

III.

In accordance with the eighth section of the twelfth article of the new Constitution, Governor Bradford on September 9, 1864, issued a proclamation calling an election on October 12 and 13 for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of the people in regard to the adoption or rejection of the document. Copies of the Constitution were immediately distributed throughout the state, and a fierce political campaign was entered upon in regard to it. The radical Union men very generally approved of the work of the Convention, but many of the more conservative citizens, including some of those who had hitherto supported the Unconditional Union party, came out publicly in open opposition and used their influence to prevent the adoption of the Constitution. Hon. Reverdy Johnson is perhaps the most striking instance of this latter class. He strongly condemned the requirement of the test oath in the vote on the Constitution, and declared that the Convention in requiring it exceeded its powers by thus acting in a legislative capacity. The Democrats of the state received the Constitution with a storm of indignation, and at once entered vigorously upon an attempt to defeat it in the coming election. This movement was doubtless precipitated by the action of the thirty-five minority members of the Convention, who immediately after the adjournment of that body, and before they had returned to their homes, drew up and published¹ a unanimous protest, addressed "To the Voters of Maryland," in which they denounced the Convention and the new Constitution in the strongest terms. After arguing that the period of a civil war was not the time in which to make any or-

¹ See "Sun," Sept. 10, 1864.