

would refrain from expressions which grated harshly upon the feelings of so large a portion of the community. Outrage, heaped upon outrage, might compel them, however reluctantly, to begin to think seriously of separation. Leave them in their present position of independence, and peace and harmony would dwell forever in our borders. Reduce them to the condition of colonies, and no man could tell the end. They had lived too long as freemen, ever to exist quietly and tamely as bondsmen.

Ere concluding his remarks, he desired to say, that in his own county, among his own people, and in his own humble way, he had, for years past, been regarded as a reformer. Great as was the respect and veneration cherished for those noble ancestors who had transmitted the present Constitution under which we had so long and so happily lived, he thought many and great changes might be effected, conducive to the general interest and public welfare. He did not regard the science of government as perfected and finished, but believed, that like all other sciences, and like man himself, would be constantly undergoing improvements—constantly advancing toward that high state of perfection which was evidently designed by the God of the Universe. Our fathers had made great strides and done nobly in their day—let us show ourselves worthy of such pater-nity—worthy of their approbation, by seeking a still more elevated degree of political knowledge. The instinct of the beast might remain still, but 'twas the province of man and intellect ever to be moving onward to an higher and loftier sphere. He was ready to co-operate with gentlemen every where in the great work of reform before them. He was ready to abase the aristocrat and exalt the people, and to infuse the spirit of equality into every branch and department of our government. But he never could consent to give his sanction to the principle contained in the amendment of Mr. Presstman, under discussion, even though gentleman assumed for it the name and garb of reform. He never could aid in the forging of chains destined eventually to fetter and bind the liberties of his own generous and noble constituency.

Mr. BROWN followed in some remarks, which are withheld for the purpose of his revision, (he being detained by sickness at home.) The remarks will be published as soon as possible.

Mr. SPENCER expressed his regret, that the debate had taken such a wide range, and that the subject of representation should have been brought into it. For the first time, in his life, he had heard that the Constitution was to be regarded as a compact, and to be treated in the same manner as a contract, or agreement between parties. There were statesmen, who contended that the Constitution of the United States was a compact, but no such proposition had ever been urged in relation to the State Constitutions. In order to show that this was an incorrect view, he quoted from Chitty's Blackstone, vol. i, p. 44, the following definition of the word "compact:"

Law "is a rule of civil conduct prescribed by the supreme power in a State, commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong." "It is

a rule to distinguish it from a compact or agreement. A compact is a promise proceeding from us—law is a command directing us."

He had looked for other authorities on the subject, but they were all out of the library—such as Story, Rawle, Wilson, Madison, and others. But, if this was to be considered as correct authority in reference to our political institutions, it will be seen that this Constitution instead of being a compact, or contract, is a "rule of action," prescribed by the supreme power in the State. If this be the case, how stands the question? The gentleman from Baltimore, had offered an amendment which was now before the the House, a simple, plain, intelligent proposition. In whom is power vested? Who has the right to change the Constitution? The people constitute the supreme power of the State, and *the right is in this supreme power alone*, and yet the assertion is made, that they cannot exercise their own discretion in effecting the object, owing to the compact contained in the Constitution. He could readily understand how, between different sovereignties, compacts of a binding force may be made; but the people, by whom our Constitution was made, being the sovereign power themselves, cannot bind themselves and posterity, by any compact in the form of a Constitution. The proposition before the House was a naked one. The gentleman from Kent has thrown in an amendment, which entirely destroys the original proposition. He contends that the people have not the power to change the Constitution in any other way than in the manner prescribed by the Constitution.

Mr. CHAMBERS explained, that when the gentleman from Baltimore offered his amendment, he had asked him to explain it. The gentleman from Baltimore, replied that it was his impression that the people, without consent of law, in disregard of the Constitution, in any way, by any mode, might upset the existing government, or put in operation a new system, and that this was the right he intended to recognize, and that those who came after us, could put their own construction on the article.

Mr. SPENCER stated what he had understood to be the course of the interrogatory; and then proceeded to defend the proposition of the gentleman from Baltimore, which was to be found embodied in the Constitutions of eighteen of the States of the Union. What reason then, he asked, was there to dread its operation in Maryland, more than it had been dreaded in other States? Was there more of a mob spirit here? Was not the people of our State orderly citizens abiding by law, and governed by a Constitution? Had they not given the strongest evidence of their love of order, in their long submission to the old Constitution? How often had the public will been thwarted by the legislative power? Yet they had borne the outrages long and quietly. The amendment of the gentleman from Kent, involved both an admission and a denial of the right of the people. It asserts that they have the right, but provides that they shall only exercise it in the way prescribed for them, and if they use it in any other way, they shall be adjudged