

ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE, FEBRUARY 23, 1895.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

Written for the Democrat and Chronicle by
Addie Denike Newcomb.

He has gone! he has gone! and we sadly
shall miss him
From the ranks of the brave and the noble
to-day.
He has gone but e'er in our hearts we shall
bless him.
The soul of a comrade has now passed
away.
The light has gone out, that has blazed out so
brightly
Unflinching, unwavering, 'mid tempest and
storm.
The friend of his race, the peer of the
noblest;
Who trampled beneath him oppression and
wrong.
He has gone! he has gone! but all mankind
shall praise him
For the sin and the suffering he strove to
allay.
He has gone, but e'er in our hearts we shall
bless him.
The soul of a comrade has now passed
away.
On the page of our nation his name shall be
written.
Who knew the full sting of the hateful
word "slave,"
But who rose in his strength and threw off
his fetters,
"In the land of the free and the home of
the brave."
He has gone! he has gone! but in white God
shall praise him.
And bathe him in light of a golden display.
He has gone, but e'er in our hearts we shall
bless him.
The soul of a comrade has now passed
away.
It seemed not like death but a glorious trans-
lation
From the burden of earth to the glory
above.
He was speaking of freedom, of freedom for
others,
When he passed to the Father of infinite
love.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

—He figured in a revolutionary time and
will be set down in history as one of the
most notable men of a fiery epoch.—*Empira
Gazette*.

—He lived in the stormiest epoch of our
national existence and in his person typi-
fied the woes and oppressions of the black
race.—*Albany Journal*.

—He was an eloquent speaker, a good
debater, a man of business ideas, a de-
voted friend of his race and one of its
most honored and most worthy repre-
sentatives.—*Syracuse Post*.

—Certainly his was the school of ad-
versity, and that he triumphed over ob-
stacles such as would cause the bravest to
turn back shows the unshrinking courage
of the man.—*Troy Times*.

—The struggles of his life were many and
hard, but by force of character he sur-
mounted them all and became by all odds
the most conspicuous negro America has
ever known.—*Utica Observer*.

—As orator, editor and patriot he has
left an impress upon history which will be
ineffaceable. What a commentary is the
career of Frederick Douglass upon the in-
stitution of slavery!—*New York Adver-
tiser*.

—If a list were to be made of the Amer-
icans who have done the greatest service
to large numbers of their fellow citizens,
the name of Frederick Douglass would
have a high place upon it.—*Buffalo Ex-
press*.

—Born a negro slave, he won freedom,
distinction and widespread influence by
his own efforts and his own abilities. Au-
thor, orator, statesman and leader of his
race, he achieved a position and wielded
an influence to which few men can aspire.
—*New York World*.

—There are many distinguished and hon-
ored citizens of African lineage in the
United States, but not one of them, not
all of them, has done so much to advance
the interests of this important element in
American citizenship as the great man who
died suddenly last night in Washington.—
Brooklyn Times.

—The slave-born Fred. Douglass had a
great career. He became the most com-
manding member of his race on this con-
tinent. Emancipation has so far failed to
evolve a rival. His brethren may well
mourn to-day. They have lost a sturdy
friend, one who honored his kind. Peace
to his ashes!—*Troy Press*.

—To the last Mr. Douglass showed a
keen interest in the welfare of the colored
people South as well as North. But he
was by no means a man of one idea. His
sympathy with the general progressive
movements of the time was often made
manifest. His presence will be missed
in many a circle.—*Boston Globe*.

—To New England, and particularly to
Massachusetts, he was looked upon almost
as an adopted son, for it was in the Old
Bay state that his first words as a de-
fender of his race were spoken, and dur-
ing the anti-slavery agitation he was a
prominent and welcome figure at many of
the public meetings held in this section
to protest against the bondage of his race.
—*Boston Herald*.

—Frederick Douglass is not much more
than a name to the present generation, but
in the period of anti-slavery agitation the
negro orator who had escaped from slavery
was a conspicuous figure. He had a nat-
ural gift of eloquence that had been well
cultivated, and that, with a picturesque
appearance and considerable earnestness,
enabled him to plead for his race with un-
common force.—*Philadelphia Times*.

—Mr. Douglass was one of the closest
and most cogent debaters of the slavery
question, and a most earnest and convinc-
ing advocate. On several occasions, in
Syracuse, he was threatened with mob vio-
lence, once or twice was rotten-egged by
slavery apologists and negro-haters; but he
invariably preserved his temper, and was
never provoked to diversion from the dis-
cussion of principle to personal contro-
versy.—*Syracuse Journal*.

