

than those, which were contended for by the Nineteen Senatorial Electors, in 1836, and which were then pronounced to be utterly subversive of the public liberties and prosperity. Consider this! And let it be an everlasting memento.

It is not to be said that this Constitution is perfect, by any means. In the progress of your legislation, you will find proof to the contrary. It will become your duty to fill up the chasms. That it might have been more complete, is very apparent. Whether or not, a large share of the blame of its imperfections is to be charged to undue opposition to its leading features, in the Convention, is a question which, no doubt, has already been correctly decided by public opinion. The delay, occasioned by stubborn debate, certainly caused unusual and injurious precipitancy, in the final action of that body, when the Constitution was put together as a whole. However, take it, with all its deficiencies, and it cannot be denied, that it contains a full recognition of, and provision for every leading question of Governmental Reform, which has, for twenty years past, entered into the popular agitations; with the single exception of the representative basis. In regard to this great measure, I admit, the republican theory has not been adhered to; though, a nearer approximation thereto has been effected, than has ever been, heretofore, generally contended for, in the State at large. No one can doubt that, the future will remove the cause of complaint, as the past has already disposed of others, equally oppressive. Two features, alone, which I find in the Constitution, are sufficient to reconcile me to its imperfect mechanical construction; the denial of any power to the Legislature to interfere with the fundamental law; and the periodical submission of this primal question of organic reform to the decision of the people only, at the ballot-box. Most of the inconveniences complained of, will be temporary; as they are fully within the reach of legislation. Had the day for putting the Constitution into effect, been postponed, to a reasonable period after the close of this present session of the General Assembly, so that, the necessary laws might have been first passed and promulgated, no complaint or cavil, whatever, would have been heard. As it is, these objections, are but the faint murmur of a receding storm; which, when once below the horizon, will be forgotten, in the brightness of the new day. The real enquiry is, not so much as to what are the merely architectural merits or demerits of the Constitution, itself, but what use will the people make of this great extension of their privileges. They themselves are the most interested in the result, and, it is for them to answer.

In obedience to the requirements of the Constitution, I shall respectfully suggest some of the legislation, which I believe to be necessary. Before doing so, I take occasion to remark, that, I shall be obliged to draw largely upon your patience. It shall be my endeavor to avoid the discussion of useless matters; and, to express my views concisely. At the same time, I shall consider it to be my duty to say, all, that may suggest itself to my mind, as proper to be said, for the full elucidation of my different subjects. My labor is concentrated; yours will be divided; inasmuch as, the customary reference of the Executive message to appropriate Committees, for their intermediate action, takes from its dry detail, much of the tediousness, incidental to such communications. You will remember that, you are about to reorganize the Government, under the new Constitution; and, that, therefore, many subjects must enter into this message, which have not heretofore engaged, and may not hereafter demand the attention of the Legislature.

The entire inapplicability of the existing election laws has been demonstrated, the