

February 8, 1856
Brown, William W[ells]
Liberator

MR. PRESIDENT.

I have watched with a good deal of interest the discussion between my friend FOSTER and those who have undertaken to correct him, but my own opinion is, that we have something to do aside from preparing a party or any thing else in which to catch or place those who have become Abolitionists, or that may make Abolitionists hereafter. Now, Mr. Chairman, I think the first thing is, the creation of public opinion,—the very thing we have been laboring for year after year; and I was never more impressed with the idea that we needed to labor for the creation of public opinion than last night, when attending a meeting in the Tremont Temple. We know that, for the last two years, the public press and the speakers favorable to freedom, have been condemning those who have taken part in favor of slavery. We know what an outcry was made when John Mitchel declared he wanted a plantation in Alabama, well stocked with healthy slaves. The whole press of Boston was out upon him; in anti-slavery meetings he was condemned, and all the Free Soilers condemned him. Well, last week John Mitchel comes to Boston, and he is welcomed in certain quarters; he is heard patiently, respectfully, and applauded at the conclusion of his address. We know what has been said hitherto respecting Judge Kane. The Legislatures of different States have had before them resolutions condemnatory of Judge Kane, and the public press propose his impeachment by Congress. Now, it is all nonsense to talk about impeaching Judge Kane for his high-handed outrage against freedom, or condemning John Mitchel for his atrocious conduct, as long as we have not a public opinion that will do it. We have not yet created that public opinion in Massachusetts. If Judge

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Kane should come to this city to-morrow, he would be welcomed. Let any body else come here who has been false to freedom and true to slavery, and he would be welcomed. We want all our agents to concentrate their power upon Massachusetts alone; and I was glad to hear you say, Mr. Chairman, that the work of this Society was in Massachusetts, and not out of Massachusetts.

Last evening I went, with many other blockheads, (laughter,) to hear Mr. Toombs. I went determined to receive him without hissing, for I was foolish enough to hope the audience would receive him in perfect silence; but when the audience applauded him, I felt I was called upon to hiss the audience. I gave my hisses to the audience, and not to Mr. Toombs. I felt last night the want of that public opinion in Massachusetts which shall sustain anti-slavery, and condemn slavery in every form. The remarks of the speaker in favor of slavery, although they were not received with that enthusiasm they would have been five or ten years ago, were yet listened to with manifest respect. I was in that hall the night before, when my distinguished friend on my right (Mr. PHILLIPS) gave a lecture, and that platform was forsaken; but last night, it was crowded by the wealth and aristocracy and respectability of the city, anxious to welcome this man from the South; and the *Atlas*, the organ of the Republican party of Boston, announced his arrival yesterday morning, and that he was the guest of an honored gentleman of Boston; spoke of him as being one of the most distinguished of the Southern gentlemen representing the rising State of Georgia,—(it is not a rising State, it is a slave-consuming State);—he was recommended as a

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good speaker and one who would entertain an audience, and the readers were left to infer that they were advised to go there, and give him a respectful hearing. I wanted every one should give him a respectful hearing, and I gave him as respectful a hearing as any body all through the hour and a half that he occupied. What was his aim? To prove that slavery was compatible with Republicanism, with the interest of America, and with the interest of the African; and during his discourse, he said that it was the duty of the Caucasian to look after and rule the African, and the God of justice would protect the Southern people in so doing; (!!) and the people sat there as quietly as could be! Why, Simply because the slaves of this country are poor and degraded and ignorant; and history, and usage, and every thing, so far as this country is concerned, have placed the African, the slave, in a very poor position. Now, it seems to me that when we shall go to work and labor as I think we can, as I think we ought, and as I hope we shall, to create that public opinion that shall do the cause of liberty justice, shall prepare the people of Massachusetts to treat the slaveholder who shall come here to lecture as he ought to be treated, and as anyone who goes into any community for the purpose of vindicating an atrocity equal to that of enslaving men ought to be treated,—I say, that when we shall have created that public opinion, then it will be time enough to talk about forming a party that shall receive these people as they deserve to be received.

What would Mr. FOSTER'S party have done with the people at the Tremont Temple last night? No political party, or church, or creed, could have kept them from the Tremont Temple,—nothing but a conviction

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of the heart, that it was *wrong* to hear any man who should make a labored speech in favor of supporting a system like slavery, could have done it. Last evening, in Boston, a refined audience was addressed by a man not a whit better than the Legrees and Haleys, and the slave-traders whom we read of in books, in newspapers, and who are brought before us by the journals of the South,—a man no better than any one who might drive or whip a slave to death on the banks of the Mississippi,—a man enslaving more than two hundred human beings,—and this man told his audience that slavery is compatible with Christianity, and, to prove that he is not alone in this opinion, said that a ‘respectable clergyman’ of Boston had come to the same conclusion! I was there time enough to cry out, ‘Doctor Adams,’ so that the audience might know that, after all, he was not so ‘respectable’ as the Hon. Mr. Toombs supposed.

We want to make Massachusetts so hot that no Senator Toombs, or any body else, will come into the State to lecture in favor of slavery. We want to create that public opinion that will make Boston so hot that even Dr. Adams shall not be able to remain in any church in this city; but until we do that, it is useless to talk about a political party. Look at those we have now! The more we have, the worse [the] people get, for they seem to run into these new parties for the purpose of doing even worse than they have been allowed to do in the parties they belonged to. We want to create a public opinion that will condemn men for their misdeeds. That is what we must look to to get up a good feeling in the Legislature, in the State, and throughout the country, too. We must make Massachusetts so that a

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