

legislative departments of the Federal Government, we have a most equitable claim, which it is difficult to understand how any citizen of Maryland can refuse, or hesitate to urge.

The President of the United States took the pains by a special message to Congress in March, 1862, to call this subject to the particular attention of Congress, and to urge upon that body the justice and propriety of making compensation to any State that would emancipate its slaves even by a process of gradual emancipation. But this national promise thus held out to the States to induce their consent to State emancipation, did not stop here. The Congress of the United States, adopting the suggestion of the President, a few weeks thereafter passed joint resolutions, *solemnly promising rational remuneration* to any State that should adopt this policy.

I need not read the resolutions, because they are appended as an amendment to the resolutions to be acted upon after the Convention shall have acted upon this 23d article.

And the President at the opening of the next session of Congress, in December, 1862, gave us more at large his views upon the subject, and avowed his support of a gradual emancipation policy. He showed that by the adoption of a system which should liberate all the slaves by the year 1900, the object he recommended would be accomplished.

If, then, Maryland, hearkening to these suggestions and to such advice, with the solemn promise of the legislative and executive departments of the nation to assist in providing compensation, if she would but adopt even a gradual emancipation policy, goes even beyond what these departments advised, and gives immediate freedom to her slaves, I say boldly, that every principle of good faith and fair dealing, even, as between individuals, and much more on the part of a great nation demands a fulfilment of that promise.

It is difficult to understand how any son of Maryland, whether by adoption or by birth, can hesitate to urge this demand. It would seem strange, but it appears that there are some who are anxious to find excuses against compliance with that promise. We hear it sometimes said, and it was said a few days ago by the gentleman from Baltimore (Mr. Cushing), that there was an offer, once to make an appropriation for such a purpose, which offer was refused.

Suppose that that statement was true. It would be like a man owing a debt, and to escape the payment, pleading the act of limitation. But I deny the truth of the assertion; and I challenge any one to prove the fact that the Government of the United States ever offered to the State of Maryland compensation for the freeing of her slaves, except

that contained in the resolutions to which I have referred.

If this were even so, and no one was injured by such refusal, to hold the State estopped thereby would indicate rather a desire to avoid the payment of a demand justly founded, than to stand by her substantial interests in obtaining for her the payment of a claim to which she has now for the first time had an opportunity to establish her title. For you remember that this action upon the part of Congress occurred after the Legislature adjourned. If my memory serves me, it was provided that emancipation should take place in the States within a certain period, that is, prior to January 1st, 1865, I think. Now, I contend that as the Legislature of the State of Maryland had no right to emancipate her slaves, that right being withheld from her by the Constitution of the State, and as it is now that for the first time the sovereign people have sent their representatives here to legislate upon the great organic law of the State, this is the first opportunity that Maryland has had to meet the obligation imposed upon her in that act.

This random assertion just referred to, that the State refused this payment when she might have secured it, is founded I presume upon the vote of some of the representatives from this State against an amendment proposed to a bill to provide compensation for slavery in Missouri.

But suppose they had all voted against such a proposition, how upon any principle of law, or justice, or morals, or common honesty can you torture such a vote by her representatives or some of them in Congress into an authorized action of the State itself in refusing compensation? It was the action of these representatives alone, at a time when the State had no title to such compensation, and when very probably these representatives desired to avoid committing their State to any moral obligation to emancipate her slaves when the people had not indicated any such purpose, and when an assent to the acceptance of such a compensation might possibly be construed as binding them to adopt that policy.

I am therefore for pressing by every legitimate means our claim to compensation by the General Government, founded as that claim is upon the promises of that Government which ought and I believe will hold such a promise sacred. As my friend from Howard (Mr. Sands) last evening read his platform, I will add that we of Baltimore county, seven in number, are pledged each to the other and to our county to do everything that is honorable and fair in order to obtain this compensation.

The second mode of compensation referred to—compensation by the State itself by taxation of its citizens—is founded upon very different considerations, and to that I have al-