

THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

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THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

From the Cincinnati Gazette.

Mr. Clay's Letter.

"In the Constitution of the Union there is not a solitary provision, fairly interpreted and fairly administered, which authorizes any interference of Congress with domestic slavery, as it exists in the United States."

This proposition is quoted from the letter of Mr. Clay, published in another column of this paper. It is now the received doctrine of all who have set themselves to reprobate the Anti-Slavery Societies of the country. The use made of it is, to justify the gag-resolutions of Messrs. Patton & Atherton, upon abolition petitions in Congress.—In reviewing Mr. Clay's abolition speech, the Cincinnati Gazette combated the correctness of this doctrine, and insisted, that many cases must arise, in which Congress and the Executive Departments could be legitimately called to act upon the slavery of the States. As Mr. Clay has taken occasion to reiterate his dogma, the Gazette feels called again to controvert it.

It is characteristic of most men to have their judgment warped and biased by the circumstances that surround them, especially when exciting subjects agitate the circle of their action. Mr. Clay would seem to form no exception, notwithstanding his liberality and experience. When it is desirable to obtain a correct opinion of any man it is the part of prudence to look for it, as expressed in a dispassionate course of action, when the public mind is at rest. We confide more in the opinion of Mr. Clay thus calmly declared, than in that upon which he acts, under strong feelings of any kind. We claim to contrast Mr. Clay excited against abolitionists, with Mr. Clay acting upon undisturbed reflection, in the absence of all agitation whatever.

In the year 1826, when John Quincy Adams was President of the United States and HENRY CLAY was SECRETARY of State, and on the 19th of June of that year, a document from the State Department, from which the following extracts are taken:

Extract from instructions of the Department of State to Mr. Gallatin, Envoy extraordinary & Minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain, dated June 12th, 1826.

You are accordingly, authorized and instructed to propose a stipulation,

1st. For the mutual surrender of deserters from the military and naval service, and from the merchant service, of the two countries. Persons who have been naturalized by the laws of either party must be excepted from the operation of the article. The sixth article of our convention with France, of 1822, will furnish suggestions for the preparation of an article on the subject.

And, secondly, a mutual surrender of all persons held to service or labor, under the laws of one party, who escape into the territories of the other. Our object in this stipulation, is to provide for a growing evil, which has produced some, and, if it be not shortly checked, is likely to produce much more irritation. Persons of the above description escape principally from Virginia and Kentucky, into Upper Canada, whither they are pursued by those who are lawfully entitled to their labor; and, as there is no existing regulation by which they can be surrendered, the attempt to recapture them leads to disagreeable collisions. In proportion as they are successful, in their retreat to Canada, will the number of fugitives increase, and the causes of collision multiply. They are generally the most worthless of their class, and far, therefore, from being an acquisition which the British Government can be anxious to make: the sooner, we should think, they are gotten rid of, the better for Canada. It may be asked, why, if they are so worthless, are we desirous of getting them back? The motive is to be found in the particular interest which those who have who are entitled to their service, and the desire which is generally felt to prevent the example of the fugitives becoming contagious. If it be urged that Great Britain would make, in agreeing to the proposed stipulation, a concession without an equivalent, there being no corresponding class of persons in her North American continental dominions, you will reply,

1st. That there is a similar class in the British West Indies, and although the instances are not numerous, some have occurred, of their escape, or being brought, contrary to law, into the United States;

2dly. That Great Britain would probably obtain an advantage over us, in the reciprocal restoration of military and maritime deserters, which would compensate any that we might secure over her in the practical operation of an article for the mutual delivery of fugitives from labor; and,

3dly. At all events, the disposition to cultivate good neighborhood, which such an article would imply, could not fail to find compensation in that or in some other way, in the already immense, & still increasing intercourse between the two countries. The States of Virginia and Kentucky are particularly anxious on this subject. The General Assembly of the latter has repeatedly invoked the interposition of the Government of the United States with Great Britain. You will therefore press the matter, whilst there exists any prospect of your obtaining a satisfactory arrangement of it. Perhaps the British Government, whilst they refuse to come under any obligations by treaty, might be at the same time willing to give directions to the colonial authorities, to afford facilities for the recovery of fugitives from labor; or, if they should not be disposed to disturb such as have, heretofore, taken refuge in Upper Canada, (few if any, are believed to find their way into the Lower Province,) they might be willing to interdict the entry of any others in future. Any such regulations would have a favorable tendency, and are, therefore, desirable, if nothing more effectual can be obtained."

