

sult. Who but the laborers of the land, encouraged by the assurance that labor is respectable and honorable, have made our nation what she is?—have hooded half a continent with railroad iron; are even now, in spite of the war, driving the iron horse snorting towards the rocky mountains, and will eventually send him whistling and roaring to the slopes of the Pacific?

Who but they bring from the bowels of the earth every treasure that is hidden there; convert the fire and the water, and the lightning into so many additional hands with which they manipulate and educe all the resources of the country?

The whole force of the slaveholding interest in the South is set against this industry. I remember once seeing a railroad in Louisiana, it ran from Bayou Sara to Jackson, Mississippi. I was riding through that country in a buggy, and was perfectly astonished at the way it was managed. The first thing I saw was a tank of water underneath the track, or near it; and I could not conceive what that was for. After a while the engine came along, and the train stopped there. Buckets were produced by the engineer and fireman, and I think the conductor also assisted in the operation, and they lifted the water out of that tank in buckets into the tank of the locomotive. This not only astonished me at the time, but proved to me how much behind the age these people were in comparison with the people of a country where labor is encouraged among the intelligent classes of society. One of the necessary results of such encouragement being to promote facility in travel and trade.

Nor is it beneficent to the non-slaveholder; on the contrary, it is to him a curse, the full force of which he cannot know until once altogether without the pale of its baneful influence. There is a class of people in the South—I mean south of Maryland—totally unknown in a free State; and in this statement I challenge contradiction. They are called "*poor white trash*," a miserable hybrid race, neither black nor white, that is, in class. They live generally on the barren ridges; they own nothing, but are allowed to live upon the edges of plantations, on the uncultivated outskirts of other people's lands; and so also do they hang on the edges of society on sufferance, half poachers and half vagabonds, and no doubt drag out their miserable existence under the belief that other poor white people live as they do. I always believed that Mr. Hammond in alluding to the "*mudsills of the North*," meant just such a class; but there is no such class in the North, and I can prove what I say, and defy anybody to prove the contrary.

This is no one's fault in particular. It is the result of no particular law on the statute book; but is simply the absolutely necessary result of the *system*.

So then, this system which we are here assembled to obliterate, seems to me to be aggressive and not conciliatory, malevolent and not beneficent, even to the community which fosters it.

Members here are pleading for the existence of this institution, and we are referred by the gentleman from St. Mary's (Mr. Billingsley) to Roman and Grecian slavery. No one doubts the fact of the early existence of slavery. There appears to be no period in the world's history when it did not exist. It is also equally true that the effects of the system upon society were alike disastrous in all times.

The institution existed in the ancient republics of Greece and Rome, and was sustained by the same arguments that are advanced in its support to-day. It required the same departure from humane forms of government, and was the principal cause of the downfall of the nations tolerating its existence. One fact is remarkable, that in so far as any State or nation became more enlightened or christianized than another, the treatment of the bondman became milder, and the institution generally less abhorrent. In the Grecian States, the condition of the slaves of Athens was far higher than that of the helots of Sparta. The Spartan masters were more physically developed, and the Athenian masters more intellectually developed.

One other fact must be noticed, that the ground of justification taken by these anti-christian slaveholders, was the same as that taken by the christian slaveholders of to-day, namely, that they, the masters, were the superior race, and were of right and by birth entitled to enslave their inferiors.

Mr. BILLINGSLEY. The gentleman does not understand the position which I assumed with regard to the subject, which was this: slavery existed under the Jewish and Christian dispensation; and in illustration of that, it existed at the time of St. Paul in a more aggravated form than it had ever existed here, even in our colonial period; and yet he left nothing on record against slavery; and consequently slavery was not a sin.

Mr. PUGH. That was another branch of the gentleman's argument. I shall come to that view of it presently. The point I am now making is, that the Grecians considered all their enemies barbarians and *inferiors*. Aristotle says, "with barbarians the family consists of male and female slaves, but to the Greeks belong dominion over the barbarians, because the former have the understanding requisite to rule, the latter the body only to obey."

Now, sir, why did not the gentleman go on with his statement? Why did he not give us some of the causes of the decline and fall of the great Roman empire? Did he forget, or did he purposely overlook the fact