

MR. CHAIRMAN,—The anniversary of no event within the recollections of the present generation, or perhaps ever graced the annals of history, seems calculated so completely to awaken feelings of gratitude and admiration in our bosoms to the all-wise Disposer of all good, as the one we have this day met to celebrate.

Together we consider it in its moral or political bearing on the future destiny of mankind, or for the magnitude of that philanthropy by which it was brought about, it equally challenges our admiration and defies all precedents to furnish an example in which the welfare and interest of so many human beings have been involved, and accomplished by means so harmless, so just and withal so powerful.

Seldom in the history of mankind has any great change taken place affecting the political condition of any considerable portion of the human family, but it has given rise to war, blood-shed, or some mighty commotion. But here we witness, by one single act of justice—in carrying out the spirit of the British Constitution—eight hundred thousand individuals *elevated* from a state of *chattelism* to all the dignity of men—standing forth redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled; and the only commotion produced, Mr. Chairman, was the spontaneous shouts bursting forth from the glad hearts of men, women and children freed from tyranny that had so long crushed them to the earth.

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glory of her arms, the fame of her heroes, and even the wisdom of her sages sink to comparative insignificance.

Yes, sir, this single act of justice, in the unconditional emancipation of her slaves, is calculated to throw a sacred halo around the British name, which will live in the memory of unborn millions, an imperishable monument, dedicated to her magnanimity and greatness, when the trophies of her military fame shall be buried in the tomb of oblivion.

We might here, Mr. Chairman, take a retrospective view of the condition of the descendants of injured Africa for the last two or three centuries, and examine the wrongs they have sustained, and the numerous and complicated interests and causes which have conspired to crush and brutalize them, then we shall be able to appreciate more fully the benefits likely to recur from the present plan of emancipation adopted by the government of Great Britain, in regard to those of them who scattered throughout the British realm.

But pleasing as the present prospect is, compared with the past condition of those who have received the inestimable boon of liberty, I am admonished that it would be a trespass upon your time and patience for me to attempt a minute description of the advantages that must necessarily accrue to all the parties concerned; for the very different relation in which the emancipated stand to their former proprietors—to the government—and to society in general, from what they former-

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ly did.

But permit me to say that the additional security felt by the proprietors both for life and property – with the increased value of real estate is acknowledged by many of the most intelligent and wealthy planters, to be equal to all the loss either real or imaginary they sustained in consequence of emancipation, hence the millions paid by the government has been a gift; but the government has been vastly relieved, by the diminution of the force necessary to secure the tranquillity of the Island, during the existence of the slave system— a large portion of which has been disbanded, being unnecessary, for those Islands in future will be garrisoned and protected by those emancipated persons, and the government relieved from a heavy tax, which was necessary to keep a slave population in subjection.

But, sir, have not the emancipated themselves been vastly benefitted by the change that has taken place in their situation? That they have I presume none will deny, except those who measure the happiness of the man of color, by their own interest, and therefore will not accede to that self-evident fact, that the love of liberty is inherent in the bosom of mankind, irrespective of color, and though the opposers of emancipation have made the most fearful production of the consequence that would follow, in case the slave were set free—the ruin of the slave— and the murder of the master— yet none of these prophecies have been realized, if we may rely on the statements of a

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number of respectable persons who have visited the Island recently; the system is working as favorably as we could have expected, taking into consideration the many disadvantages under which the laborers for the present are obliged to contend.

But, sir, we have lived to see the great experiment of immediate emancipation tested, and the result has been, that the practicability, safety, and advantage of it has been most triumphantly sustained, despite of the many obstacles thrown in the way, by the opposers of human liberty. And the cheering intelligence which we continue to receive of the tranquillity of the Island, of the continual and increasing demands for laborers, and of the disposition of the laborers themselves to improve their condition, by being industrious and frugal, and embracing every opportunity offered by their friends for their moral and intellectual culture, warrants us in believing, that the argument heretofore used, by the pro-slavery party in the United States in favor of the "Patriarchal Institution," must melt away before the power of truth, and like wax before the fire. No longer sir—after a fair and full development of the present system, over the past one, shall be thrown before the public and the world, need a pro-slavery press, or a truckling politician attempt to deceive the American people by misrepresenting the motives of that band of philanthropists, and friends of human liberty—known as abolitionists—by associating with them the idea of every thing calculated to excite the worst feelings and passions of the un-

