

ence to that particular party, what right had you to take it from me? I want you to answer me that question. Did I, as a slave-owner, ever invade the rights of the North? Look at the history of our own State. Look at the case of Gorsuch; look at the case of Kennedy. Had not they a right to claim their slaves according to the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution of the United States? What was the result? Will any member of this body undertake to tell me, under such circumstances as these, that I have not a right to my property in slaves, and to protect that right? Is it not a constitutional right? It is not only a constitutional right of my State, but a constitutional right guaranteed to me by the Constitution of the United States.

In my county it has been said that a man is not loyal who is not willing to give up his slaves. If you are not for the abolition of slavery, I cannot testify to your loyalty, and do not care how many slaves you may have lost. Here are the extremes. Every man knows that so far as regards this Union, no man is more devoted to it than I was. I had been educated to look upon this government as the noblest structure that the wisdom or the genius of man had ever devised. And I say still, sir, that could it be administered in the spirit of our fathers, the sun never shone on so blessed a land. It possessed within itself all the elements of greatness, everything that was necessary, of climate, soil, or production. Though we had our sectional or geographical divisions, yet these diversities constituted a ligament that bound the Union together. I greatly regret that any circumstance should ever have occurred by which this great country has been severed.

But what is the state of things now? What was the case in the ancient empire of Rome, not in the age of christianity and enlightenment? When Verres, who was a prætor in Sicily, by his exactions and crimes had rendered himself odious to the Sicilians, and they brought their charges against him, and he was arraigned by Cicero—I recollect very well reading when I was a boy, that beautiful exclamation of Cicero's in his oration against Verres, that even the declaration, "I am a Roman citizen," could not save from the scores of the lictors. How is it here? I stand here an American citizen. What is the boast of every heart and of every soul that vibrated in the country? We were in the habit of telling the down-trodden of other lands that this was the land of freedom, that this was the asylum for the oppressed, a desired haven of rest, a home, a refuge. But does the exclamation now, "I am an American citizen," protect you in your rights?

When Æneas was summoned into the presence of queen Dido, and told her of the destruction of his country in the sacking of

Troy, he could not have felt more poignantly, more keenly than I do, when I have looked upon the calamities of my country. I can say with Æneas, *Magna pars fui*, though not a sufferer to the extent of many of my people. If you wish to see the realization of this mad scheme, go to my county, especially if you were ever familiar with her history. There you can see the footprints of desolation; men reduced from affluence and luxury, almost to beggary, bankrupt in fortune, without the means of educating their children, not because they have been disloyal, for I repudiate and throw back with contempt, the idea of my people being disloyal.

Had they contented themselves with forcing into the army those who were fit for military service, I do not know that I should complain upon this floor. But when they take the aged, and infirm, and helpless, for nothing in the world but to support, but to me and my people invaluable, when they induced them to leave their masters and mistresses, I say that it is an outrage, and I am here this day to protest against it. What have I done in this matter? I had the honor, when a member of the Senate, to introduce a series of resolutions looking to the correction of this evil. By the courtesy of the Senate the rules were suspended, and a joint committee of the two Houses was appointed to wait upon the President to inquire whether these things were done by his authority.

[The hour having expired, the hammer fell.]

On motion of Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's, the time was extended for fifteen minutes.

Mr. BILLINGSLEY proceeded: When that series of resolutions reached this House, it met with opposition and was defeated by one vote. But I will do the President the justice upon this floor to say that I do not believe that if he knew the extent to which those outrages were carried, he would ever have countenanced it. But this has been done by the action of the government. I am free to confess and candid enough to acknowledge that so far as slavery is concerned, I look upon it as practically dead. But the difference between you and me in that particular is this: I am willing to admit that it is dead; not dead though by the action of my own State, but dead by the action of the General Government. If there is ever a returning sense of justice in the country, I believe, as conscientiously as I believe I have a soul to be saved, that this government if able, will pay me for it. But you liberate the slaves, you who have control over it, because it is an institution which you have the right to control, and what right have you to go to the General Government and demand compensation? See the injustice that you are doing. I would rather have no pledge upon the face of the earth this day and trust to the General Government, than