Here is a direct "interference" of the Government of the United States, with "Domestic Slavery," as it exists in the separate States. This INTERFERENCE would seem to have been made as a voluntary offering from the National Executive of the United States, to the special interests of Virginia and Kentucky. It appears that Ken-

tucky, through her Legislature, had then repeatedly invoked the interposition [very like "interference,"] of the Government of the United States with Great Britain.

Again on the 24th of February, 1827, John Quincy Adams still being President of the United States, and HENRY CLAY SECRETARY OF STATE, a document emanated from that Department, of which the following is an extract:

"Mr. Clay to Mr. Gallatin dated, Feb. 24, 1827.

"The General Assembly of Kentucky, one of the States which is most affected by the escape of slaves into Upper Canada, has again, at their session which has just terminated, invoked the interposition of the General Government. In the treaty which has been recently concluded with the United Mexican States, and which is now under consideration of the Senate, provision is made for the restoration of fugitive slaves. As it appears from your statement of what passed on that subject with the British Plenipotentiaries, that they admitted the correctness of the principle of restoration, it is hoped that you will be able to succeed in making a satisfactory arrangement."

This document shows, that the Legislature of Kentucky had then recently called for the "interference" of the National Government, in a matter of slavery, as it exists in the United States.—It shows that the United States Government promptly interfered upon that request.

We have a third document from the Department of State, John Quincy Adams continuing President of the United States, Henry Clay Secretary of State, and we make a third extract:

"Mr. Clay to Mr. Barbour, dated June 13, 1828.

"I transmit, herewith, a copy of a resolution of the House of Representatives, requesting the President to open a negotiation with the British Government, for the recovery of fugitive slaves, who make their escape from the United States into Canada. On that subject, Mr. Gallatin found, in his conference with the British ministers, that they were unwilling to treat. You will ascertain if the same indisposition continues to exist. The evil is a growing one; and is well calculated to disturb the good neighborhood which we are desirous of cultivating with the adjacent British Provinces. It is almost impossible for the two Governments, however well disposed, to restrain individual excesses and collisions, which will arise out of the pursuit of property on the one side, and the defence on the other, of those who have found an asylum. You will find in the instructions to Mr. Gallatin, of the 19th June, 1826, and of the 24th February, and 24th May, 1827, all that was communicated to him on this subject, from the Department. If you ascertain that the British Government is in a favorable disposition, you are authorized to renew the proposal which he was instructed to make, embracing fugitive slaves and deserters from the military, naval, and merchant service of the two countries."

From this document it appears that Congress had "interfered" with the domestic slavery of the States; that this interference had not been questioned, and that the Executive made no delay, in recognizing the right of Congress to "interfere," but hastened to carry that resolution into effect. It must be borne in mind, that these things were transacted when men had their old, undisturbed common sense about them. Then a question of slavery could be mooted without exasperation seizing upon any body. Then Congress and the President held, that the "interference" of both, or of either, might be requested, by individuals or by States. Then an application for such "interference" was treated with respect even in Congress; no person suggested that the Constitution conferred no power to "interfere."

Upon these facts, it seems to me, that Mr. Clay's dogma against "interference" is untenable; otherwise it was an act of usurpation, when the administration of Mr. Adams, backed by a vote of the House of Representatives, did "interfere," and did repeat this "interference," in the cases stated.

LETTER FROM MR. CLAY.

The Whigs of Nansemond county, Virginia, having passed resolutions approving of the course taken by Mr. Clay and other distinguished Whigs, on the abolition excitement, and having communicated them to Mr. Clay, he returned the following answer, the sentiments of which must meet with the approval of every friend of the Union of the States.—[Balt. Chron.

