

Nugent

(on Fred. Douglas)

The advanced abolitionist theories of Mr. Douglas were doomed to run into many uncomfortable and vexing snags when he put them into personal action. He had been resented by whites in New York for presuming social equality by affording gentlemanly escort to two ladies of their race. He was equally resented by members of his own race because of his second marriage.

When he brought this second wife to his home in Anacostia, he found himself criticized, and when himself not ostracized, was met on all sides by ostracism for his white mate. His appearances as a public figure were of course tolerated and accepted and would have been had he married an orang-outang, but the race-proud group in and about Washington D.C. could and would have none of his bizarre choice. His statement that his first wife, the mother of his children had been the choice of his youth' and his 'second, the choice of maturity.', did nothing to alleviate what was chosen to be regarded as an implied snub.

His beautiful home and grounds on Cedar Hill took on at first the characteristics of a siege. There was no neighborly fraternizing, none of the pleasant exchange of preserves, jellies, cakes and fruit which marked the social language and intercourse of all others in his vicinity. He was never invited with his wife to the homes of the others, and while his old friends might have pleasant converse with him alone, it was obvious that she was never to be included. It was at first even difficult for her to purchase necessities at the village stores, and such matters for a while were transacted the neighborhood children who were too young to realize the heinousness of his betrayal. He became a recluse, a figure so seldom seen and so little known that friends and schoolmates of his own grandchildren were apt to

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be frightened by the sudden appearance of this frock-coated, massive, bearded man, well over six feet tall, from some cluster of cedars near the spot which they might have picked for a picnic. The children associated the fabulous name of Fred. Douglas with the war and the big white colonial house that perched atop the hill and was reached by hundreds of steps. His log-cabin in which he did most of his writing, and which was built way back in the resinous solitude of the cedars, was in their minds, not remotely connected with him. Some of these children had been born and lived on property owned by him, and to them, none of these familiar grounds could be inhabited by the man of whom they heard in school and of whom they heard their parents so carefully not speak.

But Mrs. Douglas the second never ceased her attempted kindnesses to the little colored children, and upon his death, for years kept as a public shrine, the cabin just as it had been when he used it, roped off his favorite chair with ribbon, and left it just where he had enjoyed sitting at evening on the great porch of the big white house. And Fred. Douglas, who when he had the opportunity, could answer the recriminations of his family and friends so acidly, left his estate in Anacostia to a son whose son even in later years would ignore the presence of his grandfather's widow, when at Douglas Memorial exercises he might have to appear on the same platform with her.

Moss, Carlton
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Frederick Douglass, The Colored Orator by Frederic May
Holland - 1891 - Funk & Wagnalls.

pp. 35-36

He was astonished at "the dazzling wonders of Broadway," and so full of joyous excitement that, as he wrote at once to a friend -- we can guess what friend -- in Baltimore, he felt as if he had escaped, like Daniel, from a den of lions. That very day, however, he met another fugitive, whom he had known in Baltimore as "Allender's Jake," and was told that they were both in deadly peril. The city was full of Southerners returning home. Many of the colored people could be bribed into betraying a runaway. All their boarding-houses were closely watched, and the new comer must not think of looking for work upon the wharves. In fact, the danger of recapture was even greater than in New York, than after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill. Every door seemed closed against the stranger. He had no home, no friends, no chance of work, and he was likely soon to be out of money, although his first night in New York was passed in the open air, where he slept amid piles of barrels. He felt all the more alarmed because he had never before taken the full responsibility of looking after himself.

At last he was obliged to tell his story to a sailor who looked good-natured, and he took him at once to his own house, and then to that of the Secretary of the New York Vigilance Committee, Mr. David Ruggles. Here he was sheltered for several days, during which time Anna Murray came on from Baltimore and became his wife. She could not have been married to him according to the laws of Maryland. He stated afterwards, in a letter to Captain Auld, that "Instead of finding my companion a burden, she was truly a help-mate."

Negro Leaders

Douglas. Frederick Douglass

Douglas was brought to the Anti-Slavery movement in the summer of 1841, at a meeting in Nantucket being addressed by William Lloyd Garrison, when someone from New Bedford who had heard of his escape from slavery, called upon him to speak. "When the young man, Douglass, closed late in the evening," Parker Pillsbury, an eye-witness wrote, "none seemed to know or care of the lateness of the hour. The crowd had been wrought up almost to enchantment as he turned over the terrible apocalypse of his experience in slavery." Soon afterwards, he accepted a position with the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. The demands of people to know the whole story of his life made him publish a narrative of it in 1845, and later a moving autobiography entitled, The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself. After it appeared, his friends feared his former master would capture him and return him to slavery, and he was persuaded to leave the country. Douglass preferred to stay in America, but he wisely sailed for England, where he arrived at an opportune moment. The great fights for the repeal of the Corn Laws and the dissolution of the union between England and Ireland were on, and he met such men as O'Connell, Cobden, Disraeli, and Lord Brougham, the chief supporters

Frederick Douglass

of these issues. Douglass cherished a particular affection for Daniel O'Connell, incomparable orator and leader of the Irish people, and appeared with him on platforms in Ireland and Germany.

Douglass returned to New York in 1847, and feeling the need for a newspaper of his own, published the North Star. Up to this time, he had followed abolitionists like Garrison, who were opposed to any political action because they regarded the Constitution as a sinful document which protected slavery. But when Douglass took up his activities in New York in association with those "practical abolitionists," Ruggles and Cornish, he was profoundly influenced by them. His opinions veered toward their way of thinking; he soon began to look upon the Constitution as "a pure warrant for the abolition of slavery in every State of the Union," and he took the struggle into the political arena. This idea, the central theme of his messages to the nation during the Civil War, caused him to align himself with the Republican party, in which he came to have unlimited faith during the period of the war.

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One of the most inspiring of the Negro leaders was Sojourner Truth, called the "Libyan Sibyl" because of her alleged gift of prophecy. She was born a slave in Ulster County, New York, about 1797, and named Isabella. As a youngster, she experienced the ignominy of being sold three times. She bore six children in a slave marriage. In 1827, when the State abolished slavery, Isabella

Waring Cuney 1/16/39

Negroes of New York

Biography of Frederick Douglass

[Frederick Douglass was born in a little town called Tuckahoe in Talbot County on the eastern shore of Maryland during the month of February, 1817. The exact date of his birth is unknown in spite of the fact that he himself made a diligent search to ascertain the day on which he was born. While he was a child his mother was employed on a plantation twelve miles from Tuckahoe. His only opportunity to see his mother was when after her days work she walked the distance to Tuckahoe and then returned in time to start work in the fields at dawn. Of these trips we learn from the writings of Douglass that he was deeply impressed, " These little glimpses of my mother under such circumstances and against such odds, meagre as they were, are indelibly stamped upon my memory. She was tall and finely proportioned; of dark and glossy complexion, with regular features; and among slaves she was remarkably sedate and dignified. She was the only slave in Tuckahoe who could read." (I)

Up to the time until he was seven the boy was cared for by his grandmother. It was in her cabin that he was born. Whatever he missed of a mother's affection and a father's care - his father was unknown to him - was partly made up for by his indulgent grandmother. When he was between seven or eight his grandmother was directed by her master to take her grandson to the Lloyd plantation.

Here he was put in charge of a slave woman called Aunt Katy. This change brought him his first real hardship in life. Aunt Katy was not kindly disposed to him and punished him by denying him food. On one occasion when he had been sent to bed supperless, he waited until all was quiet and returned to the kitchen for something to eat. It so happened that his mother came in at this time and lectured to old Aunt Katy. However his triumph was short lived for in the morning his mother had gone and he never saw her again. Since she was devoted to him, it is believed that she died soon afterward. From this time on with the loss of his grandmother and mother his environment began to impress itself upon him differently. The terms "master" and "slave" were soon to become apparent to him.

