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ing the representatives of the people of Mary-
land, in Convention assembled at the capital
of the State, here to reorganize the State
government; nothing could have been more
foreign to my mind than an intention to par-
ticipate in any of the debates of this body. I
knew that here I was to meet men of age and
experience—men of great strength of mind and
most extensive intelligence—in whose wis-
dom, learning, and patriotism the people of
the State have all confidence. At the same
time I was not forgetful of my own want of all
the prerequisites necessary to successfully de-
fend and support, otherwise than by my votes,
those great propositions which have been
made by the Union men of Maryland; for the
adoption of which this Convention has been
called, for the perpetuity of the Union and
for the good of our State. I therefore sup-
posed that my voice would never be heard
during the deliberations of this body, except
on the call of the roll for the yeas and nays,
or on a motion for the previous question; and
it has only been within the last day or two
that I have determined to throw aside the
modesty which with me is sometimes a weak-
ness or a dead weight and very oppressive,
and for a very brief space of time summoning
to my aid all the fortitude of my nature,
trespass upon the time, attention, and pa-
tience of this Convention with some expres-
sion of my views upon a question in which I
feel a very deep interest, and on the proper
solution of which depends, in a very large
measure, the future prosperity of the State.
Though having thus determined, I am not
forgetful of my inability to deal with the sub-
ject now under consideration with either jus-
tice to the subject or satisfaction to myself;
yet I desire to place myself on the record that
my children may know, after the Almighty,
God shall have removed their father from the
stage of life, and that the descendants of my
family, and their collateral relations may
know, and above all, that the people of my
county may know, what considerations have
induced me to take a stand in favor of uni-
versal freedom, and in opposition to tyranny,
despotism, and misrule, in whatever shape it
may be found, whether in the general admin-
istration of government or in the institutions
of societies. And here, in the conclusion of
this first part of my introductory remarks, I
must say that during the whole of the time
that I shall occupy in addressing the Presi-
dent of this body, I shall be unable to erase
the conviction from my own mind, however
erroneous that conviction may be, that in
availing myself of the opportunity to give
expression to my views on the momentous
subject now under consideration, I am avail-
ing myself of the courtesy of the Convention
rather than of a right belonging to me as a
member of the Convention.
Mr. President, you have listened to the
views of gentlemen learned in the law—or

ganic, common, and statute—learned in mor-
als, physics, and metaphysics, and deeply
versed in historical lore—gentlemen of polit-
ical renown, whose names are well known
throughout the State, and even beyond the
limits of the State,—gentlemen distinguished
for their abilities as lawyers and statesmen,
whose training has been first in colleges of
perhaps the highest repute; then in the va-
rious courts of the State where they have
long since become accustomed to public dis-
putations in the presence and hearing of
learned courts. These gentlemen have also
long since habituated themselves to making
popular harangues on the public stump to
the multitude, and, above all, are perfectly
familiar with the transaction of business by
large deliberative bodies. But now, sir, you
are to listen to views expressed by a plain,
unvarnished, unsophisticated farmer, whose
highest aspirations have ever been the growth
of good crops and raising fat cattle, to obtain
remunerative prices for the same, and the
maintenance of a good character. From the
privacy and seclusion, the quiet and retire-
ment of the neighborhood of a small village,
far removed from the din and bustle of a
large commercial metropolis—far removed
from the strife of party, party faction, and
political intrigue—and with all his want of
the erudition and experience necessary for an
accomplished statesman, he has been called
by the people of his county to assist in the
highest council of the State—to assist in the
formation of a new organic law for the peo-
ple of the State, and now he is here and ac-
tually occupying the floor of this Convention
in response to that call. As I have not asked
for the distinguished honor, which my people
have seen fit to confer upon me, they alone
must be held responsible for any lack of
ability on my part, to perform the duties
which they have seen fit to impose upon me.
The subject now occupying the attention of
this body is of the gravest character, and is
entitled to, and I doubt not has already re-
ceived at the hands of every gentleman enti-
tled to a seat on this floor, the most careful
and serious consideration, and before the
final vote on the adoption or rejection of this
article is taken, (which vote must be taken
by the people at the public ballot box,) the
voters of the State are entitled to all the light
which finite wisdom can throw on the sub-
ject.
Inasmuch as the institution of negro sla-
very has been propagated and strengthened
in this State, and in other Southern States,
by popular prejudices—prejudices created by
personal rather than public interests, it be-
comes necessary, even painfully so, to deal
with the subject with unloved hands. To
attack this ebony idol, before which the peo-
ple of the South have for many decades bowed
in humble submission, and to whose fates the
people of the North have long been accus-