

To the PEOPLE of MARYLAND.

THE following facts, disclosing the conduct of the late convention of Maryland, is submitted to the serious consideration of the citizens of the state.

On Monday, the 21st of April, the convention met in Annapolis, and elected the honourable George Plater, Esq; president. On Tuesday they established rules for the conduct of the business; and on the same day the following question was propounded to the convention:—

“When a motion is made and seconded, the matter of the motion shall receive a determination by the question, or be postponed by general consent, or the previous question, before any other motion shall be received.”

And the following question, viz.

“Every question shall be entered on the journal, and the yeas and nays may be called for by any member on any question, and the name of the member requiring them shall be entered on the journal.”

Which two questions the convention determined in the negative.

On Wednesday, the proposed plan of government was read the first time, and thereupon it was resolved, “That this convention will not enter into any resolution upon any particular part of the proposed plan of federal government for the United States, but that the whole thereof shall be read through a second time, after which the subject may be fully debated and considered, and then the president shall put the question, ‘That this convention do assent to and ratify the same constitution?’ On which question the yeas and nays shall be taken.”

On Thursday, the members who were opposed to the ratification of the constitution, without such previous amendments could be obtained as they thought essentially necessary to secure the liberty and happiness of the people (being confined by the last resolution to consider in one view the whole of the plan of government) stated some of their objections to the constitution.—The convention met in the evening, when Mr. Paca rose and informed the president, that he had great objections to the constitution proposed, in its present form, and meant to propose a variety of amendments, not to prevent, but to facilitate the ratification; but, having just made up his mind, and not ready to lay them before the house, and to give indulgence until the morning for that purpose, the proposal being seconded, and the house asked if they would give the indulgence, it was granted without division, and they adjourned for that purpose.—On Friday, at the meeting of the house, Mr. Paca rose and informed the president, that in consequence of the permission of the house given him the preceding evening, he had prepared certain amendments, which he would read in his place and then lay on the table, when he was interrupted, and one member from each of the following counties, viz. Frederick, Talbot, Charles, Kent, Somerset, Prince-George’s, Worcester, Queen-Anne’s, Dorchester, Calvert and Caroline, and one member from the city of Annapolis, and one from Baltimore-town, arose in their places, and declared for themselves and their colleagues, “that they were elected and entrusted by the people they represented, to ratify the proposed constitution, and that as speedily as possible, and to do no other work; that after the ratification their power ceased, and they did not consider themselves as authorized by their constituents, to consider any amendments.”—After this Mr. Paca was not permitted even to read his amendments.—The opponents continued to make their objections to the constitution until Saturday noon. The advocates of the government, although repeatedly called on, and earnestly requested, to answer the objections, it not justly remained inflexibly silent, and called for the question, that

“the convention assent to and ratify the proposed plan of federal government for the United States?” Which was carried in the affirmative by 63 to 11.

The vote of ratification having thus passed, Mr. Paca again arose and laid before the convention his propositions for amending the constitution thus adopted, which he had prepared by leave of the house, declaring that he had only given his assent to the government under the firm persuasion, and in full confidence, that such amendments would be peaceably obtained, as to enable the people to live happy under the government;—that the people of the county he represented, and that he himself, would support the government with such amendments, but, without them, not a man in the state, and no people, would be more firmly opposed to it than himself and those he represented. Sentiments highly favourable to amendments were expressed, and a general murmur of approbation seemed to arise from all parts of the house, expressive of a desire to consider amendments, either in their characters as members of convention, or in their individual capacities as citizens; and the question was put on the following motion:

“Resolved, That a committee be appointed to take into consideration and report to this house on Monday morning next, a draught of such amendments and alterations as may be thought necessary, in the proposed constitution for the United States, to be recommended to the consideration of the people of this state, if approved of by this convention; and Mr. Paca, Mr. Johnson, Mr. S. Chase, Mr. Potts, Mr. Mercer, Mr. Goldborough, Mr. J. Tilghman, Mr. Hanson, Mr. J. T. Chase, Mr. Lee, Mr. W. Tilghman, Mr. M’Henry and Mr. G. Gale, were appointed a committee for that purpose.”

A division was called for on this resolution, when there appeared 66 members for, and not more than 7 against, it.

And then it was resolved, “That the amendments proposed to the constitution by the committee from Harford county should be referred to the above committee.”

The committee thus appointed, and the convention adjourned to give them time to prepare their propositions; they proceeded with every appearance of unanimity to execute the trust reposed in them.

The following amendments to the proposed constitution were separately agreed to by the committee, most of them by an unanimous vote, and all of them by a great majority:

1. That congress shall exercise no power but what is expressly delegated by this constitution.

By this amendment, the general powers given to congress by the first and last paragraphs of the 8th sect. of art. 1, and the second paragraph of the 6th article, would be in a great measure restrained; those dangerous expressions by which the bills of rights and constitutions of the several states may be repealed by the laws of congress, in some degree moderated, and the exercise of constructive powers wholly prevented.

2. That there shall be a trial by jury in all criminal cases, according to the course of proceeding in the state where the offence is committed; and that there be no appeal from matter of fact, or second trial after acquittal; but this provision shall not extend to such cases as may arise in the government of the land or naval forces.

3. That in all actions on debts or contracts, and in all other controversies respecting property, or which the inferior federal courts have jurisdiction, the trial of facts shall be by jury, if required by either party; and that it be expressly declared, that the state courts, in such cases, have a concurrent jurisdiction with the federal courts, with an appeal from either, only as to matter of law, to the supreme or final court, if the matter in dispute be of the value of _____ dollars:

That the interior federal courts shall not have jurisdiction of less than _____ dollars; and there may be an appeal in all cases of revenue, as well to

* The member from the city of Annapolis, did not give it as his opinion that he was not at liberty to consider amendments, but said he had consulted his colleagues, and that his colleagues had informed him, the citizens were against amendments.