—In the person of Frederick Douglass—
whose death occurred yesterday at his
home in Anacostia, a suburb of the na-
tional capital—was embodied the cause of
a race and the highest development it has
reached, and his departure closes the era
of African slavery in America with the
most powerful emphasis, while it affords
the supreme example of the new era of
entire equality which has begun, and de-
spite all discouraging incidents of transi-
tion, is to continue, until the brotherhood
of humanity on lines of character, culti-
vation and principle, is triumphant over
the petty and irrational prejudices of mere
race antagonism.—*Springfield Republican*.

—The rise of Frederick Douglass, who
died at his home in Washington yesterday,
from the condition of a slave boy to that of
an American citizen of acknowledged posi-
tion and wide influence was remarkable
in the same degree that the rise of a
peasant in Russia, for example, to a high
place in the government would be.—*Buffalo
Enquirer*.

—No one could start in life in more for-
bidding and discouraging circumstances
than the boy who was destined to become
celebrated on two continents as Frederick
Douglass, the anti-slavery orator. His
denunciations of slavery had not only the
force of conviction, but the irresistible
quality derived from personal experience.
American annals furnish no more capti-
vating illustration of a self-made man.—
New York Tribune.

—Mr. Douglass was a symmetrical char-
acter, free from the hatred and bitterness
manifested by many of the early abolition-
ists, strong in argument and eloquent in
speech. The people trusted him from the
first, and those who were not unfriendly
to slavery would listen to him when they
would not listen to white men expressing
the same sentiments. His good sense,
tact and judgment made his aggressive-
ness seem to many a sort of pathetic
earnestness, and he won the respect even
of those who insisted on calling themselves
his enemies.—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

—The lesson of Douglass's life is that of
self trust and energetic action. He was
a grand illustration of what a man may
do for himself, his people and his country.
With everything against him he conquered
a place for himself where he was looked
up to, even by his former enemies. He was
not a weak pleader or petitioner, but a man
of initiative. It was not because he ad-
vanced the interests of the negro that men
will honor his memory to-day, but because,
by advancing the interest of the negro he
raised the level of all manhood and made
the whole world better by living in it.—
Brooklyn Eagle.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

A Career Unique.

The celebrated American orator, Frederick Douglass, died in Washington, D. C., February 20, 1895, aged 78 years. He was born a slave in Maryland, 1817. He escaped to Massachusetts, 1838. He founded an anti-slavery newspaper, Rochester, N. Y., 1847. He addressed anti-slavery meetings in the northern states and in Great Britain, with powerful eloquence, for twenty-five years.

He raised for President Lincoln two regiments of negro troops (the Massachusetts 54th and 55th), 1863.

He was appointed by President Grant to the San Domingo Commission, 1871.

He was chosen presidential elector-at-large for the state of New York, 1872.

He was made marshal of the District of Columbia by President Hayes, 1881.

He was recorder of deeds, Washington, under Presidents Garfield and Arthur.

He was sent by President Harrison to Hayti as United States minister, 1889.

He died in Washington, as above mentioned, and was buried at his old home, Rochester, N. Y., in Mount Hope Cemetery, with unusual public honors.

The following sonnets to his memory were written in Paris, France, immediately after his funeral:

I.

I knew the noblest giants of my day,
And he was of them—strong amid the

strong:
But gentle, too; for though he suffered

wrong,
Yet the wrong-doer never heard him say

"Thee, also, do I hate!" . . .

A lover's lay—

No dirge—no doleful requiem-song—
Is what I owe him; for I loved him

long;
As dearly as a younger brother may.

Proud is the happy grief with which I

sing:
For, O my country! in the paths of men

There never walked a grander man

than he!
He was a peer of princes—yea, a king!

Crowned in the shambles and the prison-
pen!

The noblest slave that ever God set

free!

II.

Too many a man is honored overmuch!
The worthiest souls are ever scarce and

few!
And ere we crown him (if at last we do)

They first are outcasts whom we shrink to

touch!
From squalid Bethlehem came one of such,

Born in a manger, and, to human view,
A beggar—yet whom kings did homage

to,
While cattle stood in stalls about His

hutch!

How does it happen that, in every clime,

When any groaning nation of the earth

Hath need of some new leader of a

race,
Or some true prophet of a better time,

The Heavens elect him for his lowly

birth.
Ere they uplift him to his lofty place?

III.

