

valuable slaves found a resting place this side of the Southern slave market.

This view of the case is strongly fortified, at least by the fact that in 1790, some years after this policy of removal was inaugurated, there were in the nine Northern States, including Maine, only 27,109 free negroes. Yes, Mr. President, many of those at the North, who are loudest in their abuse of slavery and slaveholders are now revelling in wealth, which was originally derived from the sale of slaves, and which has been turned to more profitable account by being invested in manufactures and commerce. Many who are foremost in this abolition crusade, could the truth be ascertained, would find that they are seeking to deprive their owners of property which the South held by a warranty of title derived from Northern vendors.

[The hour having expired the hammer fell.]

On motion of Mr. STIRLING, the speaker was allowed fifteen minutes further.

Mr. EDELEN proceeded :

With this picture of the legislation in the Northern States before us, truthfully drawn as it is, who will venture to say that their people were influenced in what they did by any generous spirit of philanthropy, any noble devotion to the cause of human liberty. Let it be conceded that the character and effect of their legislation was such as is generally claimed, and still it may well be questioned how far it would establish their claim to any high degree of merit in a moral point of view; or how far they were actuated by a desire to do justice to a "wronged and down-trodden" race, because long before this emancipation movement was initiated, it had been discovered that slaves at the North, instead of a benefit, were a burden.

Turning now, Mr. President, from the legislation of New England, let us see what has been the character of that of Old England. In the year 1836, Great Britain passed a law emancipating the slaves in all her West India Colonies. The provisions of that law are in such striking contrast with the action proposed by the majority of this House, that the brief moments left me for the consideration of the subject will not be misapplied by reading to the Convention a brief extract of the same, as I find it on page 254 of the 2d vol. of Kent's Commentaries :

"By the statute of 3 and 4 William IV, chap. 73, slavery ceased throughout the British Colonies in the West Indies and elsewhere, on the 1st of August, 1836. The then existing slaves were to become apprenticed laborers. The time of their apprenticeship was to cease partly on the 1st of August, 1838, and totally on the 1st of August, 1840, when the black and colored population became altogether free. The sum of twenty millions sterling, (\$100,000,000,) was to be distributed in certain proportions and on certain conditions to the West India planters as

a compensation for the loss of their property in the slaves by the force and operation of the statute. This statute will remain forever a memorable event in the annals of British legislation. It is entitled an act for the abolition of slavery throughout the British Colonies; for promoting the industry of the manumitted slaves; and for compensating the owners hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves. The title itself is declaratory of the boldness of the design and the sense of justice and benevolence which accompanied its latter provisions."

Thus it will be seen that when the English people legislated on this important question, their action was marked by a high sense of "justice and benevolence," justice to the owner in providing full and ample compensation, and benevolence to the slave in preparing him for the enjoyment of freedom by apprenticing him to his former owner for a term of years. The great objection urged against compensation in Maryland, is that it would require a large amount of money. I grant that it would. But if emancipation must take place it should only be upon full compensation to all interested. Nations no more than individuals have a right to disregard the unbending and irreversible law of justice. With them as with individuals, the motto should be "Fiat justitia ruat coelum."

A few years since a distinguished individual, who was then a Senator from the State of New York, and who is now high in place in the Government at Washington, (Mr. Seward,) announced the very startling doctrine that there was an irreconcilable conflict between free and slave labor in this country. Recently, however, I believe the paternity of this doctrine has been attributed to Mr. Lincoln. But, whoever may have originated it, there never was started a false and more dangerous doctrine. It involves an impeachment of the wisdom of the fathers of the Republic, who, through the Federal Constitution had reconciled all discordant and incongruous elements. With the institution of slavery preserved intact, how could this conflict ever arise? We have just been reviewing the history of the Northern States, from which slave labor, under the laws of nature and political economy, was constantly withdrawing, seeking a more congenial and profitable sphere of action in the South, and leaving the North to free labor. The two systems moved in entirely different orbits of existence, and there never could arise that collision and antagonism of mutual interests predicated by the originator of this pernicious theory. Indeed, the two systems are mutually beneficial to and dependent upon each other,—slave labor at the South in a field of action unsuited to white labor producing the material which gives profitable employment to free labor in the North, and the