

tify any man having a thousand wives; if he chose to try it.

The gentlemen from St. Mary's and from Charles (Messrs. Billingsley and Edelen) opened their arguments in a very doleful strain. They said the case was prejudged and predetermined, and that they had no hope of making any impression upon the opposition. Now, I approach the subject with a great deal more of hope; I expect to make an impression upon those very gentlemen. If they do not see the fruits of it immediately, I have no doubt they will in the future think of what I say. It will be like bread cast upon the waters; we will get a return after many days. I have no doubt they will live to thank the rough radical from Cecil county for some ideas he will suggest to them to-night.

The gentleman from Charles (Mr. Edelen) referred to the testimony of slaveholders both living and dying of their attachment and devotion to the cause of slavery. I thought I would look up some of that same evidence, and as the most illustrious slaveholder, I selected George Washington—"first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." In a letter to Mr. John F. Mercer, dated September 9, 1786, he said:

"I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law."

In another letter to Robert Morris, dated April 12, 1786, he says:

"I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people who are the subject of this letter in slavery. I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it. But there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting."

In a letter to Lafayette, he says:

"The benevolence of your heart, my dear Marquis, is so conspicuous on all occasions that I never wonder at any fresh proof of it. But your late purchase of an estate, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit might diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country."

Passing over a number of other letters from this distinguished statesman and soldier, I will read an extract from the last will and testament of George Washington. He says:

"Upon the decease of my wife, it is my will and desire that all the slaves which I hold in my own right shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life would, though earnestly wished by me, be at-

tended with such insuperable difficulties, on account of their intermixture by marriage with the dower negroes, as to excite the most painful sensation, if not disagreeable consequences from the latter, while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same proprietor, it not being in my power, under the tenure by which the dower negroes are held, to manumit them."

Mrs. Washington, when she came to learn the facts, immediately freed all the slaves.

Next to the testimony of General Washington, I adduce that of Thomas Jefferson. In his notes on Virginia, he says:

"There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people, produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive, either in his philanthropy or self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms; the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose rein to the worst passions; and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be regarded, who, permitting one half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies; destroys the morals of one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other; for if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be in any other in preference to that in which he was born to live and labor for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute, as far as depends on his individual endeavors, to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him.

"With the morals of a people their industry is also destroyed; for in a warm climate no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed their only firm basis—a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? that