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From Washington

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From Washington

Washington, April, 1876.

"O spring-time sweet!

Over the hills come thy lovely feet.
The earth's white mantle is cast away;
She clothes herself all in green to-day;
And the little flowers that hid from the cold
Are springing anew from the warm, fresh mould.

"O spring-time sweet!

The whole earth smiles thy coming to greet.
Our hearts to their inmost depths are stirred
By the first spring flower and the song of the bird.
Our sweet, strange feelings no words can find;
They wander like dreams through heart and mind."

In "Exotics," that dainty little volume of translations by a gifted father and daughter, I find these stanzas, part of a charming "Spring Song" from the German. And over and over again, in my morning walks on these lovely April days, does the refrain, "O spring-time sweet!" sing itself in my mind, as I note the blossoming trees, and listen to the joyous songs of the birds, and breathe the soft air, which thrills one with intimations of the coming blessed summer-time. Our parks are beautiful now. The horsechestnuts are laden with graceful leaves of the most exquisite, vivid green, forming a lovely contrast to the dark, shining holly bushes and sombre evergreens. And the purple magnolias are in bloom, filling the air with a fragrance far more delicate than that of the snowy grandiflora. The grass has its summer luxuriance and greenness, and from every tree comes down a perfect shower of bird-songs. In the Treasury grounds the fountain flashes in the sunlight, tulips are in bloom, and great beds of hyacinths, purple and pink and white, and fragrant golden and brown wall-flowers. Weeks ago we found in the woods the trailing arbutus, sweetest of wildwood blossoms, and on the

hill-slopes the delicate houstonia opened its soft blue eyes, in
brave defiance of the chilling winds of March. And now violets
have come - such violets as we rarely see farther North, - velvet-
cheeked and starry-eyed, almost like pansies.

I like to sit under the trees and watch, through the delicately -
leaved branches, this changeful April sky, - broken clouds, now snowy
white, now silvery gray, now almost threatening in their darkness,
swiftly pursuing each other over the soft blue. There is something
strangely fascinating in such a sky, just as there is in some
changeful natures. They are not the most restful, but they are
often very bewitching.

How soothing are all the sights and sounds of spring, after the
noise and strife and vexations of the winter, - the contention of
parties, the reports of public and private dishonesty, the oppression
of the weak, the sufferings of the poor. Often has one felt
tempted to exclaim: -

"My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled!"

But now, when all the outer world is so fair and bright and joyous,
we, too, cannot fail to be more hopeful, to see, through all the
darkness, gleams of light, glimpses of a loving Father's care; and
we will

" -trust that somehow, good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.

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"Behold, we know not anything;

I can but trust that good shall fall
At last - far off - at last - to all,
And every winter change to spring."

On Friday, the 14th inst., the inauguration of the Lincoln monument took place. The exercises were attended by a great concourse of people. I have seen no such gathering of the colored people since the memorable day, years ago, when the Freedmen of the Sea Islands celebrated the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and filled the air with their jubilant shouts and grateful cries, and blessings heaped upon the head of "Massa Linkum." And now, upon the eleventh anniversary of the death of their deliverer, the people come, with quiet, reverent tread and full hearts, to dedicate to his memory the beautiful monument which they have raised by their own exertions. On and on moves the vast procession, numbering thousands, old and young, gray-head and babe, the well-to-do and the wretchedly poor; on foot, on horseback, in carriages, through the broad avenues, past the White House, where the President reviews it. It sweeps around the foot of the Capitol, and pauses at last, six streets below, at Lincoln Park, in which the monument stands, concealed by the stars and stripes, which completely enfold it. Upon the platform were the President, members of the Cabinet, Senators, some of the foreign ministers, and other dignitaries. The exercises began with prayer by a colored clergyman; the Emancipation Proclamation was read by Mr. Burch, of Louisiana; a statement with regard to the origin and progress of the monument was made by Mr. Yeatman, of the Western Sanitary Commission; the Marine Band played "Hail Columbia," the

"Marseillaise," and other selections; an appropriate poem, written for the occasion by Miss Cordelia Ray, a young colored lady, was read; and, at the request of Prof. Langston, who presided on the occasion, the statue was unveiled by the President of the United States. At this moment a salvo of artillery was fired, and shouts and cheers filled the air as the beautiful group stood revealed. The oration was delivered by Frederick Douglas, and was acknowledged by all to be one of his best efforts. It was a fine and close analysis of the character of Lincoln, doing full justice to his many virtues, yet hesitating not to speak frankly of his failings. The orator said well that it was fitting that one who loved truth so entirely should have the whole truth spoken of himself.

