

takeable language of their earnestness and sincerity upon this subject, for there too, have they knocked, and by respectful and manly petitioning, sought to obtain those beneficial changes, which you were doubtless assembled to consummate. But this is not the time to tell over the long list of reforms which they have so ardently and so anxiously desired; suffice it to say that they looked into the philosophy of their government, and desired to see it brought down in all its varied departments, to the direct and immediate control of that people, through whom and by whom it receives all its vitality and power. They looked into the bosom of their own community, and sought by the establishment of some vast educational system—to dot every section with school houses and teachers, requisite to its wants, and thus as speedily as possible develop and elevate the entire intellectual and moral energy of the whole State.

The economy of other systems was working beautifully around them, and they entertained the conviction that the blade of retrenchment might be applied well and wisely to the cumbrous and worn out machinery of their own—lopping off useless and antiquated sinecures, simplifying it in all its forms, and reducing the present enormous expenditure to a rate far more consistent with our tax burthened condition. With such high aims they gave their cheerful approbation to the call of this Convention, and looked to its assembling with pleasure—believing that long cherished hopes were soon to be realized, and dreaming not that their characters as reformers, were to be tried solely by a standard reared alone by sectional policy, and by the unbridled lust of power. Well may they shrink from an alliance alike humiliating to their pride, and destructive to their every interest. Well might they ask if this was indeed reform. Its once broad and comprehensive sense has been narrowed down to suit one single local caprice. Chameleon like it has changed its color, and leopard like its very spots, and now the wildest whim, not to say the most extravagant folly, wears its garb as familiarly as though it was exclusively its own. I had thought the spirit of transcendentalism and impractical speculation had passed away—or if it still lingered that it existed only in the elevated regions of metaphysical reasonings and speculative philosophy. We are here to indulge in no mere visionary or fanciful schemings. Our work is practical in an eminent degree, and we should seek to deal with it as statesmen looking calmly over the whole field, and weighing well every variant feeling and hostile interest. Government has a loftier design and a broader scope than many

here would seem to imagine. It is within itself when properly formed, a beautiful series of wise checks—delicate balances, and wholesome restraints, and he who can so devise and arrange the whole vast and complicated system as to secure every right, and yet produce the largest liberty, is the noblest and best benefactor of his species. In a republic like ours the will of a majority should always be truly reflected; but that will, save in cases of justifiable revolution, should only be reflected and exercised in submission to the sacred restraints and the binding obligations of a Constitution, under the solemn guarantees of which the rights of minorities are fully and thoroughly protected. Democracy descends from its high position to the lowest sinks of mere mobocracy, whenever it asserts the right of majorities to lawless and reckless control. A democratic government aims not only to give equal rights, but to secure *equal protection—individual and sectional*—and that instrument by whatever name you call it, or upon whatever abstract theory based, which violates this ennobling feature, and lays one community or one section at the feet and mercy of another—a beggar it may be for its very rights—is false alike to the letter and the spirit of true and genuine democracy. Sir, I was reared in a democratic school, and drank my earliest political lessons from a democratic fount, and to those tenets as thus taught, I yet look as did the mariner of old, to the beaming polar star that guided him in his course over the waves of the trackless ocean. Cherishing such opinions, I cannot vote for the proposition which emanates from the honorable gentleman from Washington, nor for any plan of kindred character. The scheme reads upon the journal as follows:

“The House of Delegates shall be composed of seventy-three members, to be apportioned among the several counties and city of Baltimore, according to the ratio herein provided, and to their several numbers, (as shown by the last census of the United States,) which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, three-fifths of the slaves, and allowing to each county one additional delegate for a fraction exceeding three-fourths of the ratio, but each county shall be entitled to at least two delegates. The ratio shall be one delegate to every six thousand of said population in said counties and city, until the number of the House of Delegates shall be sixty-nine, and thereafter the ratio shall be one to every thirty-two thousand.