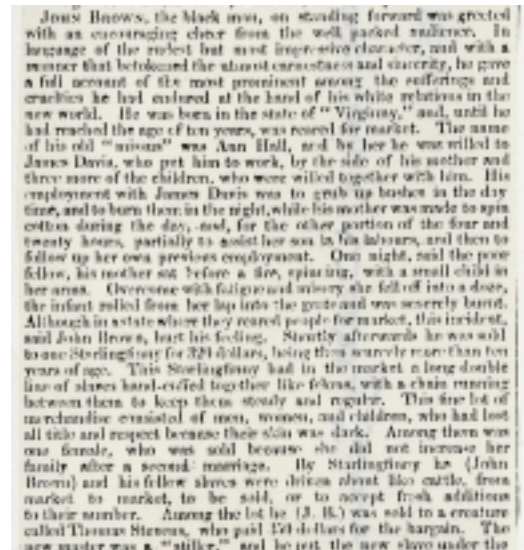


JOHN BROWN, the black man, on standing forward was greeted with an encouraging cheer from the well packed audience. In language of the rudest but most impressive character, and with a manner that betokened the utmost earnestness and sincerity, he gave a full account of the most prominent among the sufferings and cruelties he had endured at the hand of his white relations in the new world. He was born in the state of "Virginny," and, until he had reached the age of ten years, was reared for market. The name of his old "missus" was Ann Hall, and by her he was willed to James Davis, who put him to work, by the side of his mother and three more of the children, who were willed together with him. His employment with James Davis was to grub up bushes in the day time, and to burn them in the night, while his mother was made to spin cotton during the day, and, for the other portion of the four and twenty hours, partially to assist her son in his labours, and then to follow up her own previous employment. One night, said the poor fellow, his mother sat before a fire, spinning, with a small child in her arms. Overcome with fatigue and misery she fell off into a doze, the infant rolled from her lap into the grate and was severely burnt. Although in a state where they reared people for market, this incident, said John Brown, hurt his feeling. Shortly afterwards he was sold to one Starlingfinny for 320 dollars, being then scarcely more than ten years of age. This Starlingfinny had in the market a long double line of slaves hand-cuffed together like felons, with a chain running between them to keep them steady and regular. This fine lot of merchandise consisted of men, women, and children, who had lost all title and respect because their skin was dark. Among them was one female, who was sold because she did not increase her family after a second marriage. By Starlingfinny he (John Brown) and his fellow slaves were driven about like cattle, from market to market, to be sold, or to accept fresh additions to their number. Among the lot he (J.B.) was sold to a creature called Thomas Stevens, who paid 350 dollars for the bargain. The new master was a "stiller," and he put the new slave under the



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“still” to work. One day he sent Brown upon some trifling errand, telling him to look sharp. “I run all de way,” said the narrator, “but when I com back my master wanted to know why I not go quicker. I told him I run. But dat wouldn’t do for him; so he took me and beat me widout mercy, until a gemmen came aloonge and took off his ‘tention.” With this slave-driving governor poor Brown had a miserable time of it. His habits, if the regular performance of cruel tasks can be so called, were to rise in the morning at five o’clock, to breakfast, which consisted of Indian corn baked in the ashes with sometimes the luxurious addition of butter milk, at twelve o’clock, after seven hours’ hard labour; to work again until five upon the strength of the Indian corn, when a supper, composed of materials similar to the first meal, was served out. After supper work was the order of the evening, and frequently of the night too. A fellow worker, a melancholy man, much attracted the attention of John, who soon became intimate with, and questioned him narrowly. He learnt the pitiable history of the wretched fellow. He was a black, who had been reared in England, where his wife and family ties were still repining his loss. As a sailor he went out to Savannah in “Georgy,” but he did not come back again. He was allowed to go on shore, was forced up the country, and very quickly laid hold of by a slave driver, by whom he was sold to John’s master. In conversation with John he used to tell him of the “rules and regulations” in England; of how the English people honoured a black man, if he properly conducted himself, “as much as if he were white as snow.” John then made up his mind to run to England some day; he plainly saw that, though a man in stature, there was no chance for his becoming a man in feeling, so long as he remained in the States. He knew he was not a man even now, for he was desperately ignorant; but he would learn if they would teach him—he would strive hard to be a man in their sight, and to be of consequence to himself and his fellow creatures. When he was 17 years of age he thought he was old enough to run, and he made a start; but he

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was not cunning enough then, and so was quickly caught again.