I answer: He must first be taught to

know—
(I say to know, and not to guess)—how

real
Is all the misery which he hopes to

heal!
The high may show a kindness to the low:

Some wealthy lord is generous—he it so:
Yet who except the poor and pinched

can feel
Their pang of poverty? . . .

So for their weal,
They need a champion who has borne their

woe!

As the Arabian pearl, beneath the brine,
Lies hid, and frets and chafes within its

shell,
Till by its torment it grows bright and

pure,
So an illustrious spirit, born to shine,

Must first in some dim depth of sorrow

dwell,
And have a wholesome anguish to en-
dure!

IV.

Be glad, O heart of mine! and dance and

leap
At all these funeral honors paid thy

friend!
This lengthened pageantry, so slow to

end!
These crape-hung flags! these many eyes

that weep!
These cannon, loud enough to wake his

sleep!

These bells that with the trumpets in-
terblend!
These published praises, eloquently
penned!
All telling of an homage wide and deep.

Not since our Land of Liberty was young,
When fiery Otis passed away in flame,
And Patrick Henry's burning lips grew

cold,
Hath mortal silence hushed a braver

tongue
Than of this Bondman, who, in Freedom's

name
spake (like the Byzantine) with "mouth

of gold."?

V.

I ask myself, was it a dreadful dream?—
A wild, disordered vision of the night?—
That the fair country of my dear de-

light
The patriot's paradise, the exile's theme,
The Land of Lords, where Freedom reigns

supreme,
Should once have dared, in God's of-

fended sight,
To sin so great a sin against the light

That, to atone for it, a living stream
Of human blood flowed as a holocaust,

Till every household had a soldier slain!

—O tardy nation, slow agen to learn!
Let not thy former lesson now be lost!
For now thy Northern millions toll in

vain!
Beware! Deny them not the bread they

earn!

VI.

Shall there be hunger in a Land of Corn?
Then if—(shut out from idle mill and

mine)—
Come the bold beggars forth in battle-

line,
Armed and in fury, answering scorn with

scorn—
Oh, who shall lead them in their Hope For-

lorn?
How shall they know him? How shall

they divine
Their true deliverer? I will tell the

sign!
Let him be like the man whom now we

mourn!
A hero high above revenge or greed,

Forbidding bloodshed and restraining

hate,
Chiding and shaming every threat of

crime—
Not rash, but patient, knowing well indeed

That Justice, being blind, must therefore

wait,
And cannot come, except as led by

Time.

VII.

I shout for joy—here on this foreign coast,
Far distant from this sad, obsequious

scene—
To know that now, in everlasting green,

His name shall be his country's future

boast!
For now the vipers who once hissed him

most,
And stung him with their venom, vile

and mean,
(Worse than the lash!—although the lash

was keen)
All praise him! . . .

Heed them not, O gentle ghost!
For Spartacus awaits thee, I am sure,

To bid thee welcome! So, I ween, doth

He—
That mighty spirit of the Spanish Main,

Hero and martyr, Toussaint L'Ouverture!
Yet greater glory is reserved for thee!

For lo! thy laurels have no bloody

stain!

VIII.

A friendship is a hallowed thing! . . .

To-day,
In looking back on this of his and mine

(Which bears a date as old as "Auld

Lang Syne"—
Ere yet a hair of either head was gray)—

A life-long love!—what tribute shall I pay
To such a comrade? Others may en-

twine
Their ivy wreaths and lay them on his

shrine—
But I am thrice a thousand miles away.

I hope he missed me from the mournful

march—
For I, of all his lovers, loved him best;

And love is jealous; and I envy those

Who bore him through his last triumphal

arch,
And up the frosty hillside to his rest,

With all the North to wrap him in its

snows!

IX.

I knew him to the core; so it is I—
And not the many who belaud his name,
Not knowing him save only by his

fame—
Yes, it is mine to speak and testify
What well I know; how sacred, pure and

high

Was the sublime and solitary aim—
Which, like the Pillar of the Cloud and
flame,
He chose (like Israel) to be guided by!

Chief of his tribe, he centered in his soul—
As their evangel—all their hopes and
fears!

—Through all his lifetime, as their

wisest head,
He planned to lead them to some happy

goal!
(How they will lack him in the coming

years,
And wish him back among them from

the dead!)

X.

I knew his latch-string—it hung always

out!
I knew his books, on which he loved to

poro:
His Bible—(no man ever read it more!)
His Izak Walton on Religious Doubt

(And how to settle it by catching trout!)—
His Shakespeare (with a bust above the

door)—
His Talmud—and the never-tiring lore

Which takes a Thousand Nights to tell
about.