When he was nine years old he was sent to Baltimore to live with another family. Here his new mistress took a liking to him and taught him the alphabet. But his master put an end to the lessons just when the boy had mastered the simple spelling of three-lettered words. But as Booker Washington said of him, " He quickly understood that these three mysterious characters called letters were keys to a vast empire from which he was separated by enforced ignorance." (2)

Soon after this when he was sixteen he was returned to the plantation because of the death of his real master. It was at this time that he enjoyed the friendship of a Negro man named Uncle Lawson who had taught him to read. Later he referred to this man as his spiritual

father. Conditions on the plantation were much worse than in the city. Once more he faced starvation. He was hired out for a year to a poor white farm renter with a reputation for cruelty to slaves. During the first six weeks with this overseer he was beaten once a week with sticks or a cowhide. Fleeing this kind of treatment he sought out his former home in Baltimore. His former master turned a deaf ear to his story of hardships. Desperately he returned, resolved not to take another beating. Covey attacked him and an encounter followed. Covey getting the worst of it called his cousin to help him. Douglass routed the cousin with a blow in the stomach then called the other slaves to help him but they refused. From then on until he had worked out the year, Covey never tried to beat him.

On Christmas day 1834, he found himself bound over to another master named Freeland who proved to be much kinder. With him Douglass was neither overworked or underfed. However his mind was now set upon educating the other slaves. After a year spent at self-development and mental and spiritual improvement of the slaves, he set his mind upon a plan for escape. So on Saturday before Easter of the following year, 1835, he and four slaves planned to escape in a stolen canoe. The plan was to sail down the Chesapeake River to freedom, but on the morning of the day on which they were to have fled, they were confronted and jailed for planning to run away. Mr. Freeland came and took his slaves away leaving their leader Douglass in chains. But fortunately, Mr. Auld, who had refused to take

him only a few months before in Baltimore, came to his rescue and effected his release.

Mr. Auld took Douglass to Baltimore where he was apprenticed to a calker in the extensive ship yards of William Gardiner. Here he met intense prejudice existing among the white boys and mechanics. During the six months he worked at this firm everyone was allowed to use and abuse him. Always resenting insults and mistreatment he was assaulted by a crowd of ruffians and frightfully beaten. Mr. Auld took the case to court but the magistrate replied, "I am sorry, sir, but I cannot move in this matter except upon the word of a white man." (3)

Hugh Auld soon after became a foreman in the ship yards of Walter Price in Baltimore, and took Douglass there to work with him. All his earnings of course were turned over to his master. This amounted to from seven to nine dollars a week. He was soon known among the colored population as a man of singular power and superiority of mind. He joined an organization of free colored people known as the East Baltimore Improvement Society. But, even with these improvements in his condition he was unhappy. He constantly asked himself, "Why must I be a slave?" Later he said, "To make a contented slave you must make him a thoughtless one." (4)

By September 3, 1838, the day fixed for his second effort to escape from slavery, he had saved up a neat sum by an arrangement whereby he paid three dollars to his master and fed and clothed himself. Although according to Douglass, "Murder itself, was not more severely

punished in the state of Maryland than aiding or abetting the escape of a slave," he effected his escape by using the borrowed "sailors protection", a document certifying to the fact that he was a "free American sailor." All free slaves carried such identification cards and often they loaned them to slaves who wanted to escape. (5) Once in New York he put himself under the protection and guidance of the officials of the Underground Railway System. His new friends decided that New Bedford would be a much safer place, so Douglass left for New England.

In the summer of 1841 a great anti-slavery meeting was called by William Lloyd Garrison and his friends at Nantucket. Douglass who was inspired by the fact that white people in a free community were tackling the question which his life had evolved -- slavery, attended to listen and learn. But some one from New Bedford who had heard of the escaped slave called on him to speak. Parker Pillsbury, an eye witness, says, "When the young man, Douglass, closed late in the evening, none seemed to know or care of the lateness of the hour. The crowded congregation had been wrought up almost to enchantment as he turned over the terrible apocalypse of his experience in slavery." (6) Garrison spoke after Douglass and he was quick to see the value of such a man to the anti-slavery cause. John A. Collins, the general agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society offered Douglass a job as one of his assistants which he accepted. With enthusiasm he entered this work appearing on the platform where ever the Aboli-

tionists conducted meetings or waged a fight. Soon he was to become a popular and widely talked of man.

To many it was incredible that a fugitive slave with out learning could so eloquently defend the cause of freedom. The demands of people who insisted on knowing his back ground caused him to publish his Narrative which appeared in 1845. After it appeared he was persuaded to go to England for safety. His friends feared that his former master would capture him and return him to a condition of slavery. Although Douglass preferred to stay in America and fight the good fight he sailed for England. In England he found himself no stranger. The British had just gone through an anti-slavery fight which had resulted in ~~the~~ emancipation in the West Indies.

