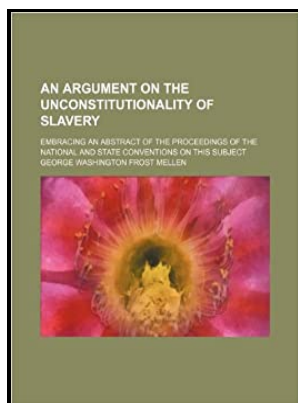


Argument on the unconstitutionality of slavery, embracing an abstract of the proceedings of the national and state conventions on this subject.

AMS Press - An Argument On the Unconstitutionality of Slavery: Embracing an Abstract of the Proceedings of the National and State Conventions On This Subject (6208265)



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But these other definitions are nevertheless, all, in themselves, uncertain, indefinite, mutable; and therefore incapable of being standards, by a reference to which the question of law, or no law, can be determined. Why this uniform concurrence of the judiciary with the legislature? To say, therefore, that the constitution intended to sanction slavery, is the same as to say that it did sanction it; which is begging the whole question, and substituting mere assertion for proof.

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Excerpt from An Argument on the Unconstitutionality of Slavery: Embracing an Abstract of the Proceedings of the National and State Conventions on This Subject But, while we have, as we think, most clearly demonstrated these as truths, and that every individual person is by the Constitution allowed his inalienable rights, and the free exercise of them, we should also hold, even if the Southern States were foreign-nations, and we had no connection or interest with them, it would be our duty, and the duty of every other man, to lift up his voice against the Oppression that is there exercised, on the same grounds that we should enter a stranger's house from which proceeded the cry of help and murder. It is also doubtful whether Parliament had the power—or perhaps rather it is certain that they had not the power—to legalize it any where, if they had attempted to do so. I have found, in none of the State constitutions before mentioned, existing in 1789, any other evidence or intimation of the existence of slavery, than that already commented upon and refuted.

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If the second conclusion be adopted, viz. EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS ON THE ADOPTION OF THE AMENDMENTS.

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And if there be no other, then it is clear that slavery had no legal existence under them.

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They are as fit and proper as any other political contracts whatever; and are founded on precisely the same principle of combination for mutual defence—for what are any of our political contracts and forms of government, but contracts between man and man for mutual protection against those who may conspire to injure either or all of them? The new constitution has accordingly, with great propriety, made provision against them, and all others proceeding from the defect of the confederation on this head, by authorizing the general government to establish an uniform rule of naturalization throughout the United States. It finally derived all its validity and obligation, as a frame of government, from its adoption by the people at large.

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Dust Jacket Condition: No Jacket - As Published. Any forty or fifty men, like those who framed the constitution, may now secretly concoct another, that is honest in its terms, and yet in secret conclave confess to each other the criminal objects they intend to accomplish by it, if its honest character should enable them to secure for it the adoption of the people.

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If these doctrines are correct, then those contracts of government, state and national, which we call constitutions, are void, and unlawful, so far as they purport to authorize, if any of them do authorize, any thing in violation of natural justice, or the natural rights of any man or class of men whatsoever. More than this, it is palpably and wholly incompatible with slavery.

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