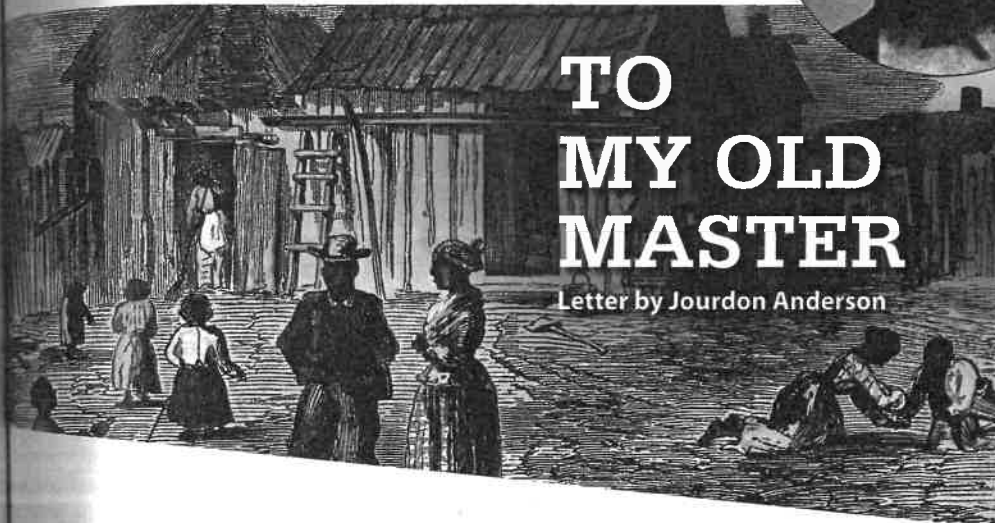




BACKGROUND

Jourdon Anderson (1826–1907) was enslaved for the first 38 years of his life working on a plantation in Tennessee. He and his wife were freed during the Civil War when Union troops came to the plantation where they worked. They took their children to Ohio, where Anderson found work and they lived in freedom. A year later, after the war ended, the man who had held them in slavery wrote Jourdon and asked him to come back to work, as the plantation was in dire straits. Jourdon dictated this letter, which was sent in response. Later, it was published in a newspaper.



SETTING A PURPOSE

As you read, pay attention to the details Anderson includes about his situation. Think about whether he is seriously considering Colonel Anderson's offer to return to work.

Dayton, Ohio

August 7, 1865

To My Old Master, Colonel P.H. Anderson, Big Spring, Tennessee

1 **S**ir: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen,

Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

ANALYZE TONE

Annotate: Mark the sentence in paragraph 1 that describes Jourdon's surprising response to Colonel Anderson's action.

Draw Conclusions: What does the writer convey by describing his response to this incident?



NOTICE & NOTE

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Annotate: Mark the noun clause in the first sentence of paragraph 2.

Analyze: What function does this noun clause serve in the sentence? What does it refer to?

ANALYZE TONE

Annotate: In paragraph 3, mark Anderson's response to the Colonel's offer of freedom.

Analyze: What contrast is there between Anderson and the Colonel's understanding of Anderson's situation?

disposed

(dī-spōzd') *adj.* having a preference, disposition, or tendency.

recompense

(rĕk'am-pĕns) *n.* payment in return for something, such as a service.

reckoning

(rĕk'ə-nĭŋ) *n.* a settlement of accounts.

Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

² I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals¹ and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy,—the folks call her Mrs. Anderson,—and the children—Milly, Jane, and Grundy—go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, “Them colored people were slaves” down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

³ As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were **disposed** to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adams's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker² has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without **recompense**. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of **reckoning** for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.

¹ **victuals** (vĭt'lz): food fit for human consumption.

² **good Maker:** God.



4 In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve—and die, if it come to that—than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form **virtuous** habits.

5 Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me.

From your old servant,

Jourdon Anderson.

virtuous

(vûr'chōō-əs) *adj.* having or showing virtue, especially moral excellence.

