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MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: To-day we commemorate the humanities of two great nations. To-day is the thirty-first return of the death-day of West India slavery. And to-day, for the first, do we celebrate it beside the prostrate, dying form of its twin monster, American slavery. Heretofore, our rejoicing over West India freedom was only partial; we stood in the shadow here and looked only upon fields of freedom beyond us. Americans were thus shamed by the humanity and justice of Britons. The newly-born child of order—Republicanism—was thus obliged to yield the palm to old world monarchy. It made us, however, the more earnest to secure freedom here, and, under God, we have been successful. I propose to-day, in the brief words I have to say, to demonstrate that this liberty has been, has always been, a blessing, and in no sense a blight upon the beautiful islands in the Carribean Sea. Thirty years ago, a stranger, alighting upon one of these blessed spots of ocean, would have literally heard songs and rejoicing. Wending his way at the noon of the night of July 31, by the aid of the transparency of the

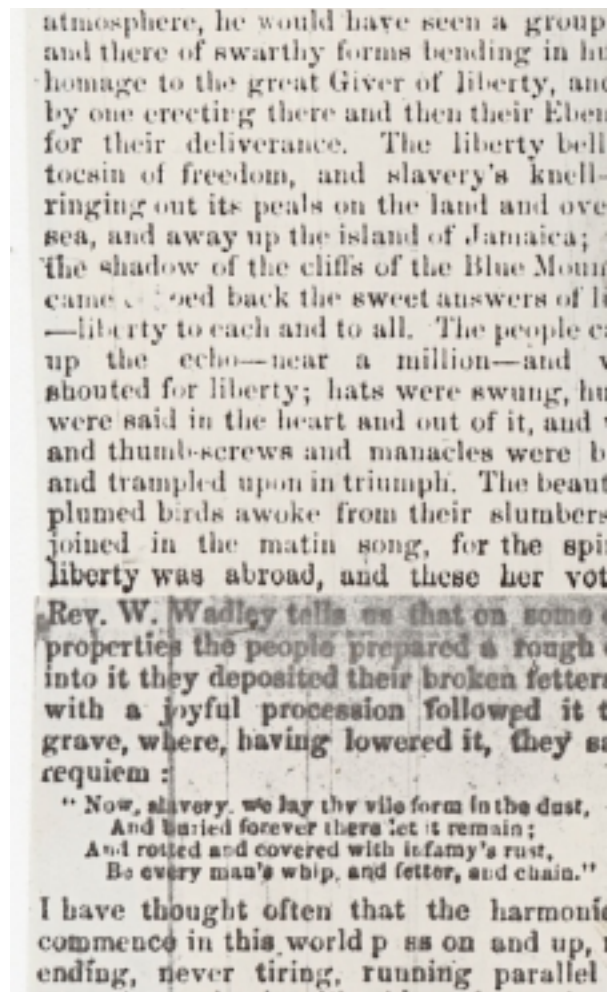
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atmosphere, he would have seen a group here and there of swarthy forms bending in humble homage to the great Giver of liberty, and one by one erecting there and then their Ebenezers for their deliverance. The liberty bell—the tocsin of freedom, and slavery’s knell—was ringing out its peals on the land and over the sea, and away up the island of Jamaica; under the shadow of the cliffs of the Blue Mountains, came [echoed] back the sweet answers of liberty—liberty to each and to all. The people caught up the echo—near a million—and voices shouted for liberty; hats were swung, hurrahs were said in the heart and out of it, and whips and thumb-screws and manacles were broken and trampled upon in triumph. The beautifully plumed birds awoke from their slumbers, and joined in the matin song, for the spirit of liberty was abroad, and these her votaries. Rev. W. Wadley tells us that on some of the properties the people prepared a rough coffin, into it they deposited their broken fetters, and with a joyful procession followed it to the grave, where, having lowered it, they sang a requiem:

“Now, slavery, we lay thy vile form in the dust,
And buried forever there let it remain;
And rotted and covered with infamy’s rust,
Be every man’s whip, and fetter, and chain.”

