

of the compact—the North on their part agreed to the incorporation of *three-fifths* of the slave population into the basis of federal representation; whilst, by the 3rd section of the 4th article of the constitution, the equal rights of *all* the States in the public domain was guaranteed.

But there was one other question connected with this subject of surpassing importance and delicacy; and which, for its proper decision, demanded great care and deliberation on the part of the Convention. We refer to the right of owners to re-possess themselves of their fugitive slaves, who might take refuge within the territory of a neighboring State, whose interests and laws were adverse to the existence of the institution.

In vain would the South, (by the sacrifice of her right to import slaves, after a limited period,) have purchased a partial representation for that portion of her population, and an equal participation in the benefits arising from the public lands, if her slaves, who should escape into the neighboring free States, should there find protection and security against reclamation by their proper owners. It was clear to the minds of all, that a compact of Union which did not embrace a remedy for this evil, would contain within itself the elements of its own speedy dissolution. Without a special provision protecting the rights of owners in this particular, a direct and controlling motive would be held out to the *free* States to encourage refugee slaves to seek protection within their borders: by which *their* political power and importance would be increased, whilst that of the slave-holding States would be diminished in a vastly increased ratio. A provision in the Constitution that would give ample security to the Southern States, in this respect, by guaranteeing to their citizens the right to reclaim their slaves *wherever found within the limits of the Republic*, was, therefore, regarded as a "*sine qua non*" to their becoming parties to the compact. Accordingly, the Convention made the required provision, in the 2d section of the 4th article of the Constitution, as follows:—"No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; *but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.*"

Without this guarantee of their rights, in regard to this species of property, neither Maryland nor any of the other States in which slavery was likely to be permanent, could or *would* have become parties to the Union. But regarding that portion of the section we have quoted, as affording them ample security and protection in this particular, and confiding in the justice and good faith of their Northern brethren, they ratified the Constitution and subscribed to *all* its obligations, which—it will not be denied—they faithfully discharged from that period to the present time.