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Our Correspondents.

For Frederick Douglass' Paper.

LETTER FROM FRANCIS BARRY.

FRIEND LANGSTON.—You seem to think
you did not charge me with one-ideaism and
that I will be able to escape the charge as all
labor lost. Well, I am not disposed to make
a very serious matter of it, but let us look at
a moment. Your words were: "Your principle
is one-ideaism with a vengeance." And yet
you say you did not charge me with one-ideaism.
That I call "splitting hairs"—making
a distinction without a difference. Who is
a one-idea man? Do you mean a man who
has but one idea? No, for there are
no such men. But a man who makes
some one idea decidedly conspicuous, who
thinks and talks of little else, considers the
idea all important, and should be attended
to in preference to all others. In other
words: a man who cherishes and carries out
a "principle," that is "one ideaism with a
vengeance," and flouts with others for not
carrying it out. Now, I cherish such a principle
(as you define it) and call it upon others;
and what would you urge but one-ideaism?
I did not suppose you meant to
charge that I was all one-ideaism, but that
I was affected with the complaint.

I admit, that a part of my argument, the
effort to show that you cherished one-ideaism,
was entirely useless, for the host part of
your last letter is an eloquent argument in
favor of one-ideaism. I do not mean that
you have but one idea, for you have a
capacious mind stored, but that the principle
you advocate is what may properly be called
one-ideaism.

It is a very noticeable fact that the currents
of your two letters run in opposite directions.
The first, is mainly an argument against
the one-idea policy; the last contains an able
argument in favor of it. You certainly de-
serve credit for impartiality. In your former
article you say: "It seems to me, that
even the most devoted, the most true-hearted
anti-slavery reformer, may know something
besides slavery and its incidents." Again:
"Who dares to say, that the very
leaders of the liberty movement shall not
give a large share of their time to the investigation
and study of Theology, Medicine, and Law?"
And again: "If, then, their right to
study and reflect upon all subjects connected
with the weal of mankind be conceded, who
shall deny them, either directly or indirectly,
the privilege of uttering their views, whenever
a fit and proper occasion shall present itself?"
(See Douglass' Paper, Dec. 15.)

But in your last, you say: "It is the duty
of every reformer, then, who would do all in
his power to advance the reform in which he
is engaged, to give it all his attention and
energy." Again: "To its advancement, I
pen and purse, and tongue and talents must
all be given." In public and in private, in so-
ciety and in solitude, this must be the all-
absorbing subject of his thoughts." (This last
sentence, in the last extracts is mine.) I do
not make these quotations to show that
you have been rowing both ways, but, be-
cause I want your former argument (which
is excellent, rightly applied) to help over-
throw your last position. Indeed, your pro-
position is so utterly untenable, that what
you previously said, is alone sufficient to
overthrow it. You now say, that to some
one reformer, the reformer's energies, time, at-
tention, talents and purse, must "all be
given," it must be the "all-absorbing subject
of his thoughts." I will not say that this is
new or "original" doctrine, but, in my view,
it is a very strange and unreasonable doctrine.
And I cannot do better than to quote again,
in reply to it, the words of your former article:
"Even the leaders of any reform movement
may give a large share of their time, to the
investigation and study of other subjects."
"By study and reflection upon all subjects
connected with the weal of mankind," and
have "the privilege of uttering their views
on all proper occasions."

GERHART SMITH, is a champion of Abolitionism;
he also thoroughly investigates and
defends Temperance, Woman's Rights,
and Land Reform. Will you say that the
attention he gives to these last named sub-
jects unfits him in the least degree for the ad-
vance of the first? Is he, necessarily, any
less faithful to the one, because of his attention
to the others? WILLIAM GODDARD, has
been much ridiculed for his "Nineteen Ar-
ticles." According to your view, he must
have made a decided failure, as a reformer.
His faithful defence of Free Trade must have
unfitted him for the time, at least, for faithful
and effective anti-slavery labor.

What is there no more true or efficient Abolitionist,
whatever his errors may be.

