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LETTERS

AGAINST THE

IMMEDIATE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY;

ADDRESSED TO THE

FREE BLACKS OF THE NON-SLAVE-HOLDING STATES.

BY T. R. SULLIVAN.

COMPRISING

A LEGAL OPINION

ON THE POWER OF LEGISLATURES IN NON-SLAVE-HOLDING STATES TO PREVENT MEASURES TENDING TO IMMEDIATE AND GENERAL EMANCIPATION;

IN A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM

WILLIAM SULLIVAN, L. L. D.

PUBLISHED WITH HIS PERMISSION.

[THE WHOLE FIRST PRINTED IN THE BOSTON COURIER.]

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PREFACE.

The following work was suggested by the writer's perception of the want of some means to counteract the impressions which the anti-slavery orators were attempting to make among the general population of the northern States, not without a degree of success encouraging them the present year to extend their operations. The opinions of citizens in Boston, at meetings called in countervcntion of these increasing influences, did not necessarily represent those of the village and country inhabitants; were not distinctly indicative of the feelings of the people at large; and could not act upon the minds of those not present at such meetings, as an antidote to exciting appeals to the multitude, "man, woman, and child," throughout New England, by sincere and ardent philanthropists (as I freely admit them, in general, to be) including, in many cases, some individuals from the most influential classes of society. The writer having been led by his professional engagements, to visit, within the space of a few months, several places of importance, (the chosen scene apparently, in some instances, of especial anti-slavery efforts) had an opportunity to judge, by personal observation, of the nature and effect of the Abolition addresses, &c., not within the reach of many, in other respects far more competent than he to the task which he undertook.

The peculiar fitness of publishing the Legal Opinion embodied in the work, at this time, arises, in the view of the author of these Letters, from the fact, that a check more effectual than public meetings, is demanded at the present crisis. The South claims "efficient measures" for its security against "insurrectionary" and "aggressive" acts, in the non-slave-holding States; and points out "legislative enactments" as the means, because it is perceived that such only will be efficient. As long as the controversy here is confined to a struggle for the supremacy of popular opinion, the Abolitionists gain as much as they lose; the attention they excite making them more conspicuous, and opening to them a wider field. This they well understand. But as soon as the conflict is between Anti-Slavery Societies and the Law, there will be something more serious to contend with than public sentiment. It is not probable that their leaders themselves would long persist, nor obtain many to unite with them, or adhere to them, in advocating abstract principles in such a manner as to expose themselves to the cognizance and penalties of the laws of the land.

T. R. S.
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LETTERS AGAINST IMMEDIATE ABOLITION.

LETTER I.

My Respected Friends:

The design of these Letters is to convince you that those gentlemen at the North, who are opposed to Immediate Abolition, are not hostile to the welfare of yourselves and your brethren in bonds; and that, accordingly, you can by no means be certain that you are promoting the elevation of your race and the removal of Slavery, when you give your sympathy and influence to the system and measures of the Immediate Abolitionists. They come from one who is a friend to the children of Africa, and who desires, in humble imitation of your Master and his, to be the servant of you all. He addresses you as the free Blacks, not reproachfully, but because he does not feel, and thinks you should not, that you have cause to be ashamed of being designated by the color with which your Creator has tinged your skin. He addresses himself to the free blacks of the non-slave-holding states, because he would think it dishonorable to interfere with the legal property or political rights of a slave owner at a distance, as he would not dare to do before his face; and he confesses that he should not venture, were he at the South, to call together and address, on any subject connected with Slavery, the free black population
of a slave-holding state, without the general consent of the slave owners. He calls himself your Friend, because he is writing in opposition to men whom he regards as your false friends, without questioning that they are sincere in deeming themselves your best friends.

The African negro may not be able to compete with the leading European races in commerce and the arts, in education and literature, in legislation, politics, and government, (though this has not been proved by a sufficiently long and fair experiment;) he may not be naturally equal to the white man in intellectual capacities, (for, as I said, it has not been proved,) but he is his equal in natural moral characteristics, and perhaps excels him in a predisposition to some virtues of a high order. The negro, by native disposition, is good-natured, obliging, and affectionate, grateful for favors, forgetful of injuries, susceptible to kindness, and ready in deference to superiority in character and station. He is, accordingly, material for peaceable neighbors and quiet citizens. Governed with combined suavity and steadiness, he is the most willing of servants and the most patient of laborers; treated with confidence and consideration, he proves, in his master's extremity, the most trusty of friends, and the bravest and most faithful of defenders. Gratitude, patience, forgiveness, and fidelity, are noble virtues; and neither the lash of cruelty, nor the chain of oppression, nor the ever-pointed finger of contempt, can destroy their connexion with the Ethiopian dye.* Though these generous qualities (my heart burns as I record it) are often smothered by sternness and severity, and often are little understood and less requited, the embers revive with returning humanity, and the frown, and the blow, the high look of pride, and the loud curse of anger, are remembered no longer. The first recollect-

* See Appendix A.
tions of my infancy and childhood are associated with negro kindness and faithfulness.

These sentiments will, I hope, assure you, in the outset, that they who feel for you the most kindly, are sometimes to be found in the number who the most strenuously oppose the principles and measures of the self-named and self-imagined friends of your brethren in bonds, but, as I think, agreeably to what was explained above, and will in the sequel be shown, their actually false lovers, the Immediate Abolitionists. 'And, now, my respected friends, although I do not think the amalgamation of the white and black races practicable or desirable; though I believe that both would degenerate in the process; though I feel assured that the God of nature has wisely placed a visible and impassable barrier to such a union, and that the laws and lines of nature are never overleaped with impunity; yet I trust you will perceive that I am not capable of justifying any plea for despising, neglecting, or oppressing the negro, bond or free, founded on the fact that the Common Former of our bodies and Father of our immortal spirits has distinguished you by "a skin not colored as my own."

I have nothing to add before taking up my subject, but I must ask you to wait till I offer you my next letter.

_________

LETTER II.

My Respected Friends:

I will now endeavor to perform my promise to show you that the Immediate Abolitionist has mistaken the interest of the cause which he advocates, and that of the country he would serve, your interest and his own.
The Rev. Dr. Cox, of England, having in view, as was understood, in addition to the promotion of Christianity as professed by the Baptist denomination, to labor in the removal of slavery in the United States, perceiving that he could not speak a word at the North for the favorite doctrine of those whom at the time he found the most active in that work, without interfering with a political question of much delicacy, and alike perplexing and important, with great propriety declined addressing the public on that subject. George Thompson chose the opposite course, and my approbation of the conduct of his countryman and companion indicates the view I take of his. I shall hereafter give you my free opinion of the latter, as an Agitator or Foreign Emissary, the only character in which I shall speak of him; for whether the imputations which have been cast upon his private life by some of the prints, are justifiable or not, by facts, in either case his public proceedings make him obnoxious to censure; and I rejoice that it would be travelling out of the record, to inquire whether those charges are just.

Now, although we could not expect the English and Scotch to understand precisely how we manage things in this free country, and a mistake by one of them of this kind, apart from any practical consequences, might be pardonable, yet it is not a little surprising that our own native New England men, who ought to know how we do business in the new world, have pitched upon a system of operations as contrary as well could be to the practice of our citizens, under our republican forms. The system which I thus designate, consists in commencing the agitation of a legal, constitutional, or political reform (for whatever name beside be given to Immediate Abolition, it is this also,) by measures adapted to inflame the passions of the multitude, including the women and children, the boarding-school misses and factory girls, in short, "man, woman,
and child,” upon the avowed plan of turning the current of popular opinion at the North so strongly in favor of the principles of northern anti-slavery, that the “man-stealers” and man-owners at the South shall feel the necessity of voluntarily abrogating the “laws” by which slavery is allowed and fortified in the slave states.

Without claiming more than common powers of observation and discernment, I do profess to know a little better than some others the practical mode of transacting public business in a free country. If I have any advantage over another, justifying the strong and almost irresistible impulse which now hurries on my thoughts with a rapidity far outstripping my pen, it is that my attention has been particularly drawn to the spirit of our republican institutions and the actual method of accomplishing things by the voice of majorities and the force of general opinion, in that genuine field of their display, our country towns. Having been largely conversant with society in New England, (for one born and bred in the city, who never passed a year at a time, as an interested inhabitant of a country town, knows little more of New England in her villages, than of Ireland in her peat bogs, or Scotland in her highland fastnesses,) my mind was especially attracted to the manner in which public affairs are managed, where every man claims freedom to think, speak, and act for the public, and every other man admits his claim, and hears, with patience every thing he says worth hearing, and to the purpose, however threadbare his coat, or mean his dwelling, or small his tax.

