

adopted by the convention. The apology for restoring free colored minors to practical slavery, under the guise of benevolence to them, is abominable.

It appears from the last census that of negro slaves, male and female, under the ages of twenty-one for males and eighteen for females, there were in 1860, in Maryland, 48,623. These are they who are included in the language of this section, all of whom, emancipated by this constitution, are to be restored to practical slavery under the guise of benevolence. In addition to that, I find that there are over the age of sixty-five and under the age of seven, of males and females, an aggregate of 21,605. Now the gentleman from Baltimore county who last addressed the convention (Mr. Ridgely,) said that it was to provide for the helpless by indenting them to their former masters. I wonder if anybody ever supposed that the former masters want the helpless and very young children. No, sir; it is when they begin to become useful, when they can be of service to their former masters, that they will take them. If you take out of those whom we intend to emancipate from slavery by the 23rd article of the bill of rights, and who may be apprenticed under this provision, those under the age of seven, there will be 29,557 who will practically come under this provision; and if you take out from the total number of slaves, those under the ages of twenty-one for males and eighteen for females, and over the age of sixty-five, there remains an aggregate of only 36,027.

Now we have heard gentleman upon this floor speaking of the thousands who have been taken and put into the military service of the United States; and we know that a large number between those ages have taken leg bail and walked off, and we have heard the clamor of the families taken off by the military and removed from their homes. Making a reasonable deduction, upon the lowest basis you please, and you cannot put it at less than fifty per cent. of the ages last mentioned taken away by these various causes, which would leave about 18,000 whom we propose to emancipate by the 23rd article of the bill of rights.

Much stress has been laid upon the benevolence of this proposition of the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd;) but I confess my surprise that a minister of the gospel should never have said, in all his views of that unfortunate race, one word in advocacy of their being educated in this transition state—not one word.

It has also been said that a preference should be given to their former masters. I deny the proposition. I think they of all men have the least claim upon any ground to the apprenticeship of these freed minors. Why? Because there is a great deal of difference between the master of an apprentice as contemplated under the apprentice system heretofore existing in

this State, and the slave master, who must of necessity feel some desire to perpetuate the feeling of dominion which he has been accustomed to exercise.

So far from the friends of this section being actuated by feelings of benevolence, I have seen no evidence yet that they are disposed to take the helpless adults or the helpless infants, and provide for either of them; but those who are just coming into usefulness, who are at an age when education is desirable, as I maintain it is, and who can pay by their labor for their support, are to be sent back to their former masters.

If this proposition contained a provision that the consent of the parents should be obtained, which has been studiously avoided by the convention, I should think this plea of benevolence had some foundation. But so far from that, I have seen every one who is an advocate of this proposition, so far as I am aware, carefully voting to prohibit the assent of the parent, the natural guardian of these free minor children. If preference was due to their former master on the ground that his relation would incline him to greater humanity than any other person, and if that is the reason for the preference, I ask who would be more likely to appreciate that than the parents, the natural guardians of the parties interested?

Again, sir, I find from the statistics of the State—and I will not go through all the figures—that taking the value of the labor of the males between the ages of twenty-one and sixty-five at \$100 per annum, and taking the value of the labor of the females between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five at \$50, and taking the numbers from the census of 1860, the aggregate value of their labor was \$44,326,616.67 in exact figures. That, sir, for forty years, was I suppose about the average value of the labor that they rendered without one cent of wages being paid. Now why do you propose to continue the labor of a portion of this race for ten or fifteen years, without any remuneration? What is unrequited labor but slavery?

The gentleman from Baltimore county who last addressed the convention, says that the State law is identical in its purview and object with the proposal of the gentleman from Caroline. I have no objection to that; if we were satisfied with that there would be no necessity at all of introducing an article which contains such dangerous elements as the one before us. I am not at all deceived by any arguments made in advocacy of this proposition. I can see in it a partial slavery, a practical slavery to which I will never consent.— And I will further say that such a proposition was anticipated early in the campaign in my county; and one of the resolutions adopted in our county convention pledged us faithfully to resist any attempt at negro apprenticeship in this State.

Mr. MARKEY. Adult; not minor.