

The Legislature is, therefore, invoked to take this subject into its most serious consideration, and to pass a law submitting to the decision of the people of Maryland at the next election, the question of the expediency and necessity of a convention to revise and remodel the Constitution of the State. Although it is by no means conceded that an act of the Legislature is indispensable to give vitality to the sovereign power, it is nevertheless, admitted for many and weighty reasons, that the object can be more conveniently reached by legislative sanction, than by any other process. Should such an act be passed, with a view to guard against disorder, to avoid panic and alarm and to protect the just rights of all the counties it ought to contain ample provisions for the organization of the Convention, fixing the time and place of its assembling; the basis of representation in that body; the compensation of its members and officers, and the manner in which its work shall be finally submitted for ratification or rejection.

I have thus endeavored to discharge a solemn obligation believed to be due to those by whose suffrages I have been elevated to the Chief Magistracy of the State.

A discussion of the causes of the war with Mexico, in which the country is now engaged, or of the manner in which hostilities have been prosecuted, might not be considered appropriate to the present occasion. While the constituted authorities of the country, with extraordinary unanimity, have declared that the war exists by the act of Mexico, the wisdom which has conceived and the skill and valor which executed the plans of campaign, are vindicated by the brilliant and uninterrupted successes with which our arms have been crowned.

There is one topic, however growing collaterally out of the question, in which the people of Maryland, in common with the South, have a deep and abiding interest. A scheme is already on foot, and will be pertinaciously pressed, for the exclusion of slavery from any territory that may be acquired by a treaty of peace.

The territory of the United States now owned, or to be hereafter acquired, is the common property of all the States, purchased with the common treasure, or won with the common blood of the whole people.

The institution of slavery is regarded by the constitution as a municipal regulation, and property in slaves is recognized, guaranteed and protected. The right of the citizens of each and all of the States to emigrate with their personal effects to any territory of the Union is clear and indefeasible. Any regulation, therefore, intended to exclude the people of the slaveholding States from an equal participation in the enjoyment of territory to be hereafter acquired by the United States, would be a palpable violation of the constitution - a deprivation of the citizens of such States of their interest in the common property and a degradation of the States themselves from an equal rank with the other States of the Union.

Such a condition of things is not for a moment to be tolerated. The subject admits of neither compromise nor conciliation, and if persisted in, must inevitably endanger the permanence of the Union. To arrest, if possible, so great an evil, it would for the representatives of the people of Maryland, respectfully and fraternally, but with firmness and dignity, to warn those who are engaged in this nefarious crusade against the rights of the South and the compromises of the constitution, of the painful consequences to which persistence may lead.

The condition of the finances, as represented in the annual message of the