

law itself, or as Lord Coke quaintly expresses it, "runneth back to the time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." The title that we have in the institution of slavery is then a perfect one. We have the statute laws of the State; we have the decisions of the highest judicial tribunals; we have the moral law; we have precedents from the beginning of time; we have the universal recognition of the institution throughout the world, to show that the title is a vested one, and a perfect one. Now, sir, where is the power in this State to divest that title? Upon what ground can any authority in this State, either through the agency of a Convention or otherwise, destroy this property. The Constitution of this State, of all the States, recognizes the universal principle of all good government, that private property cannot be taken even for public use without just compensation.

But independently of that, you must first establish the necessity for taking the property, before you can take it; either the interest of the State, some great public emergency, some great crying evil to be done away with, some great physical, moral, or political good to be accomplished—you must establish some one or all of these facts before you can touch the private property of individuals. Now, is there any such public necessity in the State of Maryland? Is there any great necessity why this species of property should be stricken down at one blow, whilst every other kind of property is amply protected? Why strike down this property which we have shown from time immemorial has received the especial protection of all the legislators of this State, because in its nature it required it? Not that the legislation of this State has been for the peculiar protection and establishment of the institution of slavery; but the guards and protections thrown around the institution have been such as were not thrown around other species of property, because in its nature it required it. It seems to me in attempting this deed gentlemen are assuming too much power, and have too extravagant an estimate of their own wisdom. Now, is there any such public necessity in the State of Maryland that requires this action at our hands? The people here, as we have seen, are prosperous. They would to-day, with their slave property at home, protected by the laws of the State, be in a thousand fold better condition to bear the burdens of the taxation of the Government than they are now.

But it is said, in reply to this, that the property is gone; that this property cannot be held; that a slave can go to his master and say—"Well, I will go to-morrow"—and the master cannot stop him; and a slave who can do that is no longer a slave. Now, sir, the duty of the Government in this State, as I conceive it to be under our Constitution, is to protect every man in his property and his

person. The rights of allegiance and protection are reciprocal rights. If a man owes true allegiance to the State of Maryland, the State of Maryland is bound to protect him in his rights, both of person and of property. That is a universally admitted principle of law. Unless the government of this State shall show that the citizens of this State have thrown off their allegiance, the Government is bound to protect them. And I say, then, that the fact that the slave is not as profitable now as formerly; the fact that the slave has it in his power to abscond at any moment, is only accountable for by the reason that the government of the State has not done its duty. The market statistics show the products of slave labor in this section to be trebly valuable over what they have been for many years past. If we had had a Governor here who had the will to determine at all hazards that the laws of the State should be executed, who possessed the boldness and the daring to have stood up and asserted and maintained the rights of the people of the State; had the Executive of the State sent, if necessary, his military down into the slave counties; had he thrown a cordon of troops around those counties and said—"This species of property shall be protected"—no power in the United States would have interfered with it for a moment. The argument used at Washington when this property was fleeing into that city was—"This is not our business; if you have not now sufficient protection for property, look to your government for it; if you cannot keep them at home yourself, apply to your Governor for sufficient force to enable you to do it." That was the universal reply there.

I say, then, that this property, so far from being valueless under the law of the State to-day, is worth more to the people of Maryland than ever before. If gentlemen act upon the theory that because they have not a thing directly in their possession therefore it is worth nothing, then they might with equal propriety say that this Union which is now split in twain is worth nothing to them, and they ought to let it go because they have not now got it, and probably cannot regain possession. Now, when our people are prosperous with this institution, when this property is valuable, there is no great public necessity that requires that it should be destroyed. On the contrary, there are reasons piled up, like Pelion on Ossa, dating back to the earliest history of the country, showing that this pioneer institution has developed the resources of the State, and that if this property had been let alone; if the guards of the Constitution had been strictly observed; if that protection which the State of Maryland when she went into the confederacy stipulated should be afforded her had been strictly given; if there had been no outside intermeddling interference; if the people had