

LETTER FROM FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

CARLISLE, (ENG.) JAN 2, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Your own experience, while on your recent serviceable visit to this country, will afford you ample apology (if any be needed) for my silence, during the last two months. The immediate and imperative demands upon my time, by public and private engagements, have left me no favorable opportunity for writing to you. If you have heard little of my movements of late, it is owing to no inactivity on my part, but to the fact that my labors, unlike what they were during your visit, have been confined to parts of the country, where there is no press to chronicle such proceedings. From the day of our reluctant parting on the waters of the 'Mersey,' until now, I have been earnestly and successfully laboring, in connection with our friend H. C. Wright, and Mr. Smith, the secretary, to extend and establish the ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE.

I am glad of the view you take of my intention to remain in this country until next summer, and hope you will be able to satisfy our friends and fellow-laborers in America, of the wisdom of that intention. Were I to consult my own ease, or yield to my inclination, I should at once quit the shores of England, and come home to my family and friends, and to my American field of labor. But the times, and the exigencies of the cause, seem imperatively to demand my presence here. I am now fairly before the public in this country, and have an opportunity of operating upon the public mind, such as can be acquired only by being some time before the public. I have now acquired a position, from which I think I am able to do good service to the cause; and it would be wrong, in my judgment, to abandon it just now. All must confess the desirableness and importance of keeping up a strong anti-slavery sentiment in England. Anti-slavery in England, is Anti-slavery in America—and labor expended in the cause here, is felt there, as it would be easy to prove. The work to be done is to revive and keep alive the anti-slavery sentiment of England. The cause here is far from being what it ought to be. In nine out of ten of all the towns, where, a few years ago, there were active and powerful organizations, there is now no trace of one to be found. This is not as it ought to be, and not as it will be, if proper means be used to produce the desired result. We can ill spare these auxiliaries from the field. The spirit of liberty and of equal justice, whose gigantic arm broke the tyrant's rod, and gave unconditional freedom to 800,000 souls in the West India islands, must be again summoned to the contest. Since the auspicious day, on which it smote the galling fetter from the slave, and, like a tornado, scattered the infernal altars of slavery in the Colonies, it seems to have grounded its weapons, left the conflict, retired from the field, drawn its curtains, and gone to sleep. It is not, however, the sleep of death. The giant is still alive. A few shrill blasts of the trump of freedom will startle him into activity, and open his piercing eye again upon our common foe.

The great and increasing contact of the people of America with the people of England—the social and commercial intercourse, resulting from the abandonment of the restrictive policy on the part of both governments—the interchange of friendly addresses of Peace and kindred societies—the multitude of travellers going to and from each country—the constant reciprocity of religious deputations—the holding of œcumenical, Evangelical conventions, and of World's Temperance Conventions—the vast improvements already made, and still making, in steam navigation—and the increasing facilities for circulating the public opinion of the one country among the people of the other—all admonish the friends of the bondman, in both countries, to greater vigilance, energy and activity, in making all these agents subservient to our righteous cause. Depend upon it, these influences, to which I have adverted, deserve to be watched: they are not of an indifferent character: they will either be used as powerful engines against the cause of human freedom, or in favor of that sacred cause—and the latter result will not come of its own accord. 'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.' The true character of American slavery and of American slaveholders must be fully made known; and, above all, the true character of the American ministers and churches must be exposed. Slavery sends no champions into the field, equal to these. They stick at nothing. There is nothing too mean or wicked for this class to do in defence of slavery. They are the vanguard of the ranks of tyranny. Their audacity is equalled only by their hypocrisy. To carry their point in England, they will pretend (as did Dr. Cox,) to shed tears over the slave, and at the same time, stab the character of his truest friends; denounce slavery as the curse of curses, and yet hug those vile wretches, who are the immediate perpetrators of this curse and crime, to their Christian communion. I say, these must be watched and exposed.

Dr. Cox said, in his letter from London to the New-York Evangelist, speaking of the anti-slavery sentiment of England—'This spirit must be exorcised from England.' In this, I believe he spoke the sentiment of every delegate to the Alliance from America, except Mr. Himes. *This spirit must be exorcised!*—and I have no doubt that the main part of the correspondence of American churches with the churches of this country, will aim at the end set forth by Rev. Dr. Cox. The pure anti-slavery sentiment of this country, like the purity of our first parents, excites the jealousy, envy and wrath of the fiend, as of old.

The American churches and ministers, steeped to their lips in guilt, and covered with the blood of the slave, are anxious to obtain accomplices in their crimes. Cast down from the heaven of purity and freedom themselves, like their father of old, they strive to drag down to pollution the churches of England. But they will not succeed. Their labor will be in vain. The British Alliance has ascertained their true character and design, and has cast them out. The Free Church of Scotland, slowly but surely, will come to the same result. A Free Church Anti-Slavery Society has been formed, and is now actively at work. It numbers among its supporters, the wisest and best of the Free Church ministers. They have sent forth a number of tracts and pamphlets, already. Their rallying-cry is, 'No quarter to slavery! NON-FELLOWSHIP OF SLAVEHOLDERS!' Things look hopeful.

You said in your good letter by the last steamer, that some of my friends in America were not pleased with my being purchased. I expected that would be the case; and I deem no man the less my friend, for not being pleased with it. I enclose a correspondence which took place between friend H. C. Wright and myself, on the subject, which, if you think it worth while, you may publish.

I am ever yours,

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.