

be robbed of that political power, in common with those of kindred associations and sympathy, by which she and they under the solemn guarantees of an organic law might have secured that independence and protection, without which the future is well nigh without hope. Old things in truth are passing away—the very land marks of that government which so long has guided and controlled our destiny, soon will be obliterated and forgotten—the shadows of coming years already are lowering o'er, and strange indeed would be that man who could stand unmoved amid the jarring elements—caring not, and recking not of the consequences that must inevitably follow.

But, sir, I did not rise like the honorable gentleman from the county of Montgomery, to sing Pæan songs to that old Constitution, which it may be, is even now breathing its last, destined perhaps, to “sleep the sleep that knows no waking.” I am no blind worshipper of the idols of the past, however antique the robes in which they may be apparelled. That Constitution was born in the glorious days of seventy-six, amid the war of opinions—the din of battle and the clash of surrounding arms. It was a memorable, sublime and eventful period, contrasted with any in the long centuries that had rolled on before it. The stirring cry of “excelsior,” echoed throughout the land, and the moral and intellectual being bursting from the grave-like cement, in which it had so long been fettered, started with a young and powerful vigor, in the onward march of life. The spirit of freedom was kindled into a glowing existence—and the recreant tameness of an unnatural and unmanly submission forever laid aside. Useless clogs and impediments that had hung like mill-stones about the neck, weighing as an incubus upon the age, and retarding it in its every progressive step, were thrown off with a giant's strength, and a new brilliancy of light, and knowledge, and liberty, dawned upon the world. Entertaining and holding such sentiments, no one can regard the immortal framers of that instrument, which no *v* seems passing away with higher respect, esteem, and admiration than myself—and no one surely contemplates the work which has received the impress of their hand with a deeper or more unbounded feeling of veneration. It came to us whilst just emerging from the bonds of colonial vassalage, and with but slight modifications, we have lived and grown under its controlling influence, until none in this broad confederacy, hold a loftier or more distinguished position. Wisely and courageously then did our fathers act, and well and nobly has the creature of their formation—the offspring of their wisdom performed the task for which it was commissioned. Yet, let no one, for an instant, imagine that with its present provisions I seek to continue or perpetuate its existence longer. However others may feel, I shall weep not over its ashes, and mourn not when its funeral notes are sounding. Another and brighter era is opening. Philosophy is moving with a bolder and more

fearless stride. Art is wrestling with nature, and making its very principles submissive to its will. Liberty and freedom are not now what they were or seemed to be three score years ago. And man himself, true to the sacred instincts of his exalted nature, is soaring to that elevated and sublime sphere, to which he has doubtless been assigned by the great God of the universe. Shall the science of government then stand still, when all else is advancing in such glorious and harmonious array? Are our additional wants and hopes and aspirations, still to be tied and crippled by unwise and unmeaning restrictions, the characteristic relics of days and generations that are gone forever? Has constitutional lore been entirely exhausted, and has all improvement abruptly ceased? No, surely not; and if any there are who are still living under such a delusion—looking backward with the long lingering view of hope and affection for the past, the time has arrived when they should at once wake to the glorious reality. The same spirit that pervaded a patriotic ancestry has been transmitted with full force and power to their posterity. The sons are worthy of the sires, and like them, whatever may be the action of this Convention, they will sleep not, and slumber not, till the whole fabric is made to conform in all its essentials to their wishes.—The examples of other States are beckoning them on—and they will not and cannot lag behind, with so many political lights burning brightly ahead. I rejoice that such is indeed the case. As the imprisoned bird, restrained by tiny barriers to the narrow limits of his cage, longs ardently for his native wilds, the green fields, the opening flowers and the babbling brook, so do I, for the moment that shall witness the eternal obliteration of all these aristocratic and unseemly features, that now mar the theory and utterly destroy the beautiful simplicity of our republican institutions. I am here to-day as a reformer, and my honorable colleagues can testify how truly are shadowed forth the sentiments of those who have sent us hither, and confided to us the sacred trust of faithfully reflecting their wishes.

Sir, when the distinguished gentleman from the county of Baltimore, [Mr. Howard,] was pleased a few days since in the hearing of us all, to characterize the county of Worcester, as an anti-reform county, because, forsooth, she had voted with eight other counties of kindred interests and sympathies against the proposition which had emanated from the honorable gentleman from Washington, (Mr. Fiery,) I could but think he little knew the character of that community of whom he thus spoke, else sentiments so unjust to their past and present history never would have been uttered. When the voice of reform and retrenchment was first heard, they answered immediately and warmly to the call, and from that period to the present instant, through long years of constant and bitter disappointment, they have been unceasingly struggling to effect the same grand objects. The records of the legislative department speak also in unmis-