

# THE CAROLINA WATCHMAN.

BRUNER & JAMES,  
Editors & Proprietors.



NEW SERIES,  
VOLUME V.—NUMBER 40.

SALISBURY, N. C., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1849.

**Terms of the Watchman.**  
For subscription, per year, Two Dollars—payable in advance. But if not paid in advance, Two dollar and fifty cents will be charged.  
Advertisements inserted at \$1 for the first, and 25 cts. for each subsequent insertion. Court orders charged 25 per cent. higher than these rates. A liberal deduction to those who advertise by the year.  
Letters to the Editors must be post paid.

## HOW SOFTLY ON THE BRUISED HEART.

A SONG—BY C. D. STUART.  
How softly on the bruised heart  
A word of kindness falls,  
And to the dry and parched soul  
The moistening tear-drop calls;  
O, if they knew, who walk the earth  
Mid sorrow, grief and pain,  
The power a word of kindness hath,  
'Twere paradise again.  
The weakest, and the poorest, may  
This simple pity give,  
And bid delight to wretched hearts  
Return again and live;  
O, what a life if love be lost?  
If man's unkind to man,  
Or what the heaven that waits beyond  
This brief but mortal span!  
As stars upon the tranquil sea  
In midday glory shine,  
So words of kindness in the heart  
Betray their source divine;  
O, then, be kind, whoever thou art  
That breathe'st mortal breath,  
And it shall brighten all thy life,  
And sweeten every death.

## SPEECH OF MR. THOMPSON.

Of Indiana, in the House of Representatives, January 25, 1849.

Mr. THOMPSON, of Indiana, was entitled to the floor, and addressed the committee during the hour.

He said he proposed to spend the brief hour allotted to him in the consideration of matters connected with the question of slavery; and he did this, he could assure the committee, with no little reluctance, for it was the first time in his life when he had entered upon such a discussion. He did it, however, from the promptings of a conviction that he represented on this floor a class of people who required at his hands that upon all and every suitable occasion he should endeavor, with whatever ability he might possess, to bring to bear upon this great question which now agitated the Union all the conservatism and conciliation which he knew and believed that they felt. It needed not now, he said, (for every body knew it) that to indulge in censure and denunciation of one section of the Union against another, was not only calculated to do no good, but to do serious harm; to disturb the harmony of that Union which had so long been our security and our strength.

The institution of slavery was one which found its existence in this country against the consent of our forefathers, in despite of the urgent remonstrances, the appeals of every single one of the American colonies. It was found here at the commencement of that glorious Revolution which resulted in the establishment of our Federal Constitution; and, at the date of our Declaration of American Independence, which on its face declared "that all men are created equal," every single one of the American colonies held, by virtue of existing laws, a right in slaves as property, fixed and recognized by the municipal legislation of each one of the colonies.

The institution of slavery existed, therefore, before the formation of the Articles of Confederation, and before the formation of our Federal Constitution. But difficulties grew out of its existence even in the Congress of the Confederation: in the apportionment between the Colonies of the amounts to be paid by the several Colonies towards defraying the public debt, the institution of slavery was a very serious and alarming impediment in the way of the adjustment of the question; and then, for the first time in the history of American legislation, in the old Congress of the Confederation, was adopted that principle of compromise by which, in the enumeration of the inhabitants to be taxed, two thirds of the slaves in each of the Colonies were deducted. That compromise was held by the men of that day to be necessary and essential to the harmony of the Confederacy. It did restore peace and quiet. But the Confederated Government, for reasons which were manifest to our fathers at the time, was not sufficiently strong to enforce upon the Colonies the legislation of the Confederated Congress; and hence the Convention was called which resulted in the formation of our present Federal Constitution. And in fixing, in that Convention, the ratio of representation in the Congress of the United States, this same difficulty arose, and this same difficulty was compromised in precisely the same way as it had been done by the Congress of the Confederation.

