

despotism! Most of the human race are now in this deplorable condition. And those nations who have gone in search of grandeur, power and splendor, have also fallen a sacrifice, and been the victims of their own folly. While they acquired those visionary blessings, they lost their freedom. My great objection to this government is, that it does not leave us the means of defending our rights, or of waging war against tyrants. It is urged by some gentlemen, that this new plan will bring us an acquisition of strength, an army, and the militia of the State. This is an idea ridiculous: gentlemen cannot be in earnest. This acquisition will trample on your fallen liberty. Let my beloved Americans guard against that fatal lethargy that has pervaded the universe. Have we the means of resisting disciplined armies, when our only defence, the militia, is put into the hands of Congress." * * * * *

"But there is one thing in it which I never would acquiesce in. I mean the changing it into a consolidated government, which is so abhorrent to my mind." * * * * *

"The American spirit has fled from here: it has gone to regions where it has never been expected: it has gone to the people of France in search of a splendid government, a strong, energetic government. Shall we imitate the example of those nations which have gone from a simple to a splendid government? Are those nations more worthy of our imitation? What can make an adequate satisfaction to them for the loss they have suffered in attaining such a government, for the loss of their liberty? If we admit consolidated government, it will be because we like a great splendid one. Some way or other, we must have a great mighty empire; we must have an army and a navy, and a number of things. When the American spirit was in its youth, the language of America was different; liberty, sir, was then the primary object. We are descended from a people whose government was founded on liberty: our glorious forefathers of Great Britain made liberty the foundation of everything. The country is become a great, mighty, and splendid nation; not because their Government is strong and energetic; but, sir, because liberty is its direct end and foundation. We drew the spirit of liberty from our British ancestors: by that spirit we have triumphed over every difficulty. But now, sir, the American spirit, assisted by the ropes and chains of consolidation, is about to convert this country into a powerful and mighty empire; if you make the citizens of this country agree to become the subjects of one great consolidated empire of America, your government will not have sufficient energy to keep them together. Such a government is incompatible with the genius of republicanism. There will be no checks, no real balances, in this government. What can avail your spe-

ciuous, imaginary balances, your rope-dancing, chain-rattling, ridiculous ideal checks and contrivances? But, sir, we are not feared by foreigners; we do not make nations tremble. Would this constitute happiness or secure liberty? I trust, sir, our political hemisphere will ever direct their operations to the security of these objects. Consider our situation, sir; go to the poor man, ask him