

such a pass that my own property may be confiscated," &c.

It was this war upon one of the constitutional guarantees of property, thus made and thus persistently urged with all the zeal of bigotry and fanaticism that has deluged the land in blood and broken up the government. Sir, every body knows what has occurred in the last few years, how Congress passed a series of compromise measures, that patriots everywhere fondly hoped would cause the subsidence of angry strife. Everybody knows that "the fugitive slave law," admitted to be constitutional, was disregarded, and if enforced at all, it was done at the point of the bayonet and the mouth of the cannon. Everybody knows that a peaceful State was invaded by armed fanatics, who seized at midnight upon Harper's Ferry, imprisoned the citizens, and were only dislodged when an armed force they could not resist drove them out. Everybody knows that when Virginia hung, as she ought to have hung, the traitor who had dared to break her laws and invade her territory, he was then and has been ever since deified as one of the martyrs of the age, and the infamous name of John Brown is to-day worshipped in the North as one of the household Gods—"the bravest and best man of the age."

Everybody knows how the last Presidential canvass was conducted, and the result of it. And yet you tell me in the face of all these facts, that the institution of slavery which was here before the nation had an existence, and which has lived with it contemporaneously from that hour to this, and until the past three years without a jar and without a conflict—you tell me that that has made the war and broken the Union. It is not so. It is not true; it was not slavery. It was the abolition party. It was the doctrines of the higher law, that doctrine that the Constitution and the laws of the land are subordinate and secondary to some undefined and shadowy myth existing in a distempered and disordered brain, and which has so obtained at the North that it has overturned reason and common sense, and to-day finds friends and advocates upon this floor. Gentlemen have also said, that the lust for power and place, that ambition and pride led the Southern leaders to take the step they did. Sir, why will men, sensible, intelligent men, be so blind? Why shut their eyes to facts so palpable and plain before them? Is it credible? Is it to be believed that if the people of the South were betrayed by their leaders, that those leaders would not have been hung long ago, by an injured and an outraged people, and yet what do we see? We see that whole people, with an unanimity wonderful and unparalleled, rising as one man, and sustaining those leaders, and bearing up and battling against a power and a force, before which in other times and

other days empires would have been swept away. Again, sir, those men who are now sitting in Richmond, and controlling the destiny of the Confederacy, were, for the most part, sitting at Washington before these stormy times came over us. They were the Representatives of these States and these people in Washington, under the Government they have discarded, honored, trusted, and beloved to a degree that has certainly been unexampled in the North.

If it had been their object to gratify human ambition; if the desires of the human heart for pomp, place and power, had alone been their motives, there was in the possession and enjoyment of these men, who represented the South at Washington, enough to satisfy the utmost for which they could wish or desire.

I say, sir, and perhaps I say it at the risk of incurring the admonition of the gentleman from Baltimore, "that I may perhaps not get paid for my negroes,"—that the people of the North have not done justice to the motives that have prompted this great uprising of an entire people. We may believe, and I do believe, there was no sufficient cause to justify secession when it took place. Our views and our opinions are influenced by the circumstances surrounding us. We as Marylanders, living upon the border, where the first shock of the conflict would be felt; where the first flash of the thunderbolt would fall, did not and do not think that there was sufficient cause for the disruption that took place. But does it follow that they did not think differently? Does it follow that they do not feel justified in their own consciences and in the sight of high heaven, in the course they took. And I beg gentlemen to remember that whilst we are forming opinions for ourselves and acting upon them, other men have the same right, and are doing the same thing. I mourn over the condition of my country as deeply as any member of this Convention. I believe that no greater calamity could befall this nation than a separation—but that has come. They have gone off, whether rightfully or wrongfully, they have gone in the face of war and battle and bloodshed, at the sacrifice of life and fortune and family, and of everything that makes life desirable, or gives a charm to life. They have dared to risk the battle, to throw themselves upon the issue of war, relying upon the God of nations, and I am bound to believe, I cannot help believing that these people—no matter what we think of them—must think, must believe, that they have right and justice on their side. What is the prospect the future holds out to us? Can this Union be restored by the abolition of slavery?

Notwithstanding the insertion in your bill of rights of the doctrine of paramount allegiance; notwithstanding the edict is about to go forth from this Hall, in the language of gentlemen; "that the shackles are about to