

a crime compared with which the men in your penitentiary are innocent and angels of light. They have not been convicted; yet the fact is as well known as if you had had the verdict of a thousand juries; and being known shall there be no punishment?

I am not willing, I do not believe the people of Maryland are willing that these men should come back here and exercise the rights of citizens. It is unjust and wrong. It is an act of justice, and not of prejudice, to exclude them from the right of voting.

Mr. STIRLING. My colleague has so well explained this matter that it is not necessary for me to do so. But so far as regards striking out the part about the President's amnesty proclamation, I have simply to say this: that the President's amnesty proclamation is applicable to an entirely different subject-matter from what this is. He has endeavored to reclaim men in actual service in the rebel army by telling them that he will grant them a pardon from any prosecution for what they have done. I do not dispute the right or policy of doing that; but that does not affect the question how far it is proper for us and safe for us to allow them to vote. It is well known that one effect will be for men to get pardoned and come back and remain merely as a precaution of safety, without the slightest change in their sentiments or feelings. Nothing in the world can be more certain than that to allow such men to come back here and exercise the right of voting will keep up a continual disturbing element in the community so long as they shall live.

The only way to prevent civil war is to require those who engage in it to abide the results of their own conduct. I have put in a provision that in case the general assembly by a two-thirds vote shall indicate its judgment of the propriety of doing so, they may restore these people to the right of voting.—It can never be done as a partisan measure; but must be done by such a vote as to evince a deliberate judgment upon the part of the people of a State that the time has arrived when it will be perfectly safe in view of the changed circumstances of the State, to allow them to vote. If these people cannot be content to await the action of the legislature of their own State, they must be so far gone that they can establish their right nowhere with any prospect of success.

Mr. EDELEN. The gentleman from Baltimore city, who immediately followed me (Mr. Stockbridge,) said that my remarks had surprised him. His remarks have more than surprised me. I can only account for the manner and substance of those remarks by referring it to the mood or the temper in which the gentleman arose to address the house. I have seen a good deal of that gentleman since I have been upon this floor, and I had given him credit for a great deal of good sense. Instead of answering the points

that I had made or thought I had made, the gentleman flew right off the handle, and in the language of Shakspeare, "as quick as meditation and thoughts of love," we find him travelling to Chambersburg, Cumberland and Gettysburg, and following the contending armies of the country. He did not meet one single point that I attempted to make.

Now, I put this question to the gentleman from Baltimore city. He rose to advocate the amendment of his colleague (Mr. Stirling.) That amendment stands, I apprehend, upon a little different ground, and is a little different in its meaning from the section, which it is proposed to amend. I apprehend that a gentleman like my friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling,) introducing a long amendment covering three or four sheets of paper to amend a certain proposition contained in eight lines of this printed paper, means something by it. I regret to see at this stage of the proceedings an attempt made to bring this matter to the consideration of the house. I regret the absence of the chairman of the committee on the elective franchise, my friend from Howard county (Mr. Sands,) who is not here today. I apprehend the gentleman had some reason in putting in this section, and I conclude that he has changed and stands here in a different position from that in which he stood yesterday in the discussion in this hall.

But I propose to ask my other friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge,) who rose a little while ago, did he propose that those men who had taken up arms against the lawful authorities of the government of the United States should be at once remitted to their original rights and privileges as citizens and as freemen? I was opposing the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore city, and insisting before the house that section two as it stands reported from the committee by the chairman (Mr. Sands,) and by the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Stott,) the gentleman from Harford (Mr. Russell,) and the gentleman from Carroll (Mr. Ecker,) ought to satisfy every gentleman upon this floor. It is in these words:

"Sec. 2. No person who has at any time been in armed rebellion against the government of the United States or the lawful authorities thereof, or who has been in any way or manner in the service of the so-called 'Confederate States of America,' shall ever thereafter be entitled to vote at any election to be held in this State, or to hold any office of honor, profit or trust under the laws thereof, unless such person has been pardoned by the President of the United States, and has fully complied with the requisitions of said pardon."

Did anything I contended for, or one word that I advanced upon this floor go to the ex-