

by the decisions of the judicial tribunals that passed upon the cases of Hanway and his fellow conspirators. A review of these facts and decisions brings home to our minds the alarming conviction, that the existing laws of the United States afford no adequate remedy for the recovery, by owners, of their slaves who may have taken refuge within the territory of a free State; but, on the contrary, the right of recovery, *guaranteed, as it is, by the Constitution of the United States, is, by its laws,* left entirely dependant upon the comity of the people of the State in which the fugitive may have taken refuge. After what has occurred, it will hardly be necessary to say that the act of 1850 affords us no efficient remedy; and is, indeed, in its present form, a useless nullity. It will not, we presume, be questioned, that any law which does not embrace within itself the elements of power necessary for the enforcement of its own provisions, if resisted, is but idle parchment; yet such is, deplorably, the case in regard to the "fugitive slave law." The last clause of the 5th section of that act empowers the officer charged with its execution to summon the "posse comitatus" to his aid, in case of resistance being offered to his authority—at the same time it enjoins upon all good citizens prompt obedience to the requisitions of the officer. Now this would be all very well, if the law contained any provision for *enforcing* the "obedience" to its behests thus enjoined, in case of its being withheld—if it did not, by its failure to provide a *penalty for disobedience to its injunctions*, leave the right to obey or *not*, at the option of the parties called upon by the officer,—thus leaving the efficiency of the law entirely dependant upon the contingency of the loyalty and patriotism of the neighborhood in which its execution may be attempted. The effect of this grave omission in the act of 1850, is lamentably illustrated in the fatal affair at Christiana. Upon that occasion citizens of Pennsylvania, whose virtue and patriotism have since been vauntingly proclaimed, flatly refused obedience to the summons of the officer, but stood by and encouraged the bloody gang of outlaws in their work of treason and butchery, notwithstanding which a Federal Court has since decided that they are not amenable to any law of the United States, whilst the local authorities of Pennsylvania have, in effect, declared them guiltless of any offence against the laws of that commonwealth! These facts, connected with the declaration of a leading counsel for the defence in Hanway's case, that "no *respectable men* in Pennsylvania" will obey the requirements of the "Fugitive Slave Act," or, in other words, "suffer themselves to be made *slave catchers*," are sufficient to induce the conclusion that no better results can be expected from any future attempts to enforce that law in its present form.

Entertaining these views, the Committee respectfully recommend that the action of the Legislature be directed to *two* objects:

First. To obtain from Congress such amendment of the 5th