

it furnishes proof, that it was nothing more than a provisional organization of a new government. It has been changed from time to time till it has become a shapeless mass of unintelligible and contradictory provisions. Some of its great leading principles remain in theory, but have been rendered nugatory by legislative and judicial construction. Some of its restrictions upon popular rights have been repealed, and a new spirit has been breathed into it by the people. But every amendment has been made in reference to some particular object, and has broken the connexion between the provisions that remained; and no one can tell what the Constitution is, or where it is to be found. But its greatest defect is, that the Legislature has power and control over it. A constitution is a limitation of power, and marks out far each branch of the Government, the orbit in which it is to move. Ours is a Constitution for the Judiciary and the Executive, but not for the Legislature. This branch may abolish the other branches or take away their powers. It might have been supposed, that an amendment proposed at one session would come under the action of the people before its confirmation at the next; but members are elected and re-elected on account of their general character and influence, and very seldom in reference to any particular measure. The Legislature, on great occasions, has been obliged to act in its conventional capacity, because there was no other practicable mode of introducing salutary amendments. But it is time that the power of legislation should be separated from the higher power of regulating the principles and boundaries of the Government; and that a permanent Constitution should be formed by a convention of the people.

There are some, who think that the people who lived in Maryland in 1776, deprived themselves and all succeeding generations, of the power to alter the present Constitution, or to make another, except in a prescribed form, and through the agency of the General Assembly. Those, who believe that the people have made no such surrender of power, are nevertheless of opinion, that the most regular mode of calling a convention, is by means of the constituted authorities. The call of a convention might be provided for by an amendment of the present Constitution, which would remove every scruple; and by the same means the State might be saved from any additional expenses. By omitting one session of the Legislature, and having a Convention to sit in its place, nothing would be added to the ordinary expenditures.

In the discharge of my official duties, very few things have come to my knowledge, that are deserving of your attention. Various official reports and communications have been received, and will be communicated. The arms heretofore received from the General Government, have generally been distributed to militia companies as directed by law and special resolutions. The muskets lately received from the Ordnance Department, have been retained in the armory, and these are all that are now fit for service. There ought to be always a supply of arms at the Seat of