How then do they transact business in the district meetings, the town meetings, and the Lyceums, those primary schools of our republican legislators and politicians? Let us suppose a case, which shall be similar in every particular to one which the writer has witnessed. Here is a discontent in one of the school districts; one party of those
living in the district being dissatisfied with the school teacher, and determined to have him removed, the opposite party being pleased with him, and as resolute that he shall be retained. But they can do nothing according to law, and they will do nothing against the law. Now the law (as in some of the New England States) gives to the superintending school committees of the several towns, the power to remove a teacher from his place, if they see fit, upon complaint being made before them by the district to which the school belongs. The parties accordingly in the district, that is, the male members, or as many of them as choose to act, together with the offending teacher, with or without some of the older pupils, to serve as witnesses, appear before the superintending school committee, state the case, attempt to prove the allegations, and receive the decision of the committee, by which they submissively abide.* Here the matter ends. Now suppose that when the disturbance began, some of the most active partisans

* A committee like this will do well to exercise their brief, and by no means enviable authority, with moderation and discretion. It will be fortunate for them if, in a case similar to that above cited, they can (as a committee known to the writer once did) see their way clearly to dismiss the parties, avoiding a decision exclusively favorable to either, but conveying a gentle reproof to both. In the above instance the committee decided, that there being evidently wrong on both sides, the committee decline acting. Whereupon the parties, though both were large, heated, and very earnest, and the excitement general in the district, acquiesced without any demur, and retired peaceably without a word of complaint, suffering the obnoxious teacher to go on with the school till his time should expire; the dissatisfied revenging themselves in the characteristic way of depriving their children of the benefit of the district school the rest of the term, by keeping them at home; as wisely as the discontented in a parish, when displeased, punish their pastor, or some of his zealous supporters, by depriving themselves of the good influences of public worship, by staying at home from meeting.
had called a public meeting of all persons, of both sexes, in the district, and there had declaimed against the master’s tyrannical discipline or incompetent knowledge, against his partiality or his negligence, insisting on the abstract right, in a free country, of redressing such an evil, “by bringing public opinion to bear” upon the question; and if, (as is the fact in some places,) one or more in the district, being opposed to the law which gives the power of removal to the superintending school committee of the town, instead of leaving it to the “prudential committee” of the district to dismiss as well as to engage a teacher, had also taken occasion to excite the assembly against the law of the state, on that point, would any good have followed from stirring up the feelings of the female population of the district? would the effect be favorable in the domestic relations? would it aid to teach the young respect for age, and subordination to authority? would it be the right way to secure dispassionate investigations and impartial results, to get wise measures adopted, or to promote either the peace of the community, or the progress of education? Who does not see that by such a mode of proceeding the collected wisdom of the district, or if it be a town meeting, of the town, would be likely to be defeated by popular feeling and female excitement? Whereas, in the ordinary practice, the good sense and argument on either side are brought into close comparison and fair conflict; and the deliberate counsel of the experienced and judicious prevails over the prejudice and jealousy of families, and the passion and clamor of the fire-side.

I am not unjust to the American Anti-Slavery Society, and its active friends, when I illustrate their system of influence by the foregoing example, because I compare it to nothing that I have not myself seen and heard, while present at the large and promiscuous assemblies by them called together. There I have seen woman’s tears testi-
fying to the portion of the audience, in an appeal to which the anti-slavery agitator best loves to indulge; and I have seen that appeal enforced by allusions to points on which woman is the most sensitive, (in relation, that is, to the illicit intercourse to which the relation of master and slave is said to give opportunity) at which the face of modest woman was turned from the speaker, and covered from the speaker's eye. Who does not know that popular art is never more triumphant than when it can enlist the peculiar feelings (whether of party, denomination, or sex) on the side of what is called public justice, or sound policy, or righteous indignation?

I attended a meeting, on another occasion, in a manufacturing town, in which eight hundred factory girls were numbered with the female population, and heard a Rev. orator ask a large audience, two thirds of which were females, whether the "laws" at the South permitting man "to hold man as property," and "to break the conjugal tie and separate family relations at will," "were to be approved?" and how they would like to see a father or brother compelled to work daily "without wages," like a horse or an ox, or to see wives and husbands, parents and children, in their neighborhood, torn from each other by the arm of a domestic tyrant, sustained by the law of the land! Is it proper to propose inquiries of so grave a character to thronged assemblies composed chiefly of females? Nay, when such questions are not merely speculative, but immediately affect the legal property, the personal security, the domestic customs, and the constitutional privileges of thousands of our countrymen, not belonging to our own State, nor even to our own New England States, is it not reprehensible and mischievous to agitate them by making impressions on the susceptible mind of woman, and by sowing the seeds of sectional prejudice and hostility in the tender hearts of children and
youth? Is it a justification that the authors of these rash proceedings "intend" no interference with the legal rights of their fellow-citizens, but mean only to instruct the public mind and direct the public feeling by the exhibition of abstract truth applied to unquestionable fact, so that the household despot of the South, and legalized oppressor of the African, shall be constrained (only by the force of public opinion, look ye,) to give liberty to the captive, and to wipe the disgrace of the slave laws from the statute book? Is it justifiable to disregard the effect of inflammatory writings and organized associations in their favor, upon the slaves themselves, whom they must sooner or later reach directly or by rumor, to the jeopardy of thousands of lives?

It is not denied that these men have, legally, the right to assemble their fellow-citizens and address them in any mode that they will hear or bear; but in this case, and in this manner, is it wise, is it politic, is it manly, is it Christian, is it humane, is it patriotic? Is it not in truth taking means to defeat the end proposed? Suppose all New England one great Anti-Slavery Society, on the principles of Immediate Abolition, "man, woman, and child"? What would be the effect at the South? What but to double lock the fetters of slavery? What but to fix the slave statutes even as the laws of the Medes and Persians? What but to render them, still more than now of necessity they are, like the laws of Draco, which were said to be written in blood? Can any reflecting man think that such are the means to abolish slavery in this country; to pierce, (according to the style of the northern enthusiast) the "criminal," "man-stealer," man-owner, and man-seller of the South with the pang of repentance, till he shall restore to his brother the stolen birthright of freedom, and substitute for the code of oppression, laws consistent with the principles of eternal justice, and the stifled calls of hu-
manity? We know our spirited southern brethren better. We know ourselves better. We know human nature better. Is it by such means, my respected friends of African descent, that your brethren in bonds are to be released from their thraldom? But a few days since an intelligent gentleman whose connexion with the South and acquaintance with the minds of the slave-holders entitle him to be heard, said to me in reference to a worthy but visionary anti-slavery leader, "What ails Mr. ——? Is he mad? Every time the Immediate Abolitionist lifts his weapons against slavery in the South, he increases its rigor and rivets its chain"!

In this letter I have addressed myself to your common sense: in the next I shall make an appeal of a different kind.

LETTER III.

My Respected Friends:

I will now give you my free opinion of George Thompson, in the character in which he has presumed upon the sympathy of the New England States, viz. that of a Foreign Agent, publicly laboring in the cause, and with the countenance of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Having no other document at hand, I can the most conveniently introduce him to you by his description in the New York Morning Courier and Enquirer of July 18, 1835, as "Thompson, the Scotchman," "employed" to agitate immediate abolition through the cities and villages of the northern states. I have no occasion to make use of the torrent of indignant contempt which the editor of that paper pours upon his public and private character,
Are the people of New England so simple as to thank this Foreign Emissary for his unwelcome interference in the affairs of the country? Are we to receive with gratitude and flatter with applause every impertinent intruder into matters which should be left with others, and which they who are the most concerned find it so difficult to remedy or settle? Suspicion is the compliment we should pay to meddlers. John Bull knows very well that family quarrels are the most bitter, and if he is to be supposed as capable of malice as of choler, he could devise no better plan to gratify his spleen, than to sow dissension in the twenty-four respectable but somewhat jealous families across the water, which he has sense enough to perceive, "divided, will fall" by their own weakness, but "united, will stand" against him and the world. Now, of all subtle contrivances for provoking them to a family broil, resembling the "letting out of water," which, once allowed to gush forth, cannot be held back or gathered up, the very choicest, it seems to me, is to send over a noisy bully to take sides with one or more, against the remainder, on some domestic question, about which they are sorely irritable, and of which they cannot talk five minutes without petulance. Slayvery is this tender point: George Thompson may or may not be such a designing intruder. Whether sent by John himself, (which, to do John justice, I very much doubt,) or whether commissioned by "a community of Scottish old ladies," who know no better, it is enough that he ought to know better than to meddle with our most intricate and agitating topics of law, policy, and constitutional right, and therefore the welcome that I give him is Suspicion. It is quite certain that this sort of interference might do us irremediable injury; and I would meet the man who should impudently insinuate himself into my family circle, and, as an artful busy-body, male or female, knows how, should abuse my sufferance
to nettle its inmates into mutual jealousy and hate,—howbeit he might smilingly hold out to me the privilege of his friendship, and smoothly tender the proffer of his humble service,—with the stern frown and steady vigilance of Suspicion!

Is any man, foreigner or native, a proper agent for promoting abolition, (supposing it justifiable to originate public measures for that purpose at the north) who has not visited the slave-holding States, to see Slavery in our country, as it is? Shall “the stranger that is within our gates” be carelessly encouraged to inflame the minds of our people, male and female, young and old, on subjects of vital interest to the country,—subjects which many of our wisest men do not even approach without diffidence, and into which none can look deeply without dismay? Are we not wanting both in self-respect and common prudence, if we do not, with one voice, say to the intruder, “You have mistaken us and yourself; yourself, if you conceive that you are doing us good; us, if you imagine that we shall silently submit to see you work us evil.”

I am not hostile to George Thompson, as George Thompson, any more than to any other human being. There is no personal cause why I should oppose him rather than any New England man. My apology to him and to his country (if his country own him to be worthy of her) is my vivid conception of the hazardous tendency of that which he has done, and is now doing in my own; and when, standing on her lovely and beloved soil, whereon my infancy was rocked, my childhood protected, my youth nurtured, and my manhood ripened, whereon my ancestors fought and toiled for the liberties and laws which my children will inherit, I see a rashly daring hand about to apply to her peace the fire of Disunion, if, by a bold word, I could prevent him who lighted the torch from spreading the flame, I should not stop to ask who it was that my
voice might arrest in so foul a deed, nor who would be displeased, if I should couple the name of the offender with the right name of the offence.

In my next, I shall communicate to you, my respected friends, some of my ideas relative to the present fashion of attempting moral or political reforms, (I shall not touch upon religious) by means of Popular Excitement and Combination.

LETTER IV.

My Respected Friends:

This letter is designed to show you the impropriety and inefficacy of popular excitement, as the instrument of moral, legal, or political reform, especially when strengthened by the power of combination. Every community, from a nation down to a village, contains a class of ardent and restless men, standing ever ready to agitate, heat, and control the multitude, who, as a multitude, are always like the sea, passive, fluctuating, and easy to be raised into tumult, and while harmless, when undisturbed, as each particular drop that contributes to form it, becoming, when agitated, like the sea swelled into violence and moving in mass, the most terrible of the agents which the Almighty holds in the hollow of his hand. When persons of this description start an excitement, the wise and moderate stand aloof, waiting a favorable crisis for interposing to smooth the waves and direct the storm, while the cooler and more calculating among the unprincipled keep still, watching how they may turn to their private advantage the commotion that its less wary authors have stirred up
for their own. Not all among the calm are indifferent; not all among the sanguine are visionary; not all among the enthusiastic are wild. But when the passionate sway the crowd, the sagacious begin to be doubtful, the benevolent to grow cold, and the virtuous to feel timid, in relation to the end proposed, how excellent soever and desirable in itself.

The history of the temperance reformation in this country furnishes an example in point. The prevalent and excessive use of ardent spirit as a drink, had become, a few years ago, an evil so great, so palpable, and so alarming, as to call upon the wise and virtuous for an effectual check. The call was obeyed, and the true remedy was discovered, viz.: that of individuals mutually pledging each other to abstain entirely from using and offering ardent spirit as a drink. Never was a better cause; never was a good cause better begun. The plan was adopted in the first instance, not from excitement, but conviction, and the measure that was proposed for general concurrence, was reasonable and equal, simple and effective. No united effort was ever more important as to its end, nor more promising as to its means, nor, up to a certain period, more successful in its operation. The temperance pledge was an extraordinary expedient to meet a great emergency. But when the temperance societies left off acting upon others not members and the community at large, as individuals, and began to operate as societies or combinations, a new face was given to the enterprise, and the reform which began with individual persuasion, came then to be prosecuted by numerical influence—thus marking the first departure from the original system.

The next modification of the original step was to add to ardent spirit, "wine, strong beer, cordials, cider," &c. to be included in the pledge of total abstinence. This again was changing ground entirely. The temperance pledge
then lost its peculiar recommendation and only rational defence as an extraordinary expedient to meet a great emergency, and was turned into an engine of moral reform in relation to temperance in general. This alteration was objectionable and impolitic. For a mutual pledge of this kind is simply the mutual voluntary relinquishment of a portion of our natural and legal freedom of action for our own and the public good. The society is properly only the form by which this mutual agreement is specified and by means of which it takes effect. So far as the drinking of ardent spirit was concerned, a case demanding such a sacrifice of personal liberty was clearly made out. Not so was it, nor can it be, in reference to any other article of drink in common use in our country. Thus was it urged upon every individual, (in some cases including children "under ten years of age," under penalty of the ban of public displeasure, to give up his freedom of action and right of self-direction to an extent which the community is not entitled to exact, and to which no man is under obligation to consent. Opposition of course arising, the temperance societies now in resolutions, and now in authoritatively published addresses, now in separate meetings, and now in conventions, began to use the power of combination to overcome resistance, or to compel men, by the force of united influence and of public feeling, to relinquish more of their liberty of action, than through individual persuasion they would deliberately have done, more than the members already gained had anticipated when they made the first sacrifice, and more than their own and the public good required.

Next, in the course of overbearing this opposition by appeals to the passions of the multitude instead of the understanding and conscience of the individual, a third modification of the original plan was introduced, viz. bringing popular feeling to bear directly upon the manu-
facturer and dealer, instead of confining direct and joint action to the reformation of the consumer or buyer. I am not defending the manufacture and sale of ardent spirit: I think, and I have publicly contended, and I now say, that with the light which has been thrown upon the nature and effects of ardent spirit, the manufacture and sale of it as a drink is not justifiable on moral grounds. Still I object to the direct action of temperance societies upon the character and employment of the manufacturer and the dealer, (such as voting not to trade with them for other things, or not to keep or receive them in the church,) considered as a means of promoting the temperance reformation, or of putting a stop to their several occupations. For the temperance reform was as unfavorable to the pecuniary interest of the manufacturer and dealer as it was beneficial to that of all other classes in society; and it was not to be expected that their minds should be carried forward by facts and arguments against that whereby haply they chiefly had their living and their gain, as fast as the minds of those whose advantage was going along with the popular current which those facts and arguments had set in motion; nor was it fair that we of the temperance societies should imperiously demand of the manufacturer and dealer a sacrifice greater than we, with all our zeal, had ever made, and which not one in fifty of us, perhaps, would have been more ready to make than they; nor was it politic, when the number who were voluntarily abandoning those employments was becoming quite in proportion to the number of those who drew their supposed right to demand it from their adoption of the temperance pledge.

The genuine temperance reformation went forward with as much rapidity, as could be desired, perhaps, and certainly with much greater than its earliest friends had expected, until these three departures from the original sys-
Meanwhile, by indirect consequence, a general moderation had begun to prevail spontaneously in the use of other intoxicating liquors; but as soon as the combined action of the temperance societies was turned directly upon the cause of general temperance, not only was the progress of general moderation checked, but the original anti-ardent spirit "Movement" began to retrograde. Imprudence having roused resistance, and resistance in turn changing zeal into violence, the natural fruits of undue excitement, folly and injustice, with their consequences, began to appear, manifested in indiscriminate censure, and the adoption of means precisely fitted to defeat the end they were intended to advance.

This chapter of collateral history,—to the truth of which hundreds of discerning minds throughout New England will testify,—affords a fair illustration of the principle of the anti-slavery operations in the Northern States, viz. the power of popular excitement, strengthened by combination; and, as like causes produce like effects, the same tendency is seen in the latter case as in the former, viz. in the injustice, practised by the immediate abolitionists, of denouncing whole classes of men, of indulging in unqualified condemnation, and of founding unfair conclusions upon inaccurate or exaggerated statements, as well as in the proofs, every day growing clearer, that by their compulsory doings (for violence is compulsory in debate as well as in action) they are using means suited to increase the misery they wish to relieve, and retard the cause they hope to serve.

When we consider, too, that the political bearings of the immediate abolition system have an importance so much more pressing than those of the temperance reform; when we reflect that the former involves legal and political questions of the most perplexing and delicate nature, the impropriety and danger of that system will be seen in a
plainer view, since unjustifiable violence and aggression are sure to produce passion, and passion, "when it is finished," brings forth madness, "confusion, and every evil work."

This use of popular excitement, aided by combination, is the more objectionable and alarming, on account of the extent of the field on which its power has been tried; especially regarded as including the intermixture of female influence in legal and political concerns. Woman, moving regularly and calmly in her own sphere, is as lovely as the evening star, and at once serviceable and delightful, like the planet of night. It is as unbecoming to her to appear in the world dis-orbed, as unattired. But something more than the violation of decorum is here involved. When woman leaves her place, and with combined voice and action, mingles with men in the struggles of ambition and power, nothing that poet ever dreamed of the disastrous shock of comets, striking our trembling globe, out-measures the evil that might follow from her political interference in times which try men's souls, when fear of change perplexes the wise, and the hearts of the boldest fail at that which may come upon the earth.

Men everywhere, but, so far as my observation has reached, particularly in this free land, are too much inclined to yield to the direction of intelligent and virtuous woman. Female influence, rightly understood, is as valuable, as female interference is mischievous. It is, however, still and meek, soothing and never irritating, seeking to draw and never to drive, and "keeping at home;" and it oversteps the modesty of nature when it begins to strive and to rule. "Let the woman," says St. Paul, "learn in silence and subjection." "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The right of private judgment implies a solemn responsibility; and that freeman is unworthy of his country
who dares not think and act freely to serve it. No man can attain true mental independence who permits domestic entreaty or dictation to deter him from forming his mind, or exerting his influence in the manner that unbiased examination and a deliberate conscience would prescribe. And it is wrong and reprehensible, accordingly, to make use of combined female influence to work upon the feelings of men, when legal and political changes are proposed. Women, from their natural excitability and domestic training, are as unfit to take part in the stern and stormy scenes of legislation and politics, as, from their physical delicacy, to wield the axe in the woods, or the hammer at the forge.

That in stating these principles I am fully sustained by nature and by fact, and do my respected countrywomen no injustice, is shown by the following illustration from real New England life, furnished by an esteemed friend, to whom I read letter No. 2, of this series, before publication, and who says, in reference to the transaction which he relates, "Of the facts there is no doubt, and I am ready to vouch for them, and to bring hundreds of others to do the like."

* * * "I can give you an example of the manner of carrying on and the effect of an excitement raised by 'addressing women and children.' The anecdote I will relate occurred within my own observation; and I have no doubt there are fifty others who could testify to similar cases. A gentleman from -------- college was engaged to teach the school in a district of --------, for the winter of 18---. Now it happened that a majority of the inhabitants of this district of the town of -------- were of a different sect from the rest of --------, and from that of the college from which the teacher came. Consequently they were predisposed to make him trouble. The children were taught to watch the motions of their master, and encouraged to report their observations to their mothers.
As it always will happen, (for who can live without making some enemies; above all, who can teach a school, and satisfy all his pupils?) opportunity was soon found for making complaint. The children carried home marvellous stories to their mothers of the various wickednesses and misdeeds of their master. The good dames were inflamed with rage. It is not necessary to recount the various stories which flew from one angry woman to another, till there was hardly a crime forbidden by law or gospel that the schoolmaster had not committed. The wives discussed between meetings and over their tea, the momentous question, and all were determined that 'something must be done, and that speedily.' But by the foolishness and tyranny of the law-makers, the master-making power was vested in a committee of men. This was a sad thing for the conspirators—for by this time the excitement and determination had taken the form of a conspiracy—but, as 'something must be done,' they consented to waive their dignity, and submit to the method which the law had prescribed. Each wife attacked her lord, while sundry maiden ladies, who had no families to take care of but their neighbors', kindly volunteered to fan the flame, and at last, as the phrase goes, 'raised considerable of a breeze. The men themselves began to think 'there was something in it after all,' and the fever raged among them at last. One dark, stormy Saturday night, a meeting of the discontented was held at the school-house, and a statement of their grievances was drawn up and signed by all present, including a childless widower and one or two old bachelors, who firmly and unanimously resolved, 'that they would not send their children to the school any more, so long as it was kept by Mr. ———.' This paper was handed to the school committee of the town next day, Sunday, and they immediately called a meeting for Monday night of the whole district—master and all—to take
the subject into consideration. By the good sense of the committee the excitement was thus stopped; for on investigation, the whole affair was found to be utterly groundless, and before leaving the meeting every man, but one, recalled his previous promise, acknowledged himself satisfied that the children, and not the master, were in fault, and agreed that they should attend school as before. The one malecontent thought better of it before morning, and his children returned with the rest. Thus was settled the difficulty which at one time threatened the peace and quietness of ———; but did the effect of the 'excitement' cease here? Far from it. The 'nullification act,' which the men had passed by the command or entreaty of their wives, was indeed recalled. But the children never forgot it. From that period to the end of the term for which Mr. ——— kept the school, he had to contend with those who had been taught by their parents to hate and despise their master. Of little value were his instructions to those children from the day the excitement began. Had the parents punished their children for 'telling tales out of school,' made their own complaints to the master himself, and if he refused redress, to the committee, no injustice would have been done, and his services would not have been rendered useless to those for whom they were intended. But this would not do. This was the method prescribed by law, and must all be carried on by the intervention of the men. The agitators preferred to 'excite the women and children, and thus to influence public opinion.' Would any sensible man, who loves truth and reason, follow their example?"

In my next letter I shall take up the question of the right to originate at the North, public measures designed to lead to the removal of slavery in the United States.
LETTER V.

My Respected Friends:

The inquiry whether it is justifiable to originate measures at the North for the removal of Slavery in the United States, involves the question of the constitutional right of the citizens of the slave States to own slaves, without interference from the federal government, and the government and people of the non-slave-holding States.

In my last letter I objected to the practice of commencing a reform, whether moral or political, by means of Popular Excitement, aided by the power of combination; illustrated by a well-known example, the evil tendency of pursuing such a method; and applied that illustration to the leading measure of the Immediate Abolitionists, viz.: promoting the cause of anti-slavery by stirring up the passions of the multitude, "man, woman, and child," in a systematic, and, as far as practicable, simultaneous effort, through organized societies, public meetings, authorized agents, foreign emissaries, regular publications, and the incessant circulation of cheap tracts, pamphlets, handbills, &c. In this Letter I shall contend that Southern slavery, the subject wherefrom the General Excitement, in this violent and systematic manner attempted, grew, is one in regard to which the citizens of the non-slave-holding States have no right to originate action, but which it belongs exclusively to the slave States, severally, to manage; and that accordingly for citizens at the North to act in it at all, except by coöperation in measures begun at the South, is justly regarded there as meddling with the rights and customs of the Southern States in an injurious and aggressive manner.
After some preliminary remarks I shall adduce authorities to the point. The guilt of slavery in this country does not lie at the door of the slave-holders. They should not be expected to work their own temporal ruin to expiate an error having its origin in another country and in other times. The evil of slavery was entailed upon the United States by the mother country during the period of our colonial dependence. The colonies made repeated efforts to prevent the importation of the slaves into this country, but could not obtain the consent of the English government. Mr. Jefferson alludes distinctly to this fact in his draft of the Declaration of Independence. Though the United States were unable at the adoption of the Constitution to relieve themselves from the burden of slavery, they were the first to prohibit the prosecution of the slave trade. (For the foregoing items of history I am indebted to the American Conversations Lexicon. Art. Slavery.)

It is obvious that if this institution could not be abolished in 1789, the difficulties in the way of it must have multiplied since, especially considering the commotion and exasperation, to which it has given rise of late. A deep-rooted and long-growing evil is not to be removed by sudden and violent means. The strength that might have upturned the sapling cannot stir the aged oak. It is not our duty to aggravate, by false zeal and political aggression, the natural retribution that slavery—regarded as “an institution founded on violence”—carries with it. When I speak of slavery as an institution founded on violence, or on the power of the strong over the weak, I refer to its origin, and not to its present maintenance when unavoidable. Slavery, while it shall exist, cannot perhaps be safely continued without severe laws; and the palliation may be admissible for the Southern slave-holder that Voltaire bespoke for Peter the Great, when in reference to some rigorous punishments, inflicted by that monarch, he said, “How-
ever shocking these severities appear to us, they were perhaps necessary in a country where the support of the laws seems to require a tremendous rigor.” Some degree of “rigor” may always be necessarily connected with slavery; but if the Southern slaves are to learn by sadder and sadder experience, that the strong epithet, used above, is in their case applicable, they may owe it to the indiscreet movements of their misjudging friends at the North.

As the laws and customs of the slave-holders are not without extenuation, so the condition of the slaves does not want alleviating circumstances. In addition to the good treatment that interest, if not humanity, must daily prompt, is to be considered the actual character of the slave. The slaves, as a body, are almost barbarous (in the Roman sense) in point of ignorance; and the remark applied by B. Constant to uncultivated pagan nations, may be transferred to them, that “the less enlightened man is, the more importunate are the cravings of selfishness; yet, though his passions are more ungoverned, his views of good are bounded by the present moment.” In the bondage to which he was born, the slave’s enjoyment and misery are made up chiefly of that which concerns the passing hour; so that the Being who made and who “knows our frame” has provided, by nature, for the untutored savage and slave, some measure of the relief promised to those, among the wise and refined, who, in their deeper and more complex anxieties, will humbly apply, as a rule of self-discipline, the divinely approved maxim, “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Children in understanding, slaves, like children in years, illustrate Gray’s characteristic of the “little victims” that he so exquisitely describes in his Ode to Eton College:

“No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day.”
This proves, it is true, their degradation; but then it proves, equally, their want of that cultivated sensibility, which, to us, would make a degraded condition intolerable.

If the Immediate Abolitionists go on till the passions of the North and South are brought into collision, the non-slave-holding States, so far as they concur with the northern agitators, put themselves in the wrong, and just to the degree that they might have effectually counteracted the instruments of that collision, they will be responsible for the consequences. Popular excitement is the worst conceivable means of operating in regard to a delicate and dangerous question. As a general rule, in all argument and council, the more exciting the subject, the greater pains should be taken to keep excitement down. It is deplorable that slavery has been publicly discussed at the North at all,—much more, that it was agitated with the violence by which so much heat has been engendered. Anti-slavery, prosecuted in this manner any further, or publicly advocated in any manner, (for it is now too late for gradual abolition societies, composed of men of wisdom and moderation,) will keep sharpening the irritability of the passionate, and chafing the temper of the fiery, and, which is more formidable, will rouse the just indignation of the rational, the good, and the patriotic, till our national government totters to its fall. The moment of disunion may be but the eve of hostilities. Disunion indeed might be sought by the one party only as a necessary step to the declaration of war against the other. For if the Immediate Abolitionists should persevere in their measures, "whatever the consequences," that is, unto disunion,—questions would arise immediately after, admitting, between distinct nations, no arbitrator but the sword; insurrection might start up at the heels of war; and blood would stream that nothing could stanch but desolating victory or exterminating slaughter. In such a conflict, New England would
have the disadvantage and the odium of being the aggressive party, and of seeing her standard waving on the unrighteous side. For the excitement which now threatens our sectional concord and national union with destruction, will burden us with the guilt of sedition and aggression, unless timely and effectual measures are adopted by us, to restrain the public agitators of a subject, with which the non-slave-holding States have no right to interfere, but which it belongs "exclusively" to the slave States to control; and in which the former cannot interfere without violating the national compact, and invading the right of property and the tenure of personal security and human life at the South, in an injurious and exasperating manner, and to a possible extent, at the thought of which humanity shudders, and patriotism and public justice stand aghast!

Although any apparent efforts at the South to coerce by intimidation the Northern States to interpose against anti-slavery, should be treated with the contempt due to bluster and bravado, yet we are bound by every principle of justice, sympathy, and honor, to hear with respect the remonstrances and claims of the South, authenticated by the names of the chosen organs of the sentiments of large and respectable assemblies of Southern citizens, such as that convened at Richmond, Virginia, August 4, 1835.

If we do not take seasonable and efficient measures to answer the just claims of the South on this point, we shall be liable to the charge of imbecility as well as injustice and impolicy. We shall learn by experience bought too dear and too late, that "in government there is as much danger from weak as from bad men."—Wash. Irv. Life of Columbus.

The original apology for the Immediate Abolitionists was error of judgment; and it is to be hoped, that a majority of the intelligent and respectable among them (for
such a good portion of them doubtless are) will pause before they incur themselves and involve the State in the guilt of sedition and aggression—and, before taking another step on the hollow ground upon which they would lead us, will consider whether they are not helping to verify,—to their own future but unavailing regret, and the irreparable injury of the country and of posterity,—that "in government mischief is often produced by error of judgment, than iniquity in design." Do. Do.

In support of the leading principle of this Letter, the following authorities are in point:—Will they not be respected and sustained by the constituted tribunals, by the legislative authorities, by an impartial posterity, and by the majority of the citizens of New England at the present critical hour?

JUDGE STORY.

"Viewed in its proper light, as a real compromise," (speaking of the compromise between the North and South with regard to slavery,) "in a case of conflicting interests, for the common good, the provision is entitled to great praise for its moderation, its aim at practical utility, and its tendency to satisfy the people, that the Union, framed by all, ought to be dear to all, by the privileges it confers, as well as by the blessings it secures. It had a material influence in reconciling the Southern States to other provisions in the Constitution, and especially the power of making commercial regulations by a mere majority, which was thought peculiarly to favor the Northern States. It has sometimes been complained of, as a grievance; but he who wishes well to his country will adhere steadily to it, as a fundamental policy, which extinguishes some of the most mischievous sources of all political divisions,—those founded on geographical position, and domestic institutions. It did not, however, pass the Convention without objection. Upon its first introduction, it was supported by the votes of nine States against two. In subsequent stages of the discussion, it met with some opposition; and in one of the State Conventions it was strenuously resisted. The wish of every patriot ought now to be, requiescat in pace."—Story's Commentaries, Vol. ii. p. 113.
LETTERS AGAINST

DANIEL WEBSTER.

"The slavery of the South has always been regarded as a matter of domestic policy, left with the States themselves, and with which the Federal Government had nothing to do. Certainly, sir, I am, and ever have been, of that opinion. * * * I regard domestic slavery as one of the greatest evils, moral and political. But though it be a malady, whether it be curable, and if so, by what means—or, on the other hand, whether it be the *vulnus immedicabile* of the social system, I leave it to those whose right and duty it is to inquire and decide. And this I believe, sir, is, and uniformly has been, the sentiment of the North.—*Webster's Speeches*, p. 380.

WILLIAM SULLIVAN.

"Slavery, it is believed, will be abolished, if not unwisely interfered with in the non-slave-holding States. Many of our fellow-citizens in the South are thoroughly awakened to the evils of their condition, and to the probable, if not inevitable, consequences in the course of time. This is unavoidably their affair, and *not that, either by right or duty, of those who dwell in the non-slave-holding States*." *Introductory Discourse before the American Institute of Instruction*, pp. 30, 31.

MARTIN VAN BUREN.

"The subject" (slave property) "is, in my judgment, *exclusively* under the control of the State Governments." "I should consider it highly impolitic for that body" (Congress) "to pass a law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia."—*Boston Morning Post*, Aug. 6, 1835.

The names here associated together as authorities against the right of northern interference with slavery in the United States, show that Immediate Abolition is not, and is not likely to be, a party question. If it were, the writer of these Letters would have hesitated to begin his task. To him the present crisis plainly appears to be one, to which the following representation is applicable, viz.:

"There is, and has always been, and may long continue to be, a great majority in this country, who are sincerely and conscientiously attached to the institutions
under which they live. They are often found to be ranged under different party names at the same time. But when the alarm comes, and these institutions are endangered, all this class of citizens are seen to combine, and, by united efforts, to arrest the impending evil."—Historical Class Book, p. 250.

These Letters were not addressed to the Free Blacks of the non-slave-holding States merely as a vehicle of communication with the rest of the public. The author really hopes to draw the attention of those to whom, nominally, he has written,—as a class of our citizens whose sympathies are wakeful in regard to slavery, and who, not less than others, have a voice and vote in our civil affairs. I believe there exists in the white inhabitants of the non-slave-holding States a feeling of perfect good will toward the colored population among them; and I appeal to the reason, justice, and generosity of the Free Blacks, by withholding their support from the anti-slavery societies to do their part to check proceedings, which cannot benefit their brethren in bondage, and must, if pursued, deeply implicate and injure the country which gave them birth, which throws around the citizen, whether of black or white descent, the protection of its laws, which secures to both alike a lot and part in the blessings of civil freedom, and which will give to the black in particular the credit due to him for all the moderation and propriety that shall mark his conduct in regard to a subject so peculiarly interesting to his feelings, and trying to his integrity.

As a substitute for letter the 6th and last, I shall append to these letters a Legal Opinion, in answer to two questions proposed by me, to a professional friend, of learning and experience in the law.
LETTER VI.

Legal Opinion, referred to in Letter V.

To the Author of the Letters against Immediate Abolition.

BOSTON, August 14, 1835.

Dear Sir,—You have proposed to me these questions:

"Has the Legislature of Massachusetts power to prohibit, under penalties, the publishing of papers and pamphlets, tending to instigate slaves, who are beyond the limits of the State, to insurrection and to acts of violence?"

"Has this Legislature power to prohibit, under any, and what penalties, assemblies to hear arguments and speeches, intended to cause general and immediate emancipation of slaves?"

In attempting to answer these questions, I shall not enter at all into the inquiry, whether slavery is, or is not, prohibited by natural or divine law. So far as I am able to comprehend the meaning of these laws, (entertaining the highest respect for the one, and habitual veneration for the other,) I think neither of them are to be taken into view in answering your questions. Human laws, made by a whole people, for their own security and happiness, and which every one is expressly, or impliedly, bound by oath to obey, are the laws, and only laws, by which these questions must be answered, whatever may become of speculations on natural or divine law. The constitution of the United States, that of Massachusetts, the statutes made under the authority of these:—The statutes in force in other States of the Union, (so far as citizens of this State are bound to respect them,) are laws which give place to no other laws, because no citizen is at liberty to treat them as contrary to natural or divine law, while he is a citizen, and these laws are in force.

By the declaration of independence (1776) the thirteen
colonies became free, sovereign, and independent States. Each State had unlimited right and power to decide for itself, on all matters of person and property, within its own limits. No citizen of one State could complain of any statute made in any other, however absurd, unjust or tyrannical he might think it to be; because the established rule is, that every empire, kingdom, and state, great or small, is absolutely sovereign within its own limits.

A sovereign community has the right to determine for itself how it will be governed; and all other similar communities must presume, that an existing government does exist with the assent of those who live under it. A nation or state is ever the same, through all successions, changes and revolutions, until it is lost by time and conquest. This is very clearly illustrated in some recent diplomatic affairs of our own country. When any community is so free, wise, and fortunate as to be able to establish, with great wisdom and deliberation, a system of government, that system continues, in full force, through all succeeding generations; it can be changed only by the will of the majority, or by usurpation, or violence. No one of common sense will deny, that the people who now live in Massachusetts, are just as much bound by the United States' Constitution, and that of our own State, as those persons were by whose acts they were originally adopted.

When a new question as to power arises in Massachusetts, the constitution must be resorted to; and the constitution is to be expounded by itself, and by established rules of construction. In this State, the General Court, (as the Legislature is constitutionally denominated,) has power, "to make, ordain, and establish all manner of "reasonable orders, laws, statutes, and ordinances, direc-"tions and instructions, either with penalties or without, "(so as the same be not repugnant to this constitution,) "as they shall judge to be for the good and welfare of
this Commonwealth; and for the governing and ordering thereof, and of the subjects of the same, and for the necessary support and defence thereof."

The 4th article of the Bill of Rights recognises the absolute sovereignty of the state, excepting power which has been, or may be, delegated to the United States of America in Congress assembled.

The 19th article recognises the right of the people to assemble in an orderly and peaceable manner, to consult on the common good, and to petition and remonstrate, "for the redress of the wrongs done to them, and of the grievances they suffer."

The people of respective States considered and adopted the present national constitution; and thereby established a perpetual union of the States, for the equal and mutual benefit of all citizens of every State. In forming the basis of the representative power, taxation and representation were regulated by numbers of persons, and numbers were ascertained, "by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to serve for a term of years, and, excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons."

The 9th section of article 1, provides, "that the migration, or importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by Congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person."

Article 4, section 2, provides; "No person held to service or labor in one State, under laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

It has never been doubted, that the words "three-fifths
"of all other persons,"—the words "migration and im-
portation," and "tax or duty imposed on such importa-
tion;" and the words, "No person held to service or 
labor in one state, under laws thereof," were intended to 
be applied to slaves. Every body, that knows any thing 
on this subject, does know, that such has been the practi-
cal application of these words, ever since the constitution 
was adopted.

Thus, it is clear, that the people of every State, by 
adopting the constitution, recognised and admitted the 
existence of slavery; and that it might continue as long 
as the constitution continued. Now, what was the inten-
tion of the people of the United States, in adopting a con-
stitution which thus admitted that there were and might 
be slaves for ever? The constitution itself answers this 
question, for the whole people declared (or a competent 
majority in all the States) their intention in these words: 
"We, the people of the United States, in order to form 
"a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic 
"tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote 
"the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty 
"to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish 
"this constitution for the United States of America."

There is, then, a national government, duly established, 
for all the people of the United States, as constituting one 
nation; and all are equally bound by its provisions. There 
is, also, for each State, a separate, independent, and sove-
reign government, as to all persons and things within 
the limits of the respective States. Each State may legis-
late and order, as it will, without limit or restriction, ex-
cepting only so far as the people thereof have consented 
to be limited and restricted by the national constitution.

Under these circumstances, certain citizens in States 
where slavery did exist, but exists no longer, assert, (and 
it is, for the present, wholly immaterial to consider on
what principles they do so) that slavery should exist no where. These citizens have held meetings, formed themselves into societies, and have had various discussions, (made public through the press,) all tending to show that slavery should be immediately abolished. As there are no slaves in Massachusetts, these measures are adopted as to slavery in other States. Besides these measures, papers and pamphlets are said to be printed, sent and circulated in slave-holding States, designed to teach slaves that they have a right to freedom paramount to all bondage arising from usage, and human laws. Some persons are charged openly by name, with combining, raising money, and circulating printed papers, tending to instigate slaves to plots, insurrections, and horrible deeds, too shocking and odious to be mentioned. No doubt the promoters of abolition will maintain that the highest injustice is done to them in imputing such motives. This may be so, but the principles of justice, universally admitted, impute to every rational agent such motives as are consistent with the consequences of his acts; and "the civil law" has no better maxim than this:

Qui non vetat, cum debeat, et possit, JUBET.

[He who ought to prevent wrong, and can prevent it, and does not, orders the wrong to be done.]

In whatsoever manner the members of anti-slavery societies may assume to justify their principles, motives, and acts, it is no longer to be doubted that they are regarded by our fellow-citizens of the South, as the real authors of the awful calamities which may occur among them; and which already demand an anxious and a costly vigilance. It appears that a meeting was called on the fourth of this month at Richmond, the capital of Virginia; that those citizens of that place who are most competent to understand, and judge of facts and consequences, were present at this numerous assembly; that there was no
sudden and passionate expression of feelings, but a selection of a committee to consider and report, after a deliberation of seven days. The very solemn declaration reported and adopted, is followed by resolutions, the second of which is in these words:

"Resolved, That we have a just claim on all the non-slave-holding States for the enactment of suitable and effectual laws, to repress and put down, by adequate penalties, all incendiary, or seditious associations, whose avowed purpose is to disturb our peace, and to excite insurrection among our slaves; and we confidently rely on the wisdom and firmness of the general assembly, by a proper appeal to these States, to procure the passage of such laws."

Now the motives of all abolitionists may not be rightly judged of by the terms of this resolve, (whatever may be said of some persons who have been publicly named,) but the point to be regarded is, the effect and consequences of their measures, in those parts of the union where these were intended to operate. If their measures necessarily conduct to these effects and consequences, the law imputes to them the intention to produce them. They have been produced. The whole tenor of the declaration which precedes this resolve, shows, that a high degree of indignation existed in that assembly; for they say, that if the attempts which are in process, "designed and well calculated to lead to insurrection, plunder, and murder," be not arrested, the compact between the States and the Government of the Union will be destroyed.

Thus a most serious public evil has arisen, and will lead to deplorable consequences if no remedy be applied. What is the remedy?

If Virginia and Massachusetts, for example, were two foreign and independent States, without being connected
with each other in a confederacy, the remedy would be open and vindictive war, if Massachusetts would not restrain her citizens, from exciting (as Virginians say) insurrections, plunder, and murder; that is, Virginians would do their utmost to destroy those who would destroy them, if destruction on one side and the other became the true character of the warfare. Those who rely on the law of nature ought to know that such war would be justifiable on the part of Virginia. Is there any law of higher authority than that which counsels to self-preservation?

But as these two sovereign States are members of the same confederacy for the purposes already stated, how does it happen that the instrument by which that confederacy was established, makes no provision for such a case as this? Because, the eminent patriots and statesmen who founded the Union, and the National Republic, could not have conceived that combinations would be formed in any of the States, to destroy, infringe, or impair, the rights which the bond of union expressly recognised, and was designed to protect. Who among them could have supposed it to be necessary to prohibit the citizens of one State, to excite a portion of the population of any other State, to rise in the night time, and burn, rob, and murder, and perpetrate acts against women and children, the mere possibility of which fills one with emotions of horror! If any members of the Convention of 1787, had contemplated that measures tending to such excitements could have been deliberately undertaken and persevered in, surely, such measures would have been regarded as offences against the peace of the nation, and provision made for their adequate punishment; or—the national constitution would neither have been adopted nor proposed. But the Constitution has been adopted, and Virginia is a member of the confederacy, and cannot declare war against Massachusetts. She has, in this respect, given up a sove-
reign right, that of appealing to the last resort. She has no remedy, if the sovereignty of Massachusetts will not interpose to restrain its own citizens, and the mischievous aliens who have intermingled with them, but to place herself in the position of absolute control, indispensable to self-preservation. Unquestionably Massachusetts has the power, as all the non-slave-holding States have, to prevent the terrible evils which threaten the citizens of Massachusetts, hardly less, than their fellow-citizens at the South.

Any State can make laws under severe penalties, to prevent and to punish acts which are adapted to deprive its own citizens of the blessings of peace, and of commercial and personal intercourse with the citizens of other States; and especially of the advantages and benefits of the union. Independent States which have no other relations than those of peace and amity, may lawfully restrain their own subjects or citizens respectively, from doing any acts which will interrupt those relations.

Suppose the peace societies of France should be of opinion, in their zeal to improve the world, that all wars are forbidden by natural and divine laws; that as the British debt was mostly contracted in carrying on wars, justice forbids the payment of principal or interest. Suppose pamphlets were printed in France, and circulated in England, counselling English subjects to resist all taxation to pay interest on that debt. Suppose England remonstrated, and France would not pass prohibitory laws; no man can doubt that a justifiable cause of war would have arisen. Thus the peace, commerce, and welfare of all the subjects of France, might be compromitted by the acts of a few deluded reformers. Could not France easily prevent such evils?

This matter is put beyond question by several cases in England sufficiently analogous to be in point. These
cases show, that acts done in England, concerning persons beyond English jurisdiction, are offences against the laws of England.

In 1788, a person commonly called Lord George Gordon had been twice convicted in England for libelling the French Ambassador, and the Queen of France. He retired to Holland, was arrested there, carried to England, and committed to Newgate, where his life terminated. About ten years afterwards, John Vint was indicted in England for a libel on the Emperor Paul of Russia, and was convicted and sentenced.* During the short peace between England and France from 27th March, 1802, to May 18, 1803, (Treaty of Amiens,) one Jean Peltier, a Frenchman, who had taken refuge in England, published an elaborate libel in the French language, in London, against Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul. The English were not in humor to be much distressed by any thing said against Frenchmen, and especially this one. It was well understood that the existing peace must be of short duration. Yet Peltier was convicted in February, 1803, of libelling Bonaparte. War being renewed, he was not called up for sentence. Peltier was tried before Lord Ellenborough; and defended by Sir James McIntosh. The defence was universally admitted to have been an unsurpassed display of juridical eloquence. Though these were cases of libel, yet the legal principle on which they were sustained is precisely that which demands penal laws against measures adapted to disturb the peace, tran-

* The words charged as libellous were: The Emperor of Russia is rendering himself obnoxious to his subjects, by various acts of tyranny; and ridiculous in the eyes of Europe by his inconsistency. He has lately passed an act to prohibit the exportation of deals and other naval stores. In consequence of this ill-judged law, an hundred sail of vessels are likely to return to this country without freight.
quillity, and independence of the Southern States; that is, they are, in the words of that eminent Judge who sat in this trial, "measures inconsistent with amity and friend-
ship, and expressed in such terms, and in such a man-
er, as to interrupt the friendly relations between the "two countries."

This is the doctrine of the common law of England (as it is called;) doctrines which our ancestors brought to this country as their birth-right. The "common law," though it retain too many traits of the dark ages from which it sprung, is nevertheless capable of being applied to the promotion of the peace, order, security and happiness of society in its progressive melioration. In the comprehen-
sive power given to the legislature of this State, as already noticed, all the principles of that law, applicable to our condition, were intended to be exercised, "for the gov-
erning and ordering of this Commonwealth, and the "subjects of the same." If no other principles could be found as guides in the present case, and if Virginia and Massachusetts were no otherwise connected than as being two sovereign powers in peace and amity, it would be a public offence against Massachusetts, and its citizens, to do any act tending to disturb these relations. In propor-
tion to the degree of irritation and resentment, which acts done may be adapted to produce, among citizens of the other sovereignty, would be the degree of offence; because that would be the measure of danger to which Massachu-
setts and its citizens would be exposed.