Very soon after the formation of the Constitution of the United States, and before a fixed construction had been given to that instrument by the several departments of the Government, and by the people themselves, efforts were made by appeals to Federal legislation to interfere with the rights which had been guaranteed and secured under that glorious charter of our rights, and at a very early time an appeal was made to the Federal arm to interfere with the institution of slavery in the several States of the Union. Congress, composed of wise, of grave, of deliberate men—of patriots—calmly, earnestly implored the men from whom these appeals came to let this exciting and agitating question alone, and stand by the compromises of the Constitution. The moderation, the forbearance, the conciliation, the compromises of that day, tripped over factious; faction became still. The country was not again excited with the question of slavery, until the application from the State of Missouri for admission as a State into the Union. He needed not refer to the agitating scenes

which grew out of that interesting and important question. The discussion of the Missouri compromise, and the admission of that State into the Union, shook this Union to its very centre; the spirit of fanaticism and of faction well nigh worked the dissolution of that glorious Union, under whose preservation our rights had been so long guaranteed and maintained. But conciliation, compromise, and concession, again prevailed, and the Union and its integrity were safe.

We heard nothing more of the agitating question of the abolition of slavery until the formation of the present political Abolition party. An effort was made, it was true, at the session of Congress of 1835-'36, akin to and precisely like the one which was made immediately after the formation of the Constitution, to interfere with slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. A memorial was presented to this House, from the State of Pennsylvania, in 1835-'36, praying Congress to abolish the slave trade and slavery in the District of Columbia. The question which arose at that time was on the reception of the memorial; a motion was made to lay it on the table, and a very large majority of the House of Representatives did lay that memorial on the table, by voting to lay the question of its reception on that table; and at the head of those who voted in the majority upon that occasion, stood the venerable and distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, who but the other day fell in this Hall, covered all over with national glory and renown. Men had not learned in that day to disregard the Constitution and the law; men had not learned at that day to be continually attempting encroachments upon the rights of the States of this Union, as fixed and guaranteed under our Federal Constitution.

This attempt was frowned down by the House of Representatives. But still the country was agitated; and that agitation continued until about 1840, when these petitions were continually presenting themselves to the consideration of Congress; and when to get rid of them, southern gentlemen on this floor adopted the celebrated "twenty-first rule," which denied to the people of the North the right to petition Congress on the question of slavery. Here, two extremes were about to meet. Immediately upon the adoption of the "twenty-first rule," the question of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia became a suspended question, and there was substituted in lieu of it, in the northern States, the question of the right of petition. The consideration of that question appeared so strongly to the feelings of the North, that a large proportion of northern citizens became accustomed to act with the party which was urging upon Congress the recognition of the right of petition, and continued to act with them in defence of this great right, so that they became, almost insensibly, political abolitionists; and thus, he verily believed, the adoption of the "21st rule" had a tendency to strengthen and increase the number of political, fanatical abolitionists at the North. This right of petition was a sacred right. The North was addressed in this behalf; and there (pointing to the seat formerly occupied by Mr. Adams) stood the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts to whom he had just alluded, day after day, month after month, and year after year, continually clamorous in this Hall for the preservation of that high constitutional right, until the excitement became so great that a portion of the northern people, living in the State of Massachusetts, through that same distinguished Representative, presented a memorial upon this floor praying that Congress would take steps for the immediate dissolution of the Union.—Those gentlemen who were present recollected the exciting scenes which took place upon this floor on that occasion, and recollected with what ability, with what earnestness and power, that "old man eloquent" defended himself against the assaults of those who attacked him, claiming only this—that while he did not, either in sentiment or feeling, accord in one jot or tittle with the sentiments of the memorial, he stood prepared to maintain the right of petition, as guaranteed to the American citizen. Upon that occasion, Mr. Adams—as it were, almost pressed to the wall by his adversaries—was compelled to declare and did declare what his own feelings were upon this very question on which the House had been compelled to vote within the last two or three weeks. He then said, in order to stop this agitation, in order to arouse the conciliatory spirit of his countrymen, within the District of Columbia, you men of the North have nothing to do with the right of the master to his slave; and he said, if he were called upon to vote upon a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, he would vote against it. He (Mr. T.) well recollected the remark; he recollected the sensation which it produced in this Hall. (He had the report of the remarks by him; but he would not consume the time of the House by reading it.) The influence which Mr. Adams was enabled to exercise upon this important question was very great throughout the whole circumference of this land. But he passed away; he died; and his remains had scarcely been carried home to the burial place of his fathers at Quincy, be-

fore one who bore his own name—a name ever revered and honored—had become associated with a political hack, through the instrumentality of a political organization, to carry into execution the very doctrines against his illustrious father had labored throughout his whole long and useful life.

