ciple laid down in this first article as it stands; that is admitted by all. One gentleman has said that he has never met with any man who denied the right of revolution; certainly not. But as he also stated, and as was very fully argued by Mr. Webster in the Rhode Island case, we had fancied that the statesmen of America had devised a mode whereby the organic law of the land might be altered and amended without a resort to that which is called "revolution," and which, under other governments, is usually accompanied by bloodshed and violence.

It is, sir, for the purpose of having a mode of alteration previously known and agreed upon and written, that our form of Constitutions have been devised and adopted. In other lands the Constitutions and laws depend upon a variety of traditions and statutes, and a long series of ages of government. The powers of government are described and understood in that way. That is the mode in which the British Constitution, as it is called, is prescribed. But our Constitutions are written agreements upon the part of the people, prescribing to those entrusted with power the extent of that power, and the mode in which it is to be exercised. The people of this country have nowhere conferred upon either State or general governments all powers of government. They have always in their State or general governments reserved to themselves most important powers, political powers, which they have authorized no government on earth to exercise for them, or to legislate upon for them. They have expressly inhibited any invasion of those powers by any governments they have established or may hereafter establish.

Now, sir, all the old Constitutions, adopted in our revolutionary times, prescribed a mode of amendment for the purpose of avoiding the necessity of a resort to revolution. It was supposed that in the changes of society—for the forms of government then adopted were experiments—in the lapse of years, there would probably be amendments and alterations required; and the mode in which those amendments and alterations were to be made was agreed upon as a part of the organic law laid down by the people for their own guidance in making those alterations and amendments. That was the case with all the Constitutions.

But the condition of the State of Maryland was somewhat peculiar. At that time each county claimed an equality in the representation of political power. Each county had an equality of representation in the Revolutionary Convention. Recognizing the fact that the geographical position of Maryland was peculiar; that when the settlements of the State upon the Western Shore should extend westwardly, filling up its territory with a large population, the eastern counties would not be enabled to maintain their position of power and equality of rights, there was a provision inserted in the Constitution of 1776, which the Legislature was to have no power to alter. Hence it was that it required three-fourths of the Legislature to pass any law that particularly affected the Eastern Shore of the State. With reference to the mode of amendment, that Constitution prescribed that there should be no alteration of that Constitution unless an act for that purpose was passed by one Legislature, published three months, I believe, before the election of the members of another Legislature, and after full knowledge and opportunity for discussion by the people, the proposed amendment was ratified by that subsequent Legislature. Now the obvious purpose of that provision was to prevent hasty, rash, injurious and unjust amendments to the Constitution from being suddenly foisted upon the people.

We lived under that form of government for three-quarters of a century, and very important amendments were made to it at various stages of our history. There was an amendment made about 1801 to 1805, which involved almost a revolution as far as the right of suffrage and other matters were concerned. Again in 1836 a reform movement brought about other very important modifications. But yet the spirit of revolution, impatient of the restraints which the wisdom and the prudence of our fathers had imposed in regard to alterations of the organic law of the State; impatient of that mode of alteration, succeeded in inducing the Legislature to pass an act calling a Convention for the purpose of amending and altering the Constitution, making a new Constitution.

Now that was not the mode of alteration prescribed by the organic law of the State. I have ever considered it—and I mean of course no sort of reflection upon the very able and learned gentlemen who composed that Convention—I have ever considered that Convention as revolutionary; not in the sense in which that word is usually used, but in the sense of being opposed to the mode prescribed by the organic law. It was, however, a revolution which the people of the State evidently willed, because they sanctioned it by their votes; and the Constitution under which we are now living received its sanction from the vote of the people approving and adopting it. Of course those gentlemen who met here and framed that Constitution, met very much under the same circumstances and with the same powers as the National Convention which met in 1787, which adopted a Constitution and submitted it to the States for their approval or rejection. That Constitution was not held to be binding upon any one until it was accepted and ratified by the people. And although the Convention of 1850 was called by the Legislature in the exercise of unconstitu-