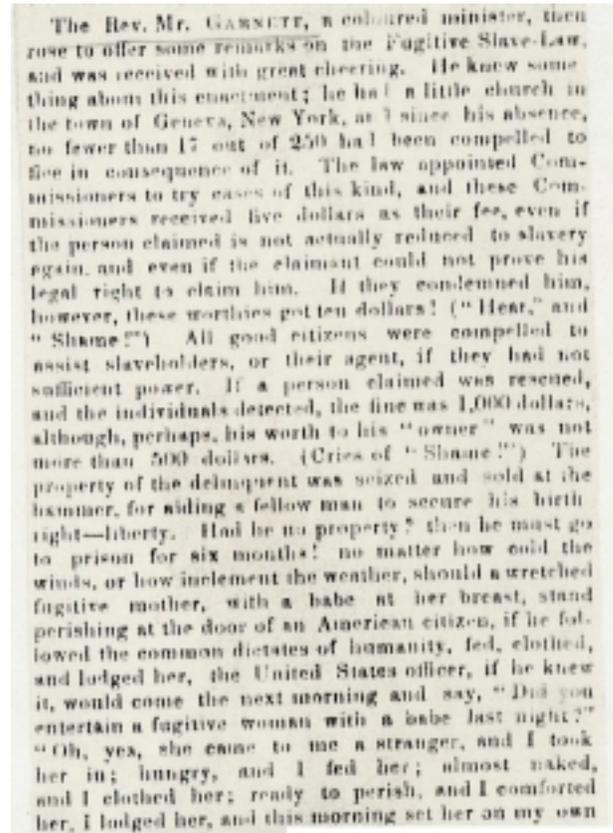


The Rev. Mr. GARNETT, a coloured minister, then rose to offer some remarks on the Fugitive Slave-Law, and was received with great cheering. He knew some thing about this enactment; he had a little church in the town of Geneva, New York, and since his absence, no fewer than 17 out of 250 had been compelled to flee in consequence of it. The law appointed Commissioners to try cases of this kind, and these Commissioners received five dollars as their fee, even if the person claimed is not actually reduced to slavery again, and even if the claimant could not prove his legal right to claim him. If they condemned him, however, these worthies got ten dollars! (“Hear,” and “Shame!”) All good citizens were compelled to assist slaveholders, or their agent, if they had not sufficient power. If a person claimed was rescued, and the individuals detected, the fine was 1,000 dollars, although, perhaps, his worth to his “owner” was not more than 500 dollars. (Cries of “Shame!”) The property of the delinquent was seized and sold at the hammer, for aiding a fellow man to secure his birth right—liberty. Had he no property? then he must go to prison for six months! no matter how cold the winds, or how inclement the weather, should a wretched fugitive mother, with a babe at her breast, stand perishing at the door of an American citizen, if he followed the common dictates of humanity, fed, clothed, and lodged her, the United States officer, if he knew it, would come the next morning and say, “Did you entertain a fugitive woman and a babe last night?” “Oh, yes, she came to me a stranger, and I took her in; hungry, and I fed her; almost naked, and I clothed her; ready to perish, and I comforted her, I lodged her, and this morning set her on my own



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beast, and by this time she is, I hope, far on her way to the land of freedom." (Tremendous cheering.) "Oh, you did, did you? Well, then, I am a United States" Commissioner, and you must pay a thousand dollars!" (Loud hisses.) He had known an opulent and excellent Quaker who had been ruined by having to pay these fines; and when on the last occasion the decision was given against him, and the slaveholders jeered at him, saying they hoped he had learned a lesson, what was his noble reply? "If ever thou seest a poor fugitive flying before the bloodhounds of his southern pursuers, and can find none to help him, send him to Thomas Garrett." (Enthusiastic applause.) He knew this gentleman well: he was a true friend of the black man; and they could never forget one who had made such sacrifices for them. (Hear, hear.) This law had caused great excitement in America. The President of the great Republic of thirty-one independent states, considered it of sufficient importance to demand his attention; and because ten or fifteen black men were present when one of their countrymen was to be taken back, and tried to get him to send him across the lakes to set his foot on the land where waved the British flag, the United States army was called out to put down this "great revolution!" (A laugh.) With reference to the views of the American ministers, he knew that they had hundreds of such men as his friend Mr. Chickering—(cheers)—men who were faithful to the cause of liberty. It was no small matter to be an abolitionist in America; they were in danger, in some parts, of going to bed at night, and "getting up in the morning with their heads off"—just as likely as not. (Great laughter.) The mention of America, made some of the brethren who came over here stand

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up rather straight; but he was troubled with no particular patriotism for that "great" country. He loved liberty, and where there was most of it, there he was the happiest. The speaker then adverted, in no measured terms, to the clerical defenders of the atrocious system, mentioning the name of Dr. Gardner Spring, and his impious reference to "prayer" in connexion with the subject, when he said, that "if by one prayer he could emancipate all the slaves, he dare not breathe it." (Hisses.) He then alluded to Moses Stuart, Mr. Storrs, and Dr. S. H. Cox, and to their recent pro-slavery proceedings—a recital which was received with very loud and oft-repeated marks of disgust and indignation. It was no use to tickle such men with a straw; some bold unflinching measure must be proposed. The North wanted to be spoken to as well as the South, till that abominable system of "negro pews"—(hear)—was done away with. It was the offence given by this system which caused the secession which formed his Church. He knew the young men of America, and could bear testimony to the altered tone of feeling towards religion which had resulted from the writings of these ministerial defenders of slavery; at first, they revolted at the idea of defending slavery from the Bible; now they said, "Go on, Dr. Stuart; go on, Dr. Spring! Yes, what you say is quite true; the Bible does sanction it; and we, therefore, reject you and the Bible along with you!"

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