

that pretence, a great many of whom are not capable of bearing arms, and are not suited to the purposes for which they were said to be taken. But here we have one-half of the negro population of the State left on our hands almost valueless, consisting of negro women and children, which you propose to take from us. You propose to abolish slavery without payment, without making provisions for their future condition, and tell us to look to the General Government for compensation for those you liberate by your State action. Do you suppose the General Government will pay for them? I say the Government of the State is responsible to the citizen for both those the General Government has taken and those freed by this Convention. And if I live I will be found beating at the doors of this State government until I am ninety years of age for payment, and if I am not paid then I will leave the claim to my children as a legacy to be prosecuted for all time to come.

Mr. BERRY, of Baltimore county. Do you expect to live so long as that?

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I hope so. I will continue to demand for the slaveholder of this State what I say is but just and right for every slave liberated by the action of this Convention, or by the General Government.

Among the reasons assigned why slavery should be abolished are, that it is immoral and irreligious, and that it prevents the natural progress of the State. Why, Mr. President, these arguments against slavery, after the arguments and evidences which have been offered in its support, are but the offspring of hypocrisy, to my mind equalling the hypocrisy which Gloucester attributed to himself, when he said:

But then I sigh, and with a piece of Scripture,

Tell them that God bids us do good for evil,
And thus I clothed my naked villainy
With odd old ends stol'n forth of Holy Writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.

Much has also been said about our worn-out lands, and the difficulty of cultivating them under this system of negro slavery. Do gentlemen know anything about this? It is mere speculation. They know as little about this as they do about most of the subjects they undertake to argue before the Convention and the reasons they assign why slavery should be abolished. They say that it will make room for the white man; that we will then have emigration here from the North. Well, God help us, if we are to have such as I have seen. I would sooner be without them. If I could I would build a wall about us. I would live within a shell, sooner than live and breathe such an atmosphere as they diffuse, coming as they would from the fetid atmosphere of the North, with all their isms, many of which are as black as purgatory. What? Coming here to diffuse their hated principles among us. May God deliver us from them.

Then it is said that schools would spring up among us, and education would receive a new impetus, instead of living, as we now do, in a state of ignorance. Gentlemen who state this as argument, show their ignorance of the laws of your own State. Since 1837, there has been in every neighborhood in most of the counties of the State, a free school system established. The schools were established for the education of the poor, and they are supported by the county. And every facility for education is afforded the youth of the counties. We have an academy in my town, where boys who have received instructions in the primary schools, after they have arrived at a certain age, can go and get a collegiate education, for we have excellent teachers, men competent to give a collegiate education. This system is fostered and paid for by the county, and by contributions from the State.

Why, the teachings they receive in the North only affords a vent to fanaticism. They receive abolition teachings at their mothers' knees, and from the pulpit. It is inculcated in them so strongly that it becomes a part of their nature. They become skeptics and fanatics. The worst sort of religion and morals prevail there. One of their chief denominations do not believe in the Trinity; I think the largest denomination among the many they have. Had we not sooner receive the Bible as we are taught it, than any such teachings. We rather keep rid of them than encourage emigration here.

Much has been said here about slave aristocracy. In that gentlemen again show their ignorance of our institutions, and our civil and social relations. I know nothing of slave aristocracy. With us it does not exist, and I am sure it does not exist in any part of the State. Virtue is the true guide to greatness with us. If a poor youth shows himself to be meritorious, he is taken by the hand, is educated and offered every facilities for advancement, and if he enters either of the professions, he generally is more successful than men of fortunes. We offer him the right hand of fellowship, and encourage him in every way to become a good and useful citizen.

It is said that the marriage relation is not recognized in slavery. Why, ever since the organization of the State Government, ministers of the Gospel have been authorized to marry colored persons, with the consent of the master, and I never in my life knew that consent to be withheld. Such marriages are always held sacred, particularly by the master, and nothing but pressing necessity beyond his control makes a slaveholder separate either man or wife, or parent and child. In the State of Louisiana, for years and years, there has existed a law which prevented the separation of children under fif-