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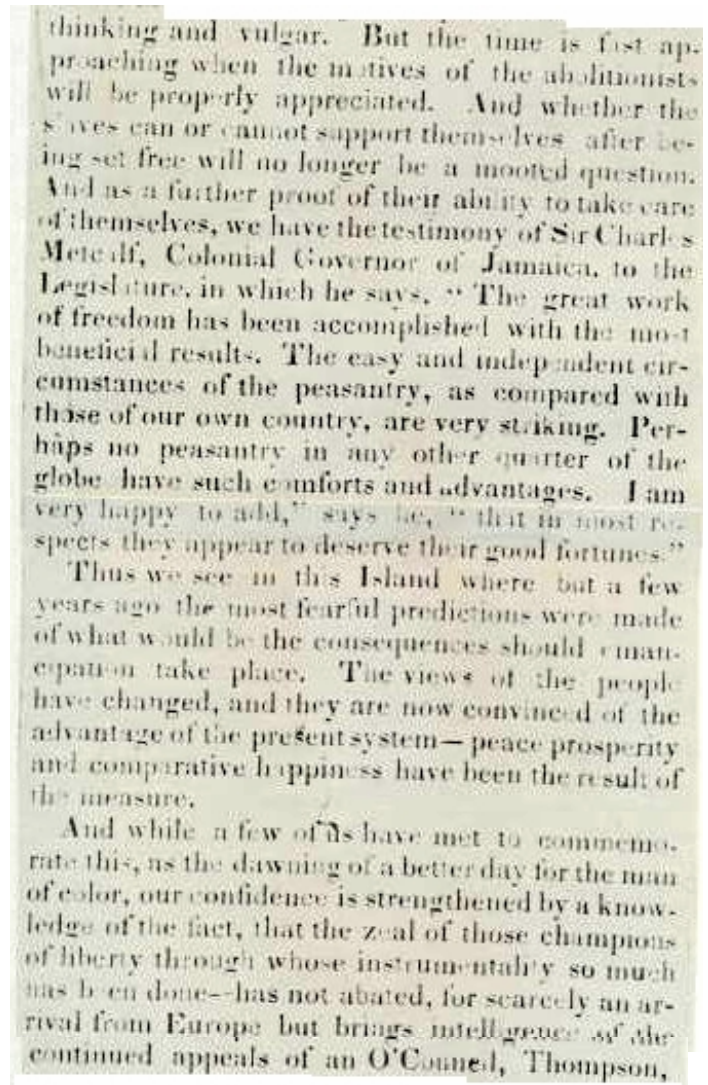
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thinking and vulgar. But the time is fast approaching when the motives of the abolitionists will be properly appreciated. And whether the slaves can or cannot support themselves after being set free will no longer be a mooted question. And as a further proof of their ability to take care of themselves, we have the testimony of Sir Charles Metcalf, Colonial Governor of Jamaica, to the Legislature, in which he says, "The great work of freedom has been accomplished with the most beneficial results. The easy and independent circumstances of the peasantry, as compared with those of our own country, are very striking. Perhaps no peasantry in any other quarter of the globe have such comforts and advantages. I am very happy to add," says he, "that in most respects they appear to deserve their good fortunes."

Thus we see in this Island where but a few years ago the most fearful predictions were made of what would be the consequences should emancipation take place. The views of the people have changed, and they are now convinced of the advantage of the present system—peace prosperity and comparative happiness have been the result of the measure.

And while a few of us have met to commemorate this, as the dawning of a better day for the man of color, our confidence is strengthened by a knowledge of the fact, that the zeal of those champions of liberty through whose instrumentality so much has been done—has not abated, for scarcely an arrival from Europe but brings intelligence of the continued appeals of an O'Connell, Thompson,



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and others, in favor of liberty not only in the Islands but throughout the world. And as soon, Mr. Chairman, could I be brought to doubt the infallibility of truth, as to question the ultimate triumph of the noble cause in which they are engaged.

But, sir, could any thing raise a doubt, as touching the question of slavery, it would be the deep rooted prejudice that exists in these United States against the man of color, and those who are opposed to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the territories belonging to the United States.

