

powers of our governments, used the following language: "If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed, that event may be attributable to the unlimited authority of the majorities, which may at some future time urge the minorities to desperation, and oblige them to have recourse to physical force. Anarchy will then be the result, but it will have been brought about by despotism." To a government founded upon the will of the majority, without such wholesome checks and restrictions as exist in our governments, this language might be wisely and appropriately applied. But it never was contemplated by the wise and patriotic founders of our governments that the will of the majority was to rule supreme. Jefferson, the father of Democracy, as he has been aptly styled, says that "minorities must be protected against the oppression of majorities." He says, also, in one of his letters to Madison, "the tyranny of the Legislature is most to be feared." It becomes us then of the southern and less populous counties of the State, to guard now, while we have it in our power to do it, against this tyranny of which we are warned, and which may, and I verily believe will, come upon us in the course of time, if we neglect now to hold on to that power or such a part of it as will enable us to protect our interests. I mean the institution of slavery, which exists almost exclusively with us, and our property from taxation, for purposes not only not beneficial, but injurious to us.

The doctrine that the will of the majority should govern, carries with it the idea that it can impose no restraint upon itself, which it is not perfectly competent to remove at its will and pleasure. Intimately connected with this, is the equally dangerous doctrine so earnestly advocated in the earlier part of the session of this Convention, "that the people have an inalienable right to alter, amend, or abolish their form of government in any manner, and at any time they may deem expedient." That they have a right to do this, without any regard to any compact, previously entered into for purposes of government. If these doctrines be true, Mr. President, they can make and unmake governments as often as it may suit their will or caprice. They can build up thrones and tear them down. They can establish monarchies and empires, and destroy them. They can break up an orderly, peaceable and prosperous government, and substitute anarchy and confusion.—They can, in fine, sir, do any thing and every thing which their will directs, and their physical force can accomplish. And all this, sir, by virtue of the supreme law of the majority's will. The poor, law-abiding, order-loving, helpless and defenseless minority must submit, or be annihilated. Hard as it must be, submission or annihilation are the only alternatives. These, Mr. President, are extreme cases; and I have only cited them, to show the absurdity—the unreasonable-ness of the doctrine. I say this, with all respect for the contra-opinions of others.

I am fully aware, sir, that I shall be charged with a want of confidence in the integrity and

discretion of the people. This is generally considered a knock-down argument. Popular distrust—a deadly poison to the political aspirant. Sir, I have as much regard for the rights of the people—I have as much confidence in their integrity and discretion, as those who profess to have more. I, sir, am one of the people. I feel sir, that I am emphatically one of the people. I speak as one of the people, and I wish no man to entertain a higher regard for my rights, than I entertain for the rights of the people. And if the people are left to their own intelligence and unbiassed judgment, unwrought upon by political factionists, aspirants and demagogues, who undertake, while they are contented, prosperous, happy and free, to instruct them as to their rights, and tell them that they are oppressed. I say if they are left to their own intelligence and unbiassed judgment, I have as much confidence in their integrity and discretion, as I wish any man to have in mine. Again, sir, I say, I speak as one of the people. I ask, I seek no political preferment. I but give utterance to the honest convictions of my best judgment, and so long as, and as often as I may be placed in a situation which seems to require it, I trust I shall always have the moral courage to give an honest expression to my honest opinions. Moral courage! The words remind me, that it is a virtue, which can not be too sedulously cultivated and practiced by politicians generally. With what greedy eagerness do we find them collecting, and storing up in their memories, the acts and opinions of others, who differ from them to be used as materials for political harangues before the people, that they may teach them to know who are their friends and who their enemies. They will flatter them as dexterously as the most sycophantic courtier, that even bowed before the throne of an Eastern potentate. They will laud and praise their honesty, intelligence and judgment. They will depict in the most glowing and pathetic terms, the rights and privileges which are theirs. They will assail as the enemies of their best interests and dearest rights, those who differ from them in opinion, and will hold them up as objects worthy of their just indignation and condemnation. All this has been done, and will be done again—to advance the interest of whom? Of the dear people? No sir, but of dearer self.—Self-interest is the moving principle—self advancement—the warmly cherished object. Let the tongue speak the judgment of the silent, but often stifled monitor, that is planted by the Deity, within the bosom of every man, and it will confirm the truth of what I say.

I have been inadvertently led, Mr. President, into this digression from the subject under consideration, for which I hope to be pardoned.

I will return, sir, to the subject. As applicable to the doctrine of the supremacy of the will of the majority, I beg leave to refer to the opinion of Mr. Hamilton, as expressed in the *Federalist*, No. 71.

"There are some," says he, "who would be inclined to regard the servile pliancy of the Exo-