

legiance down in the army than up here, it will not do any harm. I have said about all I desire to say. I shall vote for the amendment with great pleasure.

Mr. CHAMBERS. One word, Mr. President; although I do not intend to take any part in this electioneering debate which has been carried on here, not being in the category of gentlemen one side or the other. As long as they choose to occupy the stump I shall listen to them certainly with pleasure. The last remark of the gentleman from Carroll (Mr. Smith) amused me exceedingly. The gentleman said what, if he had been on the stump, would have been a most appropriate thing, but which could hardly be called a constitutional argument, with which alone we have anything to do. McClellan is before the people, and Lincoln is before the people—no doubt about that—and one of them is to be elected. Give them a fair field; that is all I want. Let them be who they may, and let their politics be what they may, give them a fair chance.

In the mean time I have something to say about the State of Maryland, upon a subject that seems to have been lost sight of for some time. The argument which I had the honor to submit, has not, in my humble judgment, been met. I stated the language of this oath to be such that it would embarrass men whose conduct was as free from reproach as that of any man on this floor or any man elsewhere. The only sort of an answer that I have heard is that of the gentleman from Howard (Mr. Sands,) that that is a matter of interpretation. It is not denied that the language does include such individuals; but it is answered that individuals must judge for themselves; that it is a matter of interpretation. Now I wish to submit this question to the majority of this house. I wish to submit it to any gentleman who wishes to deal fairly with the people of the State; to deal fairly, not with traitors, rebels, prisoners in the armies, and all that sort of thing, but with honest men, with an honest purpose; with loyal men who have always been loyal. If there are doubts in the phraseology of this oath, calculated to embarrass men who do not wish to see how near they can come to an obligation which the words might embrace, or how near to a violation of their conscience they can come by an oath, if that is the case, why not put into the oath language which does not leave room for interpretation? Gentlemen know how to frame these matters. They have here stated that no man shall be permitted to vote unless he swears that he has never given aid, comfort or countenance to any one who has been in the rebel army.

Mr. STIRLING. No, sir; it does not say that. It is no one in armed rebellion.

Mr. CHAMBERS. That is the interpretation. Why not put it in the language?

Mr. STIRLING. I have; just as well as I can express it.

Mr. CHAMBERS. Here it is; to be administered to any person offering to vote:

"I do swear or affirm that I am a citizen of the United States, that I have never given any aid, countenance or support to those in armed hostility to the United States," &c.

Mr. STIRLING. Now I will ask the gentleman to explain whether a man lying wounded and sick in a hospital is in armed rebellion, or in armed hostility to the United States?

Mr. CHAMBERS. A man who has been in armed rebellion is as much in this category, in my judgment, as if he were to-day un-wounded and unimprisoned. I want to know what sort of "aid, countenance or support" is contemplated. A man to-day in prison receives from me one hundred dollars in money to add to his comfort. He is exchanged to-morrow, and the next day is in arms against the government of the United States. Gentlemen may raise their hands and stare their eyes as much as they please; that is the very language: "I have never given any aid, countenance or support to those in armed hostility to the United States." I understand that to mean to any one in armed hostility to the United States. Did I not give aid and comfort in the case supposed? Is not he in armed opposition to the government? Is not that the language of the oath? You know how to put it in terms that lead to no difficulty. Why not do it?

But I rose now to say that I heard with the most infinite amazement, the assertion made upon this floor that the elections had been conducted in the last election without military interference. That any man with eyes in his head and ears to hear should rise and take the responsibility of making that assertion is to me a matter of amazement. I do not profess to know in many districts in the State what occurred at the election; but so far as I do know there was inspection at every district. I make this assertion, and it can be proved by as respectable testimony as can be furnished to prove any fact on oath, that in my county not only did military interference prevent men from voting, but the military made the proposition to individuals. If you will vote for the gentleman who is now in power and has control, you may vote the balance of the ticket as you like. Yes, sir; by military men such an offer was made; you may vote provided you will vote a given ticket. Does any man pretend to say he does not know that the member of congress in our district would not have received, if a fair vote had been allowed, one vote—I was about to say in ten—scarcely more than that? And yet here we are told that there was no military interference.

But even that perhaps would not have induced me to leave my seat if the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge) had