

length and breadth of that misguided country that such a proclamation had been issued, declaring the slaves of the South free, and that led many of them when our lines were extended, and even before, to escape, to elude the vigilance of their owners, their overseers, their guards and sentinels, and fly to the federal lines, where they could enjoy this boon of freedom. To that extent it had the effect of weakening the rebellion. But there were more than this one million of effective slaves in the South who were engaged in producing the necessaries of life, and the sinews of war required to support the armies engaged in carrying on this rebellion. It is well known to those familiar with the institution, that women and boys in the South are almost as valuable and effective hands as the men in the production of cotton. There are certain stages in the process of raising cotton, when women and children, who of course would be valueless on the battle field, render effective service.

The institution of slavery, as has been very properly and correctly said in this Hall, is (virtually) destroyed. The slaves have become demoralized by the events that have transpired before them. If that be the case, and I think no one will question it, if slavery be destroyed, and is no longer valuable to us as an institution, then why retain it as a part of your domestic policy? why protect it in the Constitution of your State? Why not change the policy of the State, and adopt one better adapted to the circumstances of the times? Why not recognize the fact that slavery has perished? And then let us endeavor to build upon its ruins a better system, one which will develop to a higher and greater extent, the agricultural and mineral resources of the State. Who for one moment will contend that slaves are capable of doing that? Their habits, their nature, their capacity, preclude any such presumption or any such fact. But if it is a fact that the institution of slavery is no longer valuable, that the right to hold slaves no longer carries with it the power necessary to control them, why not change the Constitution? Why not recognize that the institution is already destroyed? Why not adopt some system by which their labor can be made available in another form?

I believe human nature is the same almost everywhere, and under almost any circumstances, although it may be covered with a black skin. It must be apparent to every man—though I speak more particularly to the farmer who has employed slave labor and free labor, that free labor is incomparably more economical than slave labor. While the one performs his duty with alacrity and energy, the other renders at best an unwilling and negligent service. It is one of the peculiar characteristics of the negro race, that you can perhaps reach them in a more successful way by kind and gentle treatment;

you can flatter them into almost any belief, and by a gentle, police, firm and mild discipline, you can control them without any difficulty whatever. While, on the contrary, if you arouse all the asperities of their nature, you make them insubordinate, and reduce them practically to a worthless condition. If all of the race were slaves, perhaps a different system might prevail. But when you work slave and free side by side; men of the same color and of the same race, and of the same habits, the one the recipient of the proceeds of his own labor, the other the unwilling servant of, perhaps a griping and unyielding master, with no hope of remuneration other than the poor pittance of food and scanty apparel, you create dissatisfaction, and reduce the usefulness of the class.

Now, I am satisfied in my own mind, and from my own experience, that if the whole system were changed, and all made free, they could be made of more practical use than they ever can be in the character and condition they now occupy. It is said that if you adopt the policy of emancipation, the blacks will become idle, worthless and degraded, and that your penitentiaries and jails and work-houses will be filled with them. I think it will have exactly the contrary result. What was the case in the Island of Jamaica? It is not necessary for me to refer to the statistics—though I could do so, and had intended to do so. But I have been relieved from the necessity of referring to them, to show the effect of emancipation in the British West India Islands, and in the French Islands, by gentlemen who have discussed this subject in all its bearings. What was the fact in the Island of Jamaica? It was predicted that on the day which was to liberate eight millions of slaves, and turn them loose upon the country, riots, confusion, bloodshed and anarchy would prevail. The very reverse proved to be the case. On the night preceding the day on which the law which was to give them freedom was to go into effect, they assembled in their various places of religious worship, and there watched with the most intense anxiety, the finger upon the dial which was to mark the hour of twelve, and give them their freedom. And when the hour at last arrived, there was one universal shout of adoration and praise to Almighty God for the great deliverance that had come to them. But no riot, no demonstration of lawlessness. And after returning thanks to the Father of all men in the most humble and reverential manner, they returned to their homes and their masters, and resumed their ordinary pursuits of life. That shows the effect that change had upon the portion of the race there.

And I anticipate much better results—or at least as good results, they could not well be better—in the State of Maryland, from the adoption of this policy, because I look upon