

ion has made the laws, and denied them legislative protection. Public opinion has knotted the lash, heated the branding-iron, loaded the rifle, and shielded the murderer. Public opinion threatens the abolitionist with death, if he venture to the South; and drags him with a rope about his middle, in a broad unblushing noon, through the first city in the East. Public opinion has, within a few years, burned a slave alive at a slow fire in the city of St. Louis; and public opinion has to this day maintained upon the bench that estimable judge who charged the jury, impanelled there to try his murderers, that their most horrid deed was an act of public opinion, and being so, must not be punished by the laws the public sentiment had made. Public opinion hailed this doctrine with a howl of wild applause, and set the prisoners free, to walk the city, men of mark, and influence, and station, as they had been before.

Public opinion! what class of men have an immense preponderance over the rest of the community, in their power of representing public opinion in the legislature? The slave owners. They send from their twelve States, one hundred members, while the fourteen free States, with a free population nearly double, return but a hundred and forty-two. Before whom do the presidential candidates bow down the most humbly, on whom do they fawn the most fondly, and for whose tastes do they cater the most assiduously in their servile protestations? The slave owners always.

Public opinion! hear the public opinion of the free South, as expressed by its own members in the House of Representatives at Washington. "I have a great respect for the chair," quoth North Carolina, "I have a great respect for the chair as an officer of the house, and a great respect for him personally; nothing but that respect prevents me from rushing to the table and tearing that petition which has just been presented for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, to pieces." "I warn the abolitionists," says South Carolina, "ignorant, infuriated barbarians as they are, that if chance shall throw any of them into our hands, he may expect a felon's death." "Let an abolitionist come within the borders of South Carolina," cries a third, mild Carolina's colleague, "and if we can catch him we will try him, and notwithstanding the interference of all the governments on earth, including the federal government, we will hang him."

Public opinion has made this law: it has declared that in Washington, in that city which takes its name from the father of American liberty, any justice of the peace may bind with fetters any negro passing down the street and thrust him into jail; no offence on the black man's part is necessary. The justice says, "I choose to think this man a runaway;" and locks him up. Public opinion impowers the man of law when this is done to advertise the negro in the newspapers, warning his owner to come and claim him, or he will be sold to pay the jail fees. But supposing he is a free black, and has no owner, it may naturally be presumed that he is set at liberty. No; he is sold to recompense his jailer. This has been done again, and again, and again. He has no means of proving his freedom; has no adviser, messenger, or assistance of any sort or kind; no investigation into his case is made, or inquiry instituted. He, a free man, who may have served for years, and

bought his liberty, is thrown into jail on no process, for no crime, and on no pretence of crime, and is sold to pay the jail fees. This seems incredible, even of America, but it is the law.

Public opinion is deferred in such cases as the following, which is headed in the newspapers

"Interesting Law Case.

"An interesting case is now on trial in the Supreme Court, arising out of the following facts: a gentleman residing in Maryland had allowed an aged pair of his slaves substantial though not legal freedom for several years. While thus living a daughter was born to them, who grew up in the same liberty until she married a free negro, and went with him to reside in Pennsylvania. They had several children, and lived unmolested until the original owner died, when his heir attempted to regain them; but the magistrate before whom they were brought, decided that he had no jurisdiction in the case. *The owner seized the woman and children in the night, and carried them to Maryland.*"

"Cash for negroes," "cash for negroes," "cash for negroes" is the heading of advertisements in great capitals down the long columns of the crowded journals. Woodcuts of a runaway negro with manacled hands, crouching beneath a bluff pursuer in top boots, who, having caught him, grasps him by the throat, agreeably diversify the pleasant text. The leading article protests against "that abominable and hellish doctrine of abolition, which is repugnant alike to every law of God and Nature." The delicate mamma, who smiles her acquiescence in this sprightly writing as she reads the paper in her cool piazza, quiets her youngest child who clings about her skirts, by promising the boy "a whip to beat the little niggers with."—But the negroes, little and big, are protected by public opinion.

Let us try this public opinion by another test, which is important in three points of view: first, as showing how desperately timid of the public opinion slave owners are, in their delicate descriptions of fugitive slaves in widely-circulated newspapers; secondly, as showing how perfectly contented the slaves are, and how very seldom they run away; thirdly, as exhibiting their entire freedom from scar, or blemish, or any mark of cruel infliction, as their pictures are drawn, not by lying abolitionists, but by their own truthful masters.

The following are a few specimens of the advertisements in the public papers. It is only four years since the oldest among them appeared, and others of the same nature continue to be published every day in shoals.

"Ran away negress Caroline. Had on a collar with one prong turned down."

"Ran away, a black woman, Betsy. Had an iron bar on her right leg."

"Ran away, the negro Manuel, much marked with irons."

"Ran away, the negress Fanny. Had on an iron band about her neck."

"Ran away, a negro boy about twelve years old. Had round his neck a chain dog-collar with 'De Lampert' engraved on it."

"Ran away, the negro Hown. Has a ring of iron on his left foot. Also Grise, his wife, having a ring and chain on the left leg."

"Ran away, a negro boy, named James. Said boy was ironed when he left me."

"Committed to jail, a man who calls his name