

ion to convince the minds of our Fathers that, yielding to the force of natural causes, it must at no distant day, become extinct in the northern sections of the country.

The climate of that region was uncongenial with the constitution and habits of the negro race, whilst its soil and productions were equally unsuited to the profitable employment of that species of labor. On the contrary, under the burning sun of a Southern clime, the African was at home—in his native element—whilst in the growth and fabrication of its products, his labor could be employed with vastly remunerating results. Thus, whilst it was apparent that under the antagonistic circumstances attendant upon differences of geographical position and productions, slavery must gradually languish and die at the North, it would be fostered and extended indefinitely at the South, unless repressed in its growth, and limited in its extension, by restrictions engrafted in the federal compact. Hence, it is not surprising that, intimately connected as the subject was with the important questions of taxation and representation, its consideration by the convention that formed the constitution, should have given rise to difficulties that well nigh frustrated all their efforts to frame a system of government acceptable to the people of the different States. The vast unoccupied regions known as the “Northwestern Territory,” and the “Valley of the Mississippi,” it was foreseen, would be rapidly filled with an industrious and enterprising population. New States would be formed which would knock at the doors of the Union for admission upon terms of equality with the original States. Hence, it became the policy of the North to restrict slavery within as narrow limits as possible, by a prohibition upon the further importation of slaves into the country, and an exclusion of that portion of the population from the basis of representation, whilst it was equally the policy of the South, in order to maintain its political influence in the body politic, to insist upon the right to import slaves and to have them considered in fixing upon a basis of federal representation. In this conflict of political interests, it was obvious, that unless the representatives of each section would yield their extreme views, and meet upon middle ground to adjust this question, the labors of the convention would be fruitless, and no Bond of Union could be formed. Happily for the nation and the world, the dark spirit of fanaticism that has since overshadowed our beloved country, as with the able pall of approaching dissolution, had not then reared its hydra head. A spirit of amity, concession and compromise prevailed, and this difficult and delicate question was adjusted by a compromise equally honorable to the wisdom and patriotism of the North and South. By the terms of this compromise, the latter submitted to a tax of *ten dollars* upon each slave imported, with the understanding, that all further importations of this kind should cease after the expiration of *twenty years* from the date