Were people to adopt the plan of giving
to reformers their whole attention, among
a mass of reformers, any one of them could
receive the attention of only a few, and
hence would assuredly fail. This course
has been pursued, to a great extent and as a
result, reformers are still in their infancy.

There are enough reformers in the country
to carry any and all reforms forward to
speedy and certain triumph, if they would
only act in concert. This seems to me to
be no plan as to need no argument. Re-
form can never succeed, if people will give
attention only to some one of them; or if
any one should succeed, it would be at the
expense of the others. And if people invest
all and adopt various reforms, how can

they help educating them on "all proper
occasions?" I admit that some reformers
are peculiarly fitted for labor in some one
direction, and I want no one to work where
he is not qualified, but this peculiar fitness
is wholly the result of a more perfect un-
derstanding of that one subject, owing to
having given, as the result of circumstances
or inclination, that subject especial attention.
But this course does not conduce to
harmonious development and personal com-
pleteness and perfection; and it is never du-
ty or sound policy to sacrifice the idea of
integral development.

You make merry over the idea of my ad-
vocacy of a score of reforms, and prove
yourself the possessor of a no very mean
quantity or quality of wit. I am sorry too
sorry that I cannot say the same of your
philosophy. I am very thankful that I do
not bear the "interests and responsibilities"
of any one reform, on a little, and in so do-
ing, help myself not a little.

You complain that I gave your argument
the go-by. Now, there was one and only
one leading, and important argument in that
letter—namely: that there are many subjects
to which an anti-slavery man is bound to
give attention, and that it is his privilege if
not duty, to speak upon these, even if his
audience should exhibit a proscriptive air.
Have I not stated this fairly? Now, in
reply to this, I urged that truth is insepa-
rable, that being true to one idea, will not
atone for being false to another; that no re-
former was bound to act or go where he
could not carry all his principles with him;
that anti-slavery, law, theology, and in fact
any and all truth could be treated, and at-
tended to in connection. If that was to ignore
your argument, then, I am certainly blind.
If you want me to show the connection of
the various truths and reforms, engage me
an indefinite number of columns in Frederick
Douglass' Paper, and I will undertake the
task. That is a work, however, that Gerrit
Smith, and William Goodell have done very
well before me.

Rational reformers are ever thought to be
"dogmatical," and to substitute assertion
for argument; at the same time they are
frequently pained at the inability of people
to appreciate argument!

I will merely remark here that an audience
may be decidedly pro-slavery, and still not
be mean, and indecent enough to kick a
man or woman out doors, on account of their
complexion; such a society I would willingly
address, as a society, on any subject.

Your critic, but
quarrelsome, fellow-laborer,
FRANCIS BARRY.

BERLIN HEIGHTS, O., Feb. 7, 1855.

For Frederick Douglass' Paper.

LETTER FROM OBSERVER.

MR. EDITOR: Sir.—Instead of an entirely
original letter, I prefer to appear rather as
my own critic, or to make a little more plain
and definite some remarks in my letter of
Jan. 17th. It would, I must admit, have
been better to have examined more critically
the original manuscript. As to that, how-
ever, manuscripts generally appear philoso-
phically, truthful and faultless in the eyes of
the writer—but not always so in the eyes of
the public, nor yet in those of other individ-
uals who may have an equal interest with
ourselves in examining the same subject.

For instance, "Oliver" sees the faults, mis-
takes and "monarchical blunders" of Com-
munism, sets him right, or tries to—and I
suppose thinks he succeeds. Barry sees
those of Langston's, and sets him right—
each one explains, defines, &c. Why, then,
should I not define, explain and set myself
right? To understand one's self, and to be
clearly understood by others, is not only de-
sirable, but important.

Just here, by the bye, I would like to
make a suggestion—not only like to, but I
will make it. It may meet the eye and approval
of some one who will meet its requirements.
It is this—simply this—nothing but this—
that the said one take weekly correspond-
ence, and "criticize" it as in his judg-
ment he may think best. This proposition
presupposes, of course, that the said critic
shall be a man of acknowledged abilities,
qualification and judgment.

