stance the case of the son of the Vice-President of the Convention, who was compelled to leave his native State. He utterly denied that there was any severity in the case. If they would check the matter as had been proposed, five slaves could appear where one now appeared.

As for the agricultural interests of the State, he was assured that they would not suffer. He pledged his word that if the Convention would adopt his sentiments, the State of Maryland would go on as swimmingly and as smoothly as ever. The whole matter resolved itself into the simple proposition as to the ultimate extension of free negroes in the State of Maryland. In conclusion, he would merely add one single remark, and then he was done. It was not the vagabond slave, but the thrifty negroes, who looked around and said, "how is it that you are in your present condition?" As far as he was concerned, he could not bear to have free negroes and slaves in his house at the same time. He could not bear to pay one off in cash, whilst the other, with an imploring look, would seem to say, "shall I get nothing."

Mr. John Dorsey, of Howard County, would like to know what was going to be the result of the Convention; it seemed to him that it was nothing but scold, scold, and talk, talk. It was plain to his mind, however, that one result would be to tell all the free negroes in the State that they could not control the free negroes of the State. The result would, in fact, be nothing. He contended that the gentleman from Calvert County did not discuss the matter fairly. The proposition to expel or compel all the free negroes to leave the State was nothing more nor less than a monstrous proposition. His proposition was to send to the Legislature the reports of both the majority and minority, and let them act in the case. As for the proposition to expel, that was infinitely worse than the African slave trade. Let the Convention do something, he said, and not go to the slave and say, "we can't do without you." Mr. Dorsey proceeded at considerable length to argue the subject before the house, and he was very attentively listened to.

Mr. Bradley T. Johnson succeeded him, and at the outset stated that he was in favor of a portion of the majority report and a portion of the minority report. He argued how it was that negroes had left Maryland and gone to the South, and contended that the cultivation of cotton had a tendency to make them leave. A sudden disarrangement of labor in any State would result disadvantageously, and he essayed to prove how the case stood in some of the Counties in the State.

Judge Mason, rather excited, said—"Negroes have sold higher in Prince George's County than in New Orleans."

Mr. Johnson resumed, and contended that measures should be proposed in relation to the geographical position of the State. He would not discuss the question as to the manner in which the labor has to be supplied, but it was enough for him to state that he would rather have 3,000 free negroes in Frederick County than 3,000 abolitionists. If slave labor was driven out from the Northern Counties, their places would have to be filled, and there was a difficulty at once. In Frederick County it was not a question of property, but one of social relations. It was a matter of social organization with the people in Frederick County. The speaker adverted to the passage of a law in the State of Pennsylvania preventing the egress of free negroes in that State, and that would do very well. It had been proposed to drive the people out of the State or to sell them into slavery, both of which he declared impracticable. To replace the slave labor, a resort to white men would be had. To legislate with respect to individual cases would be bad, whilst the excellence of a law to affect the issue at hand would require it to be sweeping and affecting every one.

The Hon. James Alfred Pearce arose to speak, when the Chair observed that it wanted but fifteen minutes to two o'clock, and that if the gentleman proceeded he would, no doubt, have to ask the indulgence of the house.

The Chair was here reminded that he had made a mistake as to the hour; it was only a quarter after one o'clock.

Mr. Pearce proceeded to state that he would not ask the indulgence of the house; what he had to say could be expressed in very few words, and would not occupy much time. He felt obliged to notice some remarks which fell from the gentleman from Howard county, who seemed to think that the members of the Committee had labored to produce a mountain, and had only brought forth a mouse. He would thank him even for the compliment he paid the Committee when he admitted that they had even brought forth a mouse. He thought that, with the aid of a little reflection, that that gentleman would conclude that the Committee had done something, and had told something. But what had they done and what had they told? He would show what they had done. First, however, he would inquire what the gentleman from Howard county had done since he had been in the Convention. He had ridiculed the proposition of the gentleman from Worcester, and he had ridiculed the report of the Committee, whereas, had he listened to the report of the Committee, he would have seen that it had proposed something definite for the action of the Convention.

It would be impossible for the Committee to have submitted a bill with all its details and specific modes of relief; such a report would have been out of the question; that was the duty of the Legislature. Mr. Pearce proceeded to show in detail what the report of the Committee contained, and how it proposed to secure Legislative action in the case under discussion, to relieve the State from the evils which it suffered under slavery. They had asked the Legislature to resist the manumission of slaves, and to revise all the acts relative to slavery, and to embody them in one act. They also asked the Legislature to pass laws to prevent lazy negroes from evading the laws in relation to industrial labor. Was all that nothing? The gentleman from Worcester had spoken of the manner in which free negroes could be reduced to slavery. He would liked to have discussed that matter, but time forbade it. Could the negro, if reduced to slavery, be made to compete with white citizens? He was opposed to invade the various departments of industry in such a manner as had been proposed, to make all of them slaves, and to make them enter into competition with white labor. As for the proposition to remove them from the State, was there a single man within the sound of his voice who approved of it? He had the strongest belief that the Legislature would enact laws providing for the emergency. He would propose to apprentice the young colored people for their own good. If the Convention had nothing better to do than to expel all the free negroes from the State or to sell them into slavery, it had better adjourn *sine die*. He would confess, however, that he never had the highest hopes of accomplishing anything by the deliberation of the Convention; nevertheless he felt somewhat disappointed.

Mr. Beale H. Richardson inquired if the matter under discussion was not fully provided for in the resolutions reported by the Committee, and Mr. Pearce told him that it was.

Mr. J. T. Briscoe, of St. Mary's county, gave notice that in case the report of the committee was not speedily acted upon, he would propose an amendment in relation to the adoption of more stringent measures, and that in case the Legislature failed to act in the matter, that they take it in their own hands.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)--May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

1859