

The Rev. H.H. GARNET, who was warmly received by the meeting, spoke at considerable length, necessarily embracing much of the same matter which entered into his Gateshead address. He referred, however, in an interesting manner, to the news just received from the United States. The struggle, he said, which had long been in progress beyond the Atlantic, had terminated—for a season. Since March last, a conflict had been waged, which, for fierceness and perseverance, was unprecedented in the history of the Republic. The combatants on the one side demanded that the bloodstained banner of Slavery should wave over every inch of soil in the Union, from the banks of the Potomac to the farthest verge of California. This pretension was resisted by the other party; and the result was the admission of New Mexico into the Union with the Wilmot proviso, leaving the door open to Slavery; while California came into the confederation on her own terms, utterly repudiating compulsory, involuntary labour. (Applause.) The modern (and, as many learned men contended, the ancient) land of Ophir, peopled from all quarters of the world, had unfurled on the lofty peaks which seemed to guard the Pacific the flag of freedom; and its folds were proudly reflected in the deep blue wave of the free and chainless sea. (Cheers.) But if this glad intelligence filled his mind with joy and exultation, his happiness was chastened by the knowledge that the far-famed Fugitive Slave Bill had passed both Houses of Congress, and was now the law of the United States. It was often asserted, by the apologists of American Slavery, that the negroes were kindly treated, and content with their condition; but if so, why were there 40,000

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fugitive slaves in Canada, and 50,000 (we understood Mr. Garnet to say) in the Free States of the Union? Now, the slaveholders had long been anxious to obtain a law which should enable them more readily to drag back the fugitive to slavery. The Supreme Court of the Republic, against whose judgment there was no appeal, had decided that the slaveholder, wherever he found his slave, might seize and repossess him. But this was not sufficient. Mr. Henry Clay, the most popular, and, at the same time, the most wicked man in the United States—a slaveholder and a woman-whipper—one of the most cruel men that had ever existed, from the days of Herod to those of Haynau (laughter and applause)—Mr. Clay maintained the doctrine that what the law declared to be property *was* property; and the whole course of legislation, for 250 years, had held the slave, he said, to be property. The bill which, founded upon this assumption, he had now carried, enacted that if any slaveholder made oath that so and so, living at this or that place, wherever it might be, was his slave, the officers of the United States were bound to deliver up the man, woman, or child, so claimed, without trial. The slaveholder was under no obligation to make the claim in person. He could send his oath and his agent—and that was enough. The person seized might demand a jury when he was carried back—a jury of slaveholders! A jury of wolves to try the lamb! Now, to understand the true character of this law, the meeting should be aware that there were places in the United States where the slave was as safe as if he were in Newcastle. To meet this fact

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there was a clause providing that if any person interfered between the agent and the slaveholder and the negro whom he claimed, and the latter should in consequence escape, the person so interfering must pay the value of the fugitive; or if the escape should occur in a mob, and no individual could be made responsible, then the cost must be made good by the State in which the rescue took place. Was ever such an outrage committed until now, in the name of law or justice, since the days of the infamous Jefferies? All over the Union there were negroes living—fugitive slaves. Two thirds of his own congregation in Geneva were escaped negroes. His own wife and children might be seized under this bill, and hurried into the South. It was a measure to scatter the seeds of civil war throughout the Union, and it would not surprise him were it to provoke a dreadful conflict. He was a man of peace—but if the agent of the slaveholder were to enter his house, and lay hands upon his wife and child, could human nature tamely suffer them to be torn away to slavery! (Hear, hear.) Mr. Garnet proceeded to state that if slaves sold well in America, you might be sure that cotton was high in Liverpool, and *vice versa*. Britain, in fact, was the main prop and stay of Slavery; and Slavery could best be struck down by the withdrawal of British custom. He saw no prospect of the abolition of American Slavery, save in the rendering of it unprofitable, or in an uprising of human nature against the outrage. (Hear, hear.)

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