

Slaveholders Protecting Themselves.

Our readers will recollect a recently published account of the "tarring and feathering" of a man named Bowers, in Kent County on the Eastern Shore, who was proved to have been extensively engaged in assisting the slaves of that county to escape from their masters. It seems that many residents of that county shared in the anti-slavery

summary punishment and expulsion from the community had wrongs produced not a little excitement among them. The feeling went even so far as to produce threats of lynching against those who had lynched Bowers. In consequence of these proceedings, many of the leading citizens and slaveholders of Kent, including Senator PEARCE, Judge CHAMBERS and others, called a public meeting for the purpose of expressing the views of the slaveholders on the subject,

and their determination for the future against the domestic enemies of the institution. The largeness of the meeting, the earnest and decided language of the speakers, the emphatic resolutions adopted, and the eminent character of the citizens engaged in it, render its proceedings matter of great interest to all the slaveholding regions of the State.

The meeting assembled at Chestertown on the 17th inst., and was attended by citizens of the adjoining counties, as well as those of Kent—its avowed object, the consideration of the proper measures to be adopted to promote the better security of slave property, rendering its action important to the whole section. Judge CHAMBERS was called to the chair, and stated that the meeting had been called at the suggestion of the Agricultural Society of the county, whose representatives, the Board of Directors, were in session on Saturday last, and advised this meeting. "He thought the time had arrived when it became proper to take some decisive measure. It was his duty, in his presence to give a detailed history of late events in the county. All were informed of them.—Nor was it necessary to enter into the merits of the question, whether those who had driven from the county a man universally believed to be engaged in the most criminal and mischievous intercourse with our slaves, had executed their purpose in a way to deserve condemnation. He was free to say he would have advised a different course, but that is not now the matter demanding consideration. What was done and could not be undone. The more important inquiry is, what is doing and to be done? Matters must be dealt with as they existed. The fact was, then, that we were to provide for the protection of slaveholders and the friends of slaveholders, against the lawless attacks, as well as threats, of men who were professing to be the friends of law and order, while in the most palpable violation of it—men who manifested their aversion to every thing like illegal violence, and their contempt for their neighbors for no other alleged offence than a decided detestation of abolitionists and incendiaries."

He proceeded, at considerable length, to show that they who condemned the summary proceedings that had been resorted to, under the circumstances, were no friends of the slaveholders. He also referred to a defect in the law, rendering any regularly legal conviction of such offenders almost impossible, since, in almost every case, the negroes sought to be concealed by these incendiaries and spies were the only witnesses who could prove the facts—and yet could not testify, under the present state of the law, because the offenders were white men. It was due to the protection of the community that in such exceptional cases as this, the law should be changed. "These abolitionists," said he "insist that these slaves ought to have all civil rights and privileges—and we would practice their own doctrine upon them by making them co-equals in the witness box." He had neglected or refused to amend the law, when applied to. "Something must be done. It was for this meeting to determine what. They must of course expect to be abused and misrepresented by the abolition press. This was their trade. For himself he did not care the snap of his finger for the abuse of every abolition editor in the country. He was pretty well used to it. He thought two prominent objects should be

to the minds of all who knew him that this man was actively engaged in seducing or aiding slaves in this county to abscond from their employers. Of late years these escapes have been in gangs, as many as eleven or more going off at once, and together with the best horses and carriages of their masters, and others, and under circumstances which show such concert of action and such minute information as could only be furnished by some one engaged in the business of planning and assisting escapes. Before the tarring of Bowers a plan of escape was detected which was defeated while in progress.—Bowers was supposed to be connected with this. The testimony, however, was not competent in a Maryland Court, though quite convincing to those who obtained it.

It had, therefore, been determined by some respectable citizens of the county, as no legal remedy could be had for an evil severely condemned by the laws, and most injurious and fatal to the property of the county, that they would take measures to expel Bowers from their midst. He had been permitted to avow himself an ultra-abolitionist without molestation, but it was no longer to be borne that he should remain in the midst of a community whose prosperity and security he was believed to be constantly endangering and impairing. He was therefore by these gentlemen induced to leave his home at night, was taken to the woods, tarred and directed to leave the county. The least possible violence was used. No violence or disrespect was shown to his wife, as has been falsely stated—no personal injury done to her. The party were sober men; not stimulated by liquor, but quietly resolved to abate a nuisance so dangerous to them and all others, holders of slave property in the county. Mr. PEARCE showed the mutual dependence of all classes in the community upon each other, and how impossible it was to strike down the prosperity of one class, particularly the largest, without affecting injuriously all others. While he admitted readily the breach of law, he showed how in all cases the facts and circumstances which provoked it, so modified its character as to justify and demand that the offended majesty of the law should be appeased by a slight atonement, and that where there was no moral condemnation attaching to an act, the penalties of the law were made as nearly nominal as could be, and that in such cases, public sentiment always justified such a sentence. But in this case it was said that certain parties in the county, not remarkable as law-abiding people, had become so indignant on behalf of Bowers, and the violation of law on his person that they talked of the propriety of lynching those who were engaged in this proceeding, and had threatened with violence many peaceable persons who had no connection with the affair, but were supposed not to disapprove of it. On one occasion one young gentleman had been assaulted and knocked down because his father was supposed to be one of the party who tarred Bowers.—Another equally unconcerned was violently beaten, and unusual threats had been made against others. These people were few in number, not, as he believed, one-twentieth of the adults of the county. It was to be hoped that their indignation would evaporate with their liquor, and that when free from the influence of John Barley corn, they would come to their senses. But if they persisted in their course of violence they would be met by violence, and the contest would not be doubtful—they would be crushed completely, promptly, and if they were not, it was time for conservative people to sell their lands to Northern men for what they could get, and look for homes where constitutional and legal rights were respected and enforced, and where it was not permitted that the corruptor of slaves, the emissary of the abolitionists and the secret seducer, should find immunity in the practice of his infamous employ.

The learned Senator proceeded to advocate vigorous measures, and suggested the appointment of a committee to draft resolutions. His remarks, of course, received great attention.

Hon. J. B. RICAUD also spoke at some length, in the same strain, justifying the citizens, approving the objects of the meeting, and endorsing the views of the preceding speakers.

A committee, as suggested by Senator PEARCE, was then appointed, of which he was made chairman, who shortly reported the following preamble and resolutions:

WHEREAS, late events have disclosed the fact that there are in our midst some few mischievous and evil disposed persons, who have secretly and clandestinely operated to seduce our slaves to