The result of the late Presidential election had seemed to produce one conviction upon the minds of certain gentlemen, and that was, that there was in some of the States of this Union, lodged in the hands of this party, the balance of political power; and if they could keep up, by the agitation of this question, their political organization, they could compel either the Whig or the Democratic party to come to them, and thus enable them to accomplish their purpose. They were mistaken in the Whig party of the North and the Democratic party of the North, neither of whom sympathized in any degree whatever with the objects, purposes, or ultimate designs of the political, fanatical abolitionists.

The Presidential election over, this session of Congress commenced. What did we see? First, a proposition made upon the floor of the House of Representatives directly, unqualifiedly, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, without the consent of Maryland, without the consent of Virginia, without the consent of the slaveholders of the District. A direct attempt to exercise the Federal power of this Government to do that which all good men of all parties had declared that Congress had neither the legal power to do, nor that it was right that it should be done. That resolution had been voted down by this House, but he was astonished to see that it commanded so large a vote as it did.

Next, they saw a proposition to submit to the people of the District of Columbia the question as to whether slavery should or should not exist here, and placing the negro man—even the slave of the District—upon a par with the white man in determining the question whether the slave's bonds should be broken. A proposition thus to legislate needed but to be stated to any portion of the American people to be repudiated, condemned, and spurned by that people.

Next, they had before them a proposition to abolish the slave trade within the District of Columbia. He would remark, with reference to this, that he had thought there was a class of gentlemen on this floor who had always denied to Congress jurisdiction of the question of slavery within the District of Columbia, or within the States; yet he was astonished, when that resolution came into this Hall, to find these same gentlemen forcing the House to take jurisdiction of this bill, and that against the earnest remonstrances of this side of the Hall. When that resolution proposing to abolish the slave trade in the District of Columbia was submitted to the consideration of this House, the previous question was called upon it; and it would be recollected that the distinguished gentleman from Ohio, the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, [Mr. Vinton] got up in his place and implored the House to pass by that resolution, by voting down the proposition to put the main question. But the records of the House showed that twenty-six gentlemen of the Democratic party from the slave States, representing slave constituents, voted to order the main question, and force the House to a direct vote upon the question, against the earnest remonstrances and direct vote of twenty-eight Whigs and ten Democrats from the slave States.

Mr. MEADE, (in his seat.) What of it?  
What of it? Is asked by the gentleman from Virginia, (continued Mr. T.) This you have always denied that Congress has any jurisdiction over the question, of which you forced us to take jurisdiction by your own vote, when we wanted to stave it off and not vote at all unless the proposition was modified.

Mr. MEADE rose to say a word, but—  
Mr. THOMPSON declined to yield, and begged that gentlemen would not interrupt him.  
When the cause (he said) is once in court, and you have taken jurisdiction of it, you may decide either for the claimant or against him; but when you have no jurisdiction, you have no power to decide either way. By pressing this question upon us, you have admitted the jurisdiction of Congress over slavery within the District of Columbia.

Mr. VINTON (the floor being yielded, at his request, for a word of explanation) said he had asked the House not to sustain the previous question on the proposition because he wanted to amend it before voting. It was not his purpose to stave off voting upon it, but to strike out the preamble.  
Mr. THOMPSON continued. He concurred with the gentleman from Ohio that there was a desire on his side of the House to strike out the preamble, and that there was no disposition to stave off the question of the resolution. For himself, he (Mr. T.) was not afraid to meet it. Coming into this House from a free constituency, he had not voted for it, but directly against it.

