

sat here two weeks after enacting that very clause, they pass the most outrageous violation of the principles embodied in it that was ever shown upon the pages of American history.

But it is contended that this Convention is omnipotent, and may do everything and anything; may get over all laws, and may get over the Constitution. I anticipate this argument somewhat, for I see no other way for this outrageous measure to be defended except by asserting that a Convention being omnipotent, we may do this or anything else. But there is no sovereignty, however it may be organized, that can rob the people of their rights of life and property. That is a principle of fundamental right that the people cannot be stripped of. According to my idea—I do not know how it is with my negro-loving friends—the right of your person, of your life, of your property, is a natural right, a divine right. Judge Story says, vol. 3, page 68, that no authority, no sovereignty, no power, can deprive a citizen or person of property, except for commission of crime, or for some public use, which must be designated and justified. The right of this Convention to take away slave property, in violation of law, in violation of the Constitution, involves the right to take away any other kind of property. With the same propriety the Convention could take away from me my land, my horses, my wagons, my money, my stocks, anything I have, because property in slaves is just as surely guaranteed to the citizen as any other property that he holds. It is then manifestly absurd to assume that this Convention can do this.

Let me illustrate this point. Suppose the laboring classes of the State of Maryland were to organize themselves into a political party, and were to become numerous and powerful to such an extent that they were enabled to wield the political power of the State of Maryland. Then suppose they were to say to the wealthy farmers, and all others engaged in agricultural pursuits—"You shall not employ or use labor-saving machines; you shall not have reapers to reap your grain or mowers to cut your grass; because those implements, by reducing the number of hands necessary to be employed, operate against our interests; we will not, therefore, allow you to use reapers and mowers; we have the power, and we will call a Convention, and we will have a provision put in the Constitution which shall provide that these labor-saving machines shall not be used, because they operate against the interests of the laboring classes; and more than that, we will not only provide that you shall not use them, but we will take away from you those which you now have, and we will not pay you for them either." Now, that is a perfectly parallel case in every respect. I defy gentlemen to show any discrepancy in prin-

ciple between the two cases. Would that be just and proper?

The gentleman (Mr. Cushing) who spoke yesterday said, that in South Carolina they had passed laws that a negro coming there from a Northern State should be thrown into prison; and that a gentleman sent down there from a Northern State to investigate the constitutionality of those laws, was prohibited from exercising the duty for which he was sent there. And he spoke of that as a most flagrant outrage upon the rights of citizens, and upon the principles of liberty and humanity generally.

He also said that he was in Massachusetts upon the occasion of the return of a fugitive slave to his master; and he saw the soldiers seize that fugitive who had fled so many hundred miles to gain his freedom, and take him down to a vessel and send him off. And he avowed that if he had been a citizen of Massachusetts, he would, regardless of the law and the Constitution, have resisted the law and the Constitution. Now, sir, I do not doubt it. It is just such gentlemen as he who have brought on us all these troubles. He boldly declared here in this Convention, in broad daylight, that he would have opposed the return of that fugitive had he been a citizen of Massachusetts. The law of the land said he should be returned; he says he would have opposed the law. Just such political preachers as he have been the exciting cause, and are the head and front of all the evils that afflict the land to-day. And I charge him and his coadjutors with being the excitors of the rebellion; for if there had never been an abolitionist, in my opinion, there never would have been a secessionist.

But the great argument in favor of emancipation is, that slavery is the chief cornerstone of the rebellion; the keystone of the arch which supports all this mighty movement in the South; that supports the feeling of opposition to the Government in this State; that it is the root of all evil; the sum of all villainies; and no matter how and by what means, it must be disposed of. And it is proposed to do it violently and suddenly, and without due process of law, without any just compensation, and in opposition to all common principles of justice.

Now, are we never going to learn wisdom from the history of the past? Are we never going to learn anything from the history of other nations and past ages, and all the teachings of similar proceedings under similar circumstances? Is there an instance in the musty tomes of antiquity, or in all the volumes of modern history, to show that a people has ever been won back by force? Can you create affection, or conciliate public feeling, or produce harmony and concord and love, by violent measures and unjust and oppressive acts? That policy was tried by the British Government in reference to the colonies. And it drove