

offend and provoke as existed at any former period, you will nevertheless address yourselves, I hope, to the task before you, uninfluenced by any considerations but a regard to the future welfare and advancement of our State. It is probable that even in times past, such influences as I have mentioned would never have given the direction they did to our policy on this subject, but that those conspiring leaders at the South even then looking to a dissolution of the Union, lost no opportunity in promoting that treasonable purpose and by their artful appeals to those passions already excited by the causes mentioned, succeeded in imposing an interdict upon emancipation in Maryland which their recent proceedings beyond anything else have now effectually removed. When they lifted their hands against the Union and pointed to slavery as the Institution upon which their visionary Republic was to rest, they struck a blow at its very vitals in every Border State, under which it has continued to languish and which must inevitably result in its ultimate destruction.

It becomes us therefore, to whom the whole question rightfully belongs to take immediate measures for its removal, and which should be no longer delayed than may be required by a proper respect for those industrial pursuits with which the Institution has been so long and so intimately interwoven, and a humane regard for the slave himself which forbids us to cast him all unprepared for so great a change, too suddenly upon his feeble resources.

SLAVE ENLISTMENTS.

I feel it to be my duty in this connection to call to your attention a subject, which for some time past, has greatly agitated and alarmed the people in several of the counties of the State, and caused many complaints and appeals to me for interposition by some of the best and most faithful of our citizens. About four months since recruiting officers for the first time made their appearance among the slave population of the State with the avowed purpose of enlisting in the military service all colored persons of the required age and condition who would present themselves. No orders from the Head Quarters of the Army, authorizing such a proceeding had been made known and no rules seemed to exist establishing any certain course of proceeding. The recruiting officer exercised apparently an arbitrary discretion, stripping some neighborhoods and leaving others untouched, taking frequently the slaves of owners, whose loyalty had been never questioned, in some cases when these owners were themselves absent in the Army or Navy struggling against the enemy, and leaving those of others, whose want of loyalty was equally notorious. They frequently took, not only such as were fit