

arguments of other gentlemen. That is my apology for saying what I did.

The PRESIDENT. The usual course has been to permit the discussion of the entire subject. The chair has never taken the authority to restrict gentlemen strictly to the particular amendment under consideration.

Mr. PURNELL. My judgment inclines me to favor the proposition of the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd,) not for the reasons assigned by my honorable friend from Kent (Mr. Chambers) but for considerations entirely my own. It is not so much for the purpose of protecting or seeking to protect the interests of the master in this connection, but for the purpose of ameliorating and improving the condition of the slave, the party on whom the provisions of this section must operate.

Now it seems to me that it is proper under the present circumstances, and under any circumstances, if you can improve the condition of any class of the community, either white or black, to do so. If by hiring out, or binding out, or apprenticing out this class of the community their condition will be ameliorated, and they will be brought in habits of industry and impressed with proper principles, no evil can result to them or to the community. And if incidentally some benefit may result to the master, that should not be an objection.

But I rise more particularly to address my remarks to the amendment offered by the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge,) in relation to providing for the education of this class. That gentleman, I know, understands very well the distinction between white and black apprentices. He understands that the legislature of Maryland a long time ago made vastly different provisions for the two classes. The one is provided with an education, and with other advantages; while in the case of binding out the other the articles of apprenticeship, or the indentures, are not required to express that the negro shall be educated, as is required in the other case. Now I will read for the benefit of the gentleman—hardly necessary for his benefit, for he knows it too well to require me to do that—but for the benefit of others whose attention has not been directed to that particular statute, the provision in relation to white apprenticeship, which says, [Code, article 6, section 15:]

“Every child bound out under the provisions of this article shall, if a male, be bound until he arrives at the age of twenty-one years; or, if a female, the age of eighteen years. And the said courts shall in all cases, make it a part of the contract on the part of the master or mistress of such apprentice, that he or she shall give such apprentice reasonable education in reading, writing and arithmetic, to be particularized therein; and also teach such apprentice especially if a

male, some useful art or trade; and in all cases supply clothing and maintenance.”

That is for the white apprentice. In the same article of the code, section 36, will be found what is necessary, or rather what is unnecessary in all contracts of apprenticeship for the other race.

“It shall not be necessary in any such indenture, or in any indenture of a negro made by the trustees of the poor, to require that any education shall be given to such negro apprentice.”

There is the distinction. Now I am not prepared to say that it is necessary to educate the negro, in order to make him useful to the community, and useful to himself, or to prepare him after he arrives at years of maturity to go and set up for himself, and to perform all the necessary duties that may devolve upon him as a citizen, occupying the sphere which he must necessarily occupy.

Does any one profess upon this floor that the negro will ever occupy the status of the white man? Is there any individual who can ever bring his mind to the conclusion that that degraded race will ever be raised to the degree of the white race? I mean exactly what I say; because that they are inferior to the white race there is no doubt. The God of nature when He created, stamped upon their forehead the mark as broad and lasting as the mark upon Cain. Is there any man who would elevate them to the degree of the white man? I cannot think so. The idea that the negro can ever elevate himself to the condition of the white man is preposterous. But unfortunately the white man can debase himself to the condition of the negro.

But I cannot support a proposition to elevate the negro to the sphere of the white man. While I am willing to see him bound to a master, to a kind and benevolent benefactor, who will raise him up to habits of industry, I am unwilling to educate him and prepare him for the higher walks of life—those which are occupied by his superiors, the white race. And in advocating this principle I do no violence to the principles upon which I was elected to this convention. I came here as an emancipationist; I voted for what is now the twenty-fourth article of the bill of rights, and I boast in that important act of my life, because I think it is for the benefit of the State of Maryland, though for a while it may subject us to some temporary inconvenience.—And I think the time will come when we all shall come to the conclusion that it is not alone for the benefit of the negro, and not to the prejudice of the master, but on the contrary it is to the advantage of the master, and the co-relative advantage of both master and slave.

I had other reasons which controlled my vote on that subject, which it is not now necessary to detail, having already in an humble way expressed them.