And much he loved to con the Concord

Sage,
And Hawthorne's Hester, and the Quaker

Bard,
—I it will be remembered that James Otis

was killed by Hightning.
2 Chrysostom.

And Uncle Tom (the "Cabin" and the

"Key")—
And sometimes he would even read a page

From this poor pen of mine—not for re-

gard
Of my dull verses, but for love for me!

XI.

A wistful loneliness was in his look;
For thus he ever bore upon his face

(As in his heart) the sorrows of his

race:
And yet he gaily—in the walks we took—

Would stop and chatter to a chattering

brook,
And mimic all the creatures of the

place,
And buzz in sharps and croak in double

bass,
And caw in semi-quavers like the rook!

Not one of nature's voices (he declared)—
Whether of beast, or bird, or wind, or

wave—
Had ever chid him for his sable hue!

His fellow-men—and these alone—had

dared,
With cruel taunt, to say to him "Thou

Slave!"
(And were the only brutes he ev-

knew!)

XII.

He oft would bask, through all a winter's

eye,
Before his yule-log, till the fire was

low;
And in his talk, with all his mind

aglow,
What wit and wisdom he would inter-

weave!
It was a hearthstone I was loth to leave!

—Alack! I thither nevermore shall go:
—So, though my song is not a wail of

woe,
Yet, such a thought is sombre—and I

grieve.

Keen was his satire, but the flashing

blade,
Instead of poison on the biting steel,

Bore on its edge a balsam of a kind
Whereby the very wound the weapon made

Was at the very moment sure to heal,
And nevermore to leave a scar behind.

XIII.

If love of music be a mortal sin
(As certain of the saints are wont to

say),
He was a sinner to his dying day!

For like the rest of his melodious kin
A song was what his soul delighted in—

Especially some soft and plaintive lay
Which in the old and weird plantation

way
He loved to echo on his violin.

He touched the strings with more than

rustic art;
For oft a sudden supernatural power

Would swell within him—till he gave a

vent
To all the pent-up passion of his heart!

So his Cremona in a troubled hour
Beguiled for him a care to a content!

XIV.

He came to Paris; and we paced the

streets
As if we twain were truants out of

school!
We clomb aloft where many a carven

ghoul
And grinning gargoyle mocked our giddy

feats;
We made a sport of sitting in the seats

Where Kings of France were wont to

sit and rule!

"A throne," quoth he, "is a pretender's stool—
For kingship is a fraud, and kings are chesits!"
He loved a hero. Nor can I forget
How with uncovered head, in awe profound,
He hailed Colligny's all-too-tardy stone;²
And how, before the tomb of Lafayette,³
He said, "This place is doubly sacred ground—
This patriot had two countries for his own!"

XV.
here might crowd this empty rhyme of mine
With tales of how my travel-eager friend
(Who wished to see the world from end to end)
ped southward from the many-castled Rhine
to languid Italy—a land supine,
Yet soon to rouse herself (as signs portend),
Though why she waits is hard to comprehend:
Thence to the country of the Muses Nine—
To Marathon, and to the Academe;
Thence to the Sphinx at Ghizeh—whom with awe
He answered—and his answer may be guessed:
For there—in Egypt—by her classic stream,
He said that every famous land he saw
Taught him the more to love his own the best!

XVI.
For though his own had been a cruel land,
Wherein, through many a long and groaning year,
Oppression had been bitter and austere
(As harsh as under Pharaoh's iron hand)—
Yet such a slave could never be unmanned;
But ever with a sweet and secret cheer
He felt the day of freedom to be near.
So when it came, he well could understand
That his dear country, long herself a thrall,
Self-chained and self-degraded in the past—
Till, smiting off her shackles with her sword,
She too!—she too!—the chiefest slave of all—
Self-freed and self-uplifted, had at last
Stood forth redeemed, and lovely, and adored!

XVII.
His form was like Apollo's, and his brow
Like what the sculptors carve for Zeus' own—
As godlike as was ever cut in stone!
For if the old god Thor were living now,
With his dark visage, with his frosty pow,
And with his awe-inspiring thunder-tone—
Such a resembling pair (could both be known)
Would pass for twin-born brothers, I avow!

The gods are dead—and all the godlike men
Are dying, too! How fast they disappear!
For Death seems discontent to fill the grave
With common bones, but downward to his den
Drags, like a greedy monster, year by year
The men most missed—the good, the wise, the brave!

