

suppress the rebellion, I have cheerfully discharged an imperative duty and met the wishes, I am sure, of a vast majority of our people; — the performance of that duty however gives me no other authority than I before possessed for the protection of the property of the people of Maryland — My inclination to furnish all the protection within my power to all citizens of the State, and for all descriptions of property has never been wanting, but I have so far been unable to perceive how the power itself in the case you refer to can be properly exercised — Whilst these fugitive slaves were in Washington where no obstacle existed to the execution of civil process, and the fugitive slave law could be enforced by the ordinary means, I used all the influence I could to prevent any obstacle to its execution and was assured, it should be enforced, and I believe it was — But when there I possessed no power whatever in the premises, and no influence except in the way of advice or exhortation — I can well understand however that insuperable difficulties exist to the practical execution of the Fugitive slave law in Alexandria, were the President ever so willing and anxious to enforce it there — The machinery necessary for the issuing and service of the ordinary civil process must be entirely wanting — These slaves are in Virginia, one of the States in Rebellion where as yet the only power wielded by Constitutional authority — except to a limited extent by Gov. Pierpont in Western Virginia — is by the Military arm of the Government, and that as you know has been prohibited by law from interfering for the arrest or delivery of such fugitives —

There would just now from the peculiar condition of things in that region, be I presume a practical difficulty in procuring under the ordinary requisition from any of the States, the arrest and delivery of any offender who might there find shelter — Whilst therefore Sir, I deeply sympathize with the loyal citizens whose slaves are now at large in Alexandria, I cannot, I am sorry to say, suggest any practicable method by which the evil can be redressed.

But Sir, we must bear in mind, and the recollection may perhaps teach us to submit with some philosophy to our losses, that it is one of the casualties of War, one of the direct and anticipated fruits of this atrocious rebellion, got up under pretence of establishing a better security for this very species of property; and when we remember the heart rending calamities which it is scattering broad cast throughout the land, I shall thank God, if our State and her citizens are never called on to endure disasters more serious than the losses referred to.

You take occasion to say that you do not believe the people of this State or any of the Border States will come to the rescue this time with half the alacrity and enthusiasm that they would, if they had some guaranty for their slave property — And that the people will not voluntarily embark in a cause which they believe will be suicidal to their interests."