These are acknowledged principles of international law; but not the only ones which are to be relied on in the present inquiry, while Massachusetts and Virginia are completely sovereign as to all things pertaining to persons, property, religion, morals, and policy within their own reserved limits, the citizens of each are citizens of the same republic, founded for the express purpose of
guaranteeing to each, the full exercise of every sovereign power consistent with the provisions of the Constitution by which that republic was established.

It is in virtue of this Union, that a citizen of Massachusetts may go into any slave-holding State, and enjoy all the privileges which the citizens there enjoy. He may purchase, hold, sell, and devise any real estate; and after residence, and qualifications, according to constitutional provisions, he may choose and be chosen as to any office. He needs no ceremony of naturalization; he is the equal of the native born. If he have occasion to appear in any Court of Justice to prosecute or defend, it may be, if he chooses, in that court which is his own, since it is established by the authority of that republic to which he is ever subject, in whichever of the United States he may be. He has the assurance of the conjoint force of all the States to protect him, his family and fortunes, against internal disturbance, and the full power of all the States combine under one head, to do him justice as to all foreign aggressions. Wheresoever the winds may waft him over the wide ocean, he sees the flag of his nation, his own flag; and feels that he is one of an intelligent and powerful people, and entitled to be treated as such; and that if he is wronged millions are wronged who will take his part.

All acts done within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts necessarily leading to the loss of such blessings and benefits, are public wrongs, done to Massachusetts, and its citizens, and ought to be punished. As all citizens of every State, in consideration of being guaranteed the full enjoyment of all their own reserved rights and privileges, they are bound not to interfere with the rights and privileges of others. The conclusion from these premises is, that Massachusetts has the power, and that it is her duty, to pass laws, with proper penalties, to prevent acts within
her own limits, which may impair the enjoyment, by her own citizens, of peace, commerce, and social intercourse with the citizens of other States; and especially to prevent all acts which tend to deprive its own citizens of the advantages and benefits of the Union.

The precise terms in which a statute should be framed to define the offence of printing and publishing; or of printing with a design to publish, incendiary pamphlets and papers, would be easily found by the legislature. It is enough for the present purpose to establish the power and the duty of legislating to that end.

The second question is: Have the legislature power to prohibit under any and what penalties, assemblies to make and hear arguments, intended to cause general and immediate emancipation of slaves?

This question touches upon the liberty of the press, and the right of all citizens to assemble, discuss, and resolve, as secured by the Constitution. These are liberties and rights which are sacred in this country, and he must be poorly informed, or foolishly adventurous, who would attempt to impair them. But as the seeming of piety and devotion is the safest protection to iniquity; and as the most magnificent and costly structures, make the most enduring and imposing ruins; and as the best of the Creator's gifts, and the proudest of human inventions, may be perverted to the worst of purposes, so the press, and popular meetings, may be the most mischievous instruments to peace and happiness. Happily the press is not above the will of the people, as expressed and provided for, by their own constitutional laws, duly administered in the mode which they have ordained. Happily the same laws have provided, or may provide for the suppression of all meetings, designed to promote disorder, insurrection, turbulence and crime. Whether meetings are held for such purposes or not, is for the judicial tribu-
nals composed of learned judges, and independent and intelligent jurors, to decide.

The very object of constitutional government is, to allow to every citizen all rights and privileges which he can have, consistently with the rights of all other citizens; and to restrain him from doing all acts inconsistent with the rights of others. If the principle be established, that any act done in Massachusetts, tending to destroy the peace, commerce, amity, and friendly intercourse of her citizens with the citizens of other sovereignties is punishable, their remains nothing but the application of that principle to the particular case. If the legislature perceive, that the privilege of public meetings which the Constitution recognises, is perverted, and so applied, as to be a public evil, most unquestionably the legislature has power to forbid such meetings, and to make it penal to hold them. Meetings held to promote immediate and general emancipation, in non-slave-holding States, are a public evil of most serious character. The Legislature can declare them to be unlawful, disorderly, seditious, and against the peace and dignity of this Commonwealth; and punish those who appear at such meetings. All persons who speak in such meetings, for the avowed purpose of instigating those who are present, to do such acts, as necessarily must be done, to effect general and immediate emancipation, ought to be considered as guilty of attempting to breed insurrection, violence, and crimes; and as intending to sever the Union of the States; and, on conviction, should be duly punished. The novelty of applying a principle of legislation is no objection to the principle itself. The call for the application, and the necessity of it, constitute the novelty; for the principle itself is as old as the first moment when plain common sense was made to be one of the elements of political government.
It is to be hoped and expected, that Massachusetts will enact laws declaring the printing, publishing, and circulating papers and pamphlets on slavery; and also the holding of meetings to discuss slavery and Abolition, to be public, indictable offences; and provide for the punishment thereof, in such a manner as will most effectually prevent such offences.

Although I intended to do no more than to make plain legal answers, to the best of my ability, to your questions, I may take occasion to add; that the theory of Abolition, begun and carried on in states where slavery does not exist, (and by a few agitators who would no more venture themselves where slavery does exist than they would enter "the lion's den,";) is one of the most unfortunate delusions that ever afflicted this country: 1. It is against constitutional and statute law to touch the matter of slavery in non-slave-holding states. 2. Any interference with slavery, justifiably produces a high degree of resentment on the part of slave-owners, leading to irremediable mischief, while it never can do the least possible good. 3. Abolitionists, if friends at all to the colored race, are the cruelest they ever had. Their measures have already placed the whole race under the most watchful guardianship, have deprived them of all mental improvement, and cut off all means of attaining those consolations, which are alike necessary and precious to the prince and the peasant, the bondman and his master. 4. If every man, woman and child in non-slave-holding states, were to unite and with one voice declare, that slavery should not exist, it would have no other effect than to unite every man woman and child in slave-holding states, that slavery shall exist, at every extremity. 5. Immediate and general emancipation would make the colored race the most wretched people on the face of the earth for many reasons, and among others these: They
are destitute of the thoughts and habits indispensable to existence among any social beings, whose order of existence requires provision for helpless infancy, inevitable disease and misfortune, and imbecile old age.* Without property, instruction, policy, or foresight, what would become of them when humanity and interest cease to be their guardians? All who have had opportunity to see them as they are, know, that in general, they are a gay, cheerful race. These things are not said unadvisedly, but from actual observation, and diligent inquiry. Cases are not uncommon in which emancipated slaves, have earnestly desired to abandon their freedom, and return to their former condition. 6. If immediate and general emancipation could take place, those who were freed would not remain where they are. All but the old and young, the lame, halt, and blind would emigrate. The share of Massachusetts might be; to from 100 to 200,000. How this new accession would exist, may well deserve the consideration of statesmen who now find themselves sufficiently tasked to provide against pauperism and crime.

Abolitionists, from ignorance or design, mislead those whom they address. Instead of propounding such questions, and making such appeals, as always come from them, when anything comes from them, they should ask the people of non-slave-holding states these questions:—Are you willing that colored children should go to the same schools with your children;—are you willing that colored men should be laborers, farmers, mechanics, traders, merchants, ship-masters, jurymen, legislators, judges, in common with yourselves; are you willing that the colored should be enrolled in the militia, and be commandants of companies, battalions, regiments, and

* For some comments on the Leading Principles of the American Anti-Slavery Society, see Remarks at Concord, N. H., Appendix B.
brigades?—why not?—and if so, against whom will their arms be turned? are you willing that they should intermarry with your sisters, and daughters, and share with you in every political and social right, duty, and pleasure? If Abolitionists do not aim at this equality, where will they stop? Then suppose this equality established, and the number of the two colors about equal in any state, it would require a standing army to keep peace. The two colors cannot live on terms of equality. Nothing is more philosophically true than the remark of a Southern lady: “If the blacks are to be free, let the whites be their slaves; for both cannot be free.”

What then is to be done with the great moral evil of slavery, (for so all intelligent slave owners consider it to be?) Nothing, nothing, out of slave-holding states. He, by whose providence slavery was permitted to begin in this land three hundred years ago, will, in his own due time end it, if such be his will. His instruments will be those who have inherited slaves, and those who dwell in slave-holding countries. Whenever they invite us to act, and show us how we can act, with their assent and approbation, let us feel, that no sacrifice can be too great to accomplish their purposes.

Such is the law, such is duty, such is interest, with every northern man.

Respectfully,

William Sullivan.

Boston, August 24th, 1835.
APPENDIX.

(A. p. 2.) NEGRO FIDELITY.

"The other morning the captain of one of Commodore Johnson's Dutch prizes breakfasted at Sir Charles Middleton's, and related the following little anecdote:—One day he went out of his own ship to dine on board another; while he was there a storm arose, which in a short time made an entire wreck of his own ship, to which it was impossible for him to return. He had left on board two little boys, one four, the other five years old, under the care of a poor black servant; the people struggled to get out of the sinking ship into a large boat, and the poor black took his two little children, tied them into a bag, and put in a little pot of sweetmeats for them, slung them across his shoulder, and put them into the boat; the boat by this time was quite full; the black was stepping into it himself, but was told by the master there was no room for him, that either he or the children must perish, for the weight of both would sink the boat. The exalted heroic negro did not hesitate a moment; "Very well," said he, "give my duty to my master, and tell him I beg pardon for all my faults." And then,—guess the rest—plunged to the bottom never to rise again, till the sea shall give up her dead. I told it the other day to Lord Monboddo, who fairly burst into tears. The greatest lady in this land wants me to make an elegy of it, but it is above poetry."—Memoirs of Miss Hannah More, vol. i. p. 147.

