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large portion of his countrymen of their liberties, and the Americans immediately take that reception to heart, and it exercises great influence upon them. No meeting could be held in this country, no matter for what purpose, but especially of a moral and religious character, to which the slaveholders of America were not anxious to send representatives (hear). If a world's Evangelical Alliance was projected, or a world's Temperance Convention was held in England, slavery was sure to be represented (hear). If a Peace Congress was called together in Paris, slavery was present. And why was that? Because the slaveholders wished to make slavery appear before the world as good and tolerable a thing as possible. Among the first persons whom he (Mr. Brown) saw upon the floor of the Paris Peace Congress were two slaveholders from America, who had come over to England in the same steam-vessel as himself. Whether they were or were not delegates he could not say; but they sat among, and had the same badge or card of admission as the delegates, and yet it was known to a number of the members of Congress that those men were slaveholders (hear, hear). Now had those individuals been received in Paris as they should have been received consistently with their true characters—as men stealers—it would have created a great stir in the United States. Had they been regarded in the same manner as people would unhesitatingly

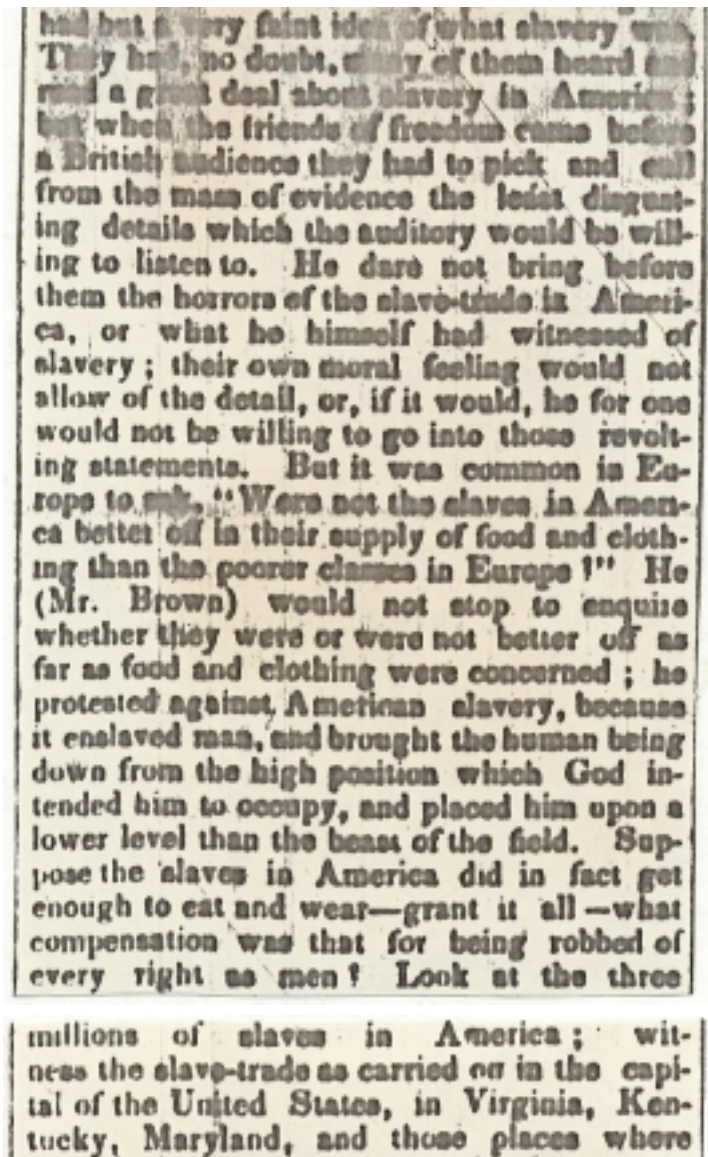
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look upon a horse-thief, or one who committed [...] high-handed act of injustice against his fellowmen, they would not have dared to remain in that Congress ; but, as it was, they continued there as any other member, until the close of the sitting. He (Mr Brown). however, thanked God that the anti-slavery cause had made such progress within the last twenty years, that if slaveholders were sent over to represent the United States in a World's Evangelical Alliance, some Garrison would make his appearance on the outside when the meeting was adjourned, and let the friends of freedom throughout Europe know that slaveholders had been there ; and thus they would be prevented accomplishing that which they had designed (hear, hear, and cheers). If at a great Temperance Convention slaveholders were sent here to represent America, some Douglass would there make his appearance, and create such a stir as would defeat their purposes ; and if they got up a World's Peace Congress, some fugitive slave, like himself, would break loose from his chains, make his appearance upon the platform, and let the people know that slavery was still in existence in the United States, and that it was not that respectable thing in reality which some American delegates would fain have it appear (cheers). Although an American himself, he (Mr. Brown) received more protection in England than he should in the United States. The people of England

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had but a very faint idea of what slavery was. They had, no doubt, many of them heard and read a great deal about slavery in America ; but when the friends of freedom came before a British audience they had to pick and cull from the mass of evidence the least disgusting details which the auditory would be willing to listen to. He dare not bring before them the horrors of the slave-trade in America, or what he himself had witnessed of slavery ; their own moral feeling would not allow of the detail, or, if it would, he for one would not be willing to go into those revolting statements. But it was common in Europe to ask, "Were not the slaves in America better off in their supply of food and clothing than the poorer classes in Europe ?" He (Mr. Brown) would not stop to enquire whether they were or were not better off as far as food and clothing were concerned ; he protested against American slavery, because it enslaved man, and brought the human being down from the high position which God intended him to occupy, and placed him upon a lower level than the beast of the field. Suppose the slaves in America did in fact get enough to eat and wear—grant it all—what compensation was that for being robbed of every right as men ? Look at the three millions of slaves in America ; witness the slave-trade as carried on in the capital of the United States, in Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, and those places where



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slaves were raised for the supply of the southern market : look at the internal slave-trade, and then ask whether food and clothing was any compensation whatever for the deprivation which the slaves underwent? He (Mr. Brown) had not seen a poor man, woman, or child since he landed upon the British soil who was worse off than the slaves in the United States. What was food and clothing to a man as long as he knew that he was a chattel slave—the property of another person ? What was the utmost amount of food and clothing to a man when he knew that he might be placed upon an auction-stand, sold to the highest bidder, and torn from his wife and children and everything that was dear to him ? Then look at the mental degradation of the slave. If a man handed a copy of the Bible to a slave, or taught him to read the truths it contained, he was severely punishable by law. Why, only a few weeks before he (Mr. Brown) left America, a clergyman thought he was doing service by establishing Sabbath schools in one of the northern slave States, by merely getting a dozen slaves together, and teaching them what he conceived to be the principles of Christianity ; and yet that very minister of religion was taken up, and received for that Christian act thirty lashes upon his bare back under the sanction of the laws of the country (hear). No, no, he (Mr. Brown) would rather be a beggar in England than the best conditioned slave in

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America (cheers). If he were to die of hunger, however, let him perish at least free, without manacles upon his limbs. "I," said Mr. Brown, "have felt the chains upon my own limbs, and I have never seen a single moment since I escaped from slavery in Missouri that I would exchange for the best portions of slavery which I have left behind. And yet, since I made my escape from slavery, I have had to struggle for existence as hard as the poorest man in England, having come out from under the institution of slavery destitute of education or friends, in the coldest winter season, without a penny in my pocket or any to appeal to. And yet I had rather grope my way along, and try to get my living under the most disadvantageous circumstances than serve a single moment under the institution that I have left behind me (cheers). It was a principle in the slave-holding States that the negroes must be kept in degradation in order to be retained in slavery. In 1844 a clergyman from the North proposed to send a ship-load of Bibles, and missionaries to teach the slaves to read them, but he was told that if he did so he must send with them another vessel freighted with soldiers, muskets, and bayonets, for the purpose of protecting the planters, for if the slaves had education they would not longer be retained in subjection—(hear)—as it wanted nothing but the power of knowledge to liberate them. When the

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people in this country read of some slave having been whipped to death or hung, with only a sham trial before two or three slaveholders, they were horrified ; and yet these were nothing more than the circumstances naturally incident to slavery. Instead of vainly seeking to better the condition of the slave, let them then seek to knock off the chains from his limbs, and not be content with anything short of that. The government of the United States was on the side of slavery instead of being the friend of freedom. In its very capital men could obtain the privilege of buying and selling human beings, and of trading in human flesh, for the sum of 400 dols. per annum ; and in sight of the capital might be seen negro-pens and warehouses where men were kept for sale. And yet the men who practised that traffic were the professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus ! Christians in good and regular standing in some of the churches of America ! (hear). Within the last twenty years the American government had used its influence for the spread of American slavery ; and even where it was abolished in Mexico, it had been reinstated by the United States. If a negro made his escape from a slave to a free State, and a Christian man gave him a crust of bread and a cup of cold water, that good man was for that very act subject to fine of 500 dollars. When he (Mr. Brown) was making his escape he had nothing whatever to eat, except a few ears of corn which he plucked by the

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way ; and yet, sick and weary as he was at last, and almost ready to die, he dared not ask relief until he saw a Quaker come by (cheers). Some of the most heroic attempts had recently been made by slaves to obtain their freedom. One man, to gain his liberty, had travelled in a railway carriage upwards of 300 miles, packed in a little box, breathing God's air only through small gimblet holes. Were he (Mr. Brown) about to depict the true character of American slavery, if he could, he would pluck a feather from the wing of some fallen angel, dip it in the wailings of despair, and write upon the blackened walls of perdition in characters which would frighten the hyena out of his ferocity. What justice was there in America for the slave? A woman was recently tried for causing the death of a negro girl ; she was acquitted, on the ground that it was her slave-woman who actually committed the deed. The slave-woman was afterwards tried and acquitted, on the ground that she committed the murder on the authority of her mistress ! (hear). If a colored man went to Washington without free papers, he would be thrown into gaol, there to remain until he had paid the goal fees ; if unable to do so, he was sold, to raise the amount of such fees, and the balance of the produce of sale actually went to swell the treasury of the United States government. He (Mr. Brown) thanked God, however, that there was an asylum still left for the slave,

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and that the Canadas, at the present moment, were the land of refuge for more than 20,000 escaped bondmen (cheers). Nor could he convey to that meeting the feelings which came over him when he landed at Liverpool and felt that he was really free. Then he could indeed adopt the language of the poet, and say—

“Old England ! old England! thrice blessed and free!
The poor hunted slave finds a shelter in thee ;
Where no blood-thirsty hound ever dares on his track;
At thy voices, old England, the monster falls back.
Go back, then, ye blood-hounds, that howl in my path ;
In the land of old England I’m free from your wrath.
And the sons of Great Britain my deep [scars] shall see,
Till they cry, with one voice, ‘Let the bondman be free!’”

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