ASHLAND, 25th May, 1839.
Gentlemen: I duly received the letter which you did me the kindness to address to me, transmitting a copy of a Resolution adopted at a meeting of the Whigs of Nansemond county, recently held.

Whilst I but too sensibly feel that they have placed an estimate too high and flattering upon my capacity and upon the public services which I have been able to render, it affords me very great satisfaction to learn that I have been so fortunate as to obtain their approbation; and I request you to communicate to those whom you represent, my respectful and grateful acknowledgments for the sentiments of respect and esteem with an expression of which they have honored me.

At the session of Congress prior to the last, I presented Resolutions to the Senate, touching the institution of domestic slavery, embracing all the principles applicable to the subject, the maintenance of which appeared to me necessary to the security of property, the stability of our system of general government, and harmony among the States of the Union. At the last session of Congress, the ultra-abolitionists had presented themselves under a new and alarming aspect. Instead of restricting their exertions to moral persuasion, addressed to the consciences of slaveholders, keeping aloof from party and politics, as they originally professed to be their intention, they had openly proclaimed their purpose to enter the political arena, and denouncing all who did not adopt their dogmas and agree with them, to force their principles and their men by the aid of the ballot-box. It required but little foresight to discern the frightful consequences which would result from this change of their position, if they should succeed. The Union would be first convulsed throughout, and finally broken into fragments. I thought, therefore, at the last session, that the time was suitable to warn these country of the designs and

efforts; and hence the speech which has commended itself to the approbation of the Whigs of Nansemond. That speech is but an expansion of the argument embodied in the resolutions of the previous session. And I shall be most happy if it should contribute anything towards arresting the mad career of these misguided men, and toward preserving the Union, which is the truest guaranty of all the high privileges which we enjoy.

In the Constitution of that Union there is not a solitary provision, fairly interpreted and fairly administered, which authorizes any interference of Congress with domestic slavery, as it exists in the United States. There is not one, relating to the subject, which does not recognize and treat slaves as lawful property. The clause which fixes the representation in the popular branch of Congress establishes the ratio founded upon the acknowledged existence of slavery, and, in the apportionment of direct taxes among the States, slaves are assumed to be lawful property. On the occasion of the imposition of a direct tax, to prosecute the late war with Great Britain, slaves were taxed by Congress as slaves, and their proprietors paid the tax accordingly. The provision which secures the surrender of fugitive slaves to their owners, of course, admits, that they are legitimate property, and was intended to preserve peace and harmony among the States. I have seen, with inexpressible surprise and deep regret, that it has been contended not only that this conservative stipulation may be evaded, but that it is even meritorious to violate it. Meritorious to violate an express injunction of the constitution which many of us are solemnly sworn, and all are bound faithfully to support! If any citizens of the United States, who object to a particular part of the Constitution may elude, and disregard it, other citizens, dissatisfied with other parts, have an equal right to violate them; and universal nullification of the sacred instrument would be the necessary consequence.

I agree with you, gentlemen, in most of what you say in regard to the present condition of our public affairs. In contemplating it there is much to depress, but I rejoice to say much also to animate and encourage, the genuine patriot, and to stimulate his most energetic exertion. New and alarming principles, dangerous practices, great abuses and extensive corruption have been introduced into the general administration, during the few last years. I have witnessed their progress, with profound regret and deep mortification. But sentiments of despair are never to be indulged as to the fortunes or fate of the Republic. An enlightened and virtuous people require only to be convinced of the evil to apply an efficacious remedy; and the conviction is forcing itself upon them, in spite of all the efforts which have been made, and are making to deceive and betray them.

I thank you, gentlemen, cordially, for the friendly and flattering manner in which you have executed the commission assigned to you by the Whigs of Nansemond, and request you to be assured of the sentiments of esteem and regard, with which, I am, faithfully,
Your friend and obedient servant,
H. CLAY.
Messrs. John C. Crump, Thos. H. P. Goodwin, and John C. Cohoon, &c. &c.

