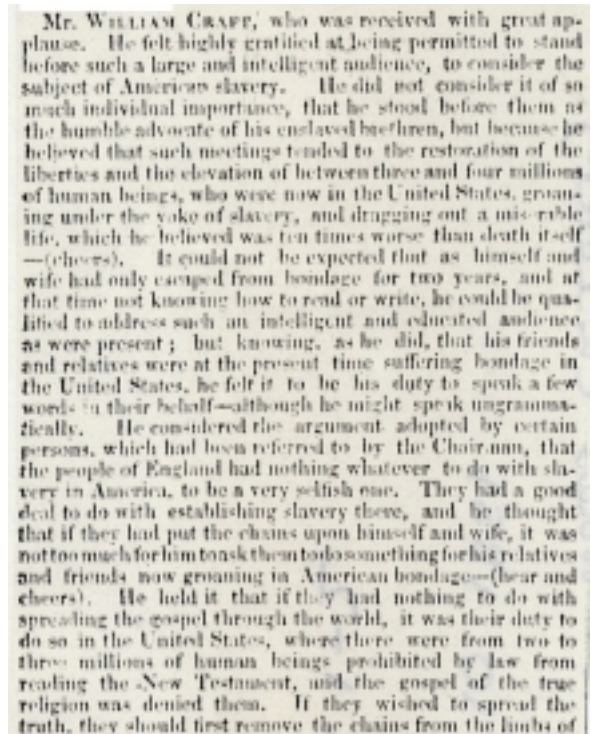


Mr. WILLIAM CRAFT, who was received with great applause. He felt highly gratified at being permitted to stand before such a large and intelligent audience, to consider the subject of American slavery. He did not consider it of so much individual importance, that he stood before them as the humble advocate of his enslaved brethren, but because he believed that such meetings tended to the restoration of the liberties and the elevation of between three and four millions of human beings, who were now in the United States, groaning under the yoke of slavery, and dragging out a miserable life, which he believed was ten times worse than death itself—(cheers). It could not be expected that as himself and wife had only escaped from bondage for two years, and at that time not knowing how to read or write, he could be qualified to address such an intelligent and educated audience as were present; but knowing, as he did, that his friends and relatives were at the present time suffering bondage in the United States, he felt it to be his duty to speak a few words in their behalf—although he might speak ungrammatically. He considered the argument adopted by certain persons, which had been referred to by the Chairman, that the people of England had nothing whatever to do with slavery in America, to be a very selfish one. They had a good deal to do with establishing slavery there, and he thought that if they had put the chains upon himself and wife, it was not too much for him to ask them to do something for his relatives and friends now groaning in American bondage—(hear and cheers). He held that if they had nothing to do with spreading the gospel through the world, it was their duty to do so in the United States, where there were from two to three millions of human beings prohibited by law from reading the New Testament, and the gospel of the true religion was denied them. If they wished to spread the truth, they should first remove the chains from the limbs of



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the sufferers, make them free, and then do what they could to raise them in the scale that God intended his creatures should stand—(cheers.) He then referred to the Bazaar, which is held in Boston, for the benefit of the abolition movement, and solicited contributions from those, who were anxious to do good to the cause of the injured slave. A good deal was said in this country about slave-holders being good Christians—good pious men—who treated slave well, and all that kind of talk; but he believed it was impossible for a man to take his fellow man, keep him in bondage, take all his earnings, and appropriate to them to himself, and be a good Christian—(hear, hear). He did not believe there was a slave owner in the United States who was a Christian, and if they had the true idea of religion, and if the example of Jesus Christ was true, then he said the practice of slave-holders was something else—for it was impossible for that man to be a good Christian, who dealt in slaves, and then read his Bible, offered up his prayers, and said he was one—(laughter and cheers.) He referred to the declaration of independence by the United States, in which men were regarded as equal, and then asked how the institution of slavery could harmonise with that? He believed there was not a slave-owner in the United States, but what knew it to be wrong to hold slaves; and he thought that slave-holders were much worse than any highwaymen that they might meet with in any part of the world. He admitted there was a difference in slave-holders—just such an one as existed between robbers. Some would pick their pockets, and let them go; others would murder them, and then rifle their pockets. Some might think that was rather strong, but if they had felt the chains upon their limbs, as he and his friend had, they would not think so. Mr. Craft then proceeded, very concisely, and with appropriateness of expression, to narrate the particulars of the escape of himself and

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wife from slavery. He was born in Georgia, one of the most cruel states in the Union, where himself and wife resided until the last two years. After much consideration of the difficulties to encounter, they resolved upon a plan of escape. He purchased a male disguise for his wife, and paid for that, and his travelling expenses out of money he had earned for over work, when working at cabinet-making, and which he concealed until the day for action had arrived. His wife feigned to her mistress that her aunt was very ill at Philadelphia, and by seeming to be much affected, she was ultimately permitted to go and see her. Mr. Craft did the same with the master, who requested him to come back again in two or three days, as he had a good deal of work to do—but said he—‘I have not found it convenient as yet’—(laughter.) His wife, attired in the disguise of a gentleman, with green spectacles on, and feigning to be sorely afflicted with inflammatory rheumatism, and he, in attendance, as her slave, succeeded, after many perplexities and much anxiety, in escaping to Philadelphia, a distance of a thousand miles, under the assumed name of William Johnson. As Mrs. Craft could not write, the fugitives were much perplexed about the signatures necessary at the different travelling offices in their route, as the railway companies and others are liable for the price of a slave, if they do not obtain certain particulars of the parties, with whom the slave is travelling. To obviate so serious an impediment to the success of their enterprise, Mrs. Craft had her hands poulticed and bandaged, and feigning to be afflicted in them, she was quite unable to write her name. Out of pity to her apparent helplessness, they were permitted to go on, and the fairness of Mrs. Craft’s complexion placed her above suspicion. After four days’ travelling, they arrived at Philadelphia, and ultimately went to Boston, where an attempt was made to recover them, under the new

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Fugitive Slave Law, but without success. The particulars of this struggle, Mr. Craft left for the succeeding nights, when himself and Mr. Browne gave illustrated lectures on the subject of slavery. Some people might blame them, he said, for practising deception to obtain their liberties—but they must remember the position they were in, the difficulties and hardships they endured, and he thought they would not then blame them for the only available course open to them. The incidents of the journey from Georgia to Philadelphia were graphically delineated, the attentions to the sick ‘master,’ by the old gentleman and his two daughters, in a railway carriage, coming from Wilmington to Richmond, as well as the devotion of the attendants at the hotel, were amusingly related—in fact, the whole scheme of escape evinced a fertility of invention, quickness of perception, and ability in execution, of no ordinary character.

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