

DOUGLASS FREDERICK

ABOLITION
FANATICISM IN
NEW YORK

Frederick Douglass

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**Frederick Douglass
Abolition Fanaticism in New York /
Speech of a Runaway Slave from
Baltimore, at an Abolition / Meeting
in New York, Held May 11, 1847**

**FLAMING ABOLITION SPEECH DELIVERED BY
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The following Report will show to Marylanders, how a runaway slave talks, when he reaches the Abolition regions of the country. This presumptive negro was even present at the London World's Temperance Convention, last year; and in spite of all the efforts of the American Delegates to prevent it, he palmed off his Abolition bombast upon an audience of 7000 persons! Of this high-handed measure he now makes his boast in New-York, one of the hot-beds of Abolitionism. The Report is given exactly as published in the New-York Tribune. The reader will make his own comments.

Mr. Douglass was introduced to the audience by Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Esq., President of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and, upon taking the platform, was greeted with enthusiastic and long-continued applause by the vast concourse which filled the spacious Tabernacle to overflowing. As soon as the audience became silent, Mr. D. with, at first, a slight degree of embarrassment, addressed them as follows:

"I am very glad to be here. I am very glad to be present at this Anniversary – glad again to mingle my voice with those with whom I have stood identified, with those with whom I have labored, for the last seven years, for the purpose of undoing the burdens of my brethren, and hastening the day of their emancipation.

I do not doubt but that a large portion of this audience will be disappointed, both by the *manner* and the *matter* of what I shall this day set forth. The extraordinary and unmerited eulogies which have been showered upon me, here and elsewhere, have done much to create expectations which, I am well aware, I can never hope to gratify. I am here, a simple man, knowing what I have experienced in Slavery, knowing it to be a bad system, and desiring, by all Christian means, to seek its overthrow. I am not here to please you with an eloquent speech, with a refined and logical address, but to speak to you the sober truths of a heart overborne with gratitude to God that we have in this land, cursed as it is with Slavery, so noble a band to second my efforts and the efforts of others in the noble work of undoing the Yoke of Bondage, with which the majority of the States of this Union are now unfortunately cursed.

Since the last time I had the pleasure of mingling my voice with the voices of my friends on this platform, many interesting and even trying events have occurred to me. I have experienced, within the last eighteen or twenty months, many incidents, all of which it would be interesting to communicate to you; but many of these I shall be compelled to pass over at this time, and confine my remarks to giving a general outline of the manner and spirit with which I have been hailed abroad, and welcomed at the different places which I have visited during my absence of twenty months.

You are aware, doubtless, that my object in going from this country, was to get beyond the reach of the clutch of the man who claimed to own me as his property. I had written a book giving a history of that portion of my life spent in the gall and bitterness and degradation of Slavery, and in which I also identified my oppressors as the perpetrators of some of the most atrocious crimes. This had deeply incensed them against me, and stirred up within them the purpose of revenge, and my whereabouts being known, I believed it necessary for me, if I would preserve my liberty, to leave the shores of America, and take up my abode in some other land, at least until the excitement occasioned by the publication of my Narrative had subsided. I went to England, Monarchical England, to get rid of Democratic Slavery, and I must confess that, at the very threshold, I was satisfied that I had gone to the right place. Say what you will of England – of the degradation – of the poverty – and there is much of it there – say what you will of the oppression and suffering going on in England at this time, there is Liberty there – there is Freedom there, not only for the white man, but for the black man also. The instant I stepped upon the shore, and looked into the faces of the crowd around me, I saw in every man a recognition of my manhood, and an absence, a perfect absence, of everything like that disgusting hate with which we are pursued in this country. [Cheers.] I looked around in vain to see in any man's face a token of the slightest aversion to me on account of my complexion. Even the cabmen demeaned themselves to me as they did to other men, and the very dogs and pigs of old England treated me as a man! I cannot, however, my friends, dwell upon this anti-Prejudice, or rather the many illustrations of the absence of Prejudice against Color in England – but will proceed, at once, to defend the Right and Duty of invoking English aid and English sympathy for the overthrow of American Slavery, for the education of Colored Americans, and to forward in every way, the interests of humanity; inasmuch as the right of appealing to England for aid in overthrowing Slavery in this country, has been called in question, in public meetings and by the press, in this city.

I cannot agree with my friend Mr. Garrison in relation to my love and attachment to this land. I have no love for America, as such; I have no patriotism. I have no country. What country have I? The Institutions of this country do not know me – do not recognize me as a man. I am not thought of, spoken of, in any direction, out of the Anti-Slavery ranks, as a man. I am not thought of or spoken of, except as a piece of property belonging to some *Christian* Slaveholder, and all the Religious and Political Institutions of this Country alike pronounce me a Slave and a chattel. Now, in such a country as this I cannot have patriotism. The only thing that links me to this land is my family, and the painful consciousness that here there are 3,000,000 of my fellow creatures groaning beneath the iron rod of the worst despotism that could be devised even in Pandemonium, – that here are men and brethren who are identified with me by their complexion, identified with me by their hatred of Slavery, identified with me by their love and aspirations for Liberty, identified with me by the stripes upon their backs, their inhuman wrongs and cruel sufferings. This, and this only, attaches me to this land, and brings me here to plead with you, and with this country at large, for the disenthralment of my oppressed countrymen, and to overthrow this system of Slavery which is crushing them to the earth. How can I love a country that dooms 3,000,000 of my brethren, some of them my own kindred, my own brothers, my own sisters, who are now clanking the chains of Slavery upon the plains of the South, whose warm blood is now making fat the soil of Maryland and of Alabama, and over whose crushed spirits rolls the dark shadow of Oppression, shutting out and extinguishing forever the cheering rays of that bright Sun of Liberty, lighted in the souls of all God's children by the omnipotent hand of Deity itself? How can I, I say, love a country thus cursed, thus bedewed with the blood of my brethren? A Country, the Church of which, and the Government of which, and the Constitution of which are in favor of supporting and perpetuating this monstrous system of injustice and blood? I have not, I cannot have, any love for this country, as such, or for its Constitution. I desire to see it overthrown as speedily as possible and its Constitution shivered in a thousand fragments, rather than this foul curse should continue to remain as now. [Hisses and cheers.]

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