

of the fundamental law, to the altered circumstances and novel condition of the people; to such improvements in governmental science, as are vindicated by the spirit of the age, and the example of other States; and above all, to that just standard of republican simplicity and economy, which, while it affords the most ample protection to life, liberty and property, is at the same time calculated to render less complex the machinery of government, and to insure a material reduction in the costs of its administration.

An enumeration of some of the most important alterations in the existing system, contemplated by those interested in the question, may not here be considered out of place. To one possessing even a superficial knowledge of the extent, population and wealth of the several counties of the State, and of their relative weight in the business of legislation, no evidence can be required to prove that there exists the most palpable inequality, not only in their representation, but in their contributions to the Treasury. The government of Maryland, so far from conforming to that cherished axiom in the republican creed which asserts the right of a majority, in all cases, to rule, is in fact a government of a minority. The statement of such a proposition carries with it the demonstration of its glaring injustice. From the singular geographical division of the State, and from sectional jealousies, long entertained by her people, it is not to be expected, nor is it even desired, that representation in the Legislature should be made to depend upon a strict basis of population or of wealth, or upon a standard formed of an admixture of both. Justice, however, seems to demand that those counties and cities, which unitedly contain within their limits, not only a plurality of the whole population, but by far the largest amount of taxable property, should be entitled to at least a controlling voice in that branch of the General Assembly, to whose custody, by the forms of the constitution, the public purse is now and will, doubtless, continue to be peculiarly committed. In thus approaching the true principles of representative government, the just rights and interests of the smaller and less populous counties, are not to be disregarded; and in curbing the power now possessed by them, in the House of Delegates, it will be insisted that territorial representation in the Senate shall be guaranteed and perpetuated.

In intimate connexion with the scheme of reform in the representative system, is the policy of express limitations upon the power of the General Assembly to contract debts, to borrow money, or to pledge the public credit, except for purposes of war, to repel invasions or to suppress insurrections: nor is there a less pressing necessity for equally stringent prohibitions upon their authority to change, alter, or in any manner to modify the organic law. No argument can, at this day, be wanting to prove the wisdom of such modifications in the constitutional charter. The value of the first is justified by the history of the past, and by financial embarrassments, proceeding from a long continued course of thoughtless and unbridled legislation. The propriety of the last, is attested by the anomalous character of the present constitution, which, while it carefully confines within their appointed orbits, the executive and the judiciary, imposes, in fact, no other restraints upon the legislative department, than the mere measure of its own discretion. The effect of both will be to afford equal protection to all the great and conflicting concerns of the State, producing a community of feeling and interest among the whole people, and dissipating forever, the pernicious causes of shore and county prejudices which have heretofore retarded the advance of Maryland in the science of free government.

Similar and still more beneficial results are expected to flow from such a modification of the constitutional provision which reposes in the Executive the