It was at the time of the great political fight for repeal of the Great Corn Laws and the dissolution of the union between England and Ireland. The leader from America heard debates in which such men as Cobden, Bright, Disraeli, and Lord Broughm debated. He met these men personally and cherished a peculiar liking for Daniel O'Connell, the incomparable orator and leader of the Irish people, with whom he appeared on the platform in Ireland and Germany. (7)

Frederick Douglass returned to America on the 20th of April, 1849. Feeling the need for a newspaper of his own he published the first edition of the North Star. The recognized leadership of Douglass among the

colored people of the country may be dated from the publication of this paper. It was issued twice weekly and had an average circulation of three thousand copies. Douglass had always followed and agreed with the group of abolitionists who regarded the constitution as a slaveholding document. But from the responsibility of conducting a paper the views of other abolitionists were imposed upon him. His opinions changed and he began to look upon the constitution as a, "pure warrant for the abolition of slavery in every state of the Union."

(8) With this new idea Douglass continued to spend much time away from home on the platform, from a home that was the last stop on the Underground Railway.

No one could be part of the anti-slavery movement between 1849 and 1859 without knowing of John Brown. In 1847, Douglass went to Chambersburg at John Brown's request. Brown was making final plans for his raid upon the slaveholders of Virginia. Douglass looked upon the plan as a futile one. But according to Booker Washington, "Of all the abolitionists he was the only one who followed Brown until the last, with advice, money, and other assistance." When news came of Brown's capture Douglass was addressing a meeting in Philadelphia. He fled to Canada after stating publicly that he would stand trial for implication in the plot in New York but not elsewhere. From Quebec in November 1859, he sailed for England where he made addresses to people eager to hear the latest news from America." (9)

The Civil War came as a direct result of the irreconcilable sentiments of the North and South on the question of slavery and political conflicts of the time. The major campaign between Lincoln and Stephen Douglass and Brechenbridge formed the battle that preceeded the final collision. The followers of Brechenbridge in the southern democracy threatened to secede and never submit to the rule of Lincoln, who was elected President of the United States. It was a signal victory but it brought war. The South immediately prepared to secede and the northern politicians became conciliatory. Lincoln issued the statement, "If I could save the Union, without freeing the slaves, I would do it. If I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union, and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help save the Union I have stated my purpose according to my views of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed wish that all men every where could be free." (10) Douglass supported the President even though the war was called a war to save the Union. To him it was nevertheless the beginning of the end of slavery. In a speech on March 2nd 1863, that began, "Men of Color, To Arms." he called upon his people to support the Union. In this speech he said, "Action! action! not criticism, is the plain duty of this hour. Words are now useful only as they stimulate to blows. The office of speech now is only to point out when, where and how to strike to the best advantage Who would

be free must themselves strike the blow. Better even to die free, than to live slaves." (11) And after this he met the President in conferences on the treatment of the Negro soldiers who answered his call. He demanded that all colored soldiers receive equal pay with the white soldiers, and that the colored soldiers should be rewarded for bravery and promoted precisely as the whites. These demands changed the official attitude of the War Department to the Negro troops and General Grant, who was impressed in the matter, gave orders to the white men in the ranks to treat the colored soldiers as comrades. (12) When the government changed its attitude to the Negro troops volunteers from each state and territory in the Union offered themselves to the Federal Government. The total number was 186,017 including 7,122 officers. It is estimated that there were in addition to this number about 92,576 colored men serving with regiments in other capacities. With Negro soldiers fighting for the Union the struggle began to assume the character of a war for liberty as Douglass had believed it would. President Lincoln issued the Proclamation of Emancipation on January 1st 1863.

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The close of the civil war left many of the agencies of emancipation without a cause. It was proposed that the American Anti-Slavery society be abolished. Douglass ——— x this plan saying, "That the Negro still had a cause and that he needed my pen and voice to plead it." (14) To face the problem of reconstruction the freedmen's bureau was established to aid the slaves and to manage the abandoned land. Douglass immediately

saw the value of suffrage for the Negro. He headed a delegation of Negroes and called on President Johnson on the 7th of March, 1866. Mr. Johnson was not in sympathy with them and expressed himself clearly on the matter. At the request of the delegation Douglass prepared an open letter to the President's arguments. In addition he and his associates saw and argued the question with members of congress.