From the Emancipator. Trinidad.

One evening last week, we attended a meeting of citizens of color, called to inquire into the expediency of abandoning their country, and emigrating to the island of Trinidad. The subject is assuming an importance which is not generally realized. We cannot wonder that many Americans of color grow impatient under their wrongs, and long to abandon a country which treats its native children with such relentless cruelty. Indeed, we have sometimes thought that it might be a just and at the same time a merciful as well as appropriate revenge, were the three and half millions of American descendants of Africa to take the nation at its word, and under some sable Moses, move off en masse to Mexico and the West Indies. Perhaps nothing could so effectually convince our money-loving countrymen of their present folly, as the sudden withdrawal of one-fourth part of the available labour of the country. It would be the greatest blow upon our political, commercial and agricultural interests that could be struck—more destructive than half a dozen wars. But we hope better things.

Native Americans, feeling a deep attachment to the land of our fathers, and ready to peril every thing for its true honor and advancement, we earnestly desire our injured fellow-countrymen to bear up under the peculiar unequal burdens thrown upon them, and stand firm in the determination to save the country, or perish in its fall. As abolitionists, too, pledged to our enslaved brethren, "as bound with them," we call upon our brethren of kindred descent, who are nominally free, to bear their just part in hastening the day of universal emancipation;—which they can do in no way so effectually as by continuing in the country. We also take this opportunity of recalling to the minds of our brethren, the sentiment, worthy of imperishable renown, "beyond all Greek, all Roman fame," which was adopted by the great meeting of people of color at the Bethel church in Philadelphia, in January, 1817, shortly after the formation of the American Colonization Society.—Perhaps that resolution has not of late, been brought forward so frequently as it ought. We find it in Garrison's Thoughts on Colonization, Part I, p. 9. "Resolved, That WE WILL NEVER SEPARATE OURSELVES FROM THE SLAVE POPULATION IN THIS COUNTRY; they are our brethren by the ties of consanguinity, of suffering, and of wrong; and we feel that there is MORE VIRTUE IN SUFFERING PRIVATIONS WITH THEM, than fancied advantages for a season."

We also copy an extract of a letter from the venerable bishop Richard Allen, which was published twelve years ago by brother Cosnish, in his "Freedom's Journal." The excellent old bishop says;
"See thousands of foreigners, emigrating to America every year: and if there be ground sufficient for them to cultivate, and bread for them to eat, why should they wish to send the first tril-

lers of the land away? Africans have made fortunes for thousands, who are yet unwilling to part with their services; but the free must be sent away, and those who remain must be slaves. I have no doubt that there are many good men who do not see as I do, and who are for sending us to Liberia; but they have not duly considered the matter—they are not men of color. This land which we have watered with our tears and our blood, is now OUR MOTHER COUNTRY, AND WE ARE WELL SATISFIED TO STAY where wisdom abounds and the gospel is free.

"RICHARD ALLEN,
"Bishop of the African Methodist
"Episcopal Church in the United
"States."

We admit that the proposals sent from the island of Trinidad are of a very flattering character; but at the same time, we are persuaded that they exhibit only the favourable side of the picture, and those who emigrate will find many privations and hardships which they now little apprehend. We think that there ought to be a committee of THREE intelligent and trusty men sent out to examine the country, and to stay there long enough to investigate the whole business, & see how things look in the eyes of free Americans. A rush of emigrants to a country of which so little is known, might involve an amount of human suffering and disappointment, hardly paralleled by the bloody experiment of the Colonization Society.

Our colored friends of Philadelphia, who conduct the National Reformer, thus express their views of the matter:

"We publish below an interesting account of the island of Trinidad. If the half be true, (and we have no reason to doubt but what the whole is so,) no ordinary inducements are offered to many of our people who are perishing for the want of such a field. We believe, under God, that those islands of the sea, (British West Indies,) are destined to have such a bearing on this country, as will ultimately lead to the abolition of slavery. We hope that some of our brethren will avail themselves of the privileges there offered. We are opposed to any general movements for emigration, any where, among our people, but we can see no objection to individuals' bettering their condition, so near home."

