

January 30, 1851  
Brown, William Wells  
*Northern Warden (Dundee)*

The CHAIRMAN then introduced to the meeting Mr. William Wells Brown, a fugitive slave, who said that he did not know whether to attribute the very large meeting before him to the zeal of the people of this place in behalf of his enslaved countrymen, or to mere curiosity to see his friends and himself; but whether it were zeal or curiosity that had brought so many together, he hoped and trusted that they would all leave the hall feeling a greater degree of hatred to the institution of slavery, and the fire of freedom burning more ardently on the altar of our hearts, as well as a deep determination to go on, and anew to labour for the entire and utter overthrow of slavery. The question of property in man was, in his opinion, settled long ago, although, as far as he had an opportunity of judging, the question occupied no small share of attention and discussion in the earliest movements of the Anti-Slavery Societies. But he thought that the people of this country and of other countries, and the United States to a great extent, had finally concluded that man brings into the world with him the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that no man, or set of men, or community, or government, can legitimately take from him the right that God has given him. (Hear, hear) The fact that man is the only representative of God upon earth—that he is a type of the Creator—is, he thought, a self-evident proposition that he is free : and if a man has a right to liberty, it is without geographical bounds, and without definition of complexion, or physical conformation. If a man with a white face and corresponding colour of hair, has a right to be free, why not a man with a black face and curly hair? the man is a man wherever born, and that is enough; and therefore, man having a right to be, and continue to be, free, must satisfy every one that slavery is wrong. And if it is wrong here, it is wrong in America; and it is there-

The CHAIRMAN then introduced to the meeting Mr. William Wells Brown, a fugitive slave, who said that he did not know whether to attribute the very large meeting before him to the zeal of the people of this place in behalf of his enslaved countrymen, or to mere curiosity to see his friends and himself; but whether it were zeal or curiosity that had brought so many together, he hoped and trusted that they would all leave the hall feeling a greater degree of hatred to the institution of slavery, and the fire of freedom burning more ardently on the altar of our hearts, as well as a deep determination to go on, and anew to labour for the entire and utter overthrow of slavery. The question of property in man was, in his opinion, settled long ago, although, as far as he had an opportunity of judging, the question occupied no small share of attention and discussion in the earliest movements of the Anti-Slavery Societies. But he thought that the people of this country and of other countries, and the United States to a great extent, had finally concluded that man brings into the world with him the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that no man, or set of men, or community, or government, can legitimately take from him the right that God has given him. (Hear, hear) The fact that man is the only representative of God upon earth—that he is a type of the Creator—is, he thought, a self-evident proposition that he is free : and if a man has a right to liberty, it is without geographical bounds, and without definition of complexion, or physical conformation. If a man with a white face and corresponding colour of hair, has a right to be free, why not a man with a black face and curly hair? The man is a man wherever born, and that is enough; and therefore, man having a right to be, and to continue to be, free, must satisfy every one that slavery is wrong. And if it is wrong here, it is wrong in America; and it is there-

January 30, 1851  
Brown, William Wells  
*Northern Warden (Dundee)*

fore the duty of the people of that country to give to the slaves there, amounting to betwixt three and four millions, the same right which they claim to themselves. (Hear, hear.) Pleas were advanced, and objections made, by slave-owners to the emancipation of the slave, because these owners gave their slaves enough to eat and drink, and clothed them well; but he considered such objections futile, for allowing the slave to be well fed and clothed, that did not at all lessen his right to liberty, and the duty of the master to restore it to him. He had often been asked if the slaves in America did not get enough to eat and to wear, and were comfortably housed, and not overworked, nor tyrannically flogged; but while he would not enter minutely into such questions, he would not wish that they should hinge their anti-slavery confession of faith on the mere amelioration of the condition of the slave as a slave —a confession of faith with which American slaveholders would find no fault whatever: but the anti-slavery movement was not commenced for that purpose, but for the purpose of demanding from all slaveholders the unconditional emancipation of the slave. (Hear, hear.) Supposing it were true that the slaves had enough to eat, were well clothed, neither over worked, nor flogged, the evils of slavery were not thereby lessened. Still looking to the system of American slavery, and to the evils and chain of misery and degradation that follow in its train, he could not think that they could rest satisfied until the accursed system were extirpated from the community. The slave is a chattel—a piece of property; and however much the slaveholder may think of his slave, he must keep him in ignorance. The more ignorant a slave is, the more valuable. If a slave is found able to read the name of the God that made him, and go a little further, he is worth probably

