

slaves, executes itself so far, as to authorize a master or his agent, to seize a fugitive slave in any State in the Union, as property, and that no State law interfering with that right is constitutional.

2nd. That the constitutional provision also contemplates legislation by Congress, to make the delivery of the fugitive slave more effectual, against all State or other interference.

3rd. That Congress having legislated, such legislation is the supreme law of the land; excluding all State legislation upon the same subject; and that no State can pass any law to qualify, impede or control Federal legislation.

4th. That the legislative power of Congress is exclusive, and that no State can pass any law, to carry into effect the provisions of the constitution in respect to fugitive slaves, whether Congress has, or has not legislated.

5th. That the points decided are in no manner intended to interfere with the police power in the States, to pass laws to take up runaway slaves, or to guard the States from their depredations.

The opinion was delivered by Mr. Justice Story. The Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Daniels, dissented from so much of the opinion as regarded the exclusive character of the Federal power of legislation, being of opinion that although the States could pass no law to impair, impede or control the constitutional right of the owner to reclaim his fugitive slave, they might legislate in aid of that provision. Mr. Justice Baldwin was of opinion that all legislation whether by Congress or the States, was unconstitutional; the provision requiring no legislative assistance whatever. Mr. Justice McLean delivered an opinion, resting principally upon the fact that the negro woman was taken out of Pennsylvania without the certificate required by the act of 1793—but still agreeing with the court, that the judgment of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ought to be reversed.

I presume your Excellency will deem this matter of sufficient importance, to communicate the result to the Legislature; and should you desire copies of the several opinions delivered, I am authorised to say by the clerk of the court, that they can be furnished in the course of four or five days. A letter addressed to him to that effect, will meet with prompt attention.

I write in great haste, and have only time to subscribe myself,

With great respect,

Your Excellency's very ob't. serv't.,

J. MEREDITH.

Read and referred to the committee on Colored Population.  
The House then adjourned until half past three o'clock.