

were then in favor of denouncing the slave-trade as piracy. But the men from Massachusetts, and from every New England State, said to them: "You shall not do it; you cannot do it." And why? "Because," said they, "our people have invested immense sums of money in ships and trade, for the purpose of carrying these cargoes into your territory; and if you denounce it at once as piracy, a large portion of our people will be ruined." And as the records of the debates of that Convention show, as a matter of fact, it had finally to be settled between the Virginia men and the Northern men, just as all great questions are ever settled, upon the basis of compromise. The Virginians said to them: "We will give you twenty years;" and they accepted it. And it was under those circumstances that it was written in the Constitution of the United States, that the slave-trade should not cease until the year 1808, which was twenty years after the Constitution was submitted to the people of the United States for their ratification. In other words, New England and the North bargained for twenty years more of the slave-trade, as the only compromise which they would make upon that subject.

Mr. STIRLING. I would request the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) to ask the gentleman from Prince George's (Mr. Belt) for his authority for that statement.

Mr. SCOTT. I was going to do so.

Mr. BELT. As my friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling) has interposed at this time, as he did once before, to ask for the authority, I will say to him that at the proper time, if he challenges it in argument, I will produce to him the proof up to the very assertion I make; full proof from the records of the debates in that Convention. He shall have authority to his full satisfaction.

Mr. SCOTT. That does not interfere with my position at all. Nations as well as individuals grow wiser as they grow older, or ought to. And at the time our Constitution was formed the nations of Europe had not formed these treaties I speak of. The civilized world had not become so convinced of the atrocity of that institution as they are now. It only proves that they assented for the time being to a system of commerce that was common all over the world.

I have a work here which has been kindly furnished to me by a friend, (Mr. Cushing,) in which I find that Mr. Pinckney, of South Carolina said in that Convention:

"If slavery be wrong, it is justified by the example of all the world."

That is just the point I was making; that they had not been educated up to the point of prohibiting the slave trade. He further says:

"In all ages, one-half of mankind have been slaves. If the Southern States were let alone, they will probably of themselves stop importations. He would himself, as a citi-

zen of South Carolina, vote for it. An attempt to take away the right as proposed, will produce serious objections to the Constitution which he wished to see adopted."

It just simply proves that the public opinion of the world at that time had not got up to the point of denouncing the slave-trade as piracy. But years afterwards they reached that point, and our Government, uniting by treaties with all the civilized nations on earth, agreed that they would stop that traffic in human flesh, and denounce it as piracy. The point I was making was that an institution that had no other or higher origin than piracy, could not be a good institution. And I find here that—

"General Pinckney thought himself bound to declare candidly that he did not think that South Carolina would stop her immigration of slaves in any short time."

South Carolina did not want to stop it. And it was at the instance and request of Southern men who wanted to buy, as well as Northern men who wanted to sell, that the slave trade was kept open until 1808. That is the origin of the title in slaves; nothing more nor less than piracy.

If you will turn back to the first chapter of Genesis, you will find that other property dates back to that period. For shortly after the creation of Adam and Eve, the Creator gave them an undisputed right and title to all species of property; to the land and its products, to the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the earth. But no mention is made in that grant of title from the Almighty, of any right to hold or enslave a fellow-man.

Another argument of the gentleman from Somerset (Mr. Jones) was that the negro was so degraded that he was unfit for liberty. Well, how did he become so degraded? You first seize a man, and degrade him; and then because he is degraded, say he is not fit for freedom. That is a beautiful argument!

The gentleman also said that it was because of the morbid abolition sentiment of the North which had become so predominant, that the shackles were tightened upon your slaves in the Southern States. Now, I think there is another reason for it than that. The immense profits produced by the cultivation of cotton, and the consequent increase of the prices of slaves, made it profitable to breed them for the market. Therefore the chains upon the slaves were tightened, and these props were put up around the institution to prevent it from being interfered with.

The gentleman from Somerset (Mr. Jones) denies the sinfulness of slavery; and argues that the slaves of Maryland are kindly treated, and compares their condition with the condition of the laboring population of Europe. Well, sir, I believe that generally the slaveholders of Maryland use their slaves well. I think that they are altogether as generou