

Excerpt – Speech by Frances Watkins Harper (1857):

But a few months since, a man escaped from bondage and found a temporary shelter almost beneath the shadow of Bunker Hill. Had that man stood upon the deck of an Austrian ship, beneath the shadow of the house of the Hapsburgs, he would have protection. Had he been wrecked upon an island or colony of Great Britain, the waves of the tempest-lashed ocean would have washed him to deliverance. Had he landed on the territory of vine-encircled France, and a Frenchman had reduced him to a thing, and brought him here under the protections of our institutions and our laws, for such a nefarious deed, that Frenchman would have lost his citizenship in France. Beneath the feebler light, which glimmers from the Koran, the Bay of Tunis would have granted him freedom in his own dominions. Beneath the ancient pyramids of Egypt he would have found liberty for the soil by the glorious Nile—is now consecrated to freedom. But from Boston Harbor, made memorable by three-penny tax tea—Boston in its proximity to the plains of Lexington and Concord, Boston, beneath the shadow of Bunker Hill and almost in sight in Plymouth Rock, he is thrust back from liberty and manhood and reconverted into a chattel. You have heard that down south they keep bloodhounds to hunt slaves, yea bloodhounds go back to your kennels. When you have failed to catch the flying fugitive, when his stealthy tread is heard in the place where the bones of the revolutionary sires repose, the ready North is base enough to do your shameful service. But when I come here to ask justice, we have no higher law than the Constitution.

Source: <http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices/examples-of-historical-thinking/25354>