

Mr. WILLIAM CRAFT then stood forward, and was received with much cheering. He is a tall athletic man, with finely formed features; but his black complexion and dark curly hair left no doubt as to his African descent. The fluency, diction, and musical tone with which he delivered his address astonished and delighted every hearer. He asked the indulgence of his intelligent audience, because, he said, it could scarcely be expected that a humble person like himself—born a slave, and left, as it were, like a weed to grow without receiving early or proper culture—was sufficiently qualified to do full justice to a subject so comprehensive and important as the one to be brought under consideration. But knowing, as he did, from bitter experience, what slavery was, and also knowing what his relatives and friends were now enduring under that wretched system, he felt he should be ungrateful for the liberty he now fully enjoyed in this free and generous country were he to settle down quietly and not attempt to raise his voice, let it be ever so feeble, in the cause of a down-trodden and degraded country. Mr. Craft first gave one or two extracts from the slave laws of America, which enact that “a slave is in the power of his master, and to him he belongs. A slave shall have no higher appeal than the will of his master. A slave shall be adjudged in all things as a chattel in the hands of his administrators and assigns in all purposes whatsoever,” &c. Having been a slave for twenty-three years, he could say that the principle which governed the slaves in America was not only worse than the laws which govern it, but he believed it to be the most oppressive curse that had ever blasted the happiness of man. After sketching in an interesting manner the way in which the Legislature had annexed various territories to the Slave States, and the cause of the recent civil war in Kansas, Mr. Craft briefly alluded to the education in America, denying

Mr. WILLIAM CRAFT then stood forward, and was received with much cheering. He is a tall athletic man, with finely formed features; but his black complexion and dark curly hair left no doubt as to his African descent. The fluency, diction, and musical tone with which he delivered his address astonished and delighted every hearer. He asked the indulgence of his intelligent audience, because, he said, it could scarcely be expected that a humble person like himself—born a slave, and left, as it were, like a weed to grow without receiving early or proper culture—was sufficiently qualified to do full justice to a subject so comprehensive and important as the one to be brought under consideration. But knowing, as he did, from bitter experience, what slavery was, and also knowing what his relatives and friends were now enduring under that wretched system, he felt he should be ungrateful for the liberty he now fully enjoyed in this free and generous country were he to settle down quietly and not attempt to raise his voice, let it be ever so feeble, in the cause of a down-trodden and degraded country. Mr. Craft first gave one or two extracts from the slave laws of America, which enact that “a slave is in the power of his master, and to him he belongs. A slave shall have no higher appeal than the will of his master. A slave shall be adjudged in all things as a chattel in the hands of his administrators and assigns in all purposes whatsoever,” &c. Having been a slave for twenty-three years, he could say that the principle which governed the slaves in America was not only worse than the laws which govern it, but he believed it to be the most oppressive curse that had ever blasted the happiness of man. After sketching in an interesting manner the way in which the Legislature had annexed various territories to the Slave States, and the cause of the recent civil war in Kansas, Mr. Craft briefly alluded to the education in America, denying

that it was of that universal kind which many persons believed—for the slaveholders not only withheld education from their slaves, but also as much as possible from the free population, well-knowing that the more educated the people were, the more they would abhor slavery. If there was one thing more than another disgraceful to a civilised nation, it was the prohibition of all education to three millions and a half of fellow-beings in the United States. Approaching the subject of his escape, Mr. Craft explained his courtship and marriage with his wife; and then proceeded to give an interesting detail of their escape from Macon to Philadelphia, a distance of one thousand miles. After discussing many plans of escape, he and his wife at last decided that, as she was a fair complexioned quadroon, she might travel as an invalid gentleman, and he as her slave. Mr. Craft had managed whilst a slave to save 220 dollars (£44), having been hired for a period of fourteen years by his owner to a cabinet maker, who paid him for over-time. Part of this money was judiciously and cautiously spent in purchasing clothes for his wife's disguise, and the remainder kept for travelling expenses. Everything being arranged, "passes" for leave of absence were obtained by the slaves from their respective owners, and at Christmas, 1848, a safe retreat was made from Macon during the night time. The plan adopted throughout the journey was this: the wife assumed the character of a young planter, suffering from inflammatory rheumatism; and in order to avoid the disclosure of her inability to write when required to sign her name at the Custom-houses and other places, her right hand was poulticed and put in a sling, and another poultice was applied to her face, to hide her beardless chin. Mr. Craft was the willing, obedient slave of his wife. Many hair-breadth escapes from detection beset them on their journey; but the