Before he proceeded to notice particularly what the resolution was, he wished to remark that there was one feature of

this transaction which struck his mind as rather curious: that was, that ultra-slavery men on that side of the House and ultra-anti-slavery men this side coalesced; that they got together in pressing this question upon the action of the House. How they got together, he did not understand. Perhaps before this session of Congress expired, they would get together again.—  
"Nous verrons."

He proposed now to speak of the resolution of the gentleman from New York, [Mr. Gott.] It was in the following words:

"Whereas the traffic now prosecuted in this metropolis of the Republic in human beings as chattels, is contrary to natural justice and the fundamental principles of our political system, and is notoriously a reproach to our country throughout Christendom, and a serious hindrance to the progress of republican liberty among the nations of the earth; therefore,  
Resolved, That the Committee on the District of Columbia be instructed to report a bill, as soon as practicable, prohibiting the slave trade in said District."

He had voted against this resolution of the gentleman from New York, for the reason, first, that it assumed that "traffic now prosecuted in this metropolis of the Republic in human beings as chattels, is contrary to natural justice and the fundamental principles of our political system." He did not recognize that as being true; and this led him to the consideration of the question—whether, under our Federal Constitution and the compact between the States, we were compelled to recognize property as existing in the slaves of the South? He knew but one mode, under the Constitution and the law of this country, to determine upon a question of law arising upon a conflict between the States, or between the States and the Federal Government. In determining whether slaves were property, he was compelled to look at the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, and nowhere else; and he must express his surprise to have heard, upon this floor, the doctrine asserted, that under the Constitution of the United States there was no recognition of the right of the slaveholder to his property. He did not intend to detain the committee by reading at any length, but he had before him the interpretation of the clause of the Constitution—"No person held to service or labor in one State," &c.—bearing upon this subject, given by Judge Story.

Story says, in the case of Prigg vs. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 16 Peters, 611:

"The last clause is that, the true interpretation whereof is directly in judgment before us. Historically, it is well known that the object of this clause was to secure to the citizens of the slaveholding States the complete right and title of ownership in their slaves as property, in every State in the Union into which they might escape from the State where they were held in servitude. The full recognition of this right and title was indispensable to the security of this species of property in all the slaveholding States; and, indeed, was so vital to the preservation of their domestic interests and institutions, that it cannot be doubted that it constituted a fundamental article, without the adoption of which the Union could not have been formed. Its true design was to guard against the doctrines and principles prevalent in the non-slaveholding States by preventing them from intermeddling with, or obstructing or abolishing the rights of the owners of slaves."

Now, (said Mr. T.) there was a solemn, deliberate opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States, given by Judge Story, a northern judge, of the highest attainments, which settled the question as between the North and the South, by the right of the master to his slave, by the Federal Constitution, was recognized as property. He held that the man who attempted to array popular opinion against this settled law of the land, as expounded by our highest judicial tribunal, and thus forever fixed and settled, was an enemy to the public welfare and the public peace—he cared not whether he was upon this floor or elsewhere. Look at the effect of it upon the institutions of our country. There was a time in our history when the "slow, unmovable finger of scorn" would be "pointed" with fixed purpose upon the man who dared attempt to break down or in the least degree impair those checks and balances which the Constitution and law had thrown around the rights of the citizen; but we had seen the Constitution and the law trodden down beneath the foot of party occasionally, and Dorris and otherisms springing up upon the shattered fragments of the broken Constitution and law, except when the power of the States and of the Federal Government was enabled to hold these factions in check.

He repeated the sentiment, and he wished it fixed upon the minds of every man who heard him and of the country, that under our form of Government, when our highest judicial tribunal, the supreme expounder of the Constitution and law, had fixed what the Constitution and law was, he held that man to be an enemy to the public welfare who sought to array the popular opinion against the Constitution and law. There slaves were property; they were so made by the municipal laws of the States, and were so recognized under our Federal Constitution.