In the succeeding thirty years Douglass was wholly right in his determination not to take up residence in one of the southern states. He did however move to Washington. In Washington two things gained his attention, the publication of another paper, The New National Era, and the Freedmen's Bank. His paper became one of the greatest helps of the hour among Negroes. Its columns were open to the leading colored men of the period. However it failed after Douglass had spent some nine or ten thousand dollars on it. The Freedmen's Bank worked as part of the Freedmen's Bureau. It was for the many poor freedmen scattered about the country and it established many branches in various parts of the south. The bank, like the paper failed, and Douglass through no dishonesty or fault of his own was bitterly criticised.

Up to this time the Negro had played no part in politics, but it did not take long for Negro Politicians to rise. In every southern state colored men served in the state legislatures and in other high offices, - "There were Negro sheriffs, County clerks, Justices of Peace."

To this period belongs two Negro senators. In the lower house of congress nearly every state of the south was represented by Negroes.

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Mr Douglass also shared the honors of office-holding. In each succeeding administration after the war posts came to him, as a matter of course. During the administration of General Grant he was one of the councilmen for Washington. Afterwards in 1877 under President Hayes he was appointed Marshal, of the District of Columbia. When President Arthur succeeded to the presidency after the assassination of Hayes he appointed Douglass Recorder of Deeds, a lucrative office that carried with it a good deal of patronage. He continued in this job for five years.

The last public office Mr. Douglass held in the United States Government was that of Minister to Haiti under President Harrison's regime. Although it came unsought Douglass had been active in the campaign of 1888. Later in 1893 he was commissioner for the Haitian Republic at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. With the closing of the fair his work as a public official was completed. After months of exhaustive work at the fair, he then yielded to the people of the west for a short lecture tour which included Des Moines, Omaha and other cities. He took this tour upon himself because of a desire to speak out against lynching which had begun to manifest itself upon his people. He returned to Washington after

What year?

his trip west. His home in Anacostia, D. C. had become a pilgrimage for thousands of colored persons who came to pay their respect to the ex-slave whose life had been dedicated to the cause of their emancipation.

On the second day of February, 1895 after having attended an all day session of a meeting held by The Council of Women who were seeking more liberties for themselves, he died suddenly. This man whose life had fallen in a period of war and controversy and strife, spent his last day healthy in body and sane in mind. That evening he returned home in fine spirit, enthusiastic about the progress of the meeting and prepared to make an address at a Baptist church. His carriage was waiting. While passing through the hall from the dining room he fell slowly to his knees. Surprise he said, "What does this mean?" (16) Then, straightened his body and died. Of his work he had already said, "Forty years of my life have been given to the cause of my people, and if I had forty more they should all be sacredly given to the same great cause . . ." (17)

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The Later Philosophy of Frederick Douglass

In evaluating the philosophy of Frederick Douglass, and analysing his comparative influence as a leader, the life of the great emancipator, may, for convenience, be divided into four periods the first and second include the early portion of his life when he became familiar with slavery at its, best, as well as some of its worse aspects, and later his rapid rise to fame as an orator, author and leader under the tutelage of the Garrisonian Abolitionists. It was during this period that he came to realize that the only solid foundations of liberty were knowledge and courage. This conviction he carried with him throughout his life. The third period dates from 1841 when he broke with the Garrisonian no - politics - abolitionists and emerged as an independent leader, until the close of the Civil War; and included, his North Star venture, tireless anti-slavery lecturing, advocacy of women's suffrage, activity in the Free Soil Party, cooperation with John Brown, Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, Abraham Lincoln and other leaders of the Republican Party, and a mad-like, untiring devotion to all the exigencies of the Civil War. It was during these years that the high-point of his career was reached. Our story deals with the last 25 years of his life and his solution to the chronic problems of the reconstruction period. And in appreciating Douglass's reaction to these problems, lest hindsight makes us unduely critical of some of his beliefs it is important that we remember that he had seen

the millenium come to pass during his life time, and before his very eyes.

