

South, in turn, affording a profitable market for the production of free Northern labor.

But, Mr. President, once destroy this institution of slavery; and then indeed will there begin an "irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces," not such, however, as was described by the distinguished speaker whose words I have quoted, but a conflict between the laboring white man of the North and the free negro. To my mind this seems as clear as the noonday sun shining forth in an unclouded sky. And without elaborating this point further, let me read to you, (for it is better than anything I can say,) a brief extract from a speech of A. H. H. Stenart, delivered before the Central Agricultural Society of Virginia, at Richmond, October 28th, 1859, and published in the National Intelligencer of November 5th, 1859.

"But these are not the only evils," says Mr. Stenart, "that would inure to the people of the non-slaveholding States from such a policy. If the Southern slaves were liberated they would naturally desire to remove from the scenes of their labor and humiliation, and seek a home among the people of the North, whose sympathy had cheered them in their bondage, and whose homes and hearts they would reasonably infer, were open to receive them. The three millions; (now over four millions,) of liberated slaves, thus left free to choose their own places of residence, would soon scatter themselves in the Northern and Western States in quest of subsistence. The better class would at once come into competition with the laboring population of the North in all the more simple employments for which they were qualified; and the draymen, hackmen, cartmen, porters, hotel waiters, stevedores, domestic servants, day laborers and others of like occupations, would doubtless find them formidable rivals who would supplant them, or greatly reduce the profits of their callings. Much the larger proportion, however, from their natural aversion to labor, would refuse to work, and with their families, sink into the lowest depths of destitution and wretchedness; and the jails, almshouses, and penitentiaries of the North would be their only refuge from starvation. They would become an intolerable burden, and all classes of society would rise up to expell them. Under these circumstances, I can readily see how the tendency to a 'conflict' between the black and the white laborer would become 'irrepressible.' The white laborer whose avocation had theretofore been respectable, and who had been accustomed to receive wages adequate to the support of his family, would not tolerate the competition of those who would degrade the dignity of labor and underbid him in his business. The tax payers would not submit to the burden of maintaining an idle and thriftless population. The landholder would not be content to have

near his premises a class whose subsistence would be eked out by pilfering.

"A conflict would necessarily ensue—a conflict of clashing interests and hostile interests brought into immediate collision—a conflict which must necessarily result in violence and bloodshed? Is this picture overdrawn? I refer those who think so to the riots that have already occurred from these causes in Cincinnati, Philadelphia and other cities and townships in the non-slaveholding States. And when it is remembered that but a few hundred of free negroes; and these above the average of their race, for freedom is generally conferred on the most worthy, or acquired by the most thrifty; have led to such outbursts of popular indignation and violence; what would be the consequence of having three millions of them (now over four millions) of all ages, sizes, classes and conditions precipitated on the non-slaveholding States?"

"But the moment they are emancipated, the present line of demarcation between the two systems of labor will be eradicated. The barrier which confines the negro race within the Southern States will be broken down; and a deluge of free negro migration will pour its desolating flood over the whole North and West, sweeping before it the peace and happiness and best interests of the people. The Northern States will then discover when it is too late to repair the mischief that they have rashly and wickedly undone all that was done for them by the wise policy of their earlier statesmen.

"Were I a Northern man therefore, and disposed to assume the championship of Northern interests, I would admonish my fellow-citizens not only not to aid in the emancipation of the slaves of the South; but to remonstrate against it, and to resist it by all fair and honorable means as fraught with incalculable mischief to the free States. I would conjure them to leave the whole subject in the hands of those immediately concerned and of Him, who although His purposes cannot be fathomed by human sagacity, we know shapes the destiny of nations and ordereth all things wisely and well."

Thus spoke this statesman of Virginia: words of wisdom to his countrymen, little dreaming; I doubt not, that before the lapse of three short years they would be found rushing madly on to that gulf of disorder and ruin against which he so solemnly and eloquently warned them. And to-day, surveying things from the stand-point of the present, I say in my place in this Hall that the Northern people will discover when it is too late to repair the mischief that they have rashly and wickedly undone all that was done for them by the wise policy of their earlier statesmen.

The brief remnant of time allowed me by the indulgence of the House cannot be better employed than by adverting to the peculiar condition of this State in connection with this