He read the next clause of the resolu-

tion: "and is notoriously a reproach to our country throughout Christendom," and said, if he wanted to do anything else than agitate the question of slavery for political purposes, he would seek to do it by earnest appeal to his brethren of the South. He would employ no terms of denunciation or rebuke. The men of the South (said Mr. T.) are not responsible for slavery; it was theirs, but they could not help it. It was fixed upon the n. evil as it was, against the earnest remonstrance, against the earnest entreaty of our fathers. It was there; let them get rid of it according to the promptings of their own judgment, in the best way they could. But when they here, in this Hall dedicated to national legislation, talked about an institution which existed in one part of this Union under the law of the sovereign States they had no right to denounce it as against the spirit of the age, and against the liberalizing influences of Christianity. This was the Hall of the national legislation—a Hall consecrated to the Union of the States; and though one gentleman came from a slave constituency, and another came from a free constituency, they were each one of the other's bone and flesh of his flesh; we were all American citizens, protected and shielded by the same Constitution, guarded by the same laws; we had a common fame a common ancestry, and a common revolutionary renown. He held that the Congress of the United States had no right to employ terms of denunciation against the South or against the North. They stood here, he repeated it, upon ground consecrated by the labors and wisdom of our fathers, and secured by that Constitution which was framed by the conservatism of that day; the checks and balances of which guarded against inroads from abroad and from faction at home, by the wisdom, virtue, and moderation which characterized that era. This resolution asserted that slavery, as it existed in the United States, was "a serious hindrance in the progress of republican liberty throughout the earth."

Well, he could not, for the life of him, imagine what sort of an abstraction that was; but it was not true. He did not believe—evil though he agreed the institution of slavery was—that the slavery of the African race had ever kept the Anglo-Saxon, or any other white race from freedom in any degree whatever. He did not believe it. Historically, it was not true. The fact of the institution of slavery existing in the colonies of the United States did not impede the progress of our fathers in their establishment of a republican government. But it was true that those countries where vice and immorality and superstition and ignorance prevailed to the greatest extent—as for example, Mexico, and he believed a number of the South American republics—recognized no such thing as the institution of slavery. The question of slavery was not one to be viewed in this light; it was a question between the immediate personal interest of the slaveholder and the slave; and he did not now expect to discuss the question, as to whether slavery might or might not have been an evil to the black race. If the colonization scheme, or any other scheme which might be devised by the ingenuity and benevolence of man for planting the African race on its native shores, should be instrumental in building up a republican form of government there and establishing the freedom of that race, he would leave it for the moralist of after days to determine, whether slavery had or had not been an evil to the black man.

This resolution proposed to abolish the slave trade in the District of Columbia. What was the "slave trade?" He could not understand this resolution as meaning anything more or less than that they proposed to interfere with the relation of the slaveholder and the slave in the District of Columbia. He had shown that Congress had at no time before hesitated for a single instant in declaring that this ought not to be done. He held that, under the law by which the District of Columbia was ceded to the United States for the purposes of a seat of the Federal Government, Congress had no legal right to interfere with the relations between slave and master here. What was the "slave trade" here? He heard a great deal said about "slave pens;" about slaves sold at auction; about stripping the mother from the child, &c. These things might exist here, but he did not know of them. Since he had first come to the District of Columbia, he had never seen a negro sold; he had never seen a band of negroes taken off by the slave-trader; he had never seen the slave-trader. He did not know where your "slave pen" was. It might be here, however, and these things might happen every day before the eyes of those gentlemen who chose to hunt them up; for himself, he had no taste for such things.

What was the "slave trade" as referred to in this resolution? It was the right of the master to sell his slave. Congress had no right to say to him that he should not. If gentlemen wanted to abolish the slave trade, in the ordinary general acceptance of that term, it was very easy to do it. When the States of Maryland and Virginia ceded this ten miles square to the United States for the purpose of a seat of Government, provision was made by the Maryland and Virginia law, that the laws of those respective States should prevail in the District of Columbia until