that it was of that universal kind which many persons believed—for the slaveholders not only withheld education from their slaves, but also as much as possible from the free population, well-knowing that the more educated the people were, the more would they abhor slavery. If there was one thing more than another disgraceful to a civilised nation, it was the prohibition of all education to three millions and a half of fellow-beings in the United States. Approaching the subject of his escape, Mr. Craft explained his courtship and marriage with his wife; and then proceeded to give an interesting detail of their escape from Macon to Philadelphia, a distance of one thousand miles. After discussing many plans of escape, he and his wife at last decided that, as she was a fair complexioned quadroon, she might travel as an invalid gentleman, and he as her slave. Mr. Craft had managed whilst a slave to save 220 dollars (£44), having been hired for a period of fourteen years by his owner to a cabinet maker, who paid him for over-time. Part of this money was judiciously and cautiously spent in purchasing clothes for his wife's disguise, and the remainder kept for travelling expenses. Everything being arranged, "passes" for leave of absence were obtained by the slaves from their respective owners, and at Christmas, 1848, a safe retreat was made from Macon during the night time. The plan adopted throughout the journey was this: the wife assumed the character of a young planter, suffering from inflammatory rheumatism; and in order to avoid the disclosure of her inability to write when required to sign her name at the Custom-houses and other places, her right hand was poulticed and put in a sling, and another poultice was applied to her face, to hide her beardless chin. Mr. Craft was the willing, obedient slave of his wife. Many hair-breadth escapes from detection beset them on their journey; but the

thought of freedom inspired them with heroic courage. Arrived safely at Charleston, they took steamer to Wilmington (South Carolina); from thence to Virginia and Baltimore, the last slave state at which they stopped. Here the difficulties appeared insurmountable by reason of the "master's" inability to write, or to give a reference to any respectable person in the town of Baltimore. But Providence assisting, both Mr. and Mrs. Craft ultimately arrived in Philadelphia, where the "master" threw off "his" disguise, and the two slaves were free. Consulting in that city with some Abolitionists, it was decided that Boston should be their future home, and they accordingly went to that city. After residing there for some time, the odious Fugitive Slave Law came into operation, and agents were sent to seize Mr. and Mrs. Craft and convey them back to their owners; but, mainly through the aid of the vigilance committee in Boston, the escaped slaves travelled overland through Maine, took steamer from Halifax to Liverpool, and have remained in England up to the present time. Mr. Craft, having finished his interesting narrative, concluded his address by suggesting that the people of England, in order to aim a heavy blow at slavery, should advocate the cultivation of cotton in their own colonies, and send addresses to the religious bodies in America, imploring them to see their influence in abolishing the slave trade.

thought of freedom inspired them with heroic courage. Arrived safely at Charleston, they took steamer to Wilmington (South Carolina); from thence to Virginia and Baltimore, the last slave state at which they stopped. Here the difficulties appeared insurmountable by reason of the "master's" inability to write, or to give a reference to any respectable person in the town of Baltimore. But Providence assisting, both Mr. and Mrs. Craft ultimately arrived in Philadelphia, where the "master" threw off "his" disguise, and the two slaves were free. Consulting in that city with some Abolitionists, it was decided that Boston should be their future home, and they accordingly went to that city. After residing there for some time, the odious Fugitive Slave Law came into operation, and agents were sent to seize Mr. and Mrs. Craft and convey them back to their owners; but, mainly through the aid of the vigilance committee in Boston, the escaped slaves travelled overland through Maine, took steamer from Halifax to Liverpool, and have remained in England up to the present time. Mr. Craft, having finished his interesting narrative, concluded his address by suggesting that the people of England, in order to aim a heavy blow at slavery, should advocate the cultivation of cotton in their own colonies, and send addresses to the religious bodies in America, imploring them to see their influence in abolishing the slave trade.