

movement increased my hope for the ultimate freedom of my race, and I united with it from a sense of delight, as well as duty.

Every week the Liberator came, and every week I made myself master of its contents. All the anti-slavery meetings held in New Bedford I promptly attended, my heart burning at every true utterance against the slave system, and every rebuke of its friends and supporters. Thus passed the first three years of my residence in New Bedford. I had not then dreamed of the possibility of my becoming a public advocate of the cause so deeply imbedded in my heart. It was enough for me to listen—to receive and applaud the great words of others, and only whisper in private, among the white laborers on the wharves, and elsewhere, the truths which burned in my breast.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INTRODUCED TO THE ABOLITIONISTS.

FIRST SPEECH AT NANTUCKET—MUCH SENSATION—EXTRAORDINARY SPEECH OF MR. GARRISON—AUTHOR BECOMES A PUBLIC LECTURER—FOURTEEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE—YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM—A BRAND NEW FACT—MATTER OF THE AUTHOR'S SPEECH—HE COULD NOT FOLLOW THE PROGRAMME—HIS FUGITIVE SLAVESHIP DOUBTED—TO SETTLE ALL DOUBT HE WRITES HIS EXPERIENCE OF SLAVERY—DANGER OF RECAPTURE INCREASED.

In the summer of 1841, a grand anti-slavery convention was held in Nantucket, under the auspices of Mr. Garrison and his friends. Until now, I had taken no holiday since my escape from slavery. Having worked very hard that spring and summer, in Richmond's brass foundery—sometimes working all night as well as all day—and needing a day or two of rest, I attended this convention, never supposing that I should take part in the proceedings. Indeed, I was not aware that any one connected with the convention even so much as knew my name. I was, however, quite mistaken. Mr. William C. Coffin, a prominent abolitionist in those days of trial, had heard me speaking to my colored friends, in the little school-house on Second street, New Bedford, where we worshipped. He sought me out in the crowd, and invited me to say a few words to the convention. Thus sought out, and thus invited, I was induced to speak