

enough to give the Federal Government a bonus of twenty or thirty millions worth of property. Ah! but we are met here: But you must save the Union—make any sacrifice for that. Mr. President, is the salvation of this Union and this country dependent upon whether 87,183 negroes are freed or not? If this be the prop and support relied upon for the salvation of the country, it is weak indeed. Their argument is fallacious. If the salvation of the country depended upon the freeing of the negroes, then indeed is the country virtually saved, for the fact is patent that the negro is virtually in fact, if not in law, free already. So, after all, the majority of this House cannot take the credit entirely to themselves of having accomplished this great progressive work of freeing the negro. The work in fact was completed, and Maryland citizens are now called together as adepts, skilled in this kind of knowledge, to give the finishing touch to the work.

Men seem to have lost all idea of right and justice. These great principles, the sure and only true foundations upon which any government can be based securely, seem for the present hidden and engulfed in the carnival of blood by which we are surrounded. Man seems to have lost sight of the rights of his fellow man, and in the whirl and excitement of a general destruction, grasps all that he can for his own personal advancement and gain.

Again, Mr. President, we are told that this property is now required for public use, not that of the State, but that of the General Government. What will our friends that claim to owe paramount allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States do? Truly, if they free the negro upon this principle, they leave themselves in an unenviable dilemma. What will they do with that article of the Constitution of the United States, which says: "Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation?" But a few hours since, and this Constitution was asserted to be the paramount and supreme law of the land, and State Constitutions and State laws, so far as they contravened that instrument, were nullities. Then they violate by this article the very principles they have asserted. If the Constitution of the United States be the paramount and supreme law, then, as it acknowledges our right to this property, until it is changed the action of this body amounts to a mere nothing. The right of property in slaves will still exist unfettered, uninterrupted, and protected by the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution guarantees to us this species of property.

Again, we are told that it is a matter of public necessity that slavery should be abolished. I would propound a question to my legal brethren—what is the difference between public use and public necessity? How

would a court of law construe the two? Is there any lawyer in this body that will assert that, under the one, the owner would be entitled to compensation and not under the other. I humbly apprehend that the words "necessity" and "use," as they are here connected, would be defined by any honest, intelligent judge to mean one and the same thing, to have one and the same signification.

Again, we are told that the abolition of slavery is caused by the present war, that it follows as a natural consequence attendant on this war. I cannot agree with such deductions as these. Government is made and intended to protect its citizens in times of war as well as in times of peace. The Government of the United States stands bound under this obligation to the citizens of Maryland. I would ask the majority of this house if the government has become too poor to pay for this property if they require it? If it be able to pay for it, why then commit such a flagrant act of injustice upon the citizens of this State? Men who have toiled and labored for years, yea, for a lifetime, and have invested the proceeds of their labor in property guaranteed to them by the Constitution of the United States, recognized and secured to them by the laws of our own State, are now to be deprived and stripped of that property without color of law, or even a shadow of right. But, Mr. President, I will not dwell upon the manifold excuses and pleas urged by the dominant party for the destruction of this right of property. We can learn a lesson from the old fable of the wolf and the lamb.

Again, Mr. President, this principle of destroying the property of citizens is dangerous in the extreme. It now truly only destroys the right of the master to his slave. But if the power exists by which this species of property can be taken from its owner, how long will it be before it will be exercised in depriving us of some other kind? How long will a man be secure in his home, and his other property? If we have a right without just compensation and just cause, thus rudely and ruthlessly to strip a man of his well-defined and vested rights, what safety, what security remains for us that those which now exist will continue for any durable time? How long will it be before some fanatic will rise in the land and deify the horse or the cow as they have already deified the negro? Yea, 'tis truly an age of progress, and I fear 'tis tending faster in the direction of barbarism and heathenism than in that of moral Christianity.

I would ask the gentlemen what they intend doing with the negro after he is free? Does the past experience of years convince us that his condition is bettered? Does it not teach us that squalid poverty, want, vice and infamy in a majority of cases soon claim the negro as their victim? How has this poor creature been treated by his professed North-