

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It is no trifling matter, no childish play, to attempt to make a speech upon slavery on this platform, where every phase of the pet institution of this Republic is presented from time to time by these noble men and women, who have devoted their lives to exposing this 'sum of all villanies,' and who have so thoroughly canvassed this question that it is difficult to find a place to put in a word edgewise. It is true the present aspect of the slavery question is enough to make even 'the stones cry out,' yet to make a speech after the gentlemen who have addressed you, and before those who are to follow me, is (to borrow a few lines from Shakespeare) to attempt

'To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish—
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.'

Such being my feelings, I shall not make an attempt at a speech. I desire simply to present you with a few thoughts on this subject, for I think that in times like these, every man can afford to say something. Yes, now when the impudent negro has entered both Houses of Congress, and is stubbornly persisting in remaining there, notwithstanding his seat is closely contested both by Democrats and Republicans; when Wendell Phillips and Henry Wilson are to be driven into Canada, and Gov. Wise is to carry the war into England; when Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Parker Pillsbury, and the entire anti-slavery host is to be swept away by the powers that be; when the free colored people are being more severely

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persecuted than ever; when many men claiming to be the friends of liberty are seeking to preserve an unholy alliance, and are avowing again and again that they have no desire to interfere with the abomination of abominations; and when every thing tends to convince us that we are sleeping on the crater of a slumbering volcano, I may, I think, be pardoned as an interested party, if I express my feelings on some of the points which I have mentioned[,] and others which have been stated in the resolutions.

Within the last six months, certain pro-slavery and Republican newspapers have been discussing the question, 'What shall be done with the free colored people?' Such a question, in any other country than this, would be regarded as monstrous. But then it must be remembered that this is in democratical and republican America, where an enlightened Court of Supreme Ignoramuses (applause) have decided that men with black skins have no rights that men with white skins are 'bound to respect.' Having failed, by barbarous treatment, to blot out the humanity of a race, they now add insult to injury. Like Alexander the Great, when he found out that he could not conquer the [Sevthians], he called them barbarians. But do the men who attempt to discuss this question feel themselves to be slaveholders and we their property? If not, upon what principle of right can we be disposed of? Has a man or a set of men a right to dispose of that which does not belong either to him or to them? Have the whites a greater right to dispose of the blacks, than the blacks have to dispose of the whites? (Several voices—"No, no!") To be sure, the whites have the physical power, and the means to annihilate the blacks, but has the great moral power

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of the American people dwindled down to brute force?

To entertain such a question is creditable to neither the heads nor the hearts of the freemen of the North. (Applause.)

You know too well that much of the wealth and prosperity of this country has been extracted from the sweat and life-blood of the black man. Now, when his intelligence teaches him to refuse to labor without compensation, you seriously entertain a proposition for removing him from the country! Have you overlooked the fact, that this country is *ours* as well as yours—that we have won our rights here, not only by incessant toil, but by shedding our blood in its defence? There is not a battle-field from Maine to Louisiana, that has not been crimsoned by our blood, and whitened by our bones.

It is said that the two races cannot exist together in freedom. Such an idea is preposterous. No one doubts our ability to remain here as slaves; but the moment we become free, we become an antagonistic race, and exceedingly objectionable. Even in freedom, there is but little prejudice against those who are exceedingly degraded, but in proportion as we become educated and elevated, the prejudice increases, and we become antagonistic. And it is only as a cultivated, industrious, and highly moral people, that we are objected to! The Americans have certainly an elevated standard!

Those who advocate our removal say the free blacks are an incumbrance. If such were the fact, I think we could easily trace it to causes outside of us, and within the detestable policy which this government pursues towards us, and which, if removed, the

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objection would cease. When white men, with every advantage and stimulant, become incumbrances, it would not be surprising if colored men, who have but little to hope for, and nothing to aspire to, should be as worthless as themselves, or, as a class, that we should become indolent and imprevident. But the charge is false. We will compare favorably with the Germans, Italians and Irish, who are not oppressed.

