

Believing all danger to be past, and reposing in fancied security under the protecting ægis of their country's laws, the horror and amazement of our people, who were looking forward to a long career of happiness and prosperity, may be readily conjectured, when the astounding intelligence reached them of the dreadful tragedy at Christiana. It fell upon their startled ears like a burst of thunder from a cloudless sky; and for a time its effects appeared to be equally stunning and bewildering. Recovering from the temporary stupor into which they had been thrown, they were enabled to realize the perilous position they occupied, and the necessity for immediate action to avert the dangers by which they were threatened. All their bright anticipations of future peace and security were in a moment dissipated by a deed of atrocity and bloodshed unparalleled in the annals of crime. The cup of hope which they had but just raised to their lips, had been rudely dashed to the ground, and replaced by the poisoned chalice of injustice and outrage, which they felt they were expected to drink to its very dregs. They saw, or thought they saw, the star of Maryland's destiny about to set forever in the grave of her martyred son, and for a time the popular mind staggered beneath the crushing blow. Deep, terrific indignation pervaded all classes of the community, and the *masses* swayed to and fro amid the storm of passion, like the sturdy oaks of the forest before the wide sweep of the hurrican's wing. Their reverence for their dead sires who had constructed the temple of Union and Independence—their duty as law-loving and law-abiding citizens of the Union—the holy and undying love for that Union, which they had ever cherished in their heart of hearts—all, *all* gave way for the time to a sense of the tremendous wrong that had been inflicted upon them, and dark and desperate feelings of revenge and retribution usurped their place. Terrible, indeed, was the crisis; and it needed but the directing efforts of active and influential *leaders* to have precipitated a catastrophe that it would be painful to contemplate. But, fortunately, the efforts of our leading citizens were directed to a different object—that of soothing the popular mind, and calming the tempest of passion to which it had temporarily yielded. They pointed to the Ark of the Constitution, shattered though it was by hands that should never have been raised save in its defence, resting quietly upon the surface of the troubled waters, whilst the banner of the UNION still floated proudly and triumphantly from its dome; and they reminded the outraged citizens, that the *laws* enacted under the provisions of *that* Constitution were amply sufficient to inflict retributive justice upon the daring perpetrators of this deed of blood, as well as to secure them in the peaceable enjoyment of their rights for the future. They told them too, that the good and patriotic citizens of Pennsylvania would doubtless hasten to wipe from their escutcheon the foul blot with which it had been tarnished, by aiding in bringing to punishment the