

alternative diminish or retrench the powers of Congress, if ultimately they are to have recourse to this power? One thing will be the certain consequence: Congress, in making requisitions, must reckon on a disappointment, and will therefore increase them according to the expected disappointment: by these means, the burdens of the people must be enlarged. He then wonders that gentlemen could come to so sudden a resolution of adopting it. As to the time, it will require as much to reject as to adopt it; and if a deliberate discussion be the most rational mode of proceeding, a precipitate rejection will, at least, be as imprudent as a sudden adoption. He declares that he would, in despite of an erring world, reject it, and wishes this state to continue in opposition. Were our country separated by nature from the other states, we might be safe without the Union; but as we are bordered on the adopting states, security can be found in union only. Consider the consequences of disunion: attend to the situation of those citizens who are contiguous to Maryland; look at the country called the Northern Neck; if we reject the Constitution, will not its inhabitants shake off their dependence on us? But, sir, the worthy member has declared, as a reason for not changing our government, that no terrors had been experienced, that no insurrections had happened, among us. It was indeed a wonder that this was the case, considering the relaxation of the laws. Tumults have happened in other states. Had they been attempted here by an enterprising adventurer, I believe he could hardly have been prevented by the laws; for I believe every citizen in this country has complained of their want of energy. The worthy member has exclaimed, with uncommon vehemence, against the mode provided for securing amendments. He thinks amendments can never be obtained, because so great a number is required to concur. Had it rested solely with Congress, there might have been danger. The committee will see that there is another mode provided, besides that which originates with Congress. On the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several states, a convention is to be called to propose amendments, which shall be a part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three fourths thereof. It is natural to conclude that those states who will apply for calling the cou-

vention will concur in the ratification of the proposed amendments.

There are strong and cogent reasons operating on my mind, that the amendments, which shall be agreed to by those states, will be sooner ratified by the rest than any other that can be proposed. The conventions which shall be so called will have their deliberations confined to a few points; no local interest to divert their attention; nothing but the necessary alterations. They will have many advantages over the last Convention. No experiments to devise; the general and fundamental regulations being already laid down.

He makes another objection — that, contrary to the articles of our bill of rights, we may be taxed without our own consent; that taxes may be imposed, although every member from Virginia should oppose the measure. The argument is not accurate. A tax imposed on the people of this state, by our legislature, may be opposed by the members from the county of Albemarle, without being repugnant to our bill of rights; because Albemarle is represented, and the act of the majority is binding on the minority. In like manner, our privilege of representation in the federal government will prevent any of the general laws from being unconstitutional although contrary to the individual opinions of our representatives.

But it is complained that they may suspend our laws. The suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* is only to take place in cases of rebellion or invasion. This is necessary in those cases; in every other case, Congress is restrained from suspending it. In no other case can they suspend our laws; and this is a most estimable security. But the influence of New England and the other Northern States is dreaded; there are apprehensions of their combining against us. Not to advert to the improbability and illiberality of this idea, it must be supposed that our population will, in a short period, exceed theirs, as their country is well settled, and we have very extensive uncultivated tracts. We shall soon outnumber them in as great a degree as they do us at this time: therefore this government, which, I trust, will last to the remotest ages, will be very shortly in our favor. Treason consists in levying war against the United States, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.