

I believed that I was thoroughly acquainted with the proclivities of a majority of the Members of that Legislature. I was perfectly convinced that they desired Maryland to leap, no matter how blindly, into the vortex of secession. I believed the same to be true of the most of those citizens who so persistently urged the assembling of the Legislature. I was, therefore, unwilling to allow that Body an opportunity so to misuse its great power; not doubting that, in imitation of the Legislatures of the then seceded States, it would exert that power to the great detriment of the People of Maryland.

It is true that I earnestly desired the People to have an opportunity of expressing their will at the ballot-box, in regard to the position of Maryland, and I would most cheerfully have afforded them such opportunity if I had possessed the constitutional power to do so, in any other way than by convening the Legislature.

But I could not trust that Body in so momentous a crisis. I did not believe the people could possibly have a fair and free expression of their will under the provisions of any law for that purpose which might be enacted by that Legislature. I was sure that through some juggle Maryland would be forced to secede. I need not speculate here in regard to the mode by which this would have been accomplished; whether by the bayonet or by some other equally cogent or persuasive process. I merely assert that I believed the plans of the secessionists would have been accomplished if they had had the great power of the Legislature to aid them.

I was, during all that time, positively convinced that a majority of the people of Maryland did not wish the State to secede. They knew that the secession of Maryland would attempt to carry with it the possession of the National Capital: and knowing also that our Northern and Western brethren could not be expected to acquiesce peaceably in such a step, I concluded that our people were not insane enough to wish this State to become one vast battle field and our homes made desolate.

I continued, then, to refuse to convene the Legislature. I hoped that nothing but *time* was needed to cause even zealots for secession to change their opinions; or, at least, forbear their designs. In this, it appears, I did not accurately measure the extent of their madness.

But I did not know how much I erred in this regard, until my eyes were opened by the occurrences in Baltimore on the 19th of April, and the subsequent events connected with that treasonable outbreak.

I then concluded that I could not hope to gain much more