Referring, then, to one marked incident in his life, John made a reflection, from which politicians may gather and work out an idea. We will give the thought in John's own words, crude as his language may be, for it is sufficiently striking to force its way through the most indistinct expression. One master, he said, with two or three hundred negroes, is quite safe in his own place, and may do what he please, for de slaves must not say a word. De foreign people—de English—tink dat slavery is noting to do wid England, but dare is a great mistake. Suppose Englishman was to go to a slave state, and quarrel wid de slave owner; de slave owner may kill him, or order his slaves to kill him, and no punishment eber reach him at all, for de negroes can't testify against dair master, and must do whatever he bid to do. Dare some rogues in de negroes, but dey are not such big rogues as de white men; for dey only make little strikes for what dey want to satisfy deir hunger, but de white man, he make one big strike all at once, and do more at dat time dan a negroe do all his life. He only make little strike now and den for what he can eat.—John then related how he was made to assist in the capture of a white man who had stolen something from a planter; how he caught the unfortunate victim of Yankee spleen, and held him while the half civilized barbarian, the slave holder, shot at and killed him in John's arms. This he mentioned by way of exemplification of the law that exists among the slave holders. He (John) knew of the murder—he had, in fact, been an unwilling party to it, and yet by the "rules" that guide in those parts, he was not allowed to break the confidence forced upon him, as a black slave of a white murderer. This was the sort of trouble he had to endure for days in and days out. He then related, in pathetic terms, how it happened that he become conscious of the possession of a soul. He had ever been treated as a creature without a soul. It had been decided, said he, that negroes were not endowed with a soul, and that it was not a cruel thing, therefore, to treat them with scorn,

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indifference, or severity; to make the most of their bodies, to work them right out, rather than attempt further to solve the great problem as to whether they really were members of the human family or not. But John Brown, amidst all his difficulties, was permitted to know that he was a being above the creatures of the earth, and that he was amenable to a higher law than any that man could enact. John's old master became struck with the death palsy; "the whole of one side of him died right off;" he lost the use of his tongue, but John understood him perfectly, knew his very wink or nod, and had in consequence to wait upon him. His wife was not anxious that he should live, quoth John, because "she wanted to be missus of all his property, and so his son wanted to be master." The old man, lying on his death bed, seemed to have visions of all his deeds of cruelty towards the slaves. He shook with fear, and would have his gun by his side, in dread that the negroes would slay him in revenge. He trembled all day, and could not bear to be spoken to of the slaves. He was not easy in his mind, as the blacks were, and that event impressed the mind of John Brown with the firm belief that a superior being reigned in the hearts of men, and guided their actions for good, while an evil spirit was ever at work, studying his utmost to counteract the influence, for bad and wicked ends. But amidst all his sufferings and death struggles, John's master never forgot to be cruel. He motioned Brown to fetch him something to eat. Brown misunderstood the indication, and proceeded to wrap up his old governor's feet. Enraged and burning with hate, the wretched old fellow caught the fingers of his slave against the bed post, and tried to crush them with his foot and with his last mortal strain, for, said John, "sure enough he went off then." After the old man's death, poor Brown and his fellows suffered worse than ever at the merciless hands of the new master, the deceased's son, who took a delight in inventing all sorts of modes by which to illtreat and punish the negroes. Worn out with toil and trouble, John Brown started off one day on the road to England.

