

prepared by some of the rudiments of education for that which is before them in their after years of freedom.

And gentlemen have sprung up in alarm as though the proposition that these people shall be educated was a proposition to place them upon an equality with the white race. Sir, I have no sympathy, no respect, even, for that feeling, or that fear, whatever it may be, that is so eternally afraid of negro equality. If, with generations that start, with the education we have already received, we cannot maintain the race with them, then in all conscience let us give them the track. It is not equality; they must be infinitely the superior of the white race if, with the brand upon them, the degradation of generations of servitude, the stupidity and ignorance begotten of that servitude, they can rise to be socially and intellectually the equal of the white race, simply because it is proposed to embody in this section the provision that these negro apprentices shall be taught to read and write. What is intellectual equality? Was such a thing ever known as any negro becoming intellectually the equal of the white man, save in those occasional, those rare, those sporadic cases which every one looks upon as a phenomenon, like some rare musical genius, where it seems to be rather an intuition, an instinct, than the result of intellectual power? There are such cases; we have heard of blind Tom, the wonderful musician; of some rare mathematician, who performs processes he does not know how. But who ever talks of any such a one being the equal of anybody else. It argues nothing.

All that is proposed is that those who are the descendants of slaves, who were themselves born in slavery, but who are destined, as sure as the sun continues to rise and set, to be free, shall have some little preparation for freedom. What has been the cry on all sides here, what has been the clamor all through the discussion of this question of emancipation, but that we were throwing out upon the world a class of people who were unprepared for freedom? And now when it is proposed that those people shall be continued in servitude, we propose to add that during that servitude they shall have some sort of preparation for their coming freedom. And that raises all this clamor of negro equality. Was ever anything under the high heaven more absurd?

Now the purpose of the proposition of the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd) is not to benefit the persons whom it is proposed to retain in slavery for this limited time. If that were the object, there is already law enough upon the statute book to accomplish that purpose. But it is for something else. It has been said that it is a sort of compensation to the masters. And gentlemen get up here, and express great regret, and lecture us as though they thought we were actuated by

some malice upon this subject towards masters. I feel none whatever. But we have acted here, and such is the record of this convention with regard to what are the rights of men. We do not hurt the master. We adjudicate between the master claiming certain rights from a person, and the person himself who claims that those rights are his, and our decision is that he who claimed himself had a better right to himself than he who claimed to own him as his own. Now if that decision of ours was right, then I beg to ask why is this offer of compensation proposed? Let gentlemen be consistent upon this subject. If the principle of that decision was right, then the principle of this proposition is wrong—the two principles do not, and cannot be made to harmonize. I would not harm a hair of the head of any person who has owned a slave. I would not deprive him of one cent of his lawful property. But when we adjudicate upon the rights of men, we say that regardless of character and condition, these people shall no longer be deprived of those rights to which they are entitled.

Then, as my colleague (Mr. Stirling) has justly remarked, if, as it has been said, this is a beneficent provision for the good of the negro, what is to become of those who may be dependent upon those whom we propose to re-enslave? Will you add all the details of legislation here? You have said that the orphans' court shall bind all these negroes who are minors. But how? Here is a decrepid and sickly child; it is the duty of the orphans' court to bind it to a white person. But the white person chooses not to have it bound to him, and if every white person says, "I will not have this child bound to me," the orphans' court has no power to bind it out. Here is an infant. The orphans' court, in the discharge of its obligation, proposes to bind that infant to its former owner. But he and everybody else says, "I will not take that infant." Then you throw upon the emancipated mother the charge of that infant until it is ten or twelve years old. And then, when it is old enough to render some assistance to its mother, to repay to some extent the care and trouble the mother has expended upon it, the orphans' court, without the consent of the mother, upon the application of some outside party, the former owner perhaps, steps in and binds that child ten years of age, for eleven years thereafter. Where is the justice in all this? Gentlemen, see how it will operate.

The orphans' court under existing law can bind out the child, provided they think it would be better for the habits and comfort of that child that it should be done. But it is not to be done on the motion of the orphans' court. Information must be given to the orphans' court, before it can be done, under existing law. But under this proposition you make the orphans' court itself the jury of