













POETRY.

From the Syracuse Evening Chronicle. TO JOHN MITCHELL.

What! would you tread them rudely down, And crush them 'neath your iron heel— The poor of earth, who loudly mourn...

STRIKE FOR FREEDOM!

Strike for Freedom! on the mountain Blow the trumpet loud and long— Let the traitorous fœman hear it...

NEBRASKA.

It comes! like the tempest that startles at morning, Where summer smiled blooming in beauty before, And falls on our hearts with a wail, like the warning...

WOMAN.

Perchance, far out at sea, thou may'st have found Some lean, bald elf—a lonely patch of ground Alien amidst the waters—some poor isle...

THE LIBERATOR.

ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN MASSACHUSETTS.

REMARKS OF MRS. CATHERINE S. BROWN. Before the Legislative Committee on Capital Punishment, in the Hall of the House of Representatives.

To be, or not to be, that is the question! Has a man a right to exist, after having taken the life of his fellow-being? We do not speak of those now, who have slain their thousands, and their tens of thousands...

It is a remarkable fact, that even men distinguished for military achievements are decidedly opposed to capital punishment. Col. STRATTON, formerly an officer in the British Army in India forty years, told me that the manner of execution in the Army, especially that of picketing, became so abhorrent to him, that he now advocates the entire abolition of the gallows, and has published essays to this effect.

Moreover this text, as a law, is total in its command. It forbids us to spare the man who has killed another. He must not be spared. There must be no pardon.

REMARKS OF WENDELL PHILLIPS, ESQ. Mr. Chairman,—Our object is to carry still further the policy of our last act of legislation relative to the death penalty.

But, it is said, 'hanging the murderer will deter others from crime.' Shall we take this principle? Then why not torture the criminal? Why not impale him in the face of heaven, writing with agony? Why not break him on the wheel, as they did in France, until every bone in his body is broken? It is claimed for the guillotine, that it kills men with less pain than the gallows, and therefore is better.

The idea of punishment has no legitimate place in human government. Cheever falls into a great mistake by assuming that it has. Human government has not to do with sin, but with evils. Society draws a line between the intent to murder, and the deed of murder. The punishment of theft is shaped to the evil it does. We treat the evils of crime. God lets down his plummet of justice (and of mercy, too) into the unathomable depths of the human heart, measures the sin, and deals with that; but not thus can man do.

a right to concede to another the right to take his life, for the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain. But Christianity does not admit such premises, and therefore cuts off the conclusion. Our opponents here will not claim that a man can rightfully kill himself, or give another the right to kill him.

REMARKS OF REV. DRS. BEECHER, WATERBURY, REV. THEODORE PARKER, AND OTHERS. There was a third hearing before the Committee on Capital Punishment, on the afternoon of the 17th inst.

Rev. F. W. Holland opened the discussion. He regarded the passage in Genesis as a prophetic declaration, rather than a command. He cited from the Bible several instances where the shedder of blood was not killed. Moses killed a man, and afterwards became a lawyer. He urged strongly that capital punishment is inexpedient.

Rev. Charles Spear remarked that five men are now under sentence of death in Massachusetts, and maintained that it is not right to put a man to death in Massachusetts. He did not now speak of what might be done in self-defence, on the highway; but insisted that it was not right to kill a criminal after he is arrested and in prison. No man has a right to take his own life. Some in France may deny this.

Rev. Dr. Waterbury said,—I belong to the conservative class, and am disposed to fear changes. It is dangerous to uproot an institution that was planted by our Puritan fathers. Yet I find you solicited to uproot a long-existing law. You will pause before you do this, and ask for the arguments of right reason.

Dr. Waterbury. The command was given independent of the Mosaic system. Its obligation is perpetual, and not to that community which blots it out. I profess sympathy with the community. If it is blotted out, I shall feel exposed to murderers, and will arm myself with pistols. Where do pistols and bowie knives abound? In Louisiana, where they never incorporated this law of God into their code.

Dr. Lyman Beecher said—Our Puritan fathers followed the Bible, and for one hundred and fifty years, hardly a nation had so much violence and crime. A small number of gentlemen have made the question before us a study, and they come here, and ask you to change the law. You will require facts to warrant such a change. I am not qualified to discuss the question.

Rev. Theodore Parker said—This is a strange spectacle! Eighteen hundred and twenty years ago, a young man in Judea summed up the whole law and prophets in these words—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.' He taught forgiveness. He disregarded the severe Jewish penalties, and took such hold of the world that two hundred and sixty millions of men now worship him as God.

