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Massachusetts Centinel, June 14, 1788

Mr. Russell: If, for no other consideration than that it opens a door for the abolition of the Slave Trade, in America, in a given number of years—the new proposed Constitution for the United States is incomparably preferable to the old one, in which no provision is made either for the suppression or circumscription of this wicked trade—and must therefore meet the wishes, and derive the support of every friend to humanity, and the common rights of mankind.

It cannot be without a blush, that a European, a friend to liberty, and the American revolution, in perusing the newspapers of the southern States, sees page after page, advertisements for the sale, exchange, &c. of men—of men, too, who are not guilty of any crime—and whose misery is caused by the barbarity and *avarice* of men, who dare to call themselves Christian. Well may infidels deny the faith, while the professed followers of the cross are guilty of such crimes. Well may they boast the *purity* of worship.

“Slavery,” says a celebrated writer, “in whatever mode it exists, will ever be considered as unlawful, except, perhaps, where it is inflicted as a punishment for some enormous crime. That a man should be treated in the same manner as a beast, or a piece of household furniture, and bought and sold, and entirely subjected to the will of another, whose equal he is by nature, and all this for no crime on his part, but merely because he is of a certain colour, born in a certain country, or descended of certain parents—is absolutely inconsistent with every idea of justice and humanity.

“We are taught by reason and religion to consider every man as our brother, and to regard him with the same degree of affection, with which we regard ourselves. Not to confine our benevolence to those of our own colour, country, or kindred, but to extend it unto all who are endowed with the same common nature. No impassible mountains, no unnavigable oceans, no inhospitable deserts are to be considered as boundaries, to intercept the force and authority of this principle. Like the sun, its power and influence ought to extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and prove a connecting band of union with all our fellow creatures. But slavery is utterly irreconcilable with such a principle, being directly subversive of the dearest and most obvious rights of human nature, and perfectly repugnant to the plainest principles of Christianity.

“Is the pecuniary interest of a few individuals a consideration more to be attended to than the happiness of whole nations? Are millions of the human race to be doomed to a life of unmerited misery—to wear the galling chains of slavery, tyranny and oppression, in order to fill the bags of avarice, or answer the demands of extravagance, of a few particular persons? If robbery and theft were totally suppressed, the finances of the thief and the highwayman would no doubt be materially affected: But are those practices, therefore, to be tolerated and encouraged? Is the robber, therefore to be permitted to provide the necessaries of life, by robbing his neighbour of his purse on the highway? If not, why is the slave-merchant to be permitted to acquire the luxuries

and superfluities of life, by robbing thousands of his fellow-creatures of their liberty, on the coast of Africa? What an inconsistent creature is man? How often are his boasted powers of reason led captive by prejudice and custom? How absurd is it, in the case before us, that one person shall be allowed to rise to wealth and affluence, and another condemned to lose his life, for actions, which have the same motive and the same tendency, merely because they are circumstantially different; and yet how must our astonishment encrease, when we consider, that the difference is such as adds greatly to the absurdity; and that the action, which exposes a man to infamy and death, wants only greater aggravation of guilt, and more extensive and pernicious effects, to be the means of advancing him to riches and honour!!

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