

the State. It is a singular fact that though every Constitution under which we have lived has placed peculiar stress on this part of the organized power of the State, and declared a well regulated Militia to be the proper and natural defence of a free Government, no such regulations as a practical and effectual use of that power requires have ever existed. This neglect has doubtless been chiefly caused by the long season of profound and uninterrupted peace which our Country has enjoyed ; our people have been slow to believe that a hostile invasion or an open resistance of the laws of such a character as to require the whole Military power of the State for its suppression, was a probable occurrence under such a Government as we possessed, and hence the provisions of any Militia law we have ever had, have rarely been of such a character as were adapted to the State of things that now exists.

None will, however, in view of our present condition, question the indispensable necessity for such provisions ; the subject has been more than once urged upon the attention of the General Assembly, so far without any such legislative amendment of the law as the exigency of the case demands. That demand becomes every day more imperative ; since the adjournment of the last Legislature, predatory bands from the Rebel Army have frequently made their way into several counties of the State, especially in the neighborhood of the Potomac River, and inflicted extensive injury upon their inhabitants, as humiliating as it was destructive, and we are daily liable to the like inflictions. We possess no safeguard against these outrages but in a complete organization of our own militia. On the 21st of July last I united with the Governor of Pennsylvania, in a letter to the President of the United States, calling attention to what we considered the importance of guarding, by an adequate military force, the fords on the Potomac, and requesting authority to raise a sufficient number of volunteers in the States of Pennsylvania and Maryland for this purpose ; undertaking to do so, provided the Government would arm and equip them, and credit them to the respective quotas of these two States. A letter from the War Department, in reply, informed us that the authority requested could not be granted. I submit herewith a copy of that correspondence, and refer to it simply as one among other circumstances calculated to show that the organization, by the State, of a home force adequately armed and equipped, has become an indispensable necessity for home protection.

The General Assembly at its last session passed an Act providing for the organization and discipline of the Militia, which after making a few general provisions in the way of an outline of the subject, and repealing all the Militia Laws then