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Adelos, Northampton *Hampshire Gazette* 6 February 1788

Mr. Printer, In the present political contest, respecting the establishment of the Federal Constitution, I have been rather a silent spectator—I have heard and read much—said little—The writers on both sides the question, have shewn spirit and learning. I confess the advocates for it have manifested a spirit (some of them at least) rather unbecoming, and somewhat bordering upon persecution: this I hope, however, will not be justified by people in general; but that every one may be allowed to speak his sentiments, and have fair play at disquisition. It is a matter of importance and requires sobriety. In this view of the matter, I beg leave to offer a few remarks for public consideration. I am not about at this time to impugn every part and parcel of the new frame of government; but if I may be allowed the natural, inherent, the grand birthright of all the human race, I will very freely and boldly oppose one article of it,—page 12, beginning of section 9. which however strange it may appear, has been but little noticed. It permits, in express terms, of that most cursed of all trades, the African slave-trade. I must confess it will be very wonderful to me, if the Massachusettians (above all people in [the] world) should hold up their hands to give efficacy to a constitution which admits of slavery; and not only so, but Congress is expressly restricted from making any provision against it, for the term of twenty-one years, let the mischiefs resulting there-from be ever so great. It is strange, I say, if Massachusetts should give countenance to this, after establishing a constitution of their own, fronted with these words, “*All men are born free and equal;*” and in consequence of which have emancipated many wretched Africans, and delivered them from masters more sordid to them (many of them) than they were to the brutal herd. I cannot see but the first moment we adopt the Federal Constitution as it stands, we raze [i.e., raze] our own to the very foundation. We allow that freedom and equity are the natural rights of every man born into the world; but if we vote this, we vote to take away those rights, and to sport ourselves with the liberties of mankind. I wish to know how one man came by his right to the service of another, without his free consent, and a proper recompense when required? Whether we go ourselves to Africa to procure slaves, or employ others to do it for us, or purchase them at any rate of others, it matters not a whit. It is an old saying and a true one, “The partaker is as bad as the thief.” It is well known that this trade is carried on by violence and rapine; nay, murder is not, I presume, out of the question. Who gave mankind a right thus to play the devil with one another? We reprobate the conduct of the Algerines; their conduct truly is highly reprehensible;—they enslave the Americans,—the Americans enslave the Africans: which is worst? Six of one and half a dozen of the other. Congress may make laws to punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas; but yet we may go to Africa, and lay waste and destroy what we please; captivate thousands of free born men, without the least provocation—bring them to

America and doom them to perpetual bondage, and all with impunity: Congress are not to be allowed to prevent it. The thought is truly shocking, and nature shudders at the recollection!

Flimsy indeed, is the argument of the Connecticut Landholder, in support of the Constitution, that “slaves are so numerous in the southern states, should an emancipation take place, they will be undone,” —truly wretched enough! So then, if by fraud and violence, I have got the possession of my neighbour’s estate, reduced him to misery and slavery, the laws may not restore it to him, the rightful owner again, lest I should be undone. Too weak even for idiocy itself. I think upon the whole the article ought to be expunged; or that we ought not to vote to give life to a constitution, which at its first breath will be branded with eternal infamy, by having a stamp of slavery and oppression upon it.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. V: Massachusetts [2] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1998), 871–73.