We, though nominally free, have felt the weight of that prejudice to an extent that it is impossible to find language to depict. Yet I do not falter in my faith of the omnipotence of truth, but believe it will prevail in the overthrow of the present nefarious system of American slavery.

And though that potent engine of oppression and prejudice, the American Colonization Society, aided as it is by the press of the country, and backed by a time-serving clergy—has been in operation more than twenty years, in which time it has done more to uphold slavery and oppress the free colored population in this country, than all other causes besides—for while it has presented itself to the North as the friend of the colored man, of religion, and missionary purposes, and collected funds of the pious and unwary, under that garb, it has at the South proved itself as the faithful handmaid of slavery. But truth and free discussion has broken its magic power, its sheepskin

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covering has been stripped off and we see the wolf in all its hideous deformity, and being unable longer to deceive the true friends of the colored man by its sophistry and double dealing, and having met with such firm and merited rebuke. Yes sir, I may say with just contempt and scorn from us it now scarcely lays claim to friendship for us, but is trying to league itself with our enemies and trying to compel us to do by indirect coercion, that which we would not be persuaded to do by misrepresentation.

If proof of this is wanted, we have it in the late movement in Maryland, and the recent attempt to us in Pennsylvania, for the purpose of replenishing the funds of this bankrupt institution, and thus to enable [them] to transport a few more of the victims of their prejudice and persecution to Liberia.

But, thanks to an overruling Providence, we no longer fear these recent manifestations of the demon-like spirit, which has ever characterized that society. We look upon them as the last threat of the expiring monster, and believe the day is not far distant when it shall be numbered with the things that have been; and be remembered only to be detested as a wicked and selfish scheme of a by gone age.

But, Mr. Chairman, its influence is still visible in the unsettled condition of our people, numbers of whom have been induced to emigrate to Trinidad, Canada, and elsewhere, to avoid that relentless prejudice that has weighed so heavily upon us in the land of our *nativity* and *birth*.

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But, sir, I have ever doubted the propriety of the measure, so far at least as Trinidad is concerned, believing it neither conducive to *our* interest nor yet to the interest of the laborers in that Island. That the offer made by the government of that Island to the free people of color in this country, was from motives of self interest, I think none can doubt, from the fact that laborers were scarce in proportion to the demand and consequently, wages is high. It follows that should that demand be satisfied by a current of emigration from this country, that wages there will find their level with other Islands; and the prospects of the emigrants be measurably blasted, and the reduction of the price of labor, by an excess of emigration, must necessarily operate to the disadvantage of the present laboring population. "But apart from any pecuniary advantage," says the friends of that measure, "we shall be relieved from prejudice and shall enjoy civil and political equality." As to what extent prejudice ever existed in those Islands, I am not prepared to say, but believing human nature to be much the same,—under like circumstances. I fear that those who have sought new homes in the Island will find when too late that though slavery be dead, its evil spirit still haunts the Island.

And, as to whether we shall or shall not enjoy civil and political equality, depends as much upon the moral and intellectual qualifications of the emigrants, as upon the laws of the Island, for, sir, I have reason to believe that in all countries civil and political equality is made to hinge upon certain contingencies.

