

Mr. CUSHING. This proposition covers those of that age as well as all others.

Mr. NEGLEY. I know it does.

Mr. SPILLING. Does the gentleman suppose that masters will have bound to them children from one to five years of age? Will they not ask to have bound to them those that are from fifteen to twenty, and let those from one to five go? Is not that the principle of human nature everywhere?

Mr. NEGLEY. I think the orphans' court will exercise a sound and humane discretion upon this subject. The gentleman's supposition is founded upon the idea that the orphans' court will be predetermined to do as much injury as possible to these emancipated negroes. It contemplates the binding out of these children over six years, at least. Now a negro child at the age of twelve years, is much more expensive to the parent or the master than a child of one or two years. And why? Because the child of twelve years will eat as much as a man, and will require a most as much clothing.

I do think it is for the good of society in these large slaveholding counties; it is for the happiness and welfare of the negro, and for the comfort of the master, that such a provision as that contemplated by the section of the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd) should be incorporated into the constitution. This suddenly turning loose of immense quantities of negroes, utterly unused to, and unskilled, and uneducated in a single means of taking care of themselves—they will be like uncaged birds; they will not know how to manage, they will not know what to do. They cannot get houses to live in during the coming winter, and they would absolutely freeze and starve to death, if the humanity of their masters did not provide them with food and shelter.

I am decidedly in favor both of doing good to the negro, and making some compensation to his former owner. I am not actuated by any ill-will or hatred towards the slaveholder; by no means. I have advocated the emancipation of the negro upon high moral grounds, and upon political grounds, uninfluenced by any feeling of bitterness towards the slaveholder, wherever he may be, and if I can consistently with my views of public duty, and with what I conceive to be for the public benefit, benefit the master also, it will be a source of gratification to me, rather than of disappointment and hate. I discard any such feelings at all. And for one I shall be very glad if they can have some compensation for the losses to which they will and must be necessarily subjected by the adoption of this constitution. Is not the injury they will suffer from the emancipation of all their slaves without compensation—is not that sufficient? Must you add another feather to the weight already on the camel's back?

Now I have gone about as far as I am inclined to go in that direction. And if I can, consistently with my ideas of public duty, do a good at the same time to the former slaveholder, and to the negro himself, I shall do it with great pleasure. And therefore I shall vote against this amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge,) because I consider it impracticable now. And I shall vote for the section proposed by the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd,) because I believe it will do much good. I believe it will have a tendency to take away a little of that bitterness that is already too prevalent throughout this entire State. Let us try to get back a little towards common ground. We will have to live together in the future. Let us attempt now to make some approximation towards living together in brotherhood, and do each other a mutual kindness and good when we can do so without any sacrifice of principle.

Mr. DANIEL. I have felt very much inclined heretofore to go for some provision of this sort; not considering it any special system of apprenticeship, but simply a binding out under existing laws, as I believe those laws would take hold of them, and bind them out if once freed. And I have thought it would be proper, where the masters were suitable persons, to give them the preference. But I think that matter is involved in a great deal of difficulty, especially if we look at the laws upon the statute book at present, and what has been the class of apprenticeship we have had in this State, almost since it has been a State. And I am really forced to the conclusion that the laws on the statute book are sufficient to regulate every case and matter that may arise of this sort.

Now there are some laws upon that book that I think we might come in conflict with, very much to the injury of this class of people, if we provide in the constitution in the direct and positive terms that is now proposed to be enacted here. It is proposed to enact here that the masters in every case, if suitable persons, shall have those children bound to them, without consulting the mother, without consulting anybody. I say that there may be cases possibly, in which the masters are not suitable persons, and yet it may be such a very delicate matter for the orphans' court to decide that, having established in the constitution a universal law that masters in all cases where they are suitable persons shall have the preference, it would result in every case pretty much in giving these apprentices to their masters. I shall therefore at the proper time, offer an amendment, which I think will prevent some of the fears that have been entertained of the consequences of these persons being thrown loosely out upon society, to be supported by their parents or others, or to get their living as they can by improper means. I think it will