ANALYZE LETTERS

Annotate: Mark the sentence that closes the letter.

Analyze: Why does the writer conclude with another example of the Colonel's poor behavior?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions before moving on to the **Analyze the Text** section.

- 1 What message does Anderson send in paragraph 1 when explaining his worries for his former master's safety?
 - A The former master is fortunate not to have been punished.
 - B The former master is a hothead who always gets into trouble.
 - C Anderson wants to have nothing to do with the former master.
 - D Anderson will only return if the former master apologizes for shooting at him.
- 2 What does Anderson ask for to test the Colonel's sincerity?
 - F Freedom for himself and his family
 - G Wages earned while they were enslaved
 - H A role in the Nashville Hospital
 - J Greetings to his old friends
- 3 What does Anderson wish for his daughters?
 - A A return to their childhood homes
 - B Good marriages and jobs
 - C Safety and an education
 - D Good relations with the former master



NOTICE & NOTE

BACKGROUND

Sojourner Truth (c. 1797–1883) was born into slavery. After being sold several times and bearing five children, she escaped from slavery in 1827 and lived the rest of her life as a free woman. A religious woman, she changed her name from Isabella Baumfree to Sojourner Truth in 1843. As an advocate for the rights of African Americans and women, Truth delivered this candid address to a progressive audience not long after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed 3 million enslaved people.

SPEECH TO THE AMERICAN EQUAL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

Argument by Sojourner Truth



Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

PREPARE TO COMPARE

In her *Declaration of Sentiments*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton called for the government and society to grant women equal rights. As you read the words of Sojourner Truth, consider how her claim and reasoning are similar to and different from Stanton's.