XVIII.
Spake I of goodly giants in the land?
And did I boast that I had known them well?
I was a stripling; so I live to tell.
In these degenerate days how great and grand,
How plain and simple were the noble band
Who cried to Heaven against that crime of Hell
Which to the auction-block brought
Babes to sell,
And which on Women burnt a market-brand!

Who were those heroes? Since the roll is known
I need not call it; Lincoln was its chief;
The rest were legion—name them whoso can;
But whoso counts the list of Freedom's Own
Must name the Chattel whom, with pride and grief,
We buried yesterday and called a Man!

XIX.
What final wreath of olive, oak or bay
(Which to withhold would do the dead a wrong)
Is due him for the fetter, yoke and thong
Which, as a slave, he bore for many a day?
If to his wintry burial blooming May
Had come herself, chief mourner of the throng,
And stopt his bier as it was borne along,
And laid a million lilies on his clay.

Not one of all these fading funeral-flowers
Would have survived the frost! . . . So—
(since, alas!
Such honors fade)—my country, hark to me!

Let us, in yonder capitol of ours,
Mold him a statue of enduring brass
Out of the broken chains of slaves set free!
—Theodore Tilton.

Paris, Feb. 23, 1895.

1 Speaking of his slave life in Baltimore, he says in his Autobiography, "I have gathered scattered pages of the Bible from the filthy street-gutters, and have washed and dried them, that in moments of leisure I might get a word or two of wisdom from them."

2 This house was in Rochester, N. Y., and was burned in 1872, with all the books and busts.

3 "Of all the interesting objects in the Museum of Genoa," he wrote, "the one that touched me most was the violin of Paganini—a precious object in my eyes."

2 Admiral de Colligny was murdered in the St. Bartholomew massacre, on the night of August 24, 1572.

3 Lafayette lies in the Picpus cemetery, rue Picpus, Paris.

Frederick Douglass.

[From the New York Independent.]

Frederick Douglass, and not John M. Langston, received the first invitation from the President to take charge of the Freedmen's Bureau, in place of Gen. Howard, whom the President threatens to remove. This unusual proposition from the White House to Mr. Douglass was made as long ago as July, though its distinguished recipient, with characteristic modesty, refrained from making it public.

The greatest black man in the nation did not consent to become a tool of the meanest white. Mr. Douglass declined the President's offer in a very gentlemanly but very positive manner. He was neither willing to facilitate the removal of a man so good and just as Gen. Howard, nor willing to put himself under any obligations to keep the peace with Andrew Johnson. For this prudence and firmness, Mr. Douglass is entitled to the thanks of the country. Much as we should like to see so able and efficient a man in one of the conspicuous offices of the Government, we should be sorry to see him secure his elevation by any of the debasing arts which white men sometimes use.

Mr. Douglass resides at Rochester, in a Republican district, which we hope to see him representing in Congress.

Lately he has been performing an act of brotherly affection, which we cannot resist the temptation of chronicling—even at the risk of making public a portion of what was meant to be wholly a private letter:

"I have been," he writes to the editor of The Independent, "keeping a kind of hotel all summer! My poor brother Perry—after a bondage of fifty-six years, deeply marked by the hardships and sorrows of that hateful condition; and after a separation from me during forty years, as complete as if he had lived on another planet—came to me two months ago, with his family of six, and took up his abode with me. To him—dear old fellow!—one who has carried me on his shoulders many a time (for he is older than I, though my head seems to contradict it) one who defended me from the assaults of bigger boys when I needed defense—I have been mainly devoting myself, and gladly so.

"I have now completed for him a snug little cottage on my own grounds, where the dear old slavery-scarred and long-lost brother may spend in peace, with his family, the remainder of his days. Though no longer young, he is no sluggard. Slavery got the best of his life, but he is still strong and hopeful. I wish his old master could see him now—cheerful, helpful, and 'taking care of himself.' If slavery were not dead, and I did not in some sort wish to forget its terrible hardships, blighting curses, and shocking

horrors, I would try to write a narrative of my brother Perry's bondage. But let the old system go! I would not call its guilty ghost from the depths into which its crimes have cast it. I turn gladly from the darkness of the past to the new and better dispensation now dawning."

We know not how others may be touched by this narrative, but to us it is deeply affecting. It is another proof that truth is stranger than fiction. It is poetic justice rewarding hope deferred. Frederick Douglass is a true, great, and noble man, with a mind fit for a senate, and with a heart fit for a child. When hundreds of the public and prominent men of this country are dead and forgotten, his name will still be remembered. And when his life comes to be written, it will hardly contain a more beautiful and romantic chapter than the pleasing story which we have just borrowed from his graphic pen.