From the Emancipator. Mr. Clay's Slave.

The following anecdote is related in the Baltimore Chronicle:

"When Mr. Clay visited Canada a few weeks ago, he took with him his servant man, Charles, who, we believe, was born in his service, and has waited upon him many years. At Montreal, we believe it was, some of her Britannic Majesty's subjects approached Charles with assurances that he could now leave him without the least fear of ever being compelled again into his service. For some time, Charles listened to these suggestions with silent disregard—but, as they were pertinaciously pressed upon him, he at length put a stop to the entreaties of his philanthropic friends, by telling them that he was as well aware as they were of the ease with which he could now gain his freedom; but that, in fact, in the service of Mr. Clay, he had as much liberty as he needed or desired; that he preferred to remain with him, and that, in short, he would not leave him for both the Canadas."

This is a very pleasant story indeed, and quite novel, proving just as conclusively that slavery is better than freedom, as the voluntary removal of the Tories to Nova Scotia in '76, proved that colonial bondage was preferable to national independence. Those who are aware how many sleek divines and servile editors, among white folks, are ready to argue that slavery is a blessing, will not wonder that among people of color, where every body expects to see a nobler spirit, here and there a pampered menial should be found, who might actually prefer the lazy indulgencies of a waiter on Henry Clay to the necessity of earning free bread by honest industry. The inference which the Baltimore man would have us draw, that, therefore, it is right for Mr. Clay to hold his fellow-man as a slave—is too strained for our assent.

But it is possible this colored man, if he were free to tell the whole truth, might put a very different face on the matter. The Jews of the Philistines, when they wanted to tempt the Almighty, put the ark of the covenant on a cart, and yoked the cows in the team, but "shut up the calves at home." It is one of the refinements of American slaveholders, to lay hold of the finer sympathies of human beings as the subject of their wanton experiments. And as the day of miracles is past, and the Almighty does not interrupt the course of nature, even to save republican serviles from being caught in the delusions they covet, our modern Philistines are able to keep the ark of the Lord in the temple of Dagon. Perhaps Mr. Clay's "servant-man Charles," having been "born in his service," (i. e. born contrary to the Declaration of Independence, which says all men are created equal,) has also a wife and children that he loves, or an aged mother towards whom he wishes to fulfil the fifth commandment, or some young sisters or brothers, or other beloved relations, that are subject to the absolute and irresponsible control of Mr. Clay, or some of his friends, and who would incur the fearful inflictions of a slaveholder's fury as the penalty, if "Charles" did not return. And his spirit was too manly to let them suffer as his hostages, even though his own liberty, dearer than life, must be the forfeit. This applause which sixty generations have bestowed on the self-sacrificing Damon may find worthier objects among the subjects of many a more relentless tyrant in republican America.

If, then, on these or any other grounds, Charles had made up his mind to return, there is not a slave in the whole South so stupid as not to know, without being told, how he must answer such proposals, if he would avoid being sent down the river, to the New Orleans man-shambles, or to his master's sugar plantation, as soon as he returned home.

Mr. Clay is welcome to all the honor which the well-informed will give for the well-considered answers of his "servant man Charles."

Mr. Clay has been often celebrated for his generosity. We should like to know his response to the following appeal in the case, which, coming from a devoted political friend, it is possible he may think worthy of consideration. The editor of the Cincinnati Gazette, after copying the anecdote above, very properly asks—

"And how has Mr. Clay requited this noble conduct? this self-devoted free-will offering, in support of the favored institutions of the South?"

"I have read or heard an anecdote of a wealthy northern man, of northern principles, of this import. In visiting his large estate, he tarried over night with his tenant that kept a snug country tavern, on a farm of 200 acres of land. The tavern keeper owned a beautiful poney, which became an instant desideratum to a little son of the proprietor. A proposal to purchase was made, but a sale was declined. Soon after the morning departure the lad came cantering on the poney to his father's carriage, with a note from the owner requesting the father to permit the boy to receive it, as a present, from one upon whom he had bestowed many unrequited favors. The poney was accepted, and from the first stopping place, a complete and fully executed deed of the farm and tavern-house he occupied, was forwarded to the poney's late master. This was somewhat of the olden time, when great men rightly understood the true sense of the maxim, 'one good turn deserves another.'"