I have thought often that the harmonies we commence in this world pass on and up, never ending, never tiring, running parallel with



eternal symphonies, like blessed angels, whispering to the heart-weary, stooping to wipe care from the brow of the sorrowing, and lending even to the heavens, so to speak, a melody, with their bright lights and blue eyes,

“As of angel voices singing.”

John Chester well describes this by saying:

“The spirits who, in the spheres of light,
Have made their happy dwelling,
To each other across the depths of space
Their tales of love are telling.”

Thus, men’s real rejoicing is not meant for naught. Who shall tell but each joyful aspiration of one heart is but an electric wire leading to some other human heart? Who shall deny that because of that rejoicing in those isles of the sea we rejoice? Thus:

“O’er the land the peal is ringing,
And hope is bright and hearts are gay;
Every lip a welcome singing,
Come and help the cause to day.”

Thirty-one years are the days of manhood.

Thirty-two years ago to-day Wes[t] India freedom walked forth crowned with years of self-reliance and power. We meet them at the threshold of the manhood of liberty. They ask not reception; they urge no pretensions; they make no demand; but, on this beautiful morning, the sun brightening our land, as it is gemming theirs, diamonded as they are, all over with the droplets of the “salt sea spray,” deepening the ever-living green growing greener and gilding the islands with glory—theirs only—we visit them, to see if liberty has been to them a blessing or a blight. But,

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however great the similarity and proper the comparison, let it be remembered a nation's years are not the years of man. To a nation 31 years are but a day. To a man they are over 7,000. At 31 years the march of the English nation was circumscribed by the oaks of the Druids. Her great people were then Pagan worshippers. If, to-day the beat of the English nation encircles the world, that beat has been marching on for centuries. At 31 years, the United States was not so completely a nation as now, but she was a feeble State, unsettled as to policy, almost exclusively devoted to hard-working mechanical development, and in some portions almost semi-barbarous. Thus increment on national character is but gradual; thus a nation is never born in a day. It may, to-day, voice forth its stifled sympathies; to-day a great people may rise from bondage; but the way has been laid by themselves or others years before, and the uprising, whether peaceful or violent, only the effect or the cause, or both, for it may be both of effort long preceding. By it I am reminded of the towering avalanches of the Alps breaking their icy bands and sweeping with a mighty crash into the plain. One additional ray of sunshine melted its fingers; one additional pennyweight prepared it to balance; and one breath of Boreas gave it motion. The change, socially, may be silent, but on it moves—it fills its years. It follows the law written

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upon everything earthly; it is Time eating down its own work to build up Eternity. And yet men are the make-up of nations. Caractacus, standing a slave in chains in the Roman shambles, was the English nation bound. And an ascending scale from that to now tells of her gradual progression; then, as we see with joy 31 years of freedom, of which we have been speaking. What are the facts, amid rumors of false and true, based upon the testimony of honorable men, in every position—planters not excepted—natives and strangers—after residences in the north and southside districts of from five to thirty and forty years?

The speaker then gave a review of the industry of the slaves since their emancipation, after which he proceeded as follows:

