

meaning of these phrases in our old Constitutions, and it is that which has caused this war and created this rebellion. Although the Constitution of the United States was supreme, and although the laws of Congress were supreme, it was held that there remained an allegiance which the people of the States owed to their State sovereignties, which withdrew them by all legal and moral power from under that supreme obligation. What has been the result? It has demoralized the people of this country with regard to oaths and obligations to such an extent that a large part of the people seem prepared to break any obligation whatever. There were United States army and navy officers at the commencement of the war who had not only sworn to support the Constitution, but sworn allegiance to the Government of the United States, and sworn to obey every order of the President as their commander-in-chief; but when the war broke out, because when at home they were on one side of a certain line, they thought they were governed by another allegiance, and that without any other notice, they could by a letter written hundreds of miles away, absolve themselves from all allegiance to the General Government; and that their own State had a right to claim them; that they owed some sort of debt to the State of Virginia or the State of South Carolina, although the acts of the State of Virginia and the State of South Carolina were against their judgment and in many instances against their wishes; while they acknowledged that the Government of the United States was supreme over them.

That has been the consequence of these theories and the interpretation put upon the oath to support the Constitution of the United States. It may be that the time of civil war is not the best time to change. It may be that this land presents the spectacle of houses blazing and lands desolated. But by the light of these burning conflagrations we have read the history of the past and the history of the present, and it has burned itself into our minds in characters broader and deeper than would have been possible in peacefulness and quiet. We have seen the interpretations placed upon the Constitution, and we mean to place in it an article which shall contain our interpretation. I say this with all respect, because with the exception of one or two gentlemen upon this floor, this seems to be rather a quarrel about words. I think my friend from Kent (Mr. Chambers) said that the word "paramount" did not mean anything more than that the citizen owed allegiance within the delegated powers; and I do not know that he has any objection to that. I do not know that there are more than two gentlemen who object to the meaning of the article; but they say, why not leave it precisely as it was before?

Because we want to deny to the State of

Maryland any right to withdraw people from their obligations to the supreme law of the land. Because we want to teach our children so that they shall not be misled by the doctrines which have misled so many misguided but noble-hearted men. If the Constitution of the State of Virginia had contained a clause like this, there would have been no war. There was a man who has now gone to his grave with all the laurels of a soldier on his brow; a man who, I honestly believe, has done more harm to the Government of the United States than any other man who has drawn his sword against it; a man who possessed many of the qualities of a fanatic, which led him sometimes to do things which Oliver Cromwell himself might have found it necessary to explain; a man who possessed high powers of mind, of pure, earnest, honest intentions, and with a susceptible and kindly heart;—I mean General Stonewall Jackson. It is a perfectly well-known historical fact, that before Stonewall Jackson engaged in the prosecution of this war, he sat in his room thinking anxiously upon the question whether the ordinance of secession of Virginia bound him to draw his sword upon that side, or whether his oath of allegiance as an officer of the United States army bound him to draw his sword upon the side of the Federal Government. We have the testimony of one of his nearest relatives who saw him after he had taken his determination and become an officer of the Confederate army, that upon parting General Jackson shook his hand, saying: "My friend, we part here below to meet only above. My first allegiance is due to the State of Virginia."

That is the reason for the incorporation of this article, to deny the right of this State or of any State, by the exercise of any power over the individual citizen, to command him as a citizen to withdraw himself from under the obligation of the law which the State and the Constitution of the State admitted to be supreme.

Now I deny, and I do it with a great deal of deference, particularly to the gentleman from Kent, that the history of the world proves that the time of revolution is not the time to incorporate new ideas into the government. I affirm on the contrary that there is not a government that exists, there is scarcely a government that ever did exist, that was not only baptized in blood, but born amid the convulsions of revolution. If it had its origin prior to revolution, it has maintained itself, and supported its existence and renewed its power only through revolutions. What is the Constitution of Maryland and the bill of rights of 1776, but an instrument declared by men that left their swords at home in order to attend the council chamber. What is the Government of England, in all the great consti-