

What is the proposition which has produced in the gentlemen's ideas, such an alarming apprehension that you are going to undo everything you have been doing. You have by one fell swoop manumitted men, women and children, old and young, firm, infirm and helpless; those who are as impotent as the child at the breast, and as incapable of maintaining themselves. You have left the master in a condition which imposes upon him the necessity of saying to those who have been brought into his family, those with whose parents he has been associated as members of the same family—you have brought the master to the absolute necessity of seeing these people perish for the want of food and clothing, or being at the expense of sustaining them.

Gentlemen have been asked, what are you to do with those so old as to be incompetent to maintain themselves, or these women and children so utterly helpless as to be incapable of providing for themselves. No answer has been given. No remedy has been suggested. Some gentlemen say that the legislature must provide. The legislature is not to meet until these people may rot in the streets, if they are left to starve according to the project of this convention. They require daily sustenance, constant protection from exposure to the weather. That is the reason suggested here for conferring this power; and we ask by what other process these people can be protected.

I take it for granted it has not been assumed, though it may be assumed, that the masters will sooner expend the last cent that they own than to allow these people to suffer extinction either by starvation or exposure. But when the proposition is offered by the gentleman from Caroline to do an act which I say, concerning nothing but the public interest, ought to be done, the fear is expressed that it will benefit the masters; that you are going to do some service to the masters; that you are going to entail slavery upon the servants. Is an apprentice a slave? You apprentice white people. Are they slaves? Is this process of universal emancipation to be postponed for twenty years because minor negroes are to be put out as apprentices in the same way exactly that white persons are apprenticed? The very moment a motion comes within sight of anything like a cent of remuneration, these gentlemen seem to take alarm, as if the country was going to be ruined by it, and their favorite scheme of universal emancipation interfered with or at least delayed. I regret exceedingly to see such a spirit prevail.

We are about to turn loose upon the community every minor negro in the State. Uneducated, unprepared for the condition of freedom, with no employment, no business, no avocation except that in which they must engage under the instruction of white people, as general laborers, entirely and exclusively accustomed to farming operations, thousands

upon thousands are to be turned loose. To do what? I say the very best thing you can do with them is to place them under the guardianship, and direction, and guidance, and instruction of white persons, who can teach them how to take care of themselves. No; you cannot do that; their master will get some benefit from it. The gentleman from Baltimore city seems to have the utterly idle view that indenting him for ten years makes him a slave; that if you indent him from seven to twenty-one years of age, you make him a slave. We have had indentures all along; and who ever heard of an indented apprentice being considered a slave? How does it interfere with the rigid principle of universal emancipation for masters to have the preference in the guardianship of these minors?

I say again that I hope this exhibition of apprehension which seems to be entertained by gentlemen lest a dollar of compensation should be given to the masters who are stripped of their property, and not only that, but made to meet the expense of sustaining those who are impotent, those who must be sustained by them or perish, those for whom their friends do not profess to make provision, those who are here utterly neglected after being turned into the streets—the apprehension lest they should receive a dollar in return. I hope it does not reveal the feelings of all the gentlemen of the majority here, towards those upon whom their policy has brought ruin. I saw yesterday a letter from a gentleman, a warm supporter of the government, who was utterly ruined; and there are others in the same predicament; ruined by a sudden blow upon the part of the body selected for the protection of the people of the State in their persons, their property and their liberties, by a sudden blow inflicted at their hands, which in one sentence strikes down every dollar's worth of property they have. Is it to be a matter of regret that incidentally you should to some small extent remunerate these people, incidentally, under the operation of an act positively and actually useful to those who are to be emancipated by this body? I again appeal to the justice and equity and conscience of the majority of this house, not to carry out their ultra doctrines which I say manifest more a determined spirit of hostility to the slave owner, than a desire to benefit the slave.

Mr. PURNELL. My judgment inclines me to favor the proposition of the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd.)

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I rise to a point of order. I did not wish to interrupt the gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers) during the progress of his lecture. But I submit that the amendment I proposed is the only thing now before the house, and that the merits of the proposition of the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd) are not now under consideration.

Mr. CHAMBERS. I was merely answering the