

they are not to be violated but by his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just; that His justice can not sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheels of fortune, in exchange of situations is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest."

In Jefferson's exposition of the rights of British America, he said:

"The abolition of domestic slavery is the greatest object of desire in these Colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infancy."

In the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, which is known to be from the pen of Jefferson, he makes this charge against the King of Britain:

"He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating the most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him; captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep a market where men should be bought and sold, he has at length prostituted his negative for suppressing any legislative attempt to prohibit and restrain this execrable commerce."

Passing by many letters, I come down to 1814; when in a letter to a friend he uses this language:

"Your favor of July 31st is duly received and read with peculiar pleasure. The sentiments do honor to the head and heart of the writer. Mine on the subject of negro slavery have long been in the possession of the public, and time has only served to give them stronger root. The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain."

Again he says:

"What an incomprehensible machine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberties; and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow-man a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose."

In a letter to James Heaton, May 20, 1826, six weeks before his death, he uses this language:

"My sentiments have been forty years before the public. Had I repeated them forty times, they would have only become the more stale and threadbare. Although I shall not live to see them consummated they will not die with me."

Here then is the testimony of Mr. Jefferson up almost to the very day of his death, which I think is a fit answer to the argument of the gentleman from Charles (Mr. Edelen) that slaveholders in life and in death have borne testimony in favor of slavery.

One of the most singular arguments made by the gentleman from Charles was that slavery was introduced into this country by common law. It is true, he said afterwards the common law of Maryland, and there is nothing more true than that. But the common law of England condemns slavery, and their writers upon law condemn it. But the gentleman when he uses the words—"the common law of Maryland,"—may well say it supports slavery; for there is no law more common in our code than the laws bolstering up this institution of slavery. Indeed, that was one of his particular points; that the institution of slavery was so guaranteed, and so protected, and so guarded by law, that it was a breach of faith to touch it. Yes, it is well protected. Turn to your code and see how numerous are your enactments bolstering up and fortifying the institution. That is a proof to my mind of the innate weakness of the institution.

Suppose you were to go out of Annapolis, and meet a man on the road with an immense load of poles and props. You ask the man what he is going to do with them, and he says he is going down to the State house with them to prop it up. Of course the idea would be at once suggested to your mind that the State house was in danger of falling down. These very props to slavery show the innate weakness of the institution. The most unusual, cruel, inhuman, and unchristian laws are passed to prevent persons from interfering with it. The whip abounds in all these enactments. Now, to show the injustice of these laws—suppose a slave is killed in an attempt being made to capture him. The price of that slave is paid to the owner by the common people, the working people of the country. It may so happen that the only son of a widow is called upon by the sheriff to assist in capturing a runaway negro, and in the contest the son is killed, and the widow is thus deprived of the support of her old age. The wealthy slaveholder is paid for the desperate negro who is killed, but who compensates the widowed mother for the loss of her son? Is there any justice in that?

All these laws, so numerous and so common in Maryland, are the most execrable and detestable; and show clearly that the institution of slavery is so opposed to common sense and the improvements and civilization of the age, that it could not stand for a day without these props to keep it up.

The gentleman says we cannot abolish slavery without a breach of faith, because they have been hedging it around and propping it up with this common law of Maryland, which