In many of the Free States, we are not only deprived of every political and nearly every social right, but we are taxed to support schools and institutions that we are not permitted to enter. In Philadelphia, where there is a larger free colored population than is to be found in any other city in the United States, we are in possession of property, real and personal, to the value of several millions of dollars. We pay taxes enough to support our own poor, and have a handsome surplus left, which goes to support the free schools and other institutions that we are not permitted to enter, and to take care of those poor whites who 'can't take care of themselves.'—
(Laughter and applause.)

The masses of those who have discussed this question, argue that colonization is the remedy. Perhaps it is. There are many reasons and much philosophy in abandoning a country and people who have so diligently sought to crush us. But, then, it must be remembered that there is no other country that is particularly inviting to us, and on this account the masses of the colored people, who *think* for themselves, have believed that the same effort made in working our way up in this country, and in civilizing the whites, would accomplish our object as certain

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and as easy as we could by emigrating to a foreign country, and overcoming the disadvantages of language, climate, low wages, and other obstacles which would tend to embarrass us in a strange country.

This being our country, we have made up our minds to remain in it, and to try to make it worth living in. (Applause.) These are our reasons for not wishing to leave this slavery-cursed land. You are sadly mistaken, if you suppose that we prefer being oppressed here, to being freemen in other countries. The intelligent portion of the colored people are rapidly losing their attachment for this country. But, then, we have ties here, and friends that we are unwilling to leave to their fate. John Brown's sympathizers will never die while we live. (Applause.)

The hardest question that I had to answer in Europe, was,—Why do the free colored people in the United States, who have means, remain in that country?

Europeans, in general, have no confidence in the success of liberty in this country; and they ridiculed the idea of attempting to work out a *moral* victory among a people who trample liberty under their feet, and who think it no more a crime to enslave a man than to work a horse; and who have never, since the establishment of slavery in this country, wanted an apology for enslaving us, or for robbing us of our inalienable rights. A Frenchman said to me, one day, 'You might as well preach fasting to a starving man, as morality to an American.' (Laughter.)

Now, those men who object to giving us our rights, say, 'If we give them their rights, we must invite them to our houses, and mingle with them in marriage.' This is a mistake. We ask only for our

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rights. (Hear.) So far as the social relation is concerned, that must regulate itself. There may be those colored men who have a morbid desire to mingle, socially, among the whites; but I do not think that the desire is greater on our part, than it is on yours. (Laughter and applause.) We all have our prejudices, and our reasons for them. Much of your prejudice against us is, no doubt, on account of the difference in our social and intellectual conditions. Much of our prejudice against you is the result of the injuries we have received at your hands. (Applause.) While I am forced to accord to the people of this country an unparalleled degree of *grossierte*, and especially so towards the colored man, yet, all colored men do not suffer alike. I see many respectable colored men, who complain of being insulted nearly every day in the streets of Boston. I have been more fortunate; I have never been insulted in this city. I can say more; I have no friends among that class of men called pro-slavery (applause); and yet I have met, from every grade in society, the most unequivocal marks of respect. No one insults me; no one ever says a pert thing to me. Even drunken loafers pass me by without unpleasant remarks made in my hearing. I have no friends ashamed to meet me anywhere, or to invite me to their houses, or to visit me in return. I have not one word of complaint to make in this direction—*not one*.

[MR. REMOND. Will my esteemed friend Dr. Rock tell us why it is that he is not insulted? We know that there is a gentleman in this city who goes to the Slave States, and is not insulted; but we know the reason. Will my friend Dr. Rock explain how it is

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that he escapes? This very day, when I had not left this hall more than ten minutes, I was assailed with the remark, 'There's that d—d nigger that spoke this morning.' I consider the Doctor's point an important one, and hope he will explain how he escapes insult.]

DR. ROCK, resuming. I have been speaking only of myself. I cannot speak for Mr. Remond; and you perceive that he has not seen fit to tell us *where* he was, when he was insulted. (Uproarious laughter and applause.)

I confess that I do not feel so thin-skinned, on this color question, as my much-esteemed and very able and eloquent friend, Mr. Remond, seems to feel. I believe there is, to a certain extent, a legitimate prejudice existing in all communities. It is not founded on the accidental distinctions of color or race. Such a prejudice is simply the result of ignorance. But there is a deeper prejudice:—it is of morals and intelligence. If a man feels that I am his inferior, I do not see why he should be expected to associate with me. All men prefer to associate with their equals. The rich prefer to associate together, the learned together, the moral together, and the vicious together; and to attempt to associate the refined with the vulgar, the moral with the vicious, or the anti-slavery with the pro-slavery, is to attempt to mix oil with water.

Besides, every man has a right to choose his company, or to fancy this color more than that. If any man is not pleased with my color, that is his business; and I do not think I have a right to meddle with it. I have neither the time nor the disposition to trouble

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myself because he lacks good taste. (Laughter.) I desire the society of no one, unless it is mutual. If a gentleman takes a seat beside me in a lecture-room, a concert, or a railroad-car, before making the discovery that I am a colored man, and then shows his ill-breeding by appearing uneasy, and finally seeking a seat elsewhere, we are both pleased—he, because he has avoided the presence of a ‘nigger,’ and I that of a *fool*. (Applause.) We are, thenceforward, kept apart by the force of mutual repulsion. There is both truth and poetry in the remark of Swift—‘If a man makes me keep my distance, the comfort is, he keeps his at the same time.’ (Applause.)

The prejudice that I complain of, is that which robs me of my inalienable rights; and which not only closes against me every avenue to wealth and position, but which refuses me even the common facilities for gaining an honest livelihood,—thereby forcing me to remain poor and degraded, and that simply because I am a colored man.

As to the ‘mingling in marriage,’ that has nothing to do with our rights. Certain enemies of the Anti-Slavery movement, when cornered on this question of Human Rights, have a contemptible manner of begging the question, by saying, Why! would you be willing to have your daughter marry a nigger? Just as though your daughter, and everybody else’s daughter, were crazy to marry ‘niggers;’ and the moment you gave the black man his rights, that moment they would seize upon and take him, *nolens volens*! (Laughter.) If this is to be the result of freedom to the blacks, it is indeed sad (laughter); and especially so to the blacks themselves, who are to be still the vic-

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tims—first, of avarice, then of mad love. O, I am almost tempted to complain of the Creator for first giving us such beautiful complexions, and then placing us among a people who are continually trying to extract the virtues from it. (Laughter and applause.) Do you not really pity those fathers who have daughters with such strange affections? (Laughter.) Have you seriously thought of what is to become of those timid young men who have been, for years, trying to muster up courage enough to ‘pop the question’? (Laughter.) What desperate crimes will they not commit on their frail ‘human natur,’ on beholding the darling objects of their affections, like genuine Amazons, bearing off ‘great big niggers’ in triumph? (Laughter and applause.)

My friends, you are brave men. You cannot, I know you will not, suffer this exciting question to pass away without a manly resistance. ‘Only to think’ of the blacks and zamboes dying out with the first generation, the mulattoes with the second, the quadroons with the third, and then, in the fourth generation,—O! horrible to relate,—the twain will be of ‘one flesh.’ These glorious meetings will be abolished. You will not have the pleasure of destroying the Constitution or dissolving the Union. Your ‘occupation’ will be ‘gone;’ and you will not have the pleasure of saying of the blacks, as we can all now say of our democratical amalgamation propagandists, that ‘the time and places that know them now, will shortly know them no more forever.’ (Laughter and applause.)

So far, I am most happy to say, that the practical friends of amalgamation have been pro-slavery *white*

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men, with strong African tendencies, (great laughter,) and one million of mulattoes in the United States demonstrates very clearly the character of *American* prejudice, and the irrepressible antagonism of the races. (Applause.)

