

ple to change their constitution in the manner in which a majority of the people desired. They claimed that, as the authority to change, alter, or abolish their form of government was guaranteed to the people in the Declaration of Rights,<sup>3</sup> and that as a convention was neither prohibited by the constitution, nor the mode of its organization prescribed, the General Assembly could constitutionally provide for a convention.

The struggle between these two parties, representing roughly the agricultural and the commercial interests of the State, extended over a period of some twenty-five years. The agitation finally resulted in a call of a constitutional convention by the General Assembly, known as the "Reform Convention of 1850."

It is the purpose of the writer to trace the growth of the idea of "conventional reform" in the State. It includes the history of the Convention of 1850 and the character of the constitution which it gave to the people of the State for their ratification, or rejection.

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<sup>3</sup> Md. Const. of 1776, Dec. of Rights, secs. 1, 2, 4.