have certain property, which you cannot be trusted to dispose of. You shall not free a slave under any circumstances. You are next the slave, in the eye of the law; it guards and limits your acts in the disposition of what is your own.

The provision most likely to induce the negro to choose a master, is that for shutting up their rural churches, where they have been accustomed to meet and call upon the Lord; prohibiting them from preaching or conducting public worship, or learning to read God's word. In fact, depriving them of all religion, except what they receive through a kind of general *mediation* of the whites—reducing them to beings, literally, "*without hope and without God in the world.*" Soon they will be ready and disposed to choose a master, but that master, neither human or divine.

The system of hiring out by the year of all adults and half grown children, and younger children till they are of age, and then to be re-hired by the year, or term of years, is to force upon these now free people, the very worst features of slavery, the destruction of all family ties and the consequent establishment of universal concubinage.

Some of the ablest men of the South are engaged in devising a practical plan to prevent this disruption of the families of their domestic servants, well knowing it to be the most assailable point of the slave system; and shall we *legislate* this most objectionable feature into our own free colored population?

We have spoken of the provisions above, on the supposition that they could be fairly and honestly carried out; but this, how totally impracticable, especially, those in regard to the new rural police: the binding out, &c. Into whose hands would these poor people fall? What is and has been for years the character of the police of Baltimore, let the testimony recently taken before the Committee of the Legislature answer: with few exceptions, conniving at fraud, linked in with rowdies, scoundrels and murderers. So it has been, to a greater or less degree, for many years past, and so it may be in time to come, differing only in degree. And what kind of execution of a law, barbarous in itself, on those helpless people, could be expected from such a police, their interest prompting them to extreme measures, and all facilities for disposing of *indulgencies* amply provided for? And can it be, for a moment supposed that better agents of the law would or could be selected in the counties? Who would seek such a post? Surely no high-minded, intelligent, honorable man. At any rate, sooner or later, all these offices would fall into the hands of idle, worthless hangers on about corner grogeries, bullies at elections, claiming their reward at the hands of successful candidates—those who have little or no employment, or capacity for any, by which to gain an honest livelihood. Under such officers, what could be supposed to equal the outrages of the execution of this law of registry and binding out, unless, indeed, its very provisions should awaken a moral sense in its executors, till then never recognized?

A provision in one of the bills, intended to favor the most worthy of the class acted upon, viz: allowing them to procure responsible bondsmen, to the amount of $200, for their good behavior, in lieu of being bound out by the year, opens the way for gross imposition and fraud. Bondsmen, of the John Hinsley class, in plenty, could, no doubt, be obtained, *for consideration*, and the result would be the sharing the proceeds of years of hard labor of the colored man, by a set of professional bondsmen.

In fine, the main provisions of the laws proposed, are not only unjust, cruel and inhuman in themselves, but of such a nature, that their just and fair execution, with every possible guard and precaution, will be next to impossible. Extra judicial oppression, and extortion with a high hand, will, of necessity, be the consequence.

But, for a moment, let us ask, on the ground of sheer expediency, in its lowest sense, if measures like those proposed are desirable. Let us imagine the letter of the laws, as proposed, carried out in one of the Eastern Shore Counties, the one most desirous of the measures, say old Dorset. Let all who have been set free, either immediate or prospectively, together with all who, through years of toil, have purchased their own freedom, be bid off on the auction block. Let their churches be razed to the ground, or sold for stables and negro quarters. Let no colored man be allowed to call upon God, in presence of his congregated fellows, or read God's word even, by torch light, in his own cabin. Let all families of free negroes, what few may have been freed prior to 1832, whether industrious and thriving or lazy and improvident, whether moral and exemplary or vicious and profligate, be broken up and dispersed—each to be put up to the highest bidder for a term of months or years; no matter at what wages, and how little the demand for labor; no matter how infirm or unfitted for service; no matter how far removed from friends or relatives; no matter to whom consigned, or to what service destined; no vestige of house or home of free colored people, and none left to succor the aged and infirm, whom the law leaves without protection, employment or support; one-half the free, re-enslaved, the other half subject to all the evils of slavery, without its compensations of care and protection. A condition of things far more terrible than a Catholic country under the ban of Papal excommunication.

And what kind of slaves will these once free men make? With a strong sense of the injustice done them, can they ever render cheerful or valuable labor? Can ought but the lash enforce any thing like compensating labor from such a people? And will the farmers of Maryland justify the vile slang of the Northern abolitionists, and become "Lords of the lash?"

Another cause of complaint is, that the example of the free negroes is injurious to our slaves, and they connive at and favor their escape. Will the exmple and influence of the new made slave, directly associated with the old, be more favorable? or will they be less likely to plan and execute escape when their own liberty is to be gained thereby? And what will the forced labor of the nominally free man be worth, deprived of all objects and stimulus to labor and exertion? What would be the condition of this

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