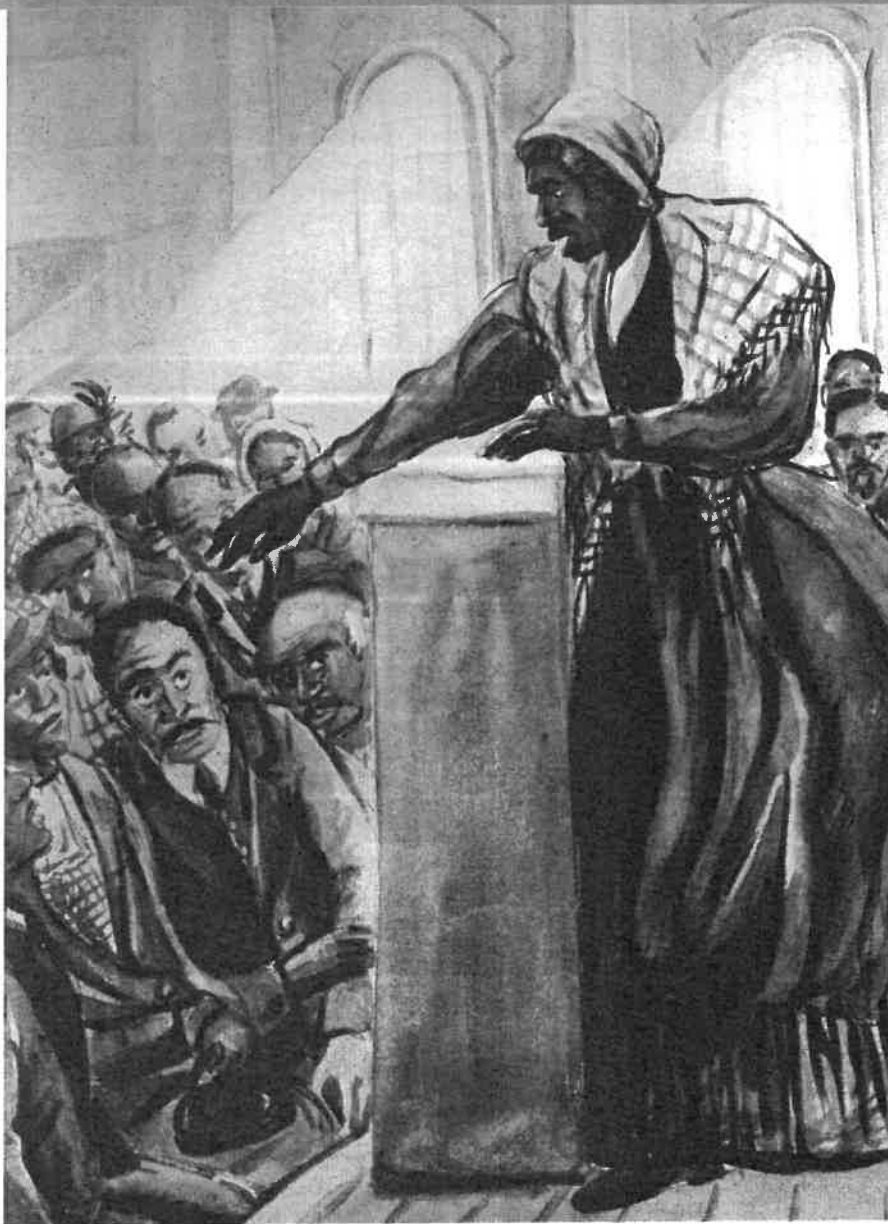
May 9, 1867

ANALYZE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

Annotate: Mark text that illustrates a distinction between Truth and her audience.

Connect: Why does Truth point out this difference? How might it compel an audience to react?

1 My friends, I am rejoiced that you are glad, but I don't know how you will feel when I get through. I come from another field—the country of the slave. They have got their liberty—so much good luck to have slavery partly destroyed; not entirely. I want it root and branch destroyed. Then we will all be free indeed. I feel that if I have to answer for the deeds done in my body just as much as a man, I have a right to have just as much as a man. There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before. So I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring; because if we wait till it is still, it will take a great while to get it going again. . . . I want women to have



their rights. In the courts women have no right, no voice; nobody speaks for them. I wish woman to have her voice there among the pettifoggers.¹ If it is not a fit place for women, it is unfit for men to be there.

- 2 I am above eighty years old; it is about time for me to be going. I have been forty years a slave and forty years free, and would be here forty years more to have equal rights for all. I suppose I am kept here because something remains for me to do; I suppose I am yet to help to break the chain. I have done a great deal of work; as much as a man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and

¹ **pettifoggers:** legal practitioners known for dealing with petty cases and using sometimes questionable methods.

ANALYZE AND EVALUATE ARGUMENTS

Annotate: Mark the reasons Truth says women ought to “have their rights.”

Analyze: What is Sojourner Truth’s main claim? How do these reasons support her argument?



NOTICE & NOTE



consolation

(kŏn-sə-lā'shən) *n.* act of giving comfort.

ANALYZE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

Annotate: A **simile** is a comparison of unlike things that includes the words *like* or *as*. Mark two similes Sojourner Truth uses toward the end of paragraph 2.

Interpret: How do these similes relate to Truth's argument to her audience?

bind grain, keeping up with the cradler;² but men doing no more, got twice as much pay; so with the German women. They work in the field and do as much work, but do not get the pay. We do as much, we eat as much, we want as much. I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of the colored women. I want to keep the thing stirring, now that the ice is cracked. What we want is a little money. You men know that you get as much again as women when you write, or for what you do. When we get our rights we shall not have to come to you for money, for then we shall have money enough in our own pockets; and may be you will ask us for money. But help us now until we get it. It is a good **consolation** to know that when we have got this battle fought we shall not be coming to you any more. You have been having our rights so long, that you think, like a slaveholder, that you own us. I know that it is hard for one who has held the reins for so long to give up; it cuts like a knife. It will feel all the better when it closes up again. I have been in Washington about three years, seeing about these colored people. Now colored men have the right to vote. There ought to be equal rights now more than ever, since colored people have got their freedom.

² **cradler:** worker who uses a scythe-like tool for reaping grain in a crop field.