

So far as concerns the missions proposed to Washington and Montgomery, the reasons, adverse to the resolution referred, are equally conclusive to the minds of the committee. It is but a few days, since a commission of three of our most discreet and distinguished citizens, visited Mr. Lincoln and his cabinet, at the request of this General Assembly. It is true, they were not charged with the duty of proposing a cessation of hostilities; but they were requested to ascertain, and they did fully possess themselves—so far as it was convenient to the Administration to inform them—of its future plans. The report made by the Commissioners to the two Houses, at the informal meeting held in the Hall of this honorable body, must have satisfied us all, that the Administration has its own fixed purposes, not to be bent by negotiation or personal solicitation, and perhaps, indeed, hardly within its own control, under the pressure of the commercial hostility and jealousy at the North, which of late have become such potent elements in the pending sectional crusade. The committee do not believe that the President of the United States would willingly entertain any further discussion of his policy with representatives accredited by this State, and they cannot but remember the vain hopes which heralded, and the disappointments which attended and followed, the noble and persistent efforts of Virginia to arrest the then comparatively distant storm of civil war. What Virginia could not do at that time, Maryland can scarcely do now. It was for this reason that the committee, in reporting the general Resolutions heretofore adopted by the House, contented themselves with an earnest entreaty to the President, on behalf of this State, to set a truce to the war he has begun. They confess that they proposed it with more of desire than hope, and they ask leave to repeat their sincere conviction, that if the Senate will give its high sanction to the resolution referred to and the series to which it belongs, the State will have done as much, in the way not only of mediation, but of self-vindication, as she can practically compass at this time.

If the committee are right, in their judgment as to the inexpediency of the proposed mission to Washington, that to Montgomery could have no practical result, however well intended or cordially received. The Confederate States are making war only in self-defence, and are ready to welcome peace, and meet any overtures half way, but they cannot be expected, and could not with propriety be asked, to arrest their preparations, in the absence of a similar manifestation on the aggressive side.