Douglass had almost unlimited faith, at first, in the Republican Party and in the enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Even as late as 1879 he raised his voice against the Negroes, who gored on by the Ku Klux Klan, mob atrocities, and the denial of political rights, had begun to migrate from the deep South; thus: (1)

"It may well enough ^{be} said that the negro question is not so desperate as the advocates of this exodus would have the public believe; that there is still hope that the negro will ultimately have his right as a man, and be fully protected in the South; that in several of the old slave States his citizenship and his rights to vote are already respected and protected; that the same, in time, will be secured for negro^{es} in other States." "the Fourteenth Amendment makes him a citizen and the Fifteenth makes him a voter. With power behind him at work for him, and which cannot be taken from him, the negro of the South may wisely bide his time."

In 1865 immediately after the war, he declined to act as an officer of the Educational Monument Association which was collecting funds for the purpose of building a school, exclusively for Negroes, to serve as a Lincoln Memorial, and on September 29, wrote the Liberator, (2)

"....I am not for building up a permanent separate institutions for colored people of any kind." And although forced to make some concessions by the nature of circumstances, throughout his life, he was "...opposed to doing anything looking to the perpetuity of prejudice." (3)

A few months later, however, realizing the "matter-of-factness" of the situation, he withdrew his opposition to cooperative race efforts by his people, due to temporary emergencies. The realization that the Negro people must get what they can, when they can, while fighting for the broader objectives, was first openly stated at the dedication of the Douglass Institute in Baltimore on October 1, the same year. (4)

"It is the misfortune of our class, that it fails to derive due advantage from the achievements of individual members." he said. "Wealth, learning, and ability, made an Irishman an Englishman. The same metamorphosing power converts a negro into a white man in this country. When prejudice cannot deny the black man's ability, it denies his race and claims him as a white man. "...the public has sternly denied the representative character of our distinguished men. This makes it necessary for the credit of the colored people that they should keep up institutions like this one, where

they may feel themselves limited by no cast, or sect, or color, where their souls may be thrilled with heavenly music and lifted to the skies on the wings of poetry and song. Here we can assemble and have our minds enlightened upon the whole circle of social, moral, and educational duties""Here, from this broad hall, shall go forth an influence which shall change at last the current of public contempt."

Throughout his life, while believing in the broader aspects of Christianity, he was skeptical of the organized church. He remembered its connection with slavery only too well. He continuously found it necessary to speak out against the tendency of his people to place undue faith in the Church to affect their earthly salvation, and when, in 1870, he was taken to task by conservative theologians and politicians, for speaking of the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment as due to our "common humanity," rather than "divine grace," he wrote the following letter to the Washington Republican in June 1870, a part of which reads as follows: (5)

"If the instigators of this sham trial, in place of getting up these church meetings to try distant heretics like myself, would honestly go to work, and endeavor to reform the character, manner, and habits of the infesting thousands of colored people, who live in the utmost

misery and destitution in the immediate vicinity of Big Bethel, he would do more to prove his church sound than to pass any number of wordy resolution about thanking God."

And again, speaking before the Bethel Literary and Historical Society of Washington, (6) he stated his creed thus: "I do not know that I am an evolutionist, but to this extent I am one. I certainly have more patience with those who trace mankind upward from a low condition. even from the lower animal, than with those who start him at a high point of perfection and conduct him to a level with brutes. I have no sympathy with a theory that starts man in heaven and stops him in hell.""So far as the laws of the universe have been discovered and understood, they seem to teach that the mission of man's improvement and perfection has been wholly committed to himself. He is to be his own savior or his own destroyer. He has neither angels to help him nor devils to hinder him." Douglas was undoubtedly under the influence of a materialist philosophy because a bust of Ludwig Feuerbach adorned his study at Washington.

