

and peace. Under the broad shield of its protection, the weak found a refuge from oppression, and the stranger an asylum. All were safe in their persons, secure in their property, and protected in their characters. It was the work of patriots, who had put their all in peril for the rights of man. It was framed and adopted at a period, when every tongue was eloquent in favor of liberty, and in condemnation of arbitrary power. It was the compact of the Freemen, and the Delegates of the Freemen of '76; solemnly formed and adopted, as a law for themselves, their children and successors. Your committee *felt*, that it was not rashly to be changed, nor for light and trivial causes.

At the same time, your committee very readily concluded, that in such of its provisions as were unequal and partial, it ought surely to be amended. Such they found to be the case, in regard to the basis of representation in the House of Delegates. Equality of suffrage is thereby given to the counties—the representation from each county being four Delegates. So the city of Annapolis, and what was then Baltimore Town, are placed on the same footing—the representation, originally, being two delegates from each. The basis was not strikingly objectionable, at the date of the constitution; but immense changes have occurred, within the last sixty years. The western portion of our State, from the fertility of its valleys, and its great productiveness, has risen in wealth, and increased in population, in a very extraordinary degree. So Baltimore town, which the framers of our constitution supposed it possible might be found, in the course of time, to contain less than half as many voters as the least populous county of the State, and for which contingency they have carefully provided, is now a city of great wealth and of many people. One of the great marts of our country, her enterprising merchants hold correspondence and commerce with all the nations of the earth. Other changes have occurred, in relative importance, less cheering for contemplation. The representation, therefore, in the house of delegates, although originally just, is now practically unjust. Your committee have agreed to recommend an apportionment of representation, in the House of Delegates, upon a different basis; and suggest an alteration of the constitution accordingly. The great disparity in the