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(Mr. Negley)
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ment here to-day? Slavery is robbery; you who hold slave property hold it by the title of a thief, which is no title. The laws which have been passed upon this subject, giving every citizen of Maryland the right to hold property of this kind, are nullities. And yet I well remember that my learned friend from Washington (Mr. Negley) standing in his place, when the vote was being taken upon the resolution of my friend from Prince George's (Mr. Clarke) authorizing the appointing a committee to go to Washington city and endeavor to procure from the President and Congress some compensation for slaves emancipated in this State—the gentleman arose in his place, when his name was called, and said that while he voted "no" on the resolution, because he deemed it premature, that the time for it had not come, he was still in favor of compensation from the general government.

Mr. NEGLEY. I never said that I was in favor of the general government remunerating slaveholders for their manumitted slaves. I said that I always believed that such an effort would be utterly fruitless. But as some gentlemen from the lower counties had pledged themselves to make that effort, I was willing to vote to enable them to have an opportunity to fulfil their pledges to their constituents. But I said that I never believed, and I do not now believe, that the federal government ever will make one cent's remuneration for slaves.

Mr. EDELEN. Then I understand my friend to say that he is opposed to compensation from any and every source.

Mr. NEGLEY. That conclusion does not necessarily follow; that is outside of my position.

Mr. EDELEN. From whom is it to come? You refuse to ask the general government for it; you refuse to let the State make it; from whom is it to come?

My learned friend from Howard (Mr. Sands) cannot escape from his position. There are those in this house who will well remember the speech he made here, upon the twenty-third article of the bill of rights, I believe. After going on in pretty much the same strain of argument with which he entertained us this morning, he pulled from his desk and read to us a copy of the platform upon which he and his colleagues stood before the people of Howard county in the late canvass for seats in this convention. In that platform they stand fully, fairly and squarely upon the principle of compensation from the general government; and take bold and strong ground against State compensation. Now, if I and every other slaveholder in this State have no other than a thief's title, if I have no rightful property in my slave, will my learned friend (Mr. Sands) and all those gentlemen upon the other side who take the same ground, tell me with what show of rea-

son, with what show of consistency they can plant themselves upon that platform, and ask the general government to compensate me for a kind of property in which I have no more title than the thief in the purse he has stolen?

Mr. SANDS. Will the gentleman permit me to explain?

Mr. EDELEN. Certainly.

Mr. SANDS. My explanation is simply this: I stated in the speech to which the gentleman referred, that as a question of law every negro held in slavery in Maryland was held from the thief who, in the language of Mr. Pinckney, had plundered him of his liberty. Now, about this question of compensation: I said, as a question of mere law, that I did not think the slaveowner was entitled to compensation either from the State or the general government. But as a question of expediency, as a question looking to the unification of our people, the pacification of our people, if the general government was pleased to give compensation I would favor it. And I stand pledged—mark you the terms of that pledge—to the use of all honorable measures to secure that compensation. But if the gentleman understands that I would consider it an honorable measure to go to the general government and falsify all my views and the light of history, all I have to say is that I do not understand it in that light. I might urge compensation upon the general government upon the grounds I have stated, the unification and pacification of our people, but not upon any moral or legal grounds. Expediency will govern me, and I will keep my pledge.

Mr. EDELEN. Then the gentleman would have the general government do it *ex gratia*, and not *de jure*, or as a matter of right?

Mr. SANDS. Yes, sir; that is it.

Mr. EDELEN. Thankful, sir; very thankful for small favors.

Mr. SANDS. You are very welcome to all you can get.

Mr. EDELEN. Aye, sir; there comes the truth at last. The gentleman and those who stand by him and advocate that proposition know full well that it is only a cheat, and that it will end in nothing.

Now in regard to this matter of a thief's title, I am glad my friend from Howard has referred to the name of Pinckney. I wish to refer to him myself. The argument of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Negley,) of my friend from Howard (Mr. Sands,) and I believe the argument of my friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Thomas,) will all, when you come to analyze them, resolve themselves into this; that we do not hold slaves in Maryland by any sort of title but a thief's title; that somebody stole these negroes from Africa, and sold them to our ancestors, and through that chain the title has finally centered in us; but that it was bad in its inci-