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Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass is one of the most accomplished writers who happened to have shown the world the situation that most of the slaves went through. In his autobiography, he recounts the experiences that they had in the camps and how this changed their perception about life. According to him, the institution of slavery was used by the masters to earn more profits from their farms. They found cheap labor in the slaves and thus they were able to make more money from the farming they did. The conditions that he talked about in his book include the sleeping conditions, the places where they lived, and their ability to associate with their family members. They were often isolated from their family members to keep them ignorant. Most of them did not know their parents. The main food that they ate as slaves was boiled coarse corn. The cloths included plain stockings and plain shoes. It was often common to see slaves putting on the same types of cloths on a daily basis. He believed that the northerners felt that the slaves were happy. According to him, such conditions did not in any way make them happy. In fact, it made them far much below the standard level of life that any human being should live.

In chapter 6, Frederick Douglass makes a comparison between the lives of the city slaves and those that worked in the plantations. He does this by looking at his life when he was working in the plantations versus when he was in the society. He noticed that the city slaves were happier compared to the farm slaves. They were not treated with a lot of hostility like their counterparts who were forced to work for long hours with meager pay. The city slaves were dressed better compared to the farm slaves. Since the masters in the city were careful not to be charged with hostile treatment of the slaves, they tended to be more friendly. The slaves on the farms faced a lot of cruelty from their masters since no one focused on them.

When Frederick Douglass learnt how to read and write after being taught by Mrs. Auld, his masters wife, it changed his perspective about slavery. He understood that they were not allowed to read and write because it would enlighten them about their rights. He also learnt that slavery denied them some of the most basic rights that every human should. This is what prompted him to plan on how he would escape and help other slaves to learn how to read and write. By being able to read and write, he believed that most of the slaves would go ahead and free themselves from slavery. He also learned that the institution of slavery was a tool used by the masters to deny them chances of living like any other human being who not a slave by then. He acquired the skills as a result of being taught by his master’s wife. When his master found out that this had been going on, he warned his wife against this. Education would make the slaves enlightened and therefore make them uncomfortable with being slaves.

Mr. Covey is the central point in this narrative. The manner in which he treated his slaves shows the extent to which masters could go with their cruelty. He described Mr. Covey as a man who was an expert in both physical and psychological torture. He was also clever enough to hide the acts of cruelty he committed against his slaves using religion. He was known for torturing his slaves physically. He deceived the system by acting as a religious person though he would beat the slaves up often. It is as a result of this that Douglass decides to change from a demoralized slave who had lost hope in life to a freedom-seeking man. He believed that he had the ability to escape from acts of men such as Mr. Covey. His interact with Mr. Covey is also a factor that instilled more confidence in him. He believed that he had his freedom in his hands. He was determined to get out of such a situation.

According to Douglass, religion is a tool that helped the masters to keep the slaves ignorant. Though he was not against most of the values of Christianity, he believed that was against the fact that they supported a slaveholding America. From the beliefs of religion, he expected the Christian slaveholders to act well. He expected them to be against slavery and even help the slaves to live freely like other people. On the contrary, they were like any other masters and even went ahead to use religion to brainwash the slaves. He viewed religion as a tool that the masters used to hide the cruel acts that they did to the slaves.

Douglass changed his name from Bailey to Douglass. He forged documents to help him get out and start fighting for the freedom of other slaves. The fact that he changed his name made it possible for him to escape. Life on the outside was better though there still other challenges that he faced. He was able to make many choices for himself unlike when he was a slave where most of the decisions were made by the master. He was able to get married to a free black woman. Though he was free, he still faced a lot of discrimination from other people. He also felt the urge to keep fighting for the blacks who still slaves. It was his duty as a free black man to fight for the other slaves to be released and slavery to be abolished.

Works cited

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