

British and Foreign Convention.

Speech of Daniel O'Connell.

While the subject of American Slavery was under consideration—

Mr. O'CONNELL rose and was greeted with the loudest and most general cheering. He said, after repeated mute acknowledgments of his reception, I have two excuses for my intrusion upon you,—first, I was alluded to by the Hon. baronet—a more sincere friend of the cause does not breathe than himself—(Cheers)—and next, as he said, he was happy as an Englishman to second an American, I am anxious to obtrude an Irishman upon you. (Laughter and cheers.) But I have another more important reason. The subject mooted by the Hon. Judge (for he is a Judge) who has just addressed you, is one of international and constitutional law, and perhaps, as I am a lawyer, you will allow my experience in the subject to compensate for my want of ability. (Laughter and cheers.) The proposition of the American senate is inadmissible. It is an outrage on common sense—it is a violation of public honesty. (Cheers.) They claim—a property in man! Why, that is inconsistent with not only all constitutional law—and their own constitution above all—but with the eternal principles of justice. (Cheers.) How would they like that the blacks should do unto them as they delight to do unto the blacks? (Hear, hear.) I have not the heart to wish any man a slave; but really I am tempted almost to do it for once, and wish Calhoun a slave. (Laughter.) It would not perhaps, be an inappropriate retribution for his infamous disposition to act with injustice, iniquity, and inhumanity, to subject him to the lash, which he would inflict on others. Oh how indignantly and pathetically he would plead on behalf of his outraged nature? (Laughter and cheers.) Why, some of you may recollect the case of the American Adams, who having been enslaved a few years in Africa, the natives said he was only fit to be a slave! he was evidently inferior to their race—the whites were good for nothing but slavery—(roars of laughter)—to which he had been consigned four years. So you see how the rule would work if equally applied. (Hear, hear.) The proposition of Calhoun is untenable, even as an American proposition. The resolutions of our friend, the worthy judge, set forth its inconsistency with the first clause of the American charter of Independence, which declares all men born equal; but there is a stronger word—it declares that all men have the same inalienable right to liberty;—yes, *inalienable* is the word. (Cheers.) That is the sacred basis of American Independence—it is not confined to caste, color, sect, or creed. (Hear, hear.) And from this spot I wish to rouse all the high and lofty mind of America. Republicanism necessarily gives a higher and a prouder station to the human mind than any other form of government. (Hear, hear.) I am not comparing them to any thing else at present, but history shows there is a pride of manliness about republicans, which, perhaps, is a consolation to them for many other things in which they may possibly be inferior. (Hear, hear.) But from this spot, I repeat, I wish to rouse all the honesty and pride of American manhood, and would that the voice of Europe would aid me in the appeal, and swell my feeble voice to one grand shout of indignation; and when these Americans point to their boasted charter of Independence, exclaim, 'Look at your PRACTICE!' But can there be held faith in man, when we find that to their vaunted principle of equality they solemnly pledge their lives, fortunes, and 'sacred honors?' (Hear, hear.) Here is all the solemnity without the profanity of an oath, in sanction of a principle thus directly, dreadfully, diabolically violated. (Hear, hear.) America must know that all Europe is looking to her. (Hear, and cheers.) She must know that the world considers that her senate, her Calhouns, are, while attempting to assert their infamous claim of property in human kind, incurring the blackest of all stains, because carrying with it the imputation of personal dishonor—shall I say perjury—in the practical violation of a principle they have so solemnly sanctioned. (Loud cheers.) France and England, without any violation of principle, might adopt such a resolution; but, in the case of America, it doubly dyed her in disgrace. He felt proud to say that they might pass and adopt as many such resolutions as they pleased; they would be all idle, all useless, because the British government had no power to acquiesce in any one of them. (Cheers.) The British government had no fund out of which they could grant compensation. No party in the State would ever propose a grant for such a purpose—the resolution was therefore idle. England had nobly paid twenty millions for the purpose of redeeming their black brethren; and now, wherever England's flag floated upon the breeze, there was glorious freedom. (Hear, hear.) The moment the foot of a freedman touched the shore of England, or any of her dependencies, his slavery vanished. (Loud cheering.) There is now no such thing known to the British law as that one man might have a property in his fellow-man—there was an act of parliament against such a crime. It had been often laid down that an act of parliament which was notoriously against justice and humanity was void—he was afraid, however, that in practice that maxim was not cared for. (A laugh.) But no man, not one of any party whatever, would dare to come down to the House of Commons and propose a grant for the purpose of making compensation; if one could be found of any party whatever, he would be shouted down and scouted from society. It was impossible it could be done, because it was totally inconsistent with our law. All the States of Europe had now admitted the great evils of slavery, it had been admitted in France, and the cause of abolition was deeply indebted to a gentleman whom he had the pleasure of seeing present (M. M. Isambert, of the Chamber of Deputies of France.) The French were a glorious nation, they were fond of glory, they were inferior to none. He wished to see no rivalry between them and us, except rivalry to do good; it was a glorious remedy, and although we might now good-humoredly taunt them and say, 'You have not gone so far in the glorious cause as we,' he trusted the day was not far distant, when our French neighbors might return the taunt and say, 'We have gone before you now, and done better!' (Cheers.) Well, then, the government had not the power to pay the compensation, unless indeed they agreed to do so out of their own pockets, or out of their salaries—a thing that was not likely. (Laughter.) How, then, was it to be paid? There was but one way in which it could be done—that was by a vote of the House of Commons; and God help the minister

who made the proposition. (Cheers and laughter.) The senate of America showed an excessive desire to put forth a wicked claim for a horrible injustice, but it was one which it was lucky could not be carried into effect. No man detested war more than he did, for even war that was justifiable, and in its best form, was accompanied by thousands of murders and robberies. He hoped such a calamity would be spared them; but if any thing short of the honor of the nation could justify recourse to such an expedient, it was the resolution read to the Country rejoiced to hear from that able and excellent gentleman that the present agitation was striking terror into the hearts of the slave-mongers, and was calculated to do much good. They were a detestable race of aristocrats, who wanted to have property and ease also—who would not labor themselves, nor pay others for doing so; therefore they seized upon their fellow-men, and dared to call them their slaves. Even in Columbia, at the foot of the temple of freedom itself, the wretched negro was writhing under the lash of a brutal task-master, the negress was doomed to all the horrors of slavery, and the poor infant hanging at its mother's breast, good God! iting face in agony, and was almost tempted to wish it in a premature grave, because it was not a man, but a slave. Yet this happened in America! He said it with all respect for his American friends' presidential escutcheon there were written in characters of blood, 'We are patronizers of slavery, the necessary result of which is that we are perpetrators of robbery and murder.' They might say, they had not the power to emancipate the slaves; but he would refer them to the Declaration of Independence and the constitution of 1787, and he would defy them to point out one single mention of slavery in either document. (Cheers.) No man could deny the personal courage of the American people—there was not a braver nation upon the face of the earth; but there was not one man in the convention of 1787 who had the moral, he had almost said the immoral, courage to mention the word slavery. (Loud cheers.) Was slavery then to exist as a thing when they did not dare to pronounce its name? (Cheers.) Undoubtedly they met with the phrase of 'persons held to labor,' in those documents; but dare any one say that under those words slavery was meant? Any man entering into any contract for work, any one who gave his labor for an equivalent, was 'held to labor,' but did that make him a slave? But no, that was as near as they dared approach slavery. There was nothing in the constitution but what was fair and just. Had they meant to acknowledge and sanction the existence of slavery, they would have done so boldly; they dared not, and as there was no mention made in the Declaration of Independence or the constitution of 1787, they must hold that it was not acknowledged by the constitution. [Cheers.] Slavery was a deep crime which multiplied robbery and murder, but the Americans added hypocrisy to their other accomplishments. He hung it upon America that she stood in this predicament. They say they have no power to emancipate the slaves. He would whisper in their ears—Columbia. [Cheers.] Columbia was not bound by any constitution—there they had the power if they pleased to use it. Then why come down upon him with such hypocrisy? They say they were the first gentlemen and the most enlightened legislature in the world. [Laughter.] He would whisper Columbia to them. 'You have the power to remove this foul blot—you have the authority—you have every thing, in fact, but the will—that alone is wanting.'

He would now turn to a subject of congratulation—he alluded to those noble-hearted men and women in America, who through difficulties and dangers were hearty in the cause of Abolition! (Loud, cheers.) He held them all as friends. He implored them to think him as one of their body.—(Cheers.) He wanted no higher station in the world, but he did covet the honor of becoming a brother among the American Abolitionists. Here the Abolitionists were in safety, and more honored for their exertions by the good; here they were encouraged and cheered by the smiles of the fair; they were bound together by godlike truth. But far different was it with their friends in America; they were vilified and insulted. Very lately did not a body of so-called gentlemen—men who would call any one out to try rattle shooting who denied them that cognomen—break in upon the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, and assault them in the most cowardly manner? And where did this happen?—why, in Boston, enlightened Boston, the capital of a non-slaveholding State. The Abolitionists here had nothing to complain of. In America they are met with the bowie-knife and lynch law. There had even been martyrs in the sacred cause, and their blood cried out, not for vengeance, but for mercy. The friends of the cause in which it was shed should not relax in their endeavours. No human being could be placed in a more glorious position than those Americans who are friends to the negro. He was delegated to be one of a convention in which so many of those brave and good women were—he trusted that their reception would be such that their zeal would be strengthened; it was a noble struggle they were engaged in, and they would yet raise a shout of liberty that would make their enemies tremble. Those brave and glorious women ought to have their names immortalized.—(Cheers.) The habits of this country had forbid them from receiving female delegates, because of the ridicule which ignorant people would have thrown upon their proceedings; but although they had not received them as delegates, were they the less to be esteemed or the less respected on that account, or at this age, he might be allowed to say, less loved? They all remembered Angelina Grimke, and her zeal in the cause of abolition, for which they owed a deep debt of gratitude. The societies in America were deeply persecuted, and were therefore deserving of every encouragement they could bestow upon them. Had he the ability he would tell them how deeply he loved and honored America and the Americans; he loved their institutions, but he denounced the anathema of civilized Europe upon them as slaveholders; they ought not to be received in society. Even the American minister at our court was a slaveholder; whether he bred them for sale was still a disputed point, which he would not then enter into. The government of this country should refuse to have any dealings with him, and tell America that they would not receive any slaveholder or recognize him. He would tell them an anecdote. Last year a very well-dressed gentlemanly person addressed him in the lobby of the House of Commons, and said he was from America. He begged him (Mr. O'Connell) to afford him the means of hearing the debate. He said, with pleasure; but first let him ask him a question—from what State was he? Alabama. Was he a slave-owner? Yes. Then he (Mr. O'Connell) bowed and left him.—(Laughter.) Now that was an example that ought to be followed. Hold no intercourse with a slaveholder. They might deal in business with him, but even then they must be cautious—(a laugh)—but they ought to be very scarce of courtesy towards him until he had cleared himself of the foul spot. He wanted a declaration of that kind from the Convention; they ought to prohibit to the slaveholders that as long as they were engaged in the accursed traffic they held them to be of a different race. Such a declaration from such a body would make the slaveholders tremble. He knew the bravery of the American nation, but still he wanted to frighten them by the powerful force of public sentiment. (Cheers.) In order to do so, they ought to lay hold of all that would assist them. He learned and hon. judge who had addressed them had himself set a splendid example to all the slaveholders world. (Cheers.) He had called their attention to Texas. It was only a few days ago that he met with a Texian newspaper, and, blessed be heaven, it most cordially abused him. (Laughter.) He was as well abused in it as he had ever been in any one in this country. He read with delight in it that that 'monster, O'Connell, had been the means of preventing the English government from acknowledging the independence of Texas.' He, on reading it, took off his hat, and made a low bow, saying, 'You do me too much honor, Mr. Texian.' He would most cheerfully submit to any such attacks in such a cause. No party in England would dare to acknowledge such a host of plundering pirates. (Cheers and laughter.) They actually stole the land, and their first act was to introduce slavery, which had been abolished by the Mexican congress and they made a law by which it is impossible for any one to stir the abolition question for six years; and when they expired, no person could do so, unless he had the authority of three-fourths of the people. This put him in mind of a story told as having happened in chivalrous times. A knight was placed upon the top of a church, where he was to remain seven years. On the opposite end to him was placed a sheaf of wheat, and in the middle a needle, and he was to be fed by the wheat which the wind blew through the eye of the needle. (Laughter.) This man had as much chance of getting fat,

any person had of obtaining the consent of three-
fourths of the Texians to consider the question of
secession. The first acts of the robbers were
to murder, systematically, all Indians, and to en-
slave the African. Only lately, seventeen chiefs
of the Comanches induced, by some means to enter their
camp, and all of them were barbarously murdered.
They might call him monster as long as they
lived, but so long as he had a tongue he would
call them foul robbers and murderers; and he would
not vote with any ministry who recognized them.
He felt deeply grateful for the attention
which had been pleased to afford him. It was a glo-
rious struggle they were engaged in—it was a holy
war; let them persevere, and sacred freedom's
banner would soon float over emancipated America,
and they would rejoice in the good work. (Loud