

But this right of the majority to govern, clear as it is upon the ground of reason and natural law, does not rest exclusively upon that ground. It is expressly secured by the constitution of the United States, in the creation of the Legislative power. By the fifth section of the first article of that instrument, it is provided that "a majority of each (house) shall constitute a quorum to do business." In some instances indeed, a greater number than a bare majority is required; but those exceptions, the result of precaution, like all exceptions, themselves prove the general rule.

The General Assembly of Kentucky cannot then agree with the state of South Carolina, that the perseverance of the General Government in the American System, leaves that state free to consider that the measures to be pursued, are "purely questions of expediency and not of allegiance." If the majority of the people of the United States in Congress assembled, adhere to that system, by abstaining from its repeal, neither the state of South Carolina, nor any other state in the Union, is at liberty to pass any act to defeat the system. That state and all the other states, are bound by the terms of our constitutional union, to yield obedience to the system.

From the principles now advanced, there has been no deviation on the part of the General Assembly of Kentucky. At a former epoch, when certain acts passed by Congress, called the alien and sedition laws, which were believed to be unconstitutional by the General Assembly, it neither interposed nor threatened the adoption of any measures to defeat or obstruct their operation within the jurisdiction of Kentucky. It expressed, and expressed in very strong language, its disapprobation of them, and its firm conviction that they were unconstitutional, and therefore void. There it stopped, and that is the limit which no State should pass, until it has formed the deliberate resolution of lighting up the torch of civil war. Every State, as well as every individual, has the incontestable right freely to form, and to publish to the world, its opinion of any and of every act of the federal government. It may appeal to the reason of the people, enlighten their judgments, alarm their fears, and conciliate their support, to change federal rulers, or federal measures. But neither a State nor an individual can rightfully resist, by force, the execution of a law passed by Congress.