Douglass, admonished the Negro to set himself solidly in the political and economic soil of the country. He was one of the greatest proponents of education, both vocational as well as academic. Speaking for Garfield at Rochester in 1880, he counseled: (7)

"With money and property comes knowledge and power; what we call money is only stored labor; a poverty stricken class will be an ignorant and despised class, and no amount of sentiment can make it otherwise." Again, speaking at the twentieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in Washington in 1883, he pointed to the great improvement that had been made by the race since then, but warned that final salvation would not ^{evolve} ~~evaluate~~; (8) "...until the colored man's path to the ballot-box, North and South, shall be as smooth and as safe as the same is for white citizens;" "...until color shall cease to be a bar to equal participation in the offices and honors of the country;" "...until the trade-unions, and the workshops of the country shall cease to proscribe the colored man, and prevent his children from learning useful trades;" "...until the American people shall make character, and not color, the criterion of respectability." "...there is but one destiny, it seems to me, left for us, and that is to make ourselves, and be made by others, a part of the American people in every sense of the word. Assimilation and not isolation is our true policy." "we cannot afford to set up for ourselves a separate political party, or adopt for ourselves a political creed apart from the rest of our fellow-citizens. Our own interests will be subserved

by a generous care for the interests of the nation at large. All the political, social, and literary forces around us tend to unification."

Yet when the National Convention of Colored Men met at Louisville during September the same year, he was careful to point out that such conventions were needed because the colored man, (9) "is still surrounded by an adverse sentiment which fetter all his movements." "His course upward is resented and resisted at every step of his progress." . . . "The colorline meets him everywhere, and, in a measure, shuts him out from all respectable and profitable trades and callings."

In the course of the same engagement, he admonished Congress to investigate the working of the shop-order system, to aid the common schools and endow colored colleges, to reimburse the depositors of the Freedman's Bank, to do full justice to colored claimants of bounties and pensions, to enforce the Civil Rights Bill, and to protect the colored voters at the polls. In making these demands, he added, (10) "we leave social equality where it should be, with each individual man and women. No law can regulate it."

He was bitterly disappointed, but not subdued, when in the latter part of 1883, the Supreme Court pronounced unconstitutional the Civil Rights Bill, upon which

he had placed so much hope. He attacked the decision vigorously branding the it the "Social Rights" decision.

In 1886 Cleveland was elected president on the Democratic ticket. By this time Douglass was totally disillusion^{ed} in the faith and political honesty of the present leadership of the Republican Party. He had hoped that the Negro vote could be made the balance of power between the two political parties. Yet he was not long in realizing the fallacy in believing that Negroes would be more favorably treated after they had ceased to help the Republican party. (11) "Their condition seems no better and not much worse than under previous administrations. Lynch law, violence, and murder have gone on about the same as formerly, and without the least show of federal interference or popular rebuke." ... "The truth is that neither the Republican nor the Democratic party has yet complied with the solemn oath taken by their respective representatives to support the Constitution and execute the laws enacted under its provisions."

Thus, realizing the full magnitude of the forces fighting against him he modified his earlier adamant stand towards migration. (12) "While I hold now, as I held years ago, that the South is the natural home of the colored race, and that there must the destiny of the race be mainly worked out, I still believe that

means can be and ought to be adopted, to assist in the emigration of such of their number as may wish to change their residence to parts of the country, where their civil and political rights are better protected than at present they can be in the South."

At the same time he saw little gain in the Negroes' taking an independent position in politics. He cautioned, (13) "The Republican party is not perfect..... but it is the best friend we have." He continued to work tirelessly for that party until his death.

He had been appointed Marshall of the District of Columbia in 1873, a position which he held until 1886. In 1889 he was appointed minister to Hayti. These official duties absorbed a great deal of his energy but he always found time for the cause of his people.

In the latter part of 1890 he again addressed the Bethel Literary and Historical Association in the course of which he reiterated the right of colored men to vote and marry as they chosed. In an article written a few years before he layed great emphasis on the solution of the Negro problem through racial assimilation.

Four years later in 1892, ~~he~~ he addressed the commencement day exercises at Tuskegee Institute. Holland, one of his biographers, makes the statement that he was delighted by the classical culture he saw there

and at Fiske, (14) "but he took care to remind his hearers how much of their welfare as well as that of their race depended on their success, not in reading Greek but in working at trades and on the soil." This must not be taken in the sense that he was against higher education. Throughout his life he fought tooth and nail against all forms of ^{educational} discrimination. Before the Negro could affect his salvation, however, he realized that he must have an economic base to stand on.