Mr. Yeatman's statement was exceedingly interesting. He told us that the first contribution to the monument was made by Charlotte Scott, an old colored woman in Marietta, Ohio, who placed five dollars in the hands of her employer. This was sent to Mr. Yeatman, and other contributions from the colored people came in. One of the colored regiments alone gave \$2,000. The commission for the statue was given to Thomas Ball. It is interesting to know that Mr. Ball had already designed the group, soon after Mr. Lincoln's assassination, without any reference to this monument. The gentleman authorized by the committee to make the selection was delighted with his design, and at once adopted it. The cost was \$17,000. The group is a truly noble work of art, and forms a refreshing contrast to the statues which do not adorn the streets of the Capital. It is in bronze, of colossal size, and stands upon a

granite pedestal. It represents Lincoln standing erect, holding in one hand the Emancipation Proclamation, while the other is extended protectingly above the head of the freed slave who kneels at his feet. Upon the wrists of the latter the shackles hang, broken, and the face is raised with an expression of dawning wonder and joy, which is very pathetic. At first I thought the expression not jubilant enough, and wished the crouching attitude of the slave might be exchanged for the erect, exultant posture of the freeman. But a little reflection convinced me that the idea of the artist is the true one. For the slave is represented at the very moment when his shackles fall; before he can begin to realize the wondrous change; before he has had time to rise. The face of Lincoln has a beautiful, solemn, most benignant expression. Those who have seen him say that the likeness is excellent, and that this is the only statue of him worthy of the name. The hand which holds the proclamation rests upon a sort of pedestal, on the sides of which are medallions of Washington, the shield of Liberty, etc. The monument has a fine position, just at the foot of East Capitol street, directly facing the Capitol, and from the height upon which it stands is visible to a great distance. Beyond the park is an open stretch of country, bounded by woods and hills, which form a fine background.

I hope the day will come when another statue will stand within the same enclosure, - the statue of him who was the

constant urger and helper of Lincoln in his great deed; who did more than any other to perfect the work which the martyred President began, -

"The statesman to his holy trust,
As the Athenian archon, just, -
Struck down, exiled, like him, for truth alone,"

the beloved, the revered, the long-lamented, Sumner!

As we turned our steps homeward after the inauguration exercises, we paused to look at the immense crowd of people collected at the Hammond meeting, on the steps of the east front of the Capitol. It was a wonderful sight. The magnificent flight of steps was converted into a "living wall." They were singing at the moment, and as the great chorus of two thousand voices rose into the air, and "swelled vast to heaven," the effect was truly grand and thrilling.

Apropos of the Hammond and Bentley meetings, which for many weeks have kept up unwearied interest and excitement among us, I must relate a little incident which illustrates the strength of prejudice against color in this community, even among professing Christians. A number of the students of Howard University (colored) have been interested in the meetings, and have frequently attended them. They have gone at various times, and occupied seats in different parts of the house, and the united testimony of all of them - so one of the teachers assures me - is that never, on a single occasion, have they had a question as to their religious experiences, the salvation of their souls, etc., addressed to them by the members of the

Young Men's Christian Association, and others, who in large numbers have gone through the congregation, and addressed such questions to all the other persons present. As some one quaintly expressed it, "Not one of them as much as asked the boys if they 'loved Jesus'!" The Christian messengers were obliged frequently to lean over them, to walk around them, and come into close contact with them in talking to others; but never by any chance did they address their colored brethren. And now the question arises, Was this because they really believe the negro has not a soul to be saved, or are they so thoroughly convinced of his spiritual superiority that they think he does not need their religious counsel and communion?