

future claims for expenses incurred in support of the rebellion and for manumitted slaves, together with an express grant of power in Congress to enforce those provisions. To this end they offer a joint resolution for amending the Constitution of the United States, and the two bills designed to carry the same into effect before referred to. They admit that they are sensible of the imperfections of the scheme, but submit it to Congress as the best they could agree upon, in the hope that its imperfections may be cured and its deficiencies supplied by legislative wisdom; and that when finally adopted it may tend to restore peace and harmony to the whole country, and place our republican institutions on a more stable foundation.

Report of the
Committee.

We have thus a brief history of the proposed amendment to change the organic law. The avowed purpose is, to punish insurgents, rebels and traitors, public enemies of the United States, enemies conquered in war, as the report describes them, in order to future peace and safety.

There are several striking incongruities in this proposition. The first is, that while this demand for additional powers to be conferred upon the Federal Government is presented in the report, as if made upon the so-called Confederate States only, and as a punishment to them, it is in fact made upon every State in the Union! If ratified by the requisite number of States, it is to be equally obligatory upon all. Secondly, that while its practical operation would diminish very materially the representation of these States in the House of Representatives, unless they conferred suffrage upon the colored race, Maryland and other States which stood faithfully by the Government, and met every requisition of the war, are placed in the same category with the so-called rebel States, and subject to the same punishment.

Let us now consider the questions involved in the ratification of the proposed amendment as presented to the Legislature of Maryland. And, first, has this amendment been proposed in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution of the United States.

This is a question of the utmost gravity and importance. It is not only the right, but the duty