fore the duty of the people of that country to give to the slaves there, amounting to betwixt three and four millions, the same right which they claim to themselves. (Hear, hear.) Pleas were advanced, and objections made, by slave-owners to the emancipation of the slave, because these owners gave their slaves enough to eat and drink, and clothed them well; but he considered such objections futile, for allowing the slave to be well fed and clothed, that did not at all lessen his right to liberty, and the duty of the master to restore it to him. He had often been asked if the slaves in America did not get enough to eat and to wear, and were comfortably housed, and not overworked, nor tyrannically flogged; but while he would not enter minutely into such questions, he would not wish that they should hinge their anti-slavery confession of faith on the mere amelioration of the condition of the slave as a slave —a confession of faith with which American slaveholders would find no fault whatever: but the anti-slavery movement was not commenced for that purpose, but for the purpose of demanding from all slaveholders the unconditional emancipation of the slave. (Hear, hear.) Supposing it were true that the slaves had enough to eat, were well clothed, neither over worked, nor flogged, the evils of slavery were not thereby lessened. Still looking to the system of American slavery, and to the evils and chain of misery and degradation that follow in its train, he could not think that they could rest satisfied until the accursed system were extirpated from the community. The slave is a chattel—a piece of property; and however much the slaveholder may think of his slave, he must keep him in ignorance. The more ignorant a slave is, the more valuable. If a slave is found able to read the name of the God that made him, and go a little further, he is worth probably

January 30, 1851  
Brown, William Wells  
*Northern Warden (Dundee)*

twenty pounds less on that account; if he is able to read writing, he is worth twenty pounds less than the former; and if he is able to write a pass to bring him away, he aint worth a penny. (Hear, hear.) He recollects, shortly before running away, of getting a book with pictures which he was endeavouring to make out, when a white man came up and asked him if he could read it, to which he replied in the affirmative, and was told that he was not worth five dollars. Some suppose that slaveholders placed the treatment of their slaves on the same footing as Englishmen did their horses. "If," say they, "he has a good horse, will he not take care of him for his value; and if so, then slaveholders have the same interest in their slaves, and will treat them accordingly." But there was a difference between the two; the one was a brute, the other an intelligent being, and no Englishman asks Parliament for a law to prevent his horse from kicking him. There were in the United States 3,000,000 slaves kept in subjection by 3000 slaveholders; and this by flogging, imprisonment, and even death; and he considered that it was impossible that such a system could be continued unless by the passing of such enactments as that which they had met to denounce. These corrections acted as preventives, and served to keep the other in chains and degradation, but the gist of the matter lay in the fact that these slaveholders were actually paid from the State Exchequer for making such examples of insubordinate slaves. Now let the British Parliament at its next session pass a law giving to every man whose donkey shall kick him a right to complain, and be paid for punishing said offending donkeys, and ere three weeks they would have donkeys kicking all over the kingdom. And this he conceived illustrated the absurdity of compensating slaveholders for punishing offending

