

THE NEW AMERICAN CRUSADE AGAINST FREE NEGROES.

On the 2d of August the free people of colour held conventions throughout the Free States, showing their resolution to make themselves heard and considered at a time of crisis which they well understand. It is evident that their neighbours and the public are surprised and deeply impressed by the ability and spirit manifested on that portentous day, and especially in the greatest of the conventions—that of Massachusetts, held at New Bedford. At this moment our business with the demonstration relates to the one particular which we commend to Mr. Dalton's employers in America, and his enthusiastic hosts in Jamaica. There were two resolutions which seem to have been agreed to with devout enthusiasm over the length and breadth of the Northern States—that the free people of colour despise and defy the Dred Scott decision, taking their stand on the argument of the dissenting judge, Curtis; and that they will resist every attempt to drive or inveigle them to any foreign country, whether it be Liberia, Central America, the West India Islands, or any place whatever out of the Union. It is observable that these decisions are sympathised in, more or less heartily, by the journals which record them. It is far from surprising, say the writers, that these people choose to remain where many of them have acquired wealth; where all can rise, if they choose, to a position in which the Dred Scott decision will become a dead letter; where schools and colleges and the learned professions and higher arts of life are rapidly opening before them; and where patriotism and inclination alike sanction the duty they choose—of proving "that freedom is its own justification and apology." The work was, in fact, achieved by the spirited men of their colour who undertook the public school question at Boston. They demanded public school rights for their children—separate schools and white teachers were offered and declined. Then separate schools, and qualified teachers of their own class. That also was declined. As nothing would satisfy them but equal admission to the existing public schools (to which they had a clear constitutional right), the Boston School Committee told them that they had thrown away their opportunity, and must now be ruled by the committee. The leaders of the movement gave notice that they should try their strength against that of the committee, and they went round to every house in Boston where there were children of their colour, and induced the parents to withdraw them from the separate schools. This vigour carried the day. Within six months the schools were thrown open. No mischief has ensued;

prejudice gave way under the experiment, and one consequence is that a yet bolder stand is now proposed. The speakers at New Bedford desire that henceforth fugitives who are taking their road will stop there, and not think it necessary to expatriate themselves, even in Canada. New Bedford and Boston have an understanding by which the soil of Massachusetts can be kept sacred as a retreat for slaves, all Federal Courts and enactments notwithstanding. As citizens of Massachusetts, these men will stand by their State, and they invite their suffering co-complexionists to come and try them. This is enough. Nobody will believe that people of this sort will ever be shipped to Jamaica at £1 a head, to be attached to the soil of a plantation for any number of years, for the sake of a plot of land (if they can get it) at the end of the term. If Mr. Dalton were to send over any of their colour at all in that way, they would not be free negroes, but slaves under that name. There might be a good many of that class; for not only are slaves a depreciated property in the market at present, but they are becoming a highly precarious property in the most ruinous way of all. All efforts to conceal the increase of "stampedes" now fail; for the northern citizens, who used to be silent about the passage of slaves through their territory, now see no necessity for such caution. We observe in a northern journal a notice of 1,000 dollars having been subscribed to meet the increased expenses of the "underground railway," from the rapid increase of its passenger traffic. All that happens tends to augment the Exodus. The frontier States, and some others, are growing sick of slavery; and the slaves run away all the more easily and abundantly. Other States grow more peremptory and strict for the laxity of their neighbours; and, under their aggravated oppression, the sufferers are more eager than ever to escape; and sooner or later they effect it. As in all time, and under every sort of tyranny, songs are the telegraph between the bond and free. Mr. Dalton's best speech at Kingston will hardly carry so many negroes to Jamaica as this verse of a song to Canada:—

"I heard Victoria plainly say,
If we would all forsake
Our native land of slavery,
And come across the Lake,
That she was standing on the shore,
With arms extended wide,
To give us all a peaceful home
Beyond the rolling tide.
Farewell, old Master!
That's enough for me—
I'm going straight to Canada,
Where coloured men are free!"

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands