

of rights, that after a Constitution is established, approved by the people of the State, and becomes the organic law of the land—a bare majority, regardless of the provisions of the Constitution from caprice, or inflamed by popular excitement, have a right to overthrow the Constitution without the forms of law. In this he is supported by his eloquent friends from Frederick, (Mr. Johnson and Mr. Thomas,) the former of whom, so emphatically expressed his opinions, "that the people, the immortal, the eternal people, could do what they pleased."

Mr. J. said, he would ask his friend from Baltimore, whether the Constitution about to be adopted, should it be confirmed by the people of the State, would not become the law of the land?

Mr. PRESSTMAN replied, that it would—but that the people had a right to change it.

Mr. J. said, he conceded that right to the utmost extent, and read the 1st, 4th, and 41st articles of the bill of rights, to show that it was recognized in express terms.

The 1st article provides, "That all government of right originates from the people, is founded in compact only, and instituted solely for the good of the whole."

The 4th article: "That whenever the ends of government are perverted, and public liberty manifestly endangered, &c., the people may, and of right ought to do, reform the old, or establish a new government." And the 41st provides for the manner of altering or abolishing the Constitution.

Mr. J. asked, what language can be more explicit? Here the rights of the people are protected for the good of the whole. But a mere majority tumultuously assembled from the city of Baltimore and the adjoining counties, without form of law—without "the ends of government being perverted, or public liberty endangered," assuming to control the whole State for political or worse purposes, should not be recognized in a bill of rights.

If the people—the "eternal, the immortal people," can abolish their own Constitution, and establish whatever they please, whenever they please, regardless of law and order, what becomes of the rights of the minority, which, perhaps, may be only a few thousand or a few hundred less than that majority?

Look at the populous city of Baltimore now numbering 170,000 souls; Baltimore county near 42,000; Frederick county near 40,000; their interests in many respects identical. By the facility of your railroads and other works of internal improvement, the whole population may be collected in a mass, in twenty-four hours. This assembled multitude without law or order—without even the knowledge of the distant counties of the State, being the "eternal people," may "throw off the existing and establish a new Constitution." Such is the construction which the remarks of gentlemen justify.

The gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Presstman,) in a former speech, took a statesman-like view of the question of reform, and ex-

pressed his opinion that there was not an intelligent man in Baltimore, under existing circumstances, who expected or desired representation based exclusively on numbers. He has been justly complimented for that speech. But now the ground he takes is infinitely more objectionable, (Mr. J. said,) and he might add, dangerous to the interests of the counties of the State.

You have, Mr. President, only this morning engrafted the first article in the new Constitution about to be formed: "That the Legislature shall pass no law affecting the existing relation of master and slave in this State." This article has been adopted by a unanimous vote of the Convention. This was intended to put to rest the fanaticism as regards this question in Maryland, and would do so, as long as the Constitution and laws are respected.

But, if you recognise the right of a bare majority, "at all times, and in any manner they deem expedient," to abolish the existing and establish a new system—what becomes of the rights this day guaranteed by the unanimous vote of this Convention? Where is the security for a month's continuance of it? If the city of Baltimore with the two counties referred to, who have less interest in this species of property than any other portion of the State, should deem it expedient to abolish it—what are the modes of preventing it? The lower counties cannot rise up in mass, as can be done in the others. It is true, that the gentleman from Dorchester county (Mr. Hicks,) perhaps, apprehending this state of things, has offered an amendment that the Eastern Shore should have the right to secede and unite with another State.

Mr. President, the time has been when the word "disunion" applied to the general government, or "secession" to the counties of a State, fell upon my ear as the words of a traitor, but occasions may arise, when they may become the language of patriotism.

Once admit that a dense mass congregated together without the forms of law, "whenever they deem it expedient," may abolish your Constitution, that doctrine advocated in this Convention by gentleman representing a high minded, intelligent and law abiding constituency—the right of secession, should go "*pari passu*," with it. It would become the duty of the Eastern Shore and of the lower counties of the Western Shore to adopt any means to protect themselves, their liberties and their property, from revolution and anarchy.

Mr. J. said we should not shut our eyes or ears to the warnings of experience. Massachusetts has had to contend with lawless spirits parading portions of her heretofore quiet State. Rhode Island has been the theatre of anarchy.

The populous cities of New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, have at different times felt the effects of an uncontrolled and excited populace. Similar scenes may again be inflicted upon them. But none have ever, until now, advocated it as a right.

A few years since the whole of Maryland felt as Baltimore, experienced the want of salutary laws, or a proper execution of them, to protect the