

The Rev. Mr. Gross, of the African Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, (who on rising was cordially welcomed by the meeting.) Before proceeding to the case of his brother Smith, he asked permission to make a few remarks personal to himself. There was a considerable difference between his present position—standing upon the platform—and that which he formerly occupied on the plantation of his old master. His feelings, on looking around, almost overpowered him. Though accustomed to preaching, it was to men who had been in his own condition. Born a slave, and not possessing the advantages of early or considerable education, he could scarcely hope to interest an audience like the present, but if they would allow him he would address them in the same plain manner in which he was accustomed to speak at home. The first that he knew of his own history was that he found himself upon a slave island, or plantation, in one of the Eastern states of America. How he came there, or why, he knew not, but he was under the care of his parents, and particularly of his mother. As soon as he became fit for service, he was claimed by his master, and from the first day that he was taken from her to work, he found—which he had never known before—what it was to be a slave; and from that day to this he had carried an aching heart. It was true he was now a free man. These hands (which he held forth) were his own; and he had now a general warranty-deed from his earthly master, allowing him (the speaker) the free use of these hands, which were given to him in the first instance by his Master in heaven. His first master (a Mr. East-[hope]) whom he served on the eastern coast of America, lived and died a drunkard; and the speaker was one

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out of 17 slaves—bodies and souls—that were sold to pay his debts. Four times in his life had he (Mr. Gross) been led upon the block, and sold to the highest bidder,—fortunately for himself, on each successive occasion he was sold to a better master,—or at least to one less vile than his predecessor. The fourth and last time was to a Minister of the Gospel,—under whom, though still a slave, he preached for years. If he had not passed into that man's hands he might now have been on the cotton or rice plantations of Georgia. He used to work him (Mr. G.) hard, but said he expected to die some day, and if he continued faithful till his death, he would, by his will, set him free. He, however, began to fear that his old master would live longer than himself, and therefore set about seeking the means of purchasing his freedom,—which his master consented to grant, if he could pay him the price at which he had been bought. Returning to the period of his youth, the speaker narrated how at the time of the sale of himself and forty-six others he entertained no hope of ever gaining his liberty. The first lot sold was his own brother,—whose purchase was immediately warned by the auctioneer that if the slave escaped he, the new master, would lose his money; the slave appealed, however, to his new master against the use of shackles, said he would not run away, and entreated him to buy the next lot—his brother, (the speaker;) the buyer did so; both then promised not to attempt to escape, and entreated him to buy their mother; but he said she was too old, and would not suit him; she was sold to another master. At evening, when they parted, she said to her sons, they would perhaps never see her again on

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earth, that she entreated them to meet her in heaven. The speaker was then fourteen years of age. These words of his mother's made such an impression on his mind as he could never forget. Thirty years have since elapsed, but he has never been able to ascertain where she is, or whether dead or alive, but he doubts not she has long since ceased to wear those fetters which were then upon her person, and he trusts, ere long, to meet her where sorrow and sighing are no more. But before his mother was upon the block, the very next lot to himself was his half-sister—a girl of seventeen, half white, the daughter of his deceased master. Her appearance excited the whole crowd of spectators—before whom she had to stand in full view. When she was put up, her two half-brothers entreated their new master to buy her, but he replied the bidding would, he thought, be over dear. He (Mr. Gross) had been born a slave, and had been up to that time a slave, and amongst slaves, and was then fourteen years of age, but never in all his life had he been so disgusted as on that occasion—nor could he now think without utter disgust and indignation, of what he was [com]pelled then to witness. There was his sister exposed to the gaze of those rude men, who came up to her, and demanded answers from herself to such questions as are usually put to persons like herself on the block. She refused to answer, and the speaker saw the big tears running down her cheeks. He (Mr. Gross) heard the most unsuitable questions put to her, with blood-chilling oaths. Then were his eyes opened to what slavery was, and he thought, had he the chance, he would rather have taken a dark, and died, than have lived to witness such

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atrocities. The buyers, often, have no respect for the feelings of the slaves, nor sense of decency before them. Not to describe their conduct, he would merely state that the slave, equally nude, are exposed, handled, and examined by these buyers exactly as they or as an English horse-dealer would examine a horse that is offered in a fair. His sister was sold for 1,702 dollars. (Sensation.) Let him ask one question, Was that large price paid because she was half white? If she was half white, she could do no more work than a person wholly white,—nor than if she had been wholly black. Then for what reason was the extra price paid? Simply because, though the blood of the white man flowed in her veins, she was beyond the law that protected the white owners, and they could use her as they pleased. When he (the speaker) thought of those scenes of the slave block, he was led to ask, was there any man or woman under the sun, having human feelings, that would not hate slavery?—The speaker entered into some further affecting particulars as to the parting with his mother, the influence of her advice upon himself, the conflicting feelings which he had from time to time experienced, and the strong temptation which he had felt to run away from slavery. He said the misery of slavery did not consist in hunger, or poor diet, or exposure to heat, or lashes—these are evils belonging to slavery, and which a slave soon forgets,—but that which preys upon his mind is the thought that his wife and his children and nearest relatives may any day or hour be sold and sent away where he will see them no more. Sometimes immediately after marriage, husband and wife are thus separated. The husband and father selected to

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be sent away, after enjoying an evening with his children—if that can be called enjoyment—when he thinks that at any moment they may be separated for ever by the will and fiat of another—in the dead of night is aroused, the handcuffs are put on him, and he is ordered to march; if he thinks to resist, to overcome the overseer and escape, the sight of the loaded revolver, and the threat of the instant receipt of its contents, compel him to submit. Could the American people make a law to stop the selling of slaves, it would abolish half the misery of the system. But there is no relief from the perpetual dread of separation. Slaves have feelings, just the same as other men. The speaker related how strongly he was tempted to run away from his old master, but the advice of his wife prevailed with him; she said—I know it is hard to be a slave, but it is no harder for you than for me; besides, if you run away to Canada with the hope of getting me there also, before you can effect my removal, the master, expecting it, will have sold me and sent me away,—where you will never know. He committed himself to God in prayer; and God had heard his prayer; he prayed for conversion and God had given him that; he prayed for freedom, and God gave him that; he prayed for the freedom of his wife and children, and God had given him that; and he trusted the like would be the case with his brother, Lewis Smith. When both were slaves they each gave their word to the other—he (Mr. Gross,) a preacher, on one side of the street, and Lewis Smith, a deacon or leader of the congregation opposite, that if one got liberty first he would help the other. When he (Mr. Gross) had gained his liberty, Mr. Smith reminded him of the promise; he

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(Mr. Gross) acknowledged its validity, but said there was a still nearer claim upon him, and that was the release of his wife. His own liberty had cost him 1,000 dollars, of which he had saved 700 dollars out of his earnings, and he preached and collected the remaining 300 dollars. His wife and children remained in slavery. Their master said their value was 3,200 dollars, but if he could raise sixteen hundred dollars he would release them. The speaker joined a company of twenty-six men, went to California, worked in the gold diggings, and procured and saved the money for their release. Never was he so proud in all his life as on the day when they received their liberty; he felt as if he had become sixteen feet high. (A laugh.) He was as light as a feather. [The speaker is a tall, broad-shouldered, full-faced negro, with athletic limbs, thick lips, and curly hair.] He felt to-night—though his wife was a little poor-looking creature, and only weighing 115lb.—he felt that if he had received 200,000,000 dollars, it would not make him so happy. After giving other particulars concerning his own release, Mr. Gross proceeded to state the case of his friend Lewis Smith. Smith was clever at well-sinking, and also at almost all kinds of miscellaneous jobs, and, in the course of eighteen years had saved up 300 dollars, when an opportunity offered of purchasing his freedom if he could pay the price, 1,000 dollars, for which his master had mortgaged him. He (Mr. Gross) then set to work, preached, prayed, and travelled, and collected, and raised the necessary 700 dollars. Smith's master's creditor, Mr. Homberg, then offered to release his wife and seven children for 6,000

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dollars. Among the children were two lads of fifteen and seventeen years, for which the creditor said he could get 1,500 dollars a piece. Though 6,000 dollars seemed an almost hopeless case, yet he and his friends set to work and collected 1,200 dollars, for which the wife and three children were released. 4,800 dollars were still necessary to procure the liberation of the remaining four. The friends of slaves and abolition in America are liberal, and claims come oft upon them, which they liberally meet; after having done so much, the recommended this appeal to be made in England, to friends of the oppressed slaves, upon whom such claims have not so often been made.....Before closing, Mr. Gross related some particulars of his interview with the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher—(cheers)—and the way in which that gentleman first investigated and then took up this case. Having satisfied himself as to the truth of all the facts, and the genuineness of the letters promised from gentlemen whose handwriting he knew, he asked Mr. Gross if he could preach, and, after learning his modest statement respecting himself, did not urge a request to occupy the pulpit, but, at the close of one of his own discourses, produced some of the letters, related the case to his congregation, told them there were two coloured brethren present, in the congregation—(alluding to himself and Mr. Smith, connected with this case,)—and desired them to plant themselves in the doorways so that the congregation could not leave without an opportunity of offering their contributions. Mr. Beecher himself brought up the first hatful of offerings. It was by such means the money for the release of Mrs. Lewis Smith and three children was obtained; and the

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