The general character of each article, in-
cluding errors in grammar, logic, or general
statements, &c., to be summed up in a few
sentences as convenient. I know that there
are men who would not like to be so critic-
ized; and there are others who would not
need to be criticized. But in the main, I
would, I think, have a good effect, not only
on writers themselves, but make those who
read them more attentive and observing.

Nothing is so desirable at present as to en-
list the public ear. While there are those
who need not and would wish not to come
under the notice of the critic eye, who pre-
sume always to be right, there is another
class who, like myself, are quite conscious
of their errors, and would like to have them
pointed out. Besides, whatever workable
material we have should receive the best
possible direction. We have no time for
flimsy, trashy writings; and those who are
qualified to communicate their sentiments
on important subjects, clearly and success-
fully, should, by some means, be admonished
that they are most appreciated when they do
so.

Still, it may be "the business of some to
eat and drink what will foster happiness—what
will make us sing, life let us cherish, and
leave the weightier matter of the law for
others." But we think as your Assistant
Editor, "w." in his thrilling article of last
week, under the head of "What are we do-
ing?" (the personal of which we would most
earnestly commend to all, and especially to
the writer from whom the quotations above
are taken), truthfully remarks—"This is not
the time for flattery. We should be pointed
as we are—yes, with all the so, if any,
upon our conscience. Let the picture be
a truthful one. We have been basking too
longly amid fantastic unrealities. We
have to deal with thumb-screws, and fetters,
and branding irons, and pro-slavery cler-
gymen, and should be the last people in the
world to be lulled to sleep by pretty songs,
and enamored of pretty pictures."

But how could I help it. Besides, there
are but few who notice or know or care
what you say, except you are assailing his

favorite "ism," or something of the kind.—
There are but few who undertake or pretend
to maintain by their acts and writings any
position, policy or principle. Mr. A. is an
abolitionist, of course, from the fact that he
is a colored man, and must, therefore, to some
extent suffer with the slave. But still he
takes no interest in any feature of the anti-
slavery cause. He neither thinks nor feels
enough to pay two dollars to have the sub-
ject presented to him and his family in its
various attitudes, relations, &c., &c., fifty-two
times in a year. But, doubt his sincerity, and
he would presume to be insulted. Mr. B.,
another very good, pious brother, goes a
half-dozen blocks past the shop of his col-
ored brother to trade with an Irishman or
Dutchman, who always votes against him
and rejects the access of "niggers" to work-
shops, to participate in the manufacture of the
furniture, boots, hats, caps, &c., &c., which
he gives them to make, or buys when I
do. If we will give such our manufacturing
to do, in place of doing it ourselves, we
have no right to complain of their doing it
ALL themselves.

But "I am off the track again." And
while I now write, a poor, trembling and se-
verely frost-bitten fugitive hovers over my
stone, beside me, having just arrived from
the Palmetto State, and awaits the cessation
of the pitiless storm, for me to accompany
him to that branch of the U. G. R. R., that
leads through your city. But I have de-
voted my subject; so much so, that I
fear a critic, such as I have suggested, would
play the mischief me.

Now to the point. I am made to say in
my article aforesaid, that we have been per-
secuted for not regarding the Sabbath as
sacred, to preach for bleeding, dying human-
ity. I intended to say, "for not regarding
the Sabbath as being too sacred to preach,
&c." I don't know. A word, however, in
regard to the Sabbath and the uses which
may be made of it. The uses to which the
Sabbath may be religiously put, and the jus-
tification or utility of our holding an abso-
lute pro-slavery churches, as to how
far our recognition by that union, compli-
ance, &c., implicates us in the sin of
slavery, or tends to retard the progress of
the anti-slavery cause, are questions that
should remain no longer undefined by every
colored community and every colored minis-
ter in the country. That the press and the
pulpit should be used and looked up to for
clear and unqualified expositions in these
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