

JOHN S. ROCK, Esq., was then introduced, and said—If this day has not brought all the most sanguine have hoped for and expected, it has certainly brought good tidings of great joy to millions of suffering bondmen, with whom we are all this day happy to rejoice. We are indebted to the white man for the terrible crime of American slavery, which has nearly destroyed this country. American liberty has always been a name without meaning, a shadow without substance, a kind of “sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.” In its name we have sanctioned and upheld “the sum of all villainies,” and for which God is now scourging us. Some far-seeing men long ago perceived that this nation was sowing the wind, and must inevitably reap the whirlwind. They could not remain idle spectators. They saw the danger and warned you of it, but your ears were so tightly stopped with cotton that you could not or would not hear them. Their warnings were disregarded, they were called crazy fanatics, infidels, and disturbers of the “domestic tranquillity,” and were every where insulted and libelled, and often maltreated; but they had right on their side; they were not the men to be intimidated; they would not equivocate; they did not retract a single inch; and they would be heard. (Applause.) And to day the whole civilized world acknowledges that the Abolitionists have been right, and that justice must prevail. When I look about me here, and see so many who have been so long identified with the Anti-Slavery movement, who by their persistent labors, self-denial, pecuniary sacrifices, and devotion to principle have caused anti-slavery to be no longer unpopular, I can thank them from my soul. I know the colored man has true friends among the

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white race, that he can well afford to be proud of—the opinion of others to the contrary notwithstanding. (Applause.) This is a great day, and we have passed through a great year in the history of my race in this country. In one short year, the gain on the side of freedom has been immense. Among the great events, we are reminded that the entire national territory has been consecrated to freedom; the national capital has been purged of slavery; it is decided that a colored man is a citizen of the United States; a quarter of a million of slaves have been liberated by the war; and to-day, by the military power vested in the President of the United States, he has declared FOREVER FREE three millions of slaves! (Applause.) Great God! what more could we have expected in so short a time? This is the day that strikes death to slavery and to traitors, and is the day we have labored so earnestly to hasten and hoped to see arrive. As the old maid said, on the eve of her marriage—

“This is the day I long have sought,  
And mourned because I found it not.”

This day, in its results, must change the fortunes of many of both races. The question of African slavery and of emancipation is to be no longer a matter of speculation, but must be studied in its results. The black man must, as time and opportunity offer, enter upon his duties as a citizen.

Mr. Rock here made a very able argument to prove that the colored man was not wanting in either morals, courage, or intelligence, and that he was capable of filling every useful position in society. He presented many striking facts and historical references to prove his position.

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He could not criticise Mr. Lincoln. He was not elected as an anti-slavery man, and when we consider his education, and the influences with which he has been surrounded, and what we said of him when he was elected, we must acknowledge that he has exceeded our most sanguine expectations. (Applause.)

His situation has been a trying one, and if he is not anti-slavery, he is, I believe, the man destined by Providence to unite the friends of free government, and to redeem our country from its degradation and its shame. (Applause, and three cheers were given for Mr. Lincoln, the audience rising to their feet.)

The entire black race on this continent is to be free. Already the day is beginning to dawn. My thanks, with five millions of my race, have already ascended to the throne of God for this great boon. We thank the President for his proclamation; we thank the Senators and Representatives for the Confiscation act; and we thank you and all others who have contributed their influence to hasten this day. The world moves; I am encouraged. (Applause.)

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