

^{gradual}
 for the emancipation of slaves
 clause, ^{and} Mr. Wythe could not be present as being a member of the judiciary
 department, and Mr. Jefferson was absent on the legation to France: but
 there wanted not in that assembly men of virtue enough to propose, &
 talents to vindicate this cause, but they saw that the moment of doing
 it with success was not yet arrived, and that an unsuccessful effort,
 as too often happens, would only rivet still closer the chains of
 bondage, and retard the moment of delivery to this oppressed des-
 cription of men. What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible ma-
 chine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment
 & death itself in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment
 be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him thro' his
 trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is
 fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebel-
 lion to oppose. but we must wait with patience the workings of an over-
 ruling providence, & hope that that is preparing the deliverance of
 these our suffering brethren. When the measure of their tears shall be
 full, when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in dark-
 -ness, doubtless a god of justice will awaken to their distress, and by dif-
 -fusing light & liberality among their oppressors, or at length by his
 exterminating thunder, manifest his attention to the things of this
 world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality.