

SPEECH OF WONG CHIN FOO

At the Mass Meeting of the Chinese Equal Rights League at Tremont
Temple, Boston, Nov. 18, 1892.

Thank God there is one spot in this great republic where its people are brave enough to stand up for principle and for oppressed humanity.

Once more it is the fellow-citizens of the noble Sumner, the illustrious and immortal Garrison, to be in front.

Whenever the honor of the nation is at stake, or the cause of human liberty is involved, the noble sons of Massachusetts can always be depended upon to defend them.

We have come before you this evening, ladies and gentlemen, not to advocate Chinese immigration. Nay, we have nothing to do with the Chinese in general. We are here to plead for the 150,000 Chinese residents of the United States whose liberties are threatened, whose rights over their own lawful homes are about to be taken away by tyrants imported upon American soil.

A hundred and fifty thousand human beings, innocent of any crime, will be forcibly taken from their happy homes and placed behind prison bars, simply because they were born in China.

On the 5th of May next 150,000 law-abiding and industrious citizens and residents of the United States will be made State criminals, and every one of them will have his picture taken for the national rogues' gallery.

The families that they have reared with care, the homes that they have built by long and weary years of toil will be scattered to the four winds, and by one single blast of the cruel Geary California act every honest man of this mighty 150,000 will be made a pauper, a thousand times worse than paupers. They will become raging maniacs if this act is carried out.

They will be shipped like cattle out of their beloved homes and from the country which they have been taught to love as their own, and dumped upon a foreign shore without friends, families or means of support.

But all this can be remedied, so say our alleged friends, 'by obeying the law.'

What do you call laws?

To enact them for individual conveniences, for the torture of defenceless men, and for party, and not public interests to degrade national integrity and honor to the level of low individual insignificance?

Do you call such things laws?

Show me any race of men who are more willing to obey the law than the Chinese. But they must have good and reasonable laws, and laws which have the dignity of laws.

This monstrous new act of California, which was quietly forced upon the entire nation by shrewd and unprincipled politicians, astonished us.

It more than astonished us, because we had no reason to expect it from so high a source. So great a nation. Had such a cruel measure been established by either Russia India or even China, we would not have felt so deeply, but a measure too cruel, too inhuman, to be practiced by the most barbarous people on earth, was so willingly and hastily adopted by the American Congress, and signed by a Christian president in the United States, the land of liberty and home of the oppressed of all nations.

Does it not and ought it not to discourage the most courageous heathen on earth?

Oh God, is it possible that thou hast created one half the people to be the surfs and slaves of the other half, so that they may be their toys and foot balls, that they might be tortured and plundered with impunity, that their cries of agony is but music to thee. No! I say thrice, No! that there is no such a God in Heaven, and there is no such a tyrant on earth, and that there is no such a cruel nation should be permitted to do such a thing in this 19th century.

Sir, do you not think that the silent tears of the oppressed ones of God will call down the fire of Heaven upon those who make them flow? Men may forget it and nations may condone it, but the vengeance of a just God will follow him to the grave.

I appeal not for myself. I plead not for the strong, but I plead for those of my fellows who are weak and defenceless, that the people of this great nation may be merciful, that they would repent of their sins, that they may be willing to be just, and force the law-makers to do right.

The noble and venerable Senator Sherman and Representative Hitt, the only two great men among the entire army of the nation's law makers who were brave enough to stand up for their country's honor, were overwhelmed by the nation's enemies.

Noble sons of liberty of Massachusetts, are you ready to-day to rise up in their support, to rise up in your might in the support of the glorious constellation for which the illustrious Washington and his fellow-patriots crossed the icy Delaware, with bleeding feet, to stand up and defend those glorious stars and stripes which are consecrated by the precious blood of the heroes of Bunker Hill?

That all men may be equal upon the soil of this glorious republic, that we may walk upon your streets without cost, that we may breathe the free air of God without it being a crime, that there may be no cast established within this republic, and no form of slavery ever to degrade the statute books of this nation.

When this monstrous bill is repealed, when the only blot upon the face of Western civilization is removed, the honor and integrity of the nation will be saved, and the glorious star-spangled banner will once more flutter proudly above the nations of the earth as the only great and glorious republic on God's footstool."