

Taking it all in all the above is the most remarkable sworn statement to be made by a man professing truth and of ordinary intelligence which has ever met my eye. Mr Kern first professes "great disinclination to speak of matters he has "merely heard of" and in the next breath supplements it with a request to be allowed to tell what he has "heard of Judge Dourger". He thus becomes a swift and willing witness. His part however is not well covered. He goes on greedily enough for a man so anxious to tell the truth, to mix up the "negro mill-pond" calumny with the Abbott letter in a style which seems "strange and peculiar" in a sworn statement. I wish to notice some of these peculiarities - not because Mr Kern made them, nor because they are all entirely new - but simply because they come to the attention of the public as the sworn statement of a man who professes great scrupulousness as to what he says.

Mr Kern <sup>says</sup> states that I stated that a respectable gentleman had informed me that fifteen colored men were found and dragged out of a mill-pond - that he considers this statement mendacious as exaggerating in a very high degree the state of crime in his (my) district.

evidently designing to produce the impression that I had made such statement in regard to my own district.

Now what were the facts: - In the Philadelphia Convention of 1866, I made a speech in the course of which I stated that just before leaving home in Guilford County, North Carolina, (which I stated in reply to a question from some one in the audience was a Quaker county) - I had been informed by a respectable citizen of that county, that a dozen or fifteen colored men had been taken out of the field-traps in some river of South Carolina, who were believed to have been murdered -

This statement was made to me & but of a day or two before I left for Philadelphia in the office of Gen. Wheeler, Governor of the District in the presence of David Holger and perhaps another ~~man~~ - gentleman. I made a minute of it at the time and asked him if I might use that statement. He said I might but he would not like to have his name connected with it as he was <sup>having just returned from a trip</sup> traveling through there and did not wish to incur loss or danger from having made it - I knew the man then only from reputation - Since that I have known him personally, I thought then that he believed the statement which he made. I think so now - Whether the statement were true or false I know not. I told it as I had it because of the character of the man who told me, and gave the character of my authority -

Letter on Slavery  
by Henry

us to any not being able to verify the statement  
I have never tried to do so - It was told me in  
the presence of two reliable witnesses who can be  
put on the stand whenever any calumniators  
choose -

But in order to create a still more false impression  
and to convey the idea that this statement was of re-  
cent occurrence, Mr Kerr goes on to say that it  
was made in a letter to Senator Abbott, which is  
tolerably <sup>talkative</sup> ~~like~~ for a man under oath -

But Mr Kerr referred to it because it was  
an exaggeration of crime in this circuit  
whereas the statement which I made did not  
refer to this circuit or even to this state, at all  
~~but~~ and was made almost five years before  
the letter to Sen. Abbott was written and when  
I was simply a private citizen.

Mr. Kerr might just as well have repeated  
before his oath, the Penitentiary scandal, or any of the  
thousand and one hellish lies which the maligni-  
ty of his fellow partisans, have invented, and  
circulated for the purpose of trying to put me  
down in this State. He had just as good authority  
for the one as for the other, and none at all for  
either. I have no objection to Mr Kerr's stating all  
he knows <sup>of me</sup> ~~or~~ all his somewhat luxuriant ~~few~~  
of our conjure up - or all <sup>that they</sup> ~~his~~ ~~findings~~  
professional lies of the party ~~convinced~~  
for his use, either with the gravity of an oath

or the bluster of a turkey-cock - but I claim  
the privilege of characterizing such statements  
as they deserve -

It may be that Mr. Kerr thought  
that he was upon the stump or possibly he has  
been so long upon the political campaign that  
belief in its stock slanders has become  
habitual - Or perhaps the softening and emul-  
terating influences of Washington had so  
worked under his reverend eye that he could  
could not rightly tell whether it was a "speech" or  
a letter; whether it was made or written in  
1866 or 1870; whether to Gen. Abbott or a Con-  
vention; whether about a mill-pond or the fish-  
traps on a river; or whether in reference to this  
district circuit, the State, South Carolina or  
Senegambia. I am willing to make all allow-  
ances, and indeed in all seriousness I feel  
far more sorrowful than angry at the poor  
old man who is nearing the grave with the bitter  
reflection as he gushingly informed me, that  
he has been the most studiously misappreciated  
man of his day in the state. There was once  
a notion that the blood of youth could restore  
the bloom of bright young life, to the wrinkled <sup>ring</sup>  
and decrepit form of the old and bleary-eyed  
debaucher. Perhaps Mr. Kerr has taken this in a fig-  
urative sense and believes firmly hopes that any  
early political death, if procured by his success

might prove to his decayed hopes and for-  
tunes, a fountain of sempiternal youth  
and a panacea for otherwise hopeless  
decay - It may be so.

I do not object to being  
ridiculed or denounced for follies  
or acts of which I am guilty - but I do  
not think I have entirely lost the right of  
self-defence because I am a judge of the  
Superior Court of North Carolina. Hitherto  
I have kept quiet and because of my  
position have let the slanders and de-  
famers have full swing rather than en-  
broil myself with them - That is over  
If I am to have any of the rights of an  
American citizen in North Carolina I will  
I will have them all. I have been belied and  
believed long in silence long enough -