"The name of slave, says Sir John Malcolm, in his History of Persia, in this country may be said to imply confidence on one part and attachment on the other. They are mostly Georgians, or Africans." "Their children are brought up in the house, and have a rank only below relations. In almost every family of consequence the person in whom the greatest confidence is reposed is a house-born slave; and instances of their betraying their charge, or abusing the confidence that is placed in them, are very rare."—Percy Anecdotes, p. 58.
To the Editors of the Atlas:

The following remarks made at a public meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, at Concord, N. H. June 4, 1835, are offered to the public through the medium of your paper, not only on account of the general interest taken in the subject, but because several imperfect reports of them have been made, and in one instance the tenor of the whole was entirely misapprehended.

Yours, &c.

T. R. SULLIVAN.

Mr. President—My friend, Mr. May, has intimated to me that the discussion to-day may be so far free, as to allow a hearing to any one disposed to speak on the opposite side. The report which has just been read to a large audience of both sexes, and which is soon to go to the public, has appealed to "every man, woman and child in New Hampshire." Having been a resident in this State for the last ten years, and being so, temporarily, at the present time, I wish to give the reasons why I cannot answer the appeal in the manner expected by the Society, provided the permission of its Agent shall have the sanction of the Chair.

[The Society; then, by a unanimous vote, gave Mr. Sullivan leave to speak.]

Whoever, Sir, hopes to effect great good by great changes, may expect to be exposed to suffering. The Anti-Slavery Society show by their complaints of ill-treatment that they are beginning to exemplify this truth. Still, as long as they are convinced they are doing right, it is their duty to persevere. There is pain too in opposing the opinions and plans of those who are sincerely aiming to effect great good; of which I now have experience in being compelled by a sense of duty to differ openly from the gentleman who last spoke, my friend, Mr. May—to whom I am attached by the ties of academical and professional sympathy—and whom, from much intimacy, I know to be a thoroughly good man, a sincere philanthropist, and a successful pastor; and not, as he was rashly stigmatized in a late New York paper, an "incompetent minister" of the Gospel, and a "hireling servant" in the cause of Anti-Slavery. These sentiments, Sir, are a pledge to the members of this Society, and to this audience that I will not intentionally say any thing to wound the sensibilities of any one present.

I will first briefly state my view of slavery in the language of another. "Slavery is an institution founded on violence. It originated in the power of the strong over the weak. It is opposed to
nature, to philosophy, the first principles of bodies politic, to the claims of humanity, and the spirit and precepts of Christianity."

"It has always been injurious to the nations which have permitted it, and has always had a paling influence on the industry and morality both of the masters and slaves." As regards, therefore, the nature of slavery in general there is, Sir, no difference of opinion between us. The point at issue is a question of means. Are the means of abolishing slavery, pursued and recommended by the Anti-Slavery Society, proper and adequate to the purpose? This is the question. I take the negative. I am opposed both to the principles and the measures of this Society. The second article of your Constitution, as I have read in Jay's Inquiry, after declaring that "slave-holding is a grievous crime in the sight of God," states, as what is, I conceive, the leading principle of the Society, that "the duty, safety, and interests of all concerned, require its immediate abandonment, without expatriation." That is, it is the duty of every slave-holder instantly to give his slaves their liberty, without sending them out of the country. To this I object because, it being a fact generally known, and verified in part by my own observation, that the free blacks are regarded as a "nuisance" in slave-holding States, I would not add indefinitely to their number without having some assurance that the emancipated slaves could be made better and happier citizens than those are, whose condition they would share, and to whose level, in every sense, a large portion of them might at once be brought by the operation of the principle in question.

I am opposed, Sir, likewise, to the measures of the Anti-Slavery Society. Their leading measure is a systematic attempt to raise a popular excitement at the North against the institution of slavery, and in favor of its immediate abolition. Now, Sir, I am opposed to Northern excitement on this subject. It will injure the cause and the country. It will exasperate the slave-holder, and inflame the slave. It will render the master's discipline more severe, the slave's condition less tolerable. Is it the intent, as well as the tendency of the efforts in favor of immediate emancipation to stir up the North against the South on this question, until the North shall be ready to divide the Union? If so, it ought to be frankly acknowledged and proposed at once, that it may be done peaceably and without blood. If it is not the design to proceed thus far, why is that done which has such a tendency, and may end in it, not peaceably, not without bloodshed, not soon perhaps, but whether soon or late, after an interval marked first by the increased rigor of slavery, then by insurrection, then by servile, and afterwards civil war. Is the aim of these
exciting measures to kindle the hostility of the South against the North, till an apology is given to the former to divide the Union? If this is not purposed, why is that done which tends to such a result? Every slave-holder feels his life and property less secure with every new effort of the Northern abolitionists. As rumors of their progress reach him he lives more anxiously by day, and sleeps less quietly at night. Should a gang of slaves rise against their masters, fire their dwellings, and murder their families, it would be charged at the South, whether justly or not, to the Northern excitement. Should such insurrections become frequent, and one at length prove so formidable as to require Northern aid to suppress it, we should then march to the relief of our Southern brethren, and be compelled, if need should be, to pursue the war against the slaves to their extermination. But probably such a necessity would not arise; the insurrection would be quelled; and what next? Why, even before they had parted on the battle ground, the Southerners would have accused their Northern comrades of being the remote cause of the conflict, with all its disasters and horrors. Our soldiery would return to us with these taunts rankling in their bosoms; and before they had respectively reached their fields and homes, these allies would have become enemies! Will it be urged, "let us do right, and leave consequences to God; let the separation of the States take place, if the cause require the price!" But will giving the price gain the cause? Suppose the Union divided, is slavery therefore at an end? All that in that case would have been done, is to give the North no further concern in it, and to leave it in Southern hands, to perpetuate it or not, as they choose.

If, Mr. President, Northern discussion has awakened so much interest that it must go on, it should be conducted with moderation. I object to the formation of societies on this subject. They provoke one another, and are unjust to each other, and a degree of heat, otherwise avoidable, is engendered. There is not an equal objection to newspapers, but if there must be a newspaper, I would say let it not be called the "Liberator," but the Cooperator; for nothing can be done towards the abolition of slavery in this country without the concurrent effort of the slave-holders.

It might serve, perhaps, to allay undue excitement on the subject of emancipation, if some attention were given to the native character and real condition of the slave. In the vast, and in some respects incomprehensible plan of Providence, how deep soever the shades of human suffering, gleams of divine benevolence shine through them.
There is that necessarily connected with slavery, nay, essential to its existence, which is its alleviation. I refer to the necessity of keeping the slaves uncultivated; I do not say uninstructed, but without the means of mental cultivation. The mind of a slave, it should be remembered, is not as that of a freeman would be in an exchange of circumstances, proud, indignant, chafing. He wants the knowledge and mental culture, and with it the sensibility, without which the iron does not enter deeply into the soul. Let it be granted that this proves his degradation; but it also proves in the same degree his comparative inability to feel it. Besides, the African slave is naturally of an easy temperament and a buoyant spirit, "grateful for favors, forgetful of blows." The African negro belongs to a hardy race. When Las Cases, in mistaken humanity, suggested bringing the Africans to the New World, it was on the ground that they were better able, by nature, to endure labor in a tropical climate, than the feeble natives of the Western continent, who were then sinking under the exactions of European oppression. This is no apology for slavery, but it throws some light on the real condition of the slave. With a constitution adapted to the South, what the slave is required to accomplish by his ordinary day labor is nevertheless comparatively small; in performing his task he is provided with necessaries, and feels not the poor man's care for to-morrow; if diligent, he is not treated with severity; and on Sundays, and at some other seasons, he is indulged with holydays. Such considerations should be permitted, under present circumstances, to moderate the feelings which slavery naturally awakens, and which are frequently heightened by the exhibition of particular instances of cruelty as if they were ordinary examples, and not exceptions. I must be permitted to repeat that I regard excitement on this subject as singularly misplaced. It is a good rule, Sir, "Before you begin, consider well the end;" and never more applicable than to the important but perplexing question that so many are now asking themselves, viz; What is my duty in relation to this subject? a question Sir, in which the lives, the destinies, the rights, and the dearest interests of millions are involved. When I look at Anti-Slavery in this point of view, though I do not possess the ardent enthusiasm of my friend, I confess that the future, as affected by the successful progress of Anti-Slavery principles and measures, presents to my imagination a frightful picture. We have just been horror-struck at the accounts of the great earthquake in Chili. After the first shock, all was serene; the waves retired from the shore, and na.
ture paused, but the original cause was still active, and the consequenc

 Soon a terrible re-action commenced; the sea rushed in on the land in high rolling billows, and after far overflowing the interior country, joined with the heaving earth to destroy, in its returning sweep, a city of 25,000 inhabitants so completely, that no trace of its existence was left but the smoke and ashes of its desolation.

THE END.