

laws be faithfully executed;" to take care looks to the past, the present and the future. It implies to search, look after, guard, protect, defend. I am loyal and can take the oath required, but the convention seeks to destroy a great constitutional principle which lies at the very foundation of the government. There is no enemy to be dreaded more than he who cloaks his ulterior and hidden designs under tests and oaths unknown to the laws and violative of great political rights. The true conservative patriot is he who tolerates differences of opinion, and sets up the constitution and the laws as his constant rule and guide.

The attempt to pass an election law to be executed in Virginia or elsewhere than where is found the voters' legal residence, and to appoint officers or soldiers in the ranks within confederate lines judges of election, and to receive and count such votes, contrary to the express law in the code, article thirty-five, section one, which enacts that "the county commissioners in each county shall appoint three persons for each election district of the county, residents in such districts, judges of the election; of the fourth section, which directs the sheriff to serve the notices on the judges, and the fifth section, which directs the judge to attend in his district, is so palpably repugnant to every principle of law, of duty and of justice, that the broadest mantle of charity cannot cover the motives and sinfulness of the act. Your name and history are linked with this proffered constitution—if it can be disguised by that name. You are to proclaim it if adopted.

These times of excitement, passion and prejudice must pass away. A reaction must come when the impartial mind must record the true character of the men and the events passing before us. Party success is ephemeral, and its measures can never be permanently fastened on a free people. They can never remain manacled by the shackles forged by interested politicians. An enlightened, chastened, and true public sentiment must succeed the agitations and injustice of those days. "Truth is mighty and must prevail," was a motto of the lamented Clay. Justice, integrity and right, will be elements in that public opinion which will consign many of the dominant and prominent actors of these days to an obloquy which will scarcely find a parallel in the annals of history.

You have an honored name. I wish you to present a fair record when the truth of history shall be vindicated by the pen of the faithful historian. The history of this tendered constitution, the actions, speeches and motives of its principal and inferior authors and abettors will be written in living letters to be read of all men. We desire that the recorder shall disconnect your name from those of its makers and assistants, and place it in a niche in the temple of fame, on the

side of the just, the true, the honored of our day

With great regard, and as ever, yours,
[Signed] GEORGE VICKERS.

GOVERNOR BRADFORD'S REPLY.

STATE OF MARYLAND,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, ANNAPOLIS,
September 19, 1864. }

George Vickers, Esq.:

My Dear Sir:—I have received your letter of the 14th inst., and given to it the attentive consideration due alike to the importance of the subject to which it relates, and to the sincere respect I always entertain for your opinions. You therein call my attention to the proceedings of the late convention, and more especially that provision found in the constitution which they framed which prescribes an oath to be taken by the voter when offering to vote at the election at which that constitution is submitted for the adoption or rejection of the voters of the State. You refer also to another part of it wherein provision is made for taking the vote of the soldiers of Maryland regiments, who are absent from the State at the time of said election, and designating these clauses of the new constitution, as palpably in conflict with the constitution of 1851, which must subsist until the new one is adopted by a vote of the people; you appeal to me to interpose and prevent the execution of these provisions, and to instruct the judges of election to disregard the clause requiring the oath aforesaid.

It is not my purpose, nor is it necessary, in the view which I take of my duty in the premises, to undertake to show that the convention possessed the power to make the provisions in question; still there are some considerations which it may not be amiss to notice, calculated to show that in so doing, they have not so manifestly exceeded their authority as your argument assumes. You, for instance, say that the oath prescribed by the convention is not only an innovation upon the existing constitution, but is in express violation of the act of 1864, from which the convention derived its existence. That act, however, in providing for the submission of the constitution to the vote of the people, declares that it shall be submitted "at such time, in such manner, and subject to such rules and regulations as said convention may prescribe."

I am aware that to this may be replied that the legislature which passed this act could have prescribed no such additional qualification for those who should vote upon the adoption of this constitution, and that possessing itself no such power, it could therefore confer none such upon the convention. But was it in fact necessary for the legislature to have required the submission of the constitution for the ratification of the people at