

al bounds, the action of the legislative and executive departments.

In speaking of popular feeling, a piece of instructive history occurs to my mind illustrative of the difficulty of ascertaining what this feeling is; and of the facility of mistake upon the subject. Allison, in his History of Europe, says, that of the one hundred thousand spectators who silently consented to the death of Louis XVI, there were not one hundred who would not, most willingly, have saved him from destruction. This illustrates the idea which I have endeavored to urge—that what is often regarded as popular opinion, is a factitious affair; the mere clamor of a few prominent and mischievous individuals. I do not mean to say that Louis XVI did not violate his duties; he may have deserved expulsion; so far as my argument is concerned, he may have deserved capital punishment; but what I say is, he was in fact murdered, and that the notion of submitting his case to trial and the verdict of a whole people, was a mockery of justice, and a false assumption of popular sentiment. Robespierre was taken, as the embodiment of public opinion; and yet when Tallien, impelled by the knowledge that his own execution had been decreed in conclave, ventured in full convention to denounce that monster in human form, that personation of all that is fiendish; and to seize him as a traitor—what was the result? Why, Robespierre was hurried to the same guillotine, from which he had caused rivers of blood to flow; and beheaded amidst thundering shouts of applause, from the thousands whose homes had been made desolate, without the sympathy of one earthly being. Sir, nothing is more dangerous, than to assume readily what is the popular sentiment; and there is nothing, in the condition of this country, to make mistake, on this subject, impossible. The people of France, and especially of Paris, were in the possession of means not inferior to those of other nations, for the cultivation of their intellectual and moral as well as political capabilities. They considered themselves in advance of the rest of the world. I may be permitted to give, in proof of this, a conversation I had with a very distinguished man, who was an actor in the scenes of the French Revolution; a man, whose memory is, as it should be, and as I hope ever will be, very dear to every American; a man to whom, in his own country, the honor and distinction to which he was justly entitled were never rendered, only in consequence of the dread and jealousy of Bonaparte. On the memorable occasion of the visit of La Fayette to this country, some five and twenty years since, by the invitation of the Congress of the United States, it was the good fortune of my friend, who sits before me, (Mr. Howard,) and myself, to be the Committee appointed by our Legislature to attend upon him, during his visit to Annapolis as the guest of this State. In the conversation which occurred in the stage, on our return to Washington, allusion was made to the political schools in Germany, where, I supposed, many young men after receiving sound notions of free institutions, would inculcate them, to an extent

greater perhaps than they had obtained in any other part of Europe. The old patriot answered with marked spirit and promptness:—"No, Sir, 'tis in France, that the large body of enlightened men best understand the true principles of rational, civil and political liberty, and there the first successful effort will be made to introduce a government, securing to men their proper rights." Yet, in France were exhibited the scenes we have reviewed.

But, Sir, we need not go abroad to find instances of popular delusion. What do we witness at this moment—passing around us—amongst our own fellow-citizens, on American soil, by American people? What are we deploring as an awful calamity? What makes us tremble for the very existence of our institutions and all the inestimable blessings involved in their perpetuity? Is it not the delusion, the excitement, the frenzy, the madness of our people? Not of this one, that, or the other, but of immense masses, whole communities, rushing with an impetuosity that seems to defy resistance, not only to their own destruction, but to the destruction of that stupendous fabric which has cost so much blood and so much anxious toil and care to construct and preserve? What is abolitionism doing, at this moment? Do we not know what has been passing in Boston, in Springfield, and in various other places, and what is still passing in the North? Are we justified in assuming that scenes of a like character, though doubtless from different motives, will never be enacted in Maryland? Are we more enlightened—or better educated—or more deeply versed in the science of government? Until fanaticism deranged those men, they had as just conceptions as we have, of political, moral, and religious obligations; the love of liberty, and the love of law, were as as deeply inscribed upon their minds and hearts as upon ours; patriotism flourished and was cherished no where, more than in the old Bay State, and around Faneuil Hall; and yet, in despite of all, a phrenzied impulse has made havoc of every sense of duty, they owe to their country, and its laws. Yes, Sir, they were true men and will be so again. This madness cannot last. No, Sir, no. We have not yet sinned, as a nation, as to deserve the curse of ruin, the curse of disunion. It is an impeachment of the great attributes of mercy and of justice which belong to the Deity, to say or to think so. It is a condition, not of idiocy but of lunacy; and a lucid interval will recur, a long and lasting interval, I hope. But upon the theory of an "independent judge dependant upon the people"—how would it work in the interim? Fortunately for the country, we have had a Sprague, a Woodbury, a Nelson, a Grier, and other such firm and faithful men, independent of all popular clamor; holding their "commissions during good behaviour;" who standing on the rock of real independence, have fearlessly opposed the storm. This you could never rationally expect from one, who depended, for his official life and character, upon popular favor. Such a man would have trembled and quailed before the infuriated mob, as a captive slave before his mas-