

mand. His Excellency, through the Department of State, took an early opportunity to assure me of his deep abhorrence of the crime committed, and of his determination to exert the energies of the law to bring the offenders to justice, and to prevent similar occurrences in the future. Copies of this correspondence are herewith transmitted. Without designing to exhibit the least want of confidence in the will and power of the officers of the General Government to make good the assurances given by the President, I determined, nevertheless, that Maryland should not be an idle spectator of such proceedings as might be instituted by the Federal Authorities. The blood of a Marylander cried out from the earth; whilst, the Genius of this Union called aloud for a vindication of outraged laws, upon the faithful observance of which alone it can rest. I anticipated, and it soon became apparent, that, the flame of excitement would spread from the hills of Maryland to the savannahs of the extreme South; until every southern State would unite in one common feeling of horror and indignation. To see justice done, and to guard against disastrous results, were now the two main objects of my solicitude. Experience has shown to every man, that, the guilty may occasionally escape justice, without culpable design or neglect on the part of its administrators. Courts, Juries, and Counsel may be pure and firm; yet, the evidence may fail, or the law prove insufficient. In view of such a possible contingency, I felt the importance of placing myself in a position to be able to satisfy the people of Maryland, and other Southern States, that, the failure to convict the Christiana rebels was not to be taken as proof of the negligence, apathy, or prejudice of Northern Judges and Jurors. Therefore, I determined to send the Attorney General of Maryland, either as a participant in, or witness of the prosecutions. His high personal character, acknowledged ability, and official station, would, I well knew, command the respect and confidence of all. His report could not fail to give a proper direction to public sentiment. Upon his testimony, the people of Maryland, and the South, would rest contented, even though the trials might result in the acquittal of the murderers, if he vouched for the fairness and impartiality of the proceedings. In the absence of such reliable testimony, I was aware that, an acquittal would be regarded, here, as *prima facie* evidence of the triumph of a corrupt fanaticism. Such was the very evident prospect before me, when I resolved upon my course. I, accordingly, instructed the Attorney General to attend the preliminary investigation, held at Lancaster, before Alderman Reigart, (whose firm and noble bearing entitles him to the respect of every honorable and patriotic citizen;) and, to report the result to me. He did so. As soon as I ascertained that, the criminals had been arrested and held for trial, upon a charge of high treason against the United States, I further instructed the Attorney General to apply for permission to participate in the prosecution; and, in the event of a refusal, then to be present at the trials, and report the proceedings