From the Mass. Abolitionist. CONSUL TRIST.

The United States have a functionary at Havana who is probably doing more to facilitate the African slave trade, than ever has been done, or ever will be done, to check it by the Colonization Society. A single day of his operations, we doubt not, brings into slavery more human beings than Colonization ever helped out of it. It would take several hundred such colonies as Liberia to make any obstructions to his operations. It is time that abolition steam-power was applied to the piston of our Federal Government machinery in sufficient force to move such felons to the quarters where they belong. The Great Western brings intelligence that the matter is causing a proper sensation on the other side of the water, and we shall watch with great interest, the conduct of our "Northern President, with Southern principles," both in the case of consul Trist and the Amity. Shall the civilized world be disappointed?

On the 31st of December, 1838, Mr. Theophilus Barker, British consul for the Cape de Verdes, wrote to his Government as follows:

"I have heard from the last American vessel that arrived at this place, that the American consul, Nicholas F. Trist, will be removed from the consulate at Havana.—He ought to be,—having granted, to my knowledge, more than ten false bills of sale of vessels and passes to these islands."

That this may be understood, it may be necessary to state, that the American vessels engaged in the trade, resort in great numbers to the Cape de Verdes, where they change their flag, and by a fraudulent sale, are for the time converted into Portuguese or Spanish vessels, and thus get a double set of papers. If overtaken by a British cruiser, they are American vessels, and cannot be searched; if, by any wonder, they should be spoken by an American cruiser, they are Spanish or Portuguese.

The following item has probably grown out of the more recent operations of Consul Trist:

Look at this!—We learn that the Campbell, formerly a U. S. Revenue Cutter, has been sold at Havana for the slave trade, and on her arrival there from New Orleans, will be sent to Africa for a load of human flesh, under the star-spangled banner! We further learn that since Dec. last, twenty-three vessels, under the American flag, have left Havana to engage in the same infamous traffic!! Can nothing be done by the U. S. Government to protect itself from this foul disgrace, and Africa from such tremendous wrongs?—*Jour. of Com.*

Yes; we reply to the Journal of Commerce, let the U. S. honestly carry out its action against slavery, and the trade, to the extent of its constitutional power, and all will follow. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree. The market must be broken up. If our soil were made as sacred as that of England, who would import slaves?

Jay's View.

The unjust and cruel war, which has been for a few years past waged against the Indians of Florida, had its origin in Slavery. The circumstances were these: "A female slave, a number of years ago, escaped from Georgia into Florida, and was married by an Indian. In process of time the daughter of this pair became the wife of Ocoola, the far-famed Indian Chief. The proprietor of the fugitive, or a person holding his claim after her death, ascertained that the wife of Ocoola was her daughter, in person, or by proxy, seized her in an unguarded moment, dragged her into Georgia, and made her a slave. The great and greatly injured son of the forest resolved on revenge, and, pursuing his kidoapper, availed himself of an opportunity to shoot him through the heart." A cry was at once raised against the unhappy Indians and the blood-hounds of war let loose upon them. And thus commenced an exterminating warfare, which, besides the misery which it has occasioned, and the lives it has sacrificed, (and northern officers and privates have been dragged to the South, to be shot down by Indian rifles or sicken and die in Florida marshes,) has already cost our government an amount of money, equal to two dollars for every man, woman and child in the country. A fair proportion of this money has come out of northern purses. Have we then nothing to do with a system which, within a few years past, has put its hands into our pockets, and abstracted from the purse of every citizen with a family of six, nearly twelve dollars, to meet a single item of its expenditures? But for the war, from ten to fifteen millions of surplus revenue, might now be divided among the non-slaveholding States. And have we nothing to do with a system which filches from us our money by millions?"