A portion of the speech is worth quoting because it is like that of an old patriarch addressing final words of wisdom to his beloved tribe towards the end of a busy and unrelentless life. (15) "The earth has no prejudice against color. Crops are yielded as readily to the touch of the black man's hand as to that of his white brother." ...He insisted that they must save their earnings if they would be respected, and closed thus: "Go on! I sha'nt be with you long. You have heights to ascend, breadths to fill, such as I never could and never can. Go on!" He warned them again and again against looking to prayer to save them from lynching and mob terror. "Seek to acquire knowledge as well as property; and, in time, you may have the honor of going to Congress; for if the Negro can stand Congress, Congress ought to be able to stand the Negro."

He was seized with a heart attack on Feb. 20, 1895 and passed away without pain that evening. He left two sons, Lewis Henry, and Charles Redmond, and a daughter Mrs. Rosetta Sprague. The largest Negro church was crowded for five hours at his funeral the following Tuesday, and included among the pall bearers, were four senators, an ex-Senator of Mississippi and an ex-Governor of Louisiana. The next day the Mayor, ex-Mayor, and Aldermen of Rochester New York helped to carry the body to the Mount Hope Cemetery. In this manner was buried, one of the greatest Negro leaders, a leader who influences the posterity of the Negro people in no small degree today. Throughout his busy life, in addition to championing the rights of his own people, he had fought for those of the oppressed Irish, Hungarians, and Chinese as well, and had supported such forward looking movements as the opening of the western frontiers and women's suffrage. His death was a loss, which, many believe, the leadership of Booker T. Washington made up for only in a restricted sense.

Addenda to Philosophy of Frederick Douglass.

The Future of the Colored Race
Schomburg Collection
May 1886 - From North America Review
p437, 438, 439, 440

"It is quite impossible, at this early date, to say with any decided emphasis what the future of the colored people will be. Speculation of this kind thus far, have only reflected the mental bias and education of the many who have essayed to solve the problem." (p457)

"Laying aside all prejudice in favor of, or against race, looking at the Negro as politically and socially related to the American people generally, and measuring the force arrayed against him, I do not see how he can survive and flourish in this country as a distinct and separate race, nor do I see how he can be removed from the country either by annihilation or expatriation." p.438

"Sometimes I have feared that, in some wild paroxysm of rage, the white race, forgetful of the claims of humanity and the precepts of the Christian religion, will proceed to slaughter the Negro in wholesale, as some of that race have attempted to slaughter Chinamen, and as it has been done in detail in some districts of the Southern States. The grounds of this fear, however, have in some measure decreased since the Negro has

Addenda to Philosophy of Frederick Douglass.

largely disappeared from the arena of Southern politics, and has taken himself to industrial pursuits and the acquisition of wealth and education though even here if over prosperous, he is likely to excite dangerous antagonism, for the white people do not easily tolerate the presence among them of a race more prosperous than themselves. The negro as a poor ignorant creature does not contradict the race pride of the white race. He is more a source of amusement to that race than an object of resentment. Malignant resistance is augmented as he approaches the place occupied by the white race, and yet I think that that resistance will gradually yield to the pressure of wealth education and high character." (p.438)

"My strongest conviction as to the future of the Negro therefore is, that he will not be expatriated nor annihilated, nor will he forever remain a separate and distinct race from the people around him, but he will be absorbed, assimilated, and will only appear finally, as the Phoenecian^h appear on the shores of Shannon in the features of a blended race."

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- 10.- Ibid. p. 353 .
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- 12.- Ibid. p. 359
- 13.- Ibid. p. 359
- 14.- Ibid. p.395 .
- 15.- Ibid. p. 396

Washington, D. C., June 12, 1862

John W. Hurn, Esqr
Vineland, New Jersey.

John W. Hurn, Esqr

My dear old friend.

You have (done?) me a real service - and I hasten to acknowledge it. My Book is miserably defective and having been stereotyped no corrections can be easily made. I am glad to have the exact truth of my escape from Phila. in John Brown times made known. It seems, now that I was in more danger than at the time of writing I supposed. You, I have no doubt, saved my life, for had I been once in the hands of the Government I should have been sent into Virginia and although I was not guilty of the raid upon Harper's Ferry - in the then temper of the public mind and the authorities of that State the fact that I was the friend of John Brown and had brought him money at Chambersburgh would have been sufficient to hang me. Had I known of your whereabouts I should have written to you while preparing this part of my Book.

Kindest regards and best wishes

Yours friend

Fred^k Douglass

(Letter in possession of Philip Hurn)