twenty pounds less on that account; if he is able to read writing, he is worth twenty pounds less than the former; and if he is able to write a pass to bring him away, he aint worth a penny. (Hear, hear.) He recollects, shortly before running away, of getting a book with pictures which he was endeavouring to make out, when a white man came up and asked him if he could read it, to which he replied in the affirmative, and was told that he was not worth five dollars. Some suppose that slaveholders placed the treatment of their slaves on the same footing as Englishmen did their horses. "If," say they, "he has a good horse, will he not take care of him for his value; and if so, then slaveholders have the same interest in their slaves, and will treat them accordingly." But there was a difference between the two; the one was a brute, the other an intelligent being, and no Englishman asks Parliament for a law to prevent his horse from kicking him. There were in the United States 3,000,000 slaves kept in subjection by 3000 slaveholders; and this by flogging, imprisonment, and even death; and he considered that it was impossible that such a system could be continued unless by the passing of such enactments as that which they had met to denounce. These corrections acted as preventives, and served to keep the other in chains and degradation, but the gist of the matter lay in the fact that these slaveholders were actually paid from the State Exchequer for making such examples of insubordinate slaves. Now let the British Parliament at its next session pass a law giving to every man whose donkey shall kick him a right to complain, and be paid for punishing said offending donkeys, and ere three weeks they would have donkeys kicking all over the kingdom. And this he conceived illustrated the absurdity of compensating slaveholders for punishing offending

January 30, 1851  
Brown, William Wells  
*Northern Warden (Dundee)*

slaves; but he demanded that his enslaved countrymen should be restored to their liberty, and allowed to get their own food and clothing. In speaking of the protection afforded to slaves in the slave states of America, he said that it has been decided that there shall be no higher court of appeal for the slave than the mere will of the master who claims the slave as his property; and thus the slave is a mere animal, and looked upon as unfit to be cited as a witness. In St. Louis a slaveowner beat her girl so unmercifully that she died, and, for mere form sake, the slave owner was tried, and acquitted on the ground that her slave woman did the whipping; and when the slave woman was tried, she was acquitted because she lashed the girl by the command of her mistress. Such was an instance of slaveholding protection and mercy. The United States being divided into the Northern and Southern States, or the free and the slave states, two-thirds of which were slave states, an enormous traffic was carried on in the bodies and souls of men betwixt the two, so enormous that a stranger could not walk through the city of Washington without seeing human beings either hauled to prison or crammed on board the vessels destined to convey them to their thraldom and sufferings. They will behold men in chains, and women cruelly lacerated, and would be led to exclaim—

“What, mothers from their children riven?  
What, God’s own image bought and sold?  
Americans to market driven,  
And bartered as the beasts for gold?

He would relate a few facts to give an idea of what a slave is worth, and how the business is carried on. When he was seventeen years of age his old uncle, who had reared him as a piece of property, sold him for the sum of L.80. The

slave ; but he demanded that his enslaved countrymen should be restored to their liberty, and allowed to get their own food and clothing. In speaking of the protection afforded to slaves in the slave states of America, he said that it has been decided that there shall be no higher court of appeal for the slave than the mere will of the master who claims the slave as his property; and thus the slave is a mere animal, and looked upon as unfit to be cited as a witness. In St. Louis a slaveowner beat her girl so unmercifully that she died, and, for mere form sake, the slave owner was tried, and acquitted on the ground that her

slave woman did the whipping ; and when the slave woman was tried, she was acquitted because she lashed the girl by the command of her mistress. Such was an instance of slaveholding protection and mercy. The United States being divided into the Northern and Southern States, or the free and the slave states, two-thirds of which were slave states, an enormous traffic was carried on in the bodies and souls of men betwixt the two, so enormous that a stranger could not walk through the city of Washington without seeing human beings either hauled to prison or crammed on board the vessels destined to convey them to their thraldom and sufferings. They will behold men in chains, and women cruelly lacerated, and would be led to exclaim—

“What, mothers from their children riven?  
What, God’s own image bought and sold?  
Americans to market driven,  
And bartered as the beasts for gold?

He would relate a few facts to give an idea of what a slave is worth, and how the business is carried on. When he was seventeen years of age his old uncle, who had reared him as a piece of property, sold him for the sum of L.80. The