Congress should by legislation provide other laws. Congress in 1801 did provide that the laws of Maryland and Virginia should prevail in the District of Columbia, and immediately afterwards declared by law, that nothing in the act of 1801 should be so construed as to prevent the right of the master to take his slave from one county into the other, and to bring him from Maryland within the District; so that now, while a gentleman living in Virginia could not bring his slave into the District of Columbia, unless he came with the bona fide intention of becoming a citizen, or as a temporary sojourner, yet a citizen of Maryland might do so, because of the compact between the General Government and Maryland. Now, all they had got to do was this: just repeal the law of Congress of 1801, which made provision for the right of the master to go with his slave to and fro, and they revived the operation of the Maryland law of 1776 and then if a man brought his slave here, the moment he came within the limits of the District of Columbia for the purpose of carrying on the illegal traffic of buying and selling slaves, that moment his slaves were free; but if he came with the bona fide intention of becoming a resident of the District, or as a necessary sojourner, he held his slaves. He ventured to affirm, that there was not a gentleman from the extreme South who would not vote to revive this law to day. Here, then, was common ground on which gentlemen from all sections of the country might stand.—Let such a bill be introduced—and if no other gentleman did, he was ready to introduce it, for he had a bill drawn up for the purpose—and be passed to do this very thing, to restore the law of 1796, and then the old law of Maryland would be in force, and slaves could not be brought in here for sale.

It might be well doubted, however, how far they could now complain of the fact that the slave trade continued to exist in that part of the District east of the Potomac river, when it was recollected that only two or three years had elapsed since the retrocession of the county of Alexandria to Virginia. He could not imagine how it was that gentlemen who advocated retrocession of that county to Virginia, fixing slavery forever upon the county of Alexandria, unless the Legislature of Virginia chose to abolish it, now complained of the existence of that institution on this side of the line. If Congress had jurisdiction (as they thought) of this question, they had given it up as far as related to the county of Alexandria, and surrendered the power of ever disturbing the relation of master and slave there.

But suppose they passed this resolution—suppose they passed a bill in this general form abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia—what next? The next proposition which would come from the political Abolitionists of the North would be to abolish the slave trade between the States. He was no alarmist; he abominated these continual threats of dissolution; he had no respect for the man who eternally talked about breaking asunder of concord and fraternal affection which had so long held us together; he had no sympathy with such movements; but he held them that just so sure as we were now a union of States, just so certainly must that union become dissevered and broken, if the municipal rights of the States were thus interfered with. The South should not trample upon the rights of the North, so far as he represented the rights of the North; nor would he—so help him God he would not—attempt to trample upon the rights of the South.—He had spent the first one-half of his life south of Mason and Dixon's line, and the other north of Mason and Dixon's line; he thought he knew the people of the North, and he thought he knew the people of the South; and he told those gentlemen here, both from the South and from the North, who talked about disunion, that they did not represent the feelings of the American people on this great question. No; they did not represent the heart of the American people. (The heart was essentially conservative on this and all other questions.)

But suppose Congress attempted to interfere with the slave trade between the States: the inevitable, positive, direct result must be the dissolution of the Union. He did not complain of the severe terms of denunciation which southern gentlemen were in the habit of sometimes employing towards the North. Northern men though he was, he was compelled to admit that some of the people of the North deserved a good deal of what was said of them by southern men. He could not imagine, for instance, what was better calculated to arouse the feelings of the South—their indignation, if gentlemen pleased—an attempt on the part of the northern States of this Union to interfere with and check that Congressional legislation which had been devised, under the Constitution, for the securing of the rights of the master when his slave escaped from him into another State. He believed there were some of the States of this Union who had repealed their legislation on this subject, and there were others who inflicted a penalty upon their officers for aiding the master in arresting his slave. He thanked God he did not come from such a constituency. The people whom he represented, the State from which he came, was essentially, emphatically, conservative upon this question of slavery. He represented a constituency among whom the master would be just as secure under the law of the land, in attempting to recover his fugitive slave, as he would be in any county in Virginia or North Carolina. He did not know of a judge or a justice of the peace within his State who would not give to the master every possible aid in his power to arrest his fugitive slave. They in their sympathized with the fanatical Abolitionists nor with the ultra pro slavery men of the South; all

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