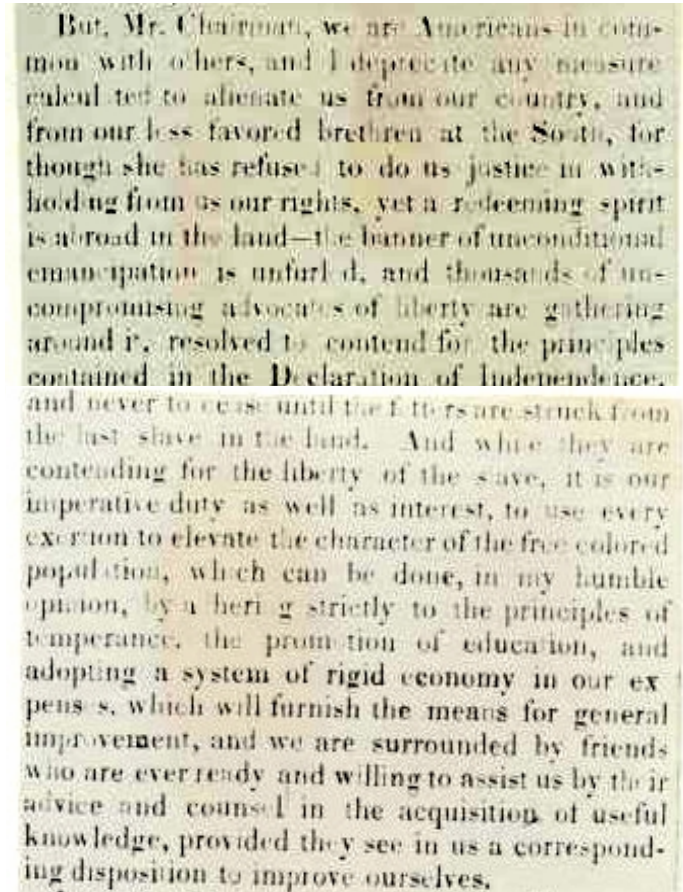
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But, Mr. Chairman, we are Americans in common with others, and I deprecate any measure calculated to alienate us from our country, and from our less favored brethren at the South, for though she has refused to do us justice in withholding from us our rights, yet a redeeming spirit is abroad in the land—the banner of unconditional emancipation is unfurled, and thousands of uncompromising advocates of liberty are gathering around it, resolved to contend for the principles contained in the Declaration of Independence, and never to cease until the fetters are struck from the last slave in the land. And while they are contending for the liberty of the slave, it is our imperative duty as well as interest, to use every exertion to elevate the character of the free colored population, which can be done, in my humble opinion, by adhering strictly to the principles of temperance, the promotion of education, and adopting a system of rigid economy in our expenses, which will furnish the means for general improvement, and we are surrounded by friends who are ever ready and willing to assist us by their advice and counsel in the acquisition of useful knowledge, provided they see in us a corresponding disposition to improve ourselves.

I am pleased on this occasion to be able to say, that throughout the free states, there appears to be an increasing disposition among our people for improvement, they have learned from fatal experience the disadvantage of lacking knowledge, and are trying to redeem the time.



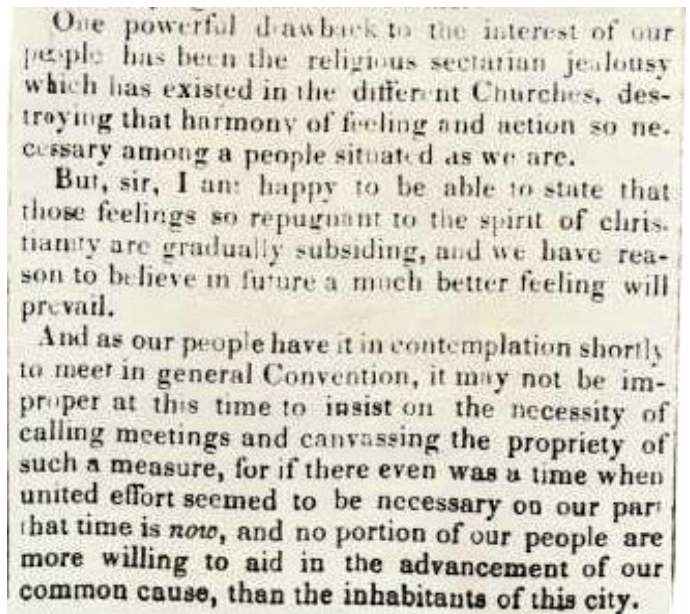
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One powerful drawback to the interest of our people has been the religious sectarian jealousy which has existed in the different Churches, destroying that harmony of feeling and action so necessary among a people situated as we are.

But, sir, I am happy to be able to state that those feelings so repugnant to the spirit of christianity are gradually subsiding, and we have reason to believe in future a much better feeling will prevail.

And as our people have it in contemplation shortly to meet in general Convention, it may not be improper at this time to insist on the necessity of calling meetings and canvassing the propriety of such a measure, for if there ever was a time when united effort seemed to be necessary on our part that time is *now*, and no portion of our people are more willing to aid in the advancement of our common cause, than the inhabitants of this city.



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