

Congress from passing any law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves.

My reason for feeling a deep interest in the American Commonwealth is this: It seems to me that the aim of all social effort, and the object of all social aspiration, is to produce a real community, every member of which shall fully share the fruits and benefits of the social union. I say this in no communistic or revolutionary sense, but in the sense in which it must be felt to be true by all, whether Liberals or Conservatives, who are trying to improve the condition of the poor, and especially by those who are doing so in obedience to the social principles laid down in the Gospel. Such is the goal to which the progress of society through all its various and successive phases, would seem to be tending, if it is tending to any goal at all, and is not a mere blind and aimless current. That English society in its present state is very far from having reached this goal, is what you will scarcely think it Jacobinical to assert. It is an open question among writers on economical history whether the mass of the peasantry in this country have really shared at all in the increase of wealth and comfort which has accrued to the upper classes in the course of the last three hundred years. No one will venture to say that they have shared in anything like a fair proportion. Too many of them are still in a state of great misery, of brutal ignorance, and of the vice which misery and ignorance always bring in their train. Millions of our labouring population live constantly in view of penal pauperism, and nearly a million of them on the average are