

it make his judge? It simply demands of a man loyalty to the land of his birth, and it makes him the judge of his own loyalty, and there comes in that infallible rule of scripture: If our own hearts acquit us, we shall be acquitted; but if our own consciences condemn us, God, who is greater than our consciences, will condemn us also. And I say that under this proposed oath any man whose conscience is clear of disloyalty to his government and to his country, every man whose conscience is clear, can come with a clear face and bold front to the ballot-box and deposit his ballot there.

An oath is a solemn thing. It calls God to witness the act. And it is solemn only because it does call God to witness the act. And when the act is a true one, where is the hardship of requiring it? Why should a man hesitate to do it, if God bears witness with his conscience that his oath is true, and not false?

And what is this provision meant to meet? I am speaking now of the general spirit of the report of the committee; for I leave my friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling) to advocate his own peculiar amendment, embodying his own peculiar views. I ask then, what is the end and object of requiring the citizen of the State to take an oath of loyalty to the State, and to the United States? Is it to promote strife? Is it to stir up war? Is it to bring desolation upon the land, or to widen it, being here? Not one whit. It is to keep strife and war and desolation out of the State, God willing, and to keep peace in it. That is the object. Is it not a good one?

There are evidences all around us everywhere of the terrible curse of war, of disloyalty, of secession, or, if you please to give it another name, of rebellion. I know that at this day there is a movement on foot in the land, and you know it, and every one else knows it, which professes to be in the interest of peace. How? "Peace on any terms" is to be the watch-word. Only think of it. Conditional loyalty! Did you ever hear of a man that was conditionally honest, or of a woman that was conditionally chaste? I would not give much for that honesty, and that chastity, which was conditional. And I would give just as much for that loyalty that was conditional. When honor ceases to be unconditional, when chastity ceases to be unconditional, above suspicion, when loyalty ceases to be unconditional, above suspicion, loyalty to your government and your constitution, no matter who at the time may be administering that government, then that loyalty, and honor, and chastity and everything else are of but little worth, are of but little value.

There is a great deal of significance in the present movement. A clique of interested selfish men, of whom I heard a senator last winter, one of their own number, say that their crime was unpardonable, set about disrupting

the country, disintegrating it; crying on all occasions, as Mr. Clay said they would, "the Constitution!" "the Constitution!" when all that they meant was their own construction of the constitution. They tried to divide the country. The masses of the people of the country arose and said—"You shall not do it." And the people, inspired with patriotism and love of country, have been fighting them for nearly four years, to prevent the destruction of this country. Those men have tried to accomplish its destruction by arms; they have failed. And now it is to be done by policy. And how? By false appeals to the people; by setting up specious party platforms; by telling the people they are for peace, and not telling them how. And if the people are so unfortunate as to trust them now, as in 1852, they will soon let the people understand upon what terms they are for peace; they will again betray the people as they did then.

Now I say, come these efforts in what shape they please, in bullets or ballots, in lead or paper, I am opposed to them. And ballots may be made as dangerous as bullets. They began with ballots, or pretended ballots, and where have they ended? In six hundred pounds. And are we to go on, in this State of Maryland, allowing those who, by their preaching and teaching, have sent away hundreds and thousands of our youths to die upon battle-fields, or to languish in filthy, noisome prisons; are we to allow them to carry on their old game of betraying, deceiving, misleading and ruining the people? There is a great deal of sympathy for gentlemen, who are in casemates at Fort Lafayette, Fort Delaware and elsewhere. Why, sir, they are not the title of the prisoners caused by this war; they are not a hundredth part. Your poor beardless boys, your uneducated masses, innocent of any wrong act, or word, or deed toward your country, they have languished and died in prison by the thousand. I saw some men who had come out of Fort Lafayette and Fort Delaware; and they walked the streets of Baltimore just as strong and hearty as I was, and rather above speaking to common people. And I have seen others by the score who came out of Libby and other prisons, hobbling along upon crutches, emaciated, and the least human in appearance that I ever saw in my life. I have seen them from those dungeons perishing of starvation. But there is not a word of sympathy for them; they are only a part of the masses. There is plenty of sympathy for the leaders, plenty of sympathy for those who went about talking of the right of secession, and the necessity of revolution; when no such right and no such necessity existed. There are plenty of them in the State of Maryland to-day, hale, hearty men. Go out to your grave yard here. I never pass it without feelings that I cannot express. There they lie, in their long prison house, hundreds and