

agree to the plan, unless their right to import slaves be untouched, the expectation is vain. The people of those States will never be such fools as to give up so important an interest. He was strenuous against striking out the section, and seconded the motion of Gen. Pinckney for a commitment."

Three days after this debate, Gen. Pinckney moved to strike out of the report of the committee the words "the year eighteen hundred," as the year limiting the importation of slaves, and to insert the words, "the year eighteen hundred and eight." Therefore the time designated in the Constitution of the United States was so designated upon the motion of Gen. Pinckney, of South Carolina; and not upon the motion of any delegate from a Northern State. And here is the recorded vote which passed that proposition of Gen. Pinckney, and I ask the attention of this House to the vote, that they may see whether Northern States passed that vote. It was passed by seven in the affirmative and four in the negative, as follows:

*Affirmative.*—New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

*Negative.*—New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia.

In that Convention the Southern States had a majority of six to five. Had the South desired to stop the importation of slaves, all they had to do was to vote against it; they got the votes of but three Northern States for it.

It thus appears that the words in the Constitution of the United States to-day, were put in there, not by Northern men, but on the motion of Gen. Pinckney, of South Carolina, who, with Mr. Rutledge, of North Carolina, declared that unless they were put in, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia could not be expected to join the Federal Union. And the question on the adoption of the motion of Mr. Pinckney was carried by Southern votes. Let us have this record right; and let us hear no more in this House about the whole weight of slavery in the United States being upon the North.

In the Convention of Massachusetts, the Constitution was adopted by a vote of 187 out of 355, a majority of only 19 votes being in favor of its adoption. So strenuous was the opposition to the Constitution that it is asserted on high authority that had the vote been taken when the Convention first met, before the reason why this article was put in was assigned, that is, to get the South to enter the Union, Massachusetts would have rejected the Constitution of the United States; and it is hardly too much to say that the fate of the Federal Constitution was to be decided by the action of the Convention of that State.

Mr. BELT. Those who have read the debates upon the adoption of the Constitution

of the United States, with an intent to ascertain what was the real question before those great men, have learned, as I have from my slight reading of what occurred there, that there were two questions relating to this matter of the slave trade before that body. One was whether the slave trade, as such, should be abolished. The other was the practical and direct question in reference to negro slavery itself, whether cargoes of slaves should be imported to reinforce the negro population. They were two entirely and absolutely distinct questions. Now what the gentleman (Mr. Cushing) has read is a portion, and but a small portion, of that which at one time occurred in that Convention upon one of these questions.

Now, as I came in here to-night unprovided with any authorities at all, all I desire to say is that I tender myself upon my reputation to make good to this House that in point of fact, upon the question of keeping open the African slave trade—which as regards the question of humanity, was the worse of the two questions considered—as a matter of fact the proposition to continue it was maintained by the men of the North, as against the men of Virginia.

Mr. STIRLING. The gentleman said before, "the men of the South."

Mr. BELT. I wish no mistake about it. I say the men of Virginia and of the South generally.

Mr. CUSHING. Does the gentleman abandon the point about the importation of slaves until 1808?

Mr. BELT. I do not. I include that in the tender I now make. I will show that the men who proposed and advocated in the Convention the proposition to continue the slave trade until 1808, were Northern men, and they did it exclusively upon the ground that a large portion of their people had so much of their money invested in the trade that it would be an outrage and a wrong suddenly to stop it. Now I tender myself to prove that proposition.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. When may we expect that proof?

Mr. BELT. Whenever in this debate I am allowed the opportunity to speak.

Mr. STIRLING. I must say that I was so surprised at what the gentleman from Prince George's (Mr. Belt) said, that I called the attention of the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) to it. The gentleman from Prince George's distinctly stated that the permission to continue the slave trade for twenty years after the adoption of the Constitution, was upon the proposition of Northern men, and secured by Northern votes. Now my colleague (Mr. Cushing) has distinctly proved from the debates of that Convention, that that particular clause was moved by a gentleman from South Carolina, and the few Northern States that voted for it, did so