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He came to a wide path, after much travelling and endurance, and that he thought must be the right road to England, because it was so broad. He walked and ran, and fasted for days and days together, until at length he met a white settler from the States, who, under the garb of friendship, betrayed him and would have given him up; but he contrived to give his captor the slip, and had not been back there since. He strived to prosecute his journey, but could not manage it then, and so after having been nearly re-taken several times, he made bold to retrace his steps, and went with a long tale back to master again. The governor appeared to believe the account John had given of his time, and did not visit the poor fellow with any immediate punishment. But after a delay of six weeks he made his appearance one morning with several men, who forthwith, in obedience to orders, knocked John down with a fierce blow, and carried him off to the whipping post. Here the master indulged his abominable propensity, and whipped the slave till the blood rolled down his back in clots. He continually whipped him; never did he miss an opportunity of punishing him; the wretched man was the marked victim of an insatiable revenge. On one occasion John was desired to catch two little slaves who were to receive punishment. He made a pretence to run after them, but allowed them to escape, and immediately became the object of his master's bad spirit. He jumped upon John's back, called aloud for "Sal, Sal," to bring him his gun. Poor John felt desperate, gave one terrible shake, shook the monster from his back and ran away. The cowardly ruffian fell on his face, and was severely injured. John reckoned himself dead by the law, and went out with the intention of drowning himself; his heart failed him however, and he returned to the reception of that certain punishment in preparation for him. He was fastened to a swing, and whipped backwards and forwards until his tormentors were tired. After that he was made to wear a sort of helmet, which was fixed on his head in such a way that he could not relieve himself from it. It was made of iron. Branching

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out from the cap part were three long horns, at each extremity of which was a bell that "tinkled" wherever he went. This he wore for some time. Another instance of the utter recklessness of this fellow, was one day evinced towards a poor negroe who was suffering and moaning, and praying to God for his deliverance. "What," said the master, "do you think God can do for you?" "He could save me," said the slave. "Can he really," responded the governor; "now I will tie you to that tree and whip you, and you pray to the Almighty, and if he don't help you, we shall see who is the best man then, shan't we?" And he tied the slave to the tree, and beat him while he prayed, but God did not release him. "Now," said he, "you see you have only one master, and that's me." Shortly afterwards this cruel planter was ill, and he implored the slaves to wash his hands, and thought there was blood on his whip, and died cursing himself for all his wicked deeds. Then the slaves thought there must indeed be an Almighty, and so they continued to pray. John Brown very soon made another start to England. He went first to Alabama, suffering as severely as he had ever done, and continually escaping detection by hair breadths. He proceeded along the Ohio river on a self made raft. On arriving at Kentucky, he went to the captain of the steam boat *Neptune*, and pretended that he had missed his master by accident, and wanted to be taken on to New Orleans to meet him. The captain believed the story, and allowed John Brown to remain on board. At New Orleans he managed to steal away from the *Neptune* unobserved, but found to his sorrow that he was still in a slave country. He scarcely knew what to do, and asked advice of a coloured man whom he met in the street. He was told that he would be taken to the lock up at night, and whipped every day until he confessed who his master was, when he would be sent back or fetched away. He studied then what he should do, and at length hit upon a plan. He observed a Yankee coming down the road, and as he looked like a villain he went up to him, as his only remaining chance, and told

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the fellow that, if he pleased he might sell him (John) and put the money in his own pocket. This he thought far preferable to being captured by his old master. The man ultimately agreed, and disposed of John to a trader named Freeman for 500 dollars; he would not give more because there was no bill of sale that could be produced. By Freeman, John was sold for 1,200, to one Jepsey James in the Mississippi State. From James he ran away to St. Lewis, in the Missouri, proceeded to Illinois, and thence to Blue-river, where the friends resided. By them he was treated with the utmost kindness. The blessings he received at their hands were such that at times he could not believe he was himself, and would look up to the roof of a luxuriant bed room, and think he must be dreaming. After remaining some time with the friends he went to Michigan, his aim being to get among the English. By accident he heard that a body of Cornish miners was proceeding up Lake Superior for the purpose of testing some mines in that district. By dint of much perseverance and trouble, John managed to join them, under Capt. Teague, who liked him very well indeed. Captain Teague, when he left, offered to bring John to England with him, but honest John thought he would rather come under his own hopes. He started in the August before last, and after long travelling, safely landed at Liverpool. He made haste to Redruth, but found his old master, Captain Teague, had long since died, and so his (John Brown's) object now was to proceed to Canada, where there was plenty of land, and many means by which he could assist himself and aid his brothers in bondage. He then made an earnest appeal on behalf of his fellow creatures, and professed his need of assistance to accomplish the grand object in his view, namely his own settlement in Upper Canada as a diligent and determined worker in the cause of slave emancipation.

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