Now, my friends, the blacks are not yet disposed of, and it will be some time before we are. We may leave this country quietly, or be driven into Canada or the West Indies, but that does not dispose of us. We are still within speaking and acting distance. At present we are, to all appearances, perfectly indifferent as to the result of this great contest—but appearances are often deceitful. Every man who snores is not asleep. Now, what impression do you think the institution of Slavery at the South, and prejudice at the North, is making upon the Africo-American race in this country? I will tell you. It is making every intelligent colored man hate his country, and swear vengeance against it. I doubt very much whether any considerable number of colored men would, in case of war with any foreign country, take up arms to defend a government which has never ceased to oppress them. (Hear.) There is no country in the civilized world, no matter how despotic, that would abolish our citizenship, or deny us equal privileges with others, or refuse to protect us with its strong arm. (Hear.) The Austrian Government is far preferable to this. We hear enough of French despotism, but the despotism of France, as compared to that of the United States, is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Napoleon watches with a parental eye over the interests of the humblest of his subjects. He is a great statesman, and knows that the

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interests of his subjects are his own interests. But the wicked rulers of this Democratical Government, which lives only by devouring her subjects, and, like the *oura ou asson* of Brazil, which forms its nest of the bones of the animals it has killed, build up and support this despotism by the gold wrung out of the flesh, blood, and bones of the negro. I have no desire to insult the Christian world by a comparison between this unhappy country and France—I would no more think of comparing Napoleon III. with Buchanan the *Last*, than I would the Saviour with Beelzebub. And in case of war between the two countries, the colored man would have everything to gain by fighting on the side of France.

We have suffered too much to be indifferent to the result of a war with any other country. If Governor Banks (who is, no doubt, more deeply interested in the Chicago nomination than in the removal of the word 'white' from our statutes) refuses to give us arms to defend our country, you ought not to be surprised if the opportunity offers, and we should resent it. This is natural. If you tread on a snail, she will shoot out her horns.

At present, the colored population of this country is a third larger than the entire population at the time of the war of the Revolution, in which our fathers took part. To-day, one hundred thousand freemen, capable of bearing arms, and three-quarters of a million of slaves, wild with the enthusiasm caused by the dawn of the glorious opportunity of being able to strike a genuine blow for freedom, will be a power that 'white men' will be 'bound to respect.' Will the blacks fight? Of course they will. The black

interests of his subjects are his own interests. But the wicked rulers of this Democratical Government, which lives only by devouring her subjects, and, like the *oura ou asson* of Brazil, which forms its nest of the bones of the animals it has killed, build up and support this despotism by the gold wrung out of the flesh, blood, and bones of the negro. I have no desire to insult the Christian world by a comparison between this unhappy country and France—I would no more think of comparing Napoleon III. with Buchanan the *Last*, than I would the Saviour with Beelzebub. And in case of war between the two countries, the colored man would have everything to gain by fighting on the side of France.

We have suffered too much to be indifferent to the result of a war with any other country. If Governor Banks (who is, no doubt, more deeply interested in the Chicago nomination than in the removal of the word 'white' from our statutes) refuses to give us arms to defend our country, you ought not to be surprised if the opportunity offers, and we should resent it. This is natural. If you tread on a snail, she will shoot out her horns.

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man will never be neutral—he would not if he could, and he could not if he would. Will he fight for this country right or wrong? This the common sense of every one answers; and when the time comes, and come it will, the black man will give an intelligent answer. And these who are continually seeking new modes to oppress u[s], ought to remember that ‘the lion had need of the mouse.

I am certain that if foreign nations knew of the smothering fires that are in need only of a breath of pure air to fan them into a flame, and the sympathy they would meet with here, they would have less respect for the strength of this government.

