

## NEGRO STEALING.

A man has been convicted of stealing negroes in Tennessee, and under a law passed during the revolution to protect the slaves of Whigs from the depredations of Tories, has been sentenced to be hung, on the first Monday of April next. The Nashville Republican says,

“We understand that the Supreme Court in delivering their opinion, stated in substance, that although, as Judges, they were bound to pronounce the law, as *men*, they concurred in opinion, that the prisoner was an object meriting the executive clemency. Indeed, there can be little doubt, but that the law is a most unequal and bloody one. No reason can be assigned why a man should be more severely punished for stealing a Negro, than for stealing the value of that Negro in money, or in any other species of property; except when a free Negro is thus taken for the purpose of being sold into slavery—in the latter case, the crime is unquestionably of the very highest nature. But the stealing of a slave or slaves is nothing more than grand larceny, and should be punished as such only. The present case is one which demands the exercise of that discretionary power which has been lodged in the executive, and the law itself deserves the attention of our legislature.”

Freedom is indeed a valuable thing. It gives men a *rational soul*, one would suppose, from the above remarks. To steal a negro slave, is only like purloining a little money—or taking off a horse from its owner; but to steal a free negro, is “a crime of the highest nature.” Now what makes the mighty difference, unless it be, that with his freedom, the negro gains a rational, an immortal soul?—As a slave, he is only property, money, land, furniture, a beast of burden, or some such thing;—as free, he is a man—has feelings, has affections, has rights. O liberty, how great is thy transforming power;—Oh how slight a circumstance, too, depends all that is tender, and intelligent, and moral in our nature! To-day, the image of God, because no unfeeling wretch can say, “you are my slave!” to-morrow, nothing more than a bank-bill or a bag of dollars—because you have been unfortunatè enough to fall beneath the arm of irresistible force!