

Mr. SCHLEY. I believe it was; but the principle is the same.

Mr. CUSHING. I give notice that at the proper time I shall offer the following substitute for the section:

"The orphans' court of this State shall in binding out as apprentices, negro or mulatto minors emancipated by the provisions of this constitution, give the preference to the former owners, if such persons are suitable persons; but no such minors shall be bound out if their parents are able to support them; nor shall any such minor over ten years of age be subject to such apprenticeship unless he or she be a common vagrant."

My object in offering this is that I am sorry to see this morning a movement in approval of what has been the curse of our country, for the last three years, and to aid in undoing what has been done. The idea is announced by the gentleman from Washington county (Mr. Negley,) that he was willing to come here and emancipate the slaves, to declare in our bill of rights that every man had a right to the proceeds of his own labor; and then, as the gentleman himself announced, for the purpose of giving some compensation to the man from whom these slaves were taken, that he was willing to ignore the provisions of that bill of rights, and up to the age of twenty-one years deprive every such negro of the right to the proceeds of his own labor. It has been announced on the floor of this house in eloquent terms by the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd,) that slavery was a sin in the sight of God, and proved from holy writ.

What is slavery? The gentlemen of the opposition told you what slavery was, when they told you that it was a thing protected by the constitution of the United States, which tells you that slaves are persons held to service for a term of years. Gentlemen have argued in favor of the right, regarding it as guaranteed by the constitution of the United States, to hold persons to labor for a term of years. Yet the gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers) asks you this morning, how holding men to service for a term of years can be called slavery, and denies that it is slavery.—If it is not slavery what becomes of the argument of the gentleman of the opposition that in emancipating the slaves we interfere with the right of the masters under the constitution of the United States. The wording is identical. Holding to service for a term of years, is merely making slavery extend until the man is twenty-one years of age; it is to take away from him his whole youth; it is to deprive him of the opportunity of providing for his aged parents. It is to crush his life out of him for his whole youth, and then throw him upon the community with his best powers exhausted. We have been told that we were throwing upon the community helpless women and children. By this very section it is proposed to take away the bone

and sinew which might have helped to support the women and children. Having made a provision in accordance with the highest claims of justice for emancipating a man, and after declaring in the bill of rights that he is entitled to the proceeds of his own labor, you deprive him even of the satisfaction of supporting his aged father and mother who have been released from slavery. You take the able-bodied man of nineteen before your orphans' court and bind him for two years an apprentice to his former master, and he goes to his master's quarter, while his father and mother go to the almshouse of the county.—Under the operation of this section, you take the whole class of men and select from among them the men that would contribute to support the old, and aid to provide for the whole class, you take away all its young men and young women, all the able-bodied, and leave the old and infirm. On what principles of justice or right can this be urged?

Mr. President, I tell you, and gentlemen of the convention I tell you, that it is the one thing that has cursed the emancipation party of this country; the one thing that has cursed the Union party of this land, from the beginning until now; that it has never gone one step forward but straightway it made haste to go two back. We have gone to men with the knife at our throat, or with the bowie knife at our bosom, and begged them for God's sake to take some sort of conciliation. Detesting and scorning it, we dare not touch the sacred thing of slavery, but we must make peace and stultify ourselves. That is the operation and that alone. I doubt if the provision in this section accomplishes any other single thing more surely than to tell the people of Maryland, as my colleague has said, that we have sat here and heard the thunder of the cannon on the border, and we have heard the cries rising up from burning Chambersburg, and we are scared. If it means anything, it means, go to the people of the State who sent you here bound by a solemn oath to do your duty, who have said that negro apprenticeship under any special provision is a thing abhorred by them, and tell them that you found it inexpedient to do what they required; that you were afraid of pressing the emancipation principle in Maryland to the wall.

The gentleman from Washington thought proper in his second remarks to this house to take back the assertion that he did this for the sake of compensation to the slaveowners, by telling us that he did it for no one in particular. If then it is for the interest of nobody—for no man can seriously get up and argue that it is for the interest of the black man, of the slave we have set free to put them back—if the gentlemen who intend to vote for it do not intend it for the interest of the slaveholder, to whom they give this able-bodied labor during the term of their appren-