

told plainly that emancipation is a foregone conclusion; that the people have so decided; and that there shall be no compensation. The gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Cushing) yesterday told us—and I could hardly believe my own ears and eyes—that we should not receive one dollar, not one cent for our property. He says that whatever tales of grief and injustice may come up to us here, they will pay no attention to them; that they will not listen to them; that he hopes that property will have no consideration. Now, sir, it is not a question of sympathy. I tell the gentleman it is simply a question of justice. We do not claim it from considerations of sympathy. We do not ask it, if the worst comes to the worst, as a matter of gratuity. We stand upon the broad principles of justice. The widow and the orphan, the injured families of Maryland, cry for justice. No time for that, he says; no time for sympathy. Why, sir, has the time come, will the time ever come, in the history of the good old State of Maryland, when those in authority will be regardless of, and will not consider, the plea of justice? Perish the government! perish the authority and the power, whatever it may be, that does not, with all its energy and might, accord justice alike to the proudest and the poorest of its citizens. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

But he tells us that the people have so determined. I cannot believe it; I will not believe it; I would shut my ears to the painful truth, if it were a truth. I was born in Maryland; I was raised in Maryland; I have lived in Maryland all my life. I am proud of my State, of her past history, of the Revolutionary record which she has, and I cannot believe that the people of Maryland are dishonest at heart. The people of Maryland are honest. Her past history shows it; her whole antecedent history proves it. The people of Maryland have never by their votes sanctioned any measure of dishonesty or discredit. There was a time in the financial history of our State, when she was unfortunate. The works of internal improvement, which she had perhaps gone into rashly, had involved the State. We were in debt; our currency was in a deplorable condition; all the interests of our State were convulsed; and commercial enterprise of every kind seemed to be tottering on the very brink of ruin. The ship of state was tempest-tost in the wild storm, and the winds of adversity seemed to be fast driving her upon the rock of repudiation. The people of Maryland then arose in the majesty of their power, and elected to the Gubernatorial Chair a slaveholder; they placed in the position of Executive of the State a man from a slave-holding county, not now credited among the elect, but whom posterity will set down among the faithful. He seized the helm of State, and with a master-hand guided our good old bark into a

harbor of safety. And he was backed up by the spontaneous, mighty impulse of the people. There is no dark spot upon her character for fidelity and justice that her people have ever sanctioned.

This emancipation without compensation, according to my view of the subject, is to all intents and purposes, practical confiscation. What is the difference? I am no lawyer, but I have taken the trouble to look into the law dictionary, and find this to be the definition of confiscation:

“Confiscation is the act by which the estate, goods, or chattels of a person who has been guilty of some crime, or who is a *public enemy*, is declared to be forfeited for the good of the public *treasury*. When property is forfeited as a punishment for the commission of crime, it is usually called a forfeiture.”—*Bowyer's Law Dictionary.*

Now, have the people of this section of Maryland forfeited their right to all this property by any crime they have committed? Have they been arraigned in any court of justice? Has there been any indictment, any charge of any kind brought against them? Yet it is proposed, practically, to confiscate all this property, and at one blow strike it from their hands. The General Government has not attempted to confiscate the private property of those who have gone into the rebel army, and are fighting against the Government, except, I believe, upon due process of law. Or, if they have done so, it is in violation of the Constitution of the United States. Yet here this sovereign Convention, representing the will of the people of Maryland, are going to take away this property without any process whatever. It is perfectly absurd; it is monstrous; it is heinous; it is damnable.

In our bill of rights we have declared, in an article already passed, that private property shall not be taken except for consideration and by due process of law. The Constitution of the United States, the supreme law of the land, to which it is said we owe paramount allegiance, says “nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.” But the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) says it is not taken for public use. Is it taken for private use? Sir, it is taken for public use. It is announced all the time that this is necessary as a public measure; as a political measure; that it is necessary to hold Maryland in her true position, and make her gravitate to the grand centre of the government. It is taken for public use, or for no use at all. The gentleman will hardly acknowledge that it is taken for no use or purpose at all.

This, then, is in direct violation of our own bill of rights. This Convention assembled in 1864, to make a new Constitution and form of Government, have embodied this principle in our bill of rights; and before they have