

The approval by the Anti-Slavery Convention recently held at Albany, at which the Garrisonians and the original and pure-blooded Abolitionists signed as usual, of Mr. Seward's doctrine of antagonism between the slave and the free States, seems to have been the result of the prospect of that doctrine being the basis of a political struggle.

It is not very easy to explain Mr. Seward's position in this case; but his Mr. Seward says that his friends have been urging on him for years and years the necessity of a compromise with the very "conflict and antagonism" which in his Rochester speech was made a part of the platform of the Convention, and that he has a right to find fault with it.

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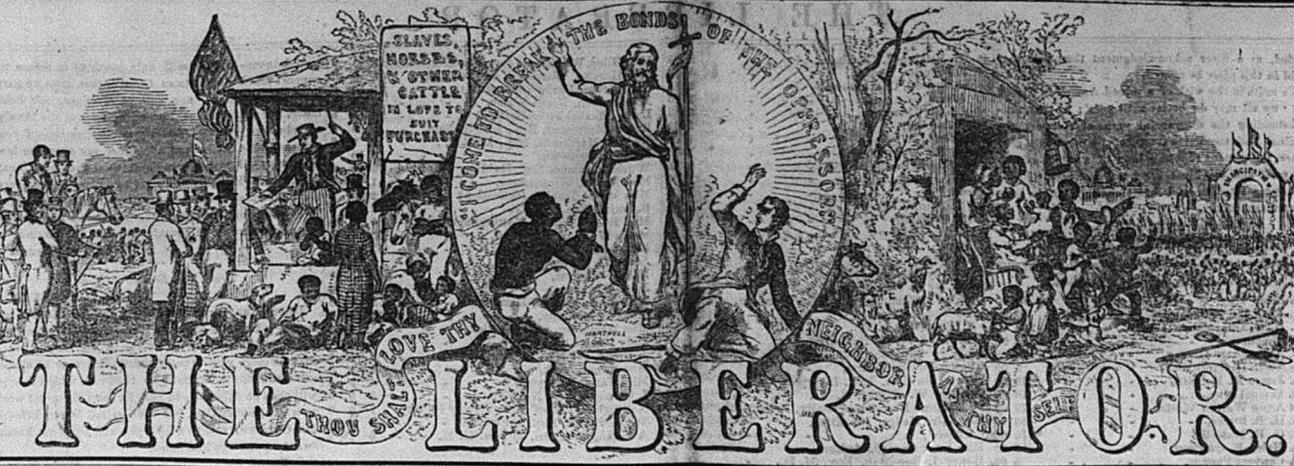
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Our Country is the World, our Countrymen are all Mankind.

BOSTON, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1859. WHOLE NUMBER, 1580.

SLAVE-HUNTING IN MASSACHUSETTS.

The Springfield Republicans, referring to the numerous petitions now before the Legislature of Massachusetts, asking that body to put an end to slave-hunting in this Commonwealth, blows 'hot and cold' in the following facile manner:—

We doubt whether those who started the petition can tell what sort of legal enactments they want on the subject, and certainly the majority of those that sign it have never considered that question at all.

The authors of the petition—half a dozen amiable philanthropists in Boston—aim only at the general agitation of the slavery question by it, without any view to practical results, and most of those that sign it do so only from their dislike to slavery and to negro-hunting, and from the feeling which every genuine Massachusetts man and woman entertains that it is a man and despicable business. The sentiment is manly and Christian, and those who do not sympathize with it have no proper home in this latitude, wherever they may have been born.

But there is absolutely nothing more that the Massachusetts Legislature can do in the matter. Our personal liberty law was meant to go up to the very verge of constitutional power in obstructing the hunting of runaway slaves upon our soil, and it does. There is nothing for our unwillingness to do. We would pit the State against the general government, and resist the United States officers by actual violence. Those who sign these petitions do not desire open war with the general government on this question. There is nothing to be gained practically by any new legislation upon it. There is no slave-hunting in Massachusetts, and will not be. The business is too risky and costs too much. The slaveholders understand this, and act accordingly. Why then should we ourselves waste our strength upon a fictitious issue? Why, especially, should there be an effort to put the State into a position which will be represented as treasonable, and which will go far towards neutralizing our moral influence on the subject? Great vital issues are continually being pressed upon us by the slave power, and all our strength and skill are required to meet them, and thwart the constantly recurring aggressions. It is wrong to folly waste our energy on unreal issues at home, when all our efforts are required in the great national conflict. There has been altogether too much of this folly in Massachusetts heretofore, for a State so well fitted by its intelligence and early historical discipline for practical wisdom. But this petition is neither evidence of the unwisdom nor the anti-slavery fanaticism of our people, as it has been represented, but only of the thoughtlessness, the easy complacency, and the good nature with which petitions for all sorts of purposes are signed.

