaven, and the great God of angels and men, as its Patron and Friend, will give it success.

Again I thank you, friends of Indiana, and of the Kansas Brigade, for the compliment of this occasion, and bid you all a hearty goodnight. (Loud cheering.)

Cheer after cheer rent the air. The Kansas boys then left for their tents, evidently a little proud of their commander, and the Indianians were not in the least inclined to relinquish their birth-right interest in the earnest and eloquent advocate of liberty, Jim Lane.  
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