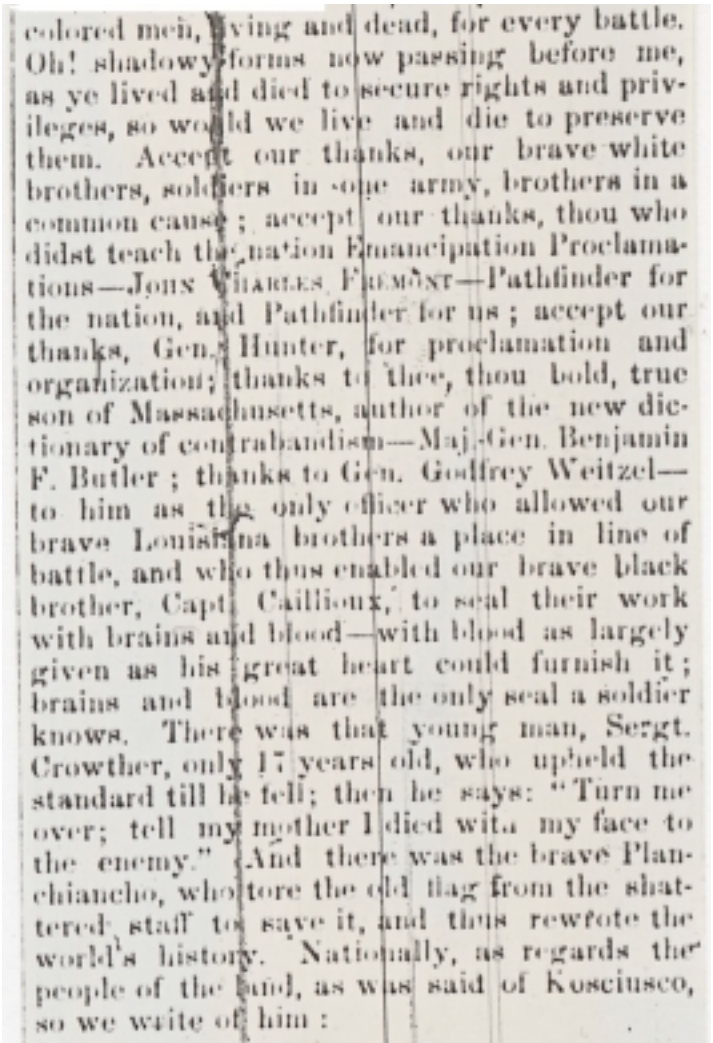
Rest, Col Shaw; rest, rest, brave brothers of Fort Wagner; rest from the storm of battle, and the sterner storm of hate. All is past now. Ye sleep; but we to-day enjoy because of you, and we come to-day to lay our humble tribute on your memory. In olden days the cairn was heaped high as the memorial of love, and hope, and honor—heaped high by those who survived; but our cairn ye yourselves have piled up, your great souls flinging their dead bodies in heaps, that we might climb up to the high honors and privileges, the national rights and duties, of to-day. Accept our thanks, Wagner, and Olustee, and Port Hudson, and Mi[la]ken's Bend; accept our thanks

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colored men, living and dead, for every battle. Oh! shadowy forms now passing before me, as ye lived and died to secure rights and privileges, so would we live and die to preserve them. Accept our thanks, our brave white brothers, soldiers in one army, brothers in a common cause; accept our thanks, thou who didst teach the nation Emancipation Proclamations—JOHN CHARLES FREMONT—Pathfinder for the nation, and Pathfinder for us; accept our thanks, Gen. Hunter, for proclamation and organization; thanks to thee, thou bold, true son of Massachusetts, author of the new dictionary of contrabandism—Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler; thanks to Gen. Godfrey Weitzel—to him as the only officer who allowed our brave Louisiana brothers a place in line of battle, and who thus enabled our brave black brother, Capt. Caillieux, to seal their work with brains and blood—with blood as largely given as his great heart could furnish it; brains and blood are the only seal a soldier knows. There was that young man, Sergt. Crowther, only 17 years old, who upheld the standard till he fell; then he says: "Turn me over; tell my mother I died with my face to the enemy." And there was the brave Plan-chiancho, who tore the old flag from the shattered staff to save it, and thus rewrote the world's history. Nationally, as regards the people of the land, as was said of Kosciusco, so we write of him:



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Not vain, alas! not vain! ye gallant few,
From rack to rack your vollied thunder flew,
On! grandest picture in the book of time!
Though negroes fell, unwept, without a crime:
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe:
Strength in their arms, but mockery in their woe!
Tearing their banners from the shattered staff,
They won a memory o'er which angels laugh!
Freedom then rang her [wild] alarom [bell]
A RACE ROSE [UP] WHERE PLASCHIANCHO fell!

Thanks, in this new photography, for all the
Linolntypes the bloody hand of war has
created. Thanks to Grant, to Sherman, even
with his prejudices, and Thomas, and Rose-
crans, and Can[b]y. Thanks to all. Thanks to
the Cabinet of 1863. Thanks to Secretary
Stanton, the Atlas of War Secretaries. Thanks
to Vice-President Johnson for the promise of
leadership up from Egypt to Canaan. Thanks
to President Lincoln for leadership from Egypt
to the Wilderness.

Prof. Day spoke for one hour in a most elo-
quent strain, and was interrupted at intervals
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