

be supposed that men who voted for Mr. Leary, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Webster and Mr. Crisfield in 1861, and for Governor Bradford in 1863, have ever given aid and comfort to the enemies, or expressed a desire for the defeat of the armies, of the United States. There has, in the opinion of your committee, been a ways in this State a clear majority of loyal men, and a minority only of sympathizers with and perpetrators of treason; but if, by the influx of disloyal refugees from the South, or from any other cause, these conditions are now changed, and the disloyal element does really preponderate in the State, why then the more important is it that the power to govern and to legislate for the State should be rigorously kept in the hands of the truly loyal. The nation has not yet surmounted the difficulty of her position. It is true that armed treason has been suppressed; but the feeling of domination, of caste, of opposition to free labor, of hatred to the loyal States unfortunately have survived the war which has just closed; and, in the opinion of the committee, it would be extremely dangerous at this time to entrust with political power men of such unregenerate tempers. It would give them opportunity, upon any slight local dissention among loyal men of the State, in a moment of apathy or fancied security, to place men in Congress whose sympathy is with the vanquished enemies of the Republic, to unite with them when they shall be resolved to dictate the law to the loyal men of the nation, who spent their treasure and gave their lives for the defence of our free institutions and for the perpetuity of our Republican government.

To contemplate such a result is sufficient to appal the heart of the stoutest. It is to repudiate our national debt or assume theirs. It is to place those of the rebel army who deserted our flag in 1861 again on the rolls of our army and navy, to desert again, perhaps, on the first occasion in which the country might need the services of true defenders. It is to restore, if not slavery, a qualified peonage which is worse. It is, in short, to desert now, in the moment of victory, the victorious cause, and to abandon the great experiment of Free Labor, which we have all fondly hoped would redeem the continent.

The appeal is made that, "the South is all to be restored, and therefore all disfranchisement here should be removed." The South has not yet been restored, and it will be time enough when the Southern States are represented in Congress, and when those who have resisted the Government there are restored, to consider the question here. By the very terms of the petition the time has not yet arrived. It may be that