

evils under which we are this day so lamentably suffering. In looking back into the past history of my country, I have seen everywhere the Federal Government has been too eager to assume to itself powers of a doubtful character, that the assumption of these powers has engendered discord and jarring among the sovereign States of this Union. I had very clearly seen in the past history of our people, that from the origin of the government there have been two classes of politicians in the land—political thinkers, if you choose to call them so.

There had been one class of men who have taken the preamble of the Constitution of the United States, and by an interpretation of that preamble, assumed to exercise powers in the administration of the Federal Government, which the States, North and South, protested against from its origin. The exercise of these powers has well nigh driven the States, North and South, heretofore upon the verge of resisting by force and violence the Government at Washington.

Looking back upon that history, I am unwilling to take any new step now that, by doubtful construction of this very article, may induce those men who are disposed to put a latitudinous construction upon the powers of the General Government in all time to come, to interfere with the rights of the State of Maryland. For, as I have just said, I believe that the exercise of those unauthorized powers—not what the majority who have spoken here have designated as the pestilent doctrine of State rights—I believe before God that the assumption of those powers by the General Government has precipitated upon us all the calamities and bickerings, and troubles that ever have existed between the States; aye, sir, has eventually brought about this deplorable war.

Sir, that school of politicians of which John Adams was the head, first started this theory, this idea that we were to have a great government at Washington with transcendent powers; an idea which I know addressed itself with some patriotic force to the minds of men—an idea, I believe, which, carried out in France, ultimately converted her government into a despotism and an empire. They held that the Government of the United States was to be glorified; that it was to be clothed with these undefined and illimitable powers to the prejudice of States and State institutions. These leaders of that party, whenever they have heretofore held the reins of government, and undertaken to carry out that idea, have brought about these jealousies and these troubles. When Adams was President of the United States, they inaugurated the alien and sedition laws.

Then came the charter of the United States Bank. What said the State rights party of this country then? They said it was a power of doubtful constitutionality; a

power not clearly defined, one not delegated to the government at Washington: hands off: leave this question to be controlled by the legislatures of the States. Again, when the no less dangerous policy of projecting schemes of internal improvements in this country seized the public mind; when it was proposed to concentrate in the General Government the power of carrying out grand and startling projects of railroads from one section of the country to the other; a power which the States' rights party in this country always denied, and which they said would produce difficulties among the States; contending that their practical effect when carried out would produce jealousy between sections of the country. It would be said to the Government at Washington—you are dispensing the benefits of this Government to the States of one section, to the prejudice of the States of another section. When that question came up the State rights party of the country said: Your true policy is to leave that subject to the States; let it rest with them; you cannot point out in the Constitution of the United States any warrant for the exercise of the power; and unless you find there the authority expressly enumerated and clearly defined, then forbear its exercise. This alone will secure peace; otherwise it will result in sectional jealousies and in sectional discord. It will tear the hearts of the people of the States away from their common Government at Washington.

Sir, it was the same thing with the tariff. There was one portion of the States that maintained you must have what was termed a high, protective, discriminating tariff in this country. Another section of the country said that free trade was the right policy; and that the power to lay this high protective tariff was a power that no man could point out in the Constitution of the United States; that it was a power of inferences; and that these inferential powers ought not to be exercised by the Government of the United States. To what did it lead? The very moment the Government at Washington undertook to carry out their high protective tariff doctrine, there was a spirit of discord in one section of the confederacy. South Carolina itself was upon the verge of nullification. It was in this manner that this practice grew up of this exercise of doubtful powers by the Government; this disposition to ignore the rights of the States, and to build up and concentrate all power in the Government of the United States.

Now, sir, we say that this policy is being carried out by the Government at this very time; the assumption of these unlimited and undefined powers. Then, sir, we come to this other question of slavery, which gentlemen charge has been the cause of the dissolution of the Union, or this war, if they prefer so to charge it. How natural was it for the State rights party in the land to say to the