

trance to the harbor of New York, where they are now closely confined, by military order, under many privations and restrictions, at a distance from their families and friends. The order itself which directed their removal described them as "State prisoners"—an appellation hitherto happily unknown in the nomenclature of offenders under the laws and Constitution of this Republic. What may be the further destination or ultimate fate of the victims, can be determined only by those who are able to anticipate and fathom the caprices of irresponsible and arbitrary power.

Upon the facts disclosed by this simple and unexaggerated statement, which has been given without coloring or argument, your Committee propose to comment as briefly as they may. The statement itself would be its own best comment, in any ordinary condition of the public mind. But the tide of partisanship and passion, which is now rolling over the land, seems to have swept away the landmarks of our older and better days, and there is scarce a principle of private right or public freedom, so fundamental or so sacred, as to be sure of recognition, or superior to challenge or denial. A little while ago, and all the sympathies and instincts and convictions of the American people, like all the traditions of their own history and of the mighty and free people from which they sprang, were impulsively upon the side of freedom as against power; of law as against prerogative; of self-government as against government imposed. With a strange and fearful revulsion, they appear, of late, to have rushed back a century, to theories which the Declaration of their Independence and the swords of their fathers were supposed to have buried forever. No man therefore knows the acceptance which may greet, to-day, what yesterday was a consecrated axiom of common right and constitutional liberty. It becomes the representatives of the people of Maryland, then, upon an occasion so important as the present, and in contemplation of grievances so monstrous and so galling as those disclosed by the Memorials before them, to re-assert, distinctly and manfully, the principles which their fathers asserted; to claim, as becomes them, the inheritance which their fathers bequeathed; and to protest and remonstrate, and appeal to their countrymen, against the usurpations, of which their soil has been made the theatre, their State the subject, and their citizens the victims.

It is not a question of Union or Disunion, of North or South, of treason or loyalty. It is the naked and desperate alternative of constitutional government and free institutions on the one hand, and State annihilation and individual enslavement on the other.