January 30, 1851  
Brown, William Wells  
*Northern Warden (Dundee)*

man who bought him laid him on the shelf to remain until the market rose. At the end of three years he was sold for L.130, and again laid on the shelf, but the influence of the ideas which had got into his head regarding the right of man to liberty prevailed on him to endeavour to effect his escape, which he did by rolling off the shelf and running to Canada. Probably the gentleman was not satisfied with his bargain, as he remained with him only about three months, but he assured the audience that he was satisfied with it, as he now gloried in freedom, and had escaped the darkest and worst feature of slavery —that which consisted in the confinement and degradation of the intellect. He then adverted to the Fugitive Slave Bill, a bill the parallel of which cannot be found in the wide world, and said that it provided that, if a free man or woman were detected giving a fugitive slave bread, they were liable to be fined in the sum of L.200, and also imprisonment for six months. Such was American generosity and liberality, especially as extended to the African race or their descendants on the American continent; and it was not confined to the Africans only, for they had *prima facie* evidence before them (alluding to Mr Craft) to that effect. He hoped that the bill would be denounced; and that whatever expression would go forth from this meeting would be such a one as would satisfy the people of the United States, and those concerned in the passage, and maintenance, and execution of the bill, that the hearts of the people of this town beat right on the subject of freedom. (Applause.) Everything in the United States was bent to the institution of slavery. The political, the religious, the social— everything must give way to that institution now enslaving one-sixth of the population of the United States. He would bring his remarks to a close by saying that there

man who bought him laid him on the shelf to remain until the market rose. At the end of three years he was sold for L.130, and again laid on the shelf, but the influence of the ideas which had got into his head regarding the right of man to liberty prevailed on him to endeavour to effect his escape, which he did by rolling off the shelf and running to Canada. Probably the gentleman was not satisfied with his bargain, as he remained with him only about three months, but he assured the audience that he was satisfied with it, as he now gloried in freedom, and had escaped the darkest and worst feature of slavery —that which consisted in the confinement and degradation of the intellect. He then adverted to the Fugitive Slave Bill, a bill the parallel of which cannot be found in the wide world, and said that it provided that, if a free man or woman were detected giving a fugitive slave bread, they were liable to be fined in the sum of L.200, and also imprisonment for six months. Such was American generosity and liberality, especially as extended to the African race or their descendants on the American continent; and it was not confined to the Africans only, for they had *prima facie* evidence before them (alluding to Mr Craft) to that effect. **He hoped that the bill would be denounced; and that whatever expression would go forth from this meeting would be such a one as would satisfy the people of the United States, and those concerned in the passage, and maintenance, and execution of the bill, that the hearts of the people of this town beat right on the subject of freedom. (Applause.)** Everything in the United States was bent to the institution of slavery. The political, the religious, the social— everything must give way to that institution now enslaving one-sixth of the population of the United States. He would bring his remarks to a close by saying that there

January 30, 1851  
Brown, William Wells  
*Northern Warden (Dundee)*

was something in the constitution of America to be admired; and, though they had met to denounce the bill in question, yet there was a redeeming quality about the people of the United States, as there were men and women there labouring with all their might for the complete overthrow of American slavery. The anti slavery movement was gaining ground every day; and the time could not be far distant when the institution of American slavery must crumble to the earth. Americans, with all their boast of liberty, philanthropy, and Christianity, were nevertheless the greatest tyrants in the world, and the protection denied him and friends by the stars and stripes, they found under the paws of the British lion. (Applause.) He concluded by apologising for Mr Craft, and trusted they would give him a hearty welcome, reminding them of the poet's effusion—

“Bushy locks and black complexion  
Cannot forfeit nature’s claim;  
Skins may differ, but affection  
Dwells in white and black the same.”

—(Applause.)

was something in the constitution of America to be admired; and, though they had met to denounce the bill in question, yet there was a redeeming quality about the people of the United States, as there were men and women there labouring with all their might for the complete overthrow of American slavery. The anti slavery movement was gaining ground every day; and the time could not be far distant when the institution of American slavery must crumble to the earth. Americans, with all their boast of liberty, philanthropy, and Christianity, were nevertheless the greatest tyrants in the world, and the protection denied him and friends by the stars and stripes, they found under the paws of the British lion. (Applause.) He concluded by apologising for Mr Craft, and trusted they would give him a hearty welcome, reminding them of the poet's effusion—

“ Bushy locks and black complexion  
Cannot forfeit nature’s claim;  
Skins may differ, but affection  
Dwells in white and black the same.”

—(Applause.)