Civil and foreign wars are scourges which every Christian man must deprecate. I am certain that colored men are patriotic. No man ever heard of a colored traitor. We love this country, and we love you. Nothing could be more foreign to our desires than the necessity for taking up arms against our own country. But there must be an end to this persecution. We cannot suffer forever. And as Mr. Everett has said, and perhaps truly, that at least civil war must be the result of this conflict, then I would be prepared for it. If the blacks are to be annihilated, then let it be done when we are contending for our rights. We had much better die freemen, than live to be slaves. (Applause.) When Mr. Everett spoke of the terrible scenes which are to close up this conflict, and cited Hayti as an example, he ought to have been honest enough to have stated who were the aggressors, and the terrible crimes and savage barbarities that were resorted to, to re-fasten the shackles on the limbs of the blacks; and to state also that the acts which he spoke

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of were not deliberate crimes committed in cold blood, but the result of the most barbarous treatment that disgraces the pages of history, and which goaded them on to revenge. They were fighting for their liberty, and were perfectly justifiable in annihilating everything that stood in their way. (Applause.)

Mr. Everett quotes from some unknown author, whose name he no doubt felt would not add to his cause. I am certain that it was not from Ardouin's *Etudes sur l'Histoire d'Haiti*,* which is the most perfect and complete history of the Island that has ever been published. But Mr. Everett is not particular to be correct. He hates justice, facts, and black men, and garbles from slaveholders, newspapers, and history, and uses them all to aid him in a bad cause.

He is one of that class of great men who are fond of being exceedingly little. (Applause.) He condemns the blacks for wresting their Independence from the French and English, and driving them from the Island. His arguments remind me of the ignorance of the Greek priest, who, in his condemnation, praised the pictures of Titian, that he refused to accept. 'Your scandalous figures *stand out*,' said he, 'from the canvass like a group of statues.' And, Mr. Everett, 'your negroes are so imbued with the contemptible spirit of liberty, that they will attempt to do on a vast scale what was done in St. Domingo.' As an offset to the quotation which that honored gentleman made in his Faneuil Hall speech, I will read an extract which will give you another idea of Hayti. It shows what may be expected from immediate eman-

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cipation, and what an oppressed people can do alone. It was written by Baron de Vastry, one of the counsellors of Christophe, himself a pure negro, who published some reflections on the state of Hayti, about thirty-five years ago. He says:

'Five and twenty years ago, we are plunged in the most complete ignorance. We had no notion of human society, no idea of happiness, and no powerful feelings. Our faculties, both physical and moral, were so overwhelmed under the load of slavery, that I, myself, who am writing this—I thought the world finished at the line which bounded my sight, and my fellow-countrymen were as ignorant as myself, and more so, if that were possible. I have known many of us who have learned to read and write without the benefit of instruction. Such men have become notaries, attorneys, advocates, judges, administrators, and have astonished the world by the sagacity of their judgment. Others have become sculptors and painters by their own exertions, and have astonished strangers by their works. Others, again, have succeeded as architects, mechanics, and manufacturers; others have worked mines of sulphur, fabricated saltpetre, and made excellent gunpowder, with no other guides than books of chemistry and minerology. And yet the Haytiens do not claim to be a manufacturing and commercial people. Agriculture and arms are our professions. Like the Romans, we go from arms to the plough, and from the plough to arms.' (Applause.)

This is the kind of progress which our humane, democratic government is determined to put a stop to. The negro has no right to become industrious and in-

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telligent. These things only tend to render him more barbarous. It is the lash and ignorance which have raised him to the elevated position which he now holds in this, his paradise.

But, let me tell Mr. Everett a fact which cannot be successfully refuted; and that is, in proportion to the population, Hayti to-day numbers more *finished* scholars than the United States. I do not mean men who pass through a four years' course of study in a college, where it is the *interest* of the Institution to graduate as many as possible; but *educated* gentlemen, who will compare favorably with the best European scholars on the Continent, where they have graduated. Have the brawlers about negro inferiority forgotten that, a few months since, three black gentlemen—Messieurs, Faubert, Dupuy, and Delva, from Hayti, took all the prizes at the reunion of the colleges of France—that the Emperor sent a detachment of his National Guards, with a band of music, to wait upon Mr. Faubert, the gentleman who took the first prize, the prize of Honor, and to congratulate him on his success? This honor was achieved over students from this, and all other countries in the civilized world. I believe that no student from the United States has ever taken even a third prize at the Sorbonne reunions. I know the fact which I state. I was in Paris at the time, and had the honor of an invitation to a banquet given to the *laureats*. Black men have graduated here; but, if monkeys can pass through college in this country, I am certain that it takes *men* to do so in France, (laughter,) and if black men prove themselves equal to the most finished European *savants*, Mr. Everett will need many facts and

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much logic to prove that we are by nature incapacitated for liberty. (Applause.)

Such men as Everett and Wise, Buchanan and Cushing, have such a morbid desire for devouring the blacks, that they can swallow a 'nigger,' as Bishop Butler's knave did a fool, much larger than himself; and if they can, like him, but get his head between their jaws, will carry the rest of him hanging out of their mouths, until by degrees they have digested him.

Now, I belong to that class of fanatics who believ[e] that every man has the same inalienable rights; that any distinctions founded upon color are unjust; and that every man should be judged by his merits; that the black man is not as good as the white man, unless he does as good; if he acts as good, he is as good; if he conducts himself better, he is better. I believe that the outraged slave has not only the same rights as others, but a heavy claim upon you. If there is any human being whose cup of misery is full, it is his. He has nothing to console him. He has no bright future in the distance—no faint glimmerings of hope. Nothing greets him but suffering, and eternal toil without rest. To-night, after his daily labor, he lives in the bosom of his family; he dandles his young babe on his knee; his children play about him; and his grown-up sons and daughters, who have walked several miles to be together, divert each other as best they can from the terrible monotony which is before them. To-morrow!—Great God of Justice! what a change! The mother and babe both on the auction-block,—one to go to a neighboring State, and the other to the far South! The father

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and sons on the plantation, under the cruel driver's lash. The daughters—where are they? aye, where are they?—in the power of the cold-blooded veteran ravisher! And to all this they are obliged to submit. There is no custom, no law, and no constitution to forbid it! There is no public sentiment to forbid it. If the slave says, 'My hands, my body, my mind, myself,' a million of Sharp's rifles are ready to make a sieve of his body!

This is the glorious institution which this present democratical government is seeking to extend and perpetuate in this country, and which has already the controlling power of the government. The Executive, the Legislative, the Military, and the diplomatic powers, are under its immediate control. It says to the Executive, 'Go,' and he goes; to the National Legislature, 'Come,' and it comes; and to the Judiciary, 'Do this,' and it does it. It has now turned the sword of government into an assassin's dagger; and to this the Executive and Judicial authorities are close and confidential associates.

The Republicans are checkmating this power; and, in this respect, I think they are doing a good work. The idea of 'no more slave States' is good. The fewer the better. (Applause.) But they do not carry it far enough. I would have them say, 'No more slavery!' The Republicans, however, have no idea of abolishing slavery. They go against slavery only so far as slavery goes against their interests; and if they keep on lowering their standard, as they have been for the last few months, they will soon say in New England, what they have said already in the Middle States, that the Republican party is not only

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the white man's party, but that 'it aims to place white men and white labor *against* black men and black labor.' Such republicanism is no better than democracy. But, in Massachusetts, there is some life, and many true lovers of liberty in the party, who mean to do right, even if the heavens fall; who intend to make the soil of this old Commonwealth free. To all such men, I am ready to give a hearty God-speed. Those of us who believe slavery to be not only a crime against morals, but against the eternal principles of justice, cannot consistently excuse ourselves from using our whole exertions to bring about its immediate abolition. The contest is now going bravely on. We have only to be true to our principles, and the victory is ours. A host of noble men have now met in collision, with a set of dark intriguing and desperate characters, and the terrible struggle between a slavery oligarchy and a free Republic will soon close, and slavery go down in the tumult, never to rise again. (Loud applause.) Then we will all hail the happy day when we can have a country which recognizes no man as master, and no brother as a slave. (Applause.)

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