This is not a very gross fault, to be sure, but it leads to this misdirection of public sentiment, and it may mislead the legislature; at least, it uses up their time, which is an expensive article to the tax-payers, and it should therefore be abated. If nobody would sign a petition, except upon individual conviction that the thing asked is necessary and proper, petitions would cease to have significance, and the right of petition would be, in use as well as in theory, sacred. Now it means very little.

LEGISLATURE OF OHIO.

Report of the Committee on Federal Relations, on Sundry Petitions of the Counties of Ashland and Columbiana, Ohio.

The standing Committee on Federal Relations, to whom were referred the petitions of various residents of Ashland and Columbiana counties, asking the Legislature to enact that no person, who has been held as a slave, shall be delivered up by any officer or court, State or Federal, within this Commonwealth, to any one claiming him on the ground that he owes 'service or labor' to such claimant by the laws of any one of the Slave States of this Union—would respectfully report:

That upon a reference to the Constitution of the United States, they find, in the last paragraph of section 21, in article IV, of that ever-to-be revered instrument of compact, an express and unmistakable provision, directing that persons, held to service and labor in one State, under the laws thereof, and escaping into another, shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due. They find, also, that it has been recognized by the most eminent statesmen and ablest jurists of our land, as the bounden duty of the Congress of the United States, to enact all laws which may be necessary to carry into effect each and every provision of the Constitution; and that, in the opinion of many, this duty extends also to the Legislatures of the different States, so far as is necessary within their respective sovereignties. They find, further, that Congress has passed what is called the Fugitive Slave Law, to give effect to the above constitutional provision, and that the Supreme Court of the United States have, without a dissenting voice, decided that law to be constitutional and proper.

Art. VI. of the Constitution further declares that all laws, made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law—the laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding. This taken in connection with the opinion of our master jurists, Chief Justice Kent and Story, and the decisions of the Supreme Court upon the constitutional question must stand as a part of that instrument itself until they are reversed, leads your committee to the conclusion that the rendition of fugitives from labor is as solemn and certain an obligation as any imposed upon the States by the sacred compact of their Union.

Therefore, as the Senators and Representatives in this Legislature assembled, have such and all taken a solemn oath to support the Constitution of the United States, such an enactment as some of the residents of Ashland and Columbiana counties demand, can never be made without a palpable violation of that obligation.

Your committee, then, must deplore the offering of such petitions as indications of an unhealthy and rebellious public sentiment, and recommend, in future, that all such petitions be laid upon the table, without comment. They would, however, as a response to the present memorials, respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That while the right of petition, upon all subjects not inconsistent with propriety and public morals, is sacred and inalienable, yet, as the Representatives of the loyal sentiment of the people of Ohio, declare themselves forever opposed to every description of sectional and unconstitutional legislation, and respectfully deprecate, in future, all memorials praying for such enactments. (1)

HUNTER BROOKE, J. W. McFERRAN, J. W. PAINE, HENRY MORSE, J. MILTON WILLIAMS.

(1) This cunningly worded resolution (which is designed to legalize and permit slave-hunting on the soil of Ohio, though the term is not used, and also to browbeat those who petition for a law against it) was adopted by the House of Representatives by the following vote:—Yeas 60, nays 17 1/2.

SELECTIONS.

SLAVE-HUNTING IN OHIO.

A Committee of the Legislature of Ohio, consisting of Messrs. Hunter Brooke, J. W. McFerran, J. W. Paine, Henry Morse, and J. Milton Williams, having reported adversely to the petitions before that body, asking for the suppression of slave-hunting in Ohio, Dr. A. Brooke, in the last number of the Anti-Slavery Bugle, addresses this kidnapping Committee in the following pungent style:—

From the tone of your report it would appear that not only your committee, but the Legislature which endorsed it, entertain an erroneous conception of the relation you sustain to your constituents. They send you to Columbus as their servants, and bind you to do their bidding. Instead of attending to your duty as such, you assume to be by their masters, and lecture them in reports like this upon constitutions and compacts, as if they were not so competent to understand these subjects as yourselves. You characterize the expression of their will as 'indications of unhealthy and rebellious public sentiment,' and presume to recommend that 'their petitions be laid upon the table, without further comment in future.' A precious specimen, this, of Democracy and Republicanism! As a man, you are a slave and a servant slave, yourselves, politically, to the oligarchy which rules the nation, with no conception of a higher sense of self-respect in others than a just self-appreciation enables you to possess, it is natural enough you should desire to be, and therefore are, the part of masters towards all who you suppose will submit to your domination. If the people really are prepared to endure it, they will desire to be plunged into the deepest pit into which official assent can sink them.

Since you have assumed the office of expounders of the Constitution, however, and to be judges of what is healthy public sentiment, there are several questions, both ethical and political, on which the people might profitably be made acquainted with your opinion. You have well styled the Federal Constitution compact, although with explosive profanity, by an act which is itself a violation of the policy or equality, is one party