Dr. Waterbury—I did not apply the word atheists to those here who oppose capital punishment. Mr. Parker—I must concede to the gentleman the right to explain his own words. Perhaps he will withdraw the word infidel.

Dr. Waterbury—He who calls Christ a man, and denies his divinity, I must regard as an infidel. Mr. Parker—I am not certain of what you mean by denying his divinity. Three Evangelists speak of Jesus as a man. I have long venerated Dr. Beecher. My soul has risen on the wings of his prayers.

Notwithstanding the unfavorable weather of last evening, the City Hall was filled with one of our most respectable and intelligent audiences, to hear Miss Stone upon the Social and Industrial Disabilities of Woman.

his blood be shed.' [He read the Hebrew.] I think the common exegesis is right. Well, it is assumed that this is God's law for all time. My brother on my left—I forgot I am an 'infidel'—the Rev. Dr. Waterbury, said, 'I gave that law to Noah, as the representative of the race, and afterwards gave additional words and privileges to Abraham. Did he give him something better than is allowed by Christianity? A man was found picking up sticks on the Sabbath. He was taken to Moses. There was no law on the subject. God said he must be stoned. Do you stone men now for picking up sticks on Saturdays? But the obstinate one was killed under that system. But we have in Massachusetts an institution for such boys, in violation of the Mosaic code. Another law was adopted this week:—Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers adopted the Puritan; but let me remind Dr. Beecher that the Puritans had, and now his daughter tramples on that institution, and his son tramples on it. [Applause.]

Dr. Beecher here remarked, that nothing disrespectful was intended by the word 'infidel,' as it had been used. Mr. Parker—Oh, it does not annoy or disturb me to be called an infidel. I believe in Jesus. In Dr. Beecher's State, Connecticut, the first settlers enacted the laws of God until we can get better. Shall we be Christians, and have what is better? Dr. Beecher himself would agree to waive the death penalty for the Russian mode of banishment. His representation that the crime was formerly rarer than now, is a mistake. There were more executions in Massachusetts when the population numbered only 20,000, than at present.

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GERRIT SMITH ON THE HOMESTEAD BILL.

WASHINGTON, Monday, March 6, 1854. FREDERICK DOUGLASS—MY DEAR SIR: An hour ago, I gave you my vote against the Homestead Bill; and that, too, notwithstanding I had made a speech in favor of it; and that, too, notwithstanding I have, for so many years, loved, and advocated, and acted on, the great essential principle of the bill.

My apparent inconsistency in this case is explained by the fact, that, just before we were called to vote on the bill, it was so amended as to limit its grant of land to white persons. If my fellow-land-reformers, with whom I shall be so long toiled for the success of our land reform doctrines, shall be aggrieved by my vote, I shall be sorry. Nevertheless, I can never regret my vote. I was a man before I was a land-reformer. And for the sake of no gains, however great, or however many, can I consent to ignore the claims, and even the fact itself, of a common manhood. But the advantages which are sought at the expense of trampling on human rights are not gains. Such gains are losses—even to those who get them. The Homestead bill would have been purchased at the dear rate, had it proscribed only one negro, or only one Indian. The curse of God is upon the bill, or there is no God. There is no God, if I have to insult and outrage any portion of his children.

To reconcile me to the bill, as amended, I was told by one of the members of Congress, that the colored people would not be shut out from the public lands, but they could still buy them! That is, the colored people must buy their homes, while the white people are to have free homes! What a comment this on the great justifying doctrine of negro slavery, that the negroes are unable to take care of themselves! The mere spectacle of negroes cruelly used, and the mere sight of the colored people of history furnish no parallel to it. Our State Legislatures join our State Legislatures in holding out to the free colored people the hard alternative of returning under the yoke of slavery, or from being shut out from our broad continent. And that the excuse for this treatment is no less unreasonable and insulting than the treatment is cruel and murderous. It is, that the free colored people are too ignorant, and lazy, and worthless to deserve any better choice than slavery and death. And this is the excuse of those who shut out the colored people from schools, and drive them into negro jails, and banish them from society, and mark them as physical and moral lepers, to be everywhere shunned, and loathed, and hated!

That our free colored brethren should in such circumstances be no more discouraged and dejected, no more self-despairing and self-despising, no more in intelligence, and morals, and thrift, is to me amazing. That the mass of them should, notwithstanding the depressing, crushing influence upon them, be still rising and bettering their condition; and that there should be rapidly multiplying instances among them of the acquisition of wealth, and of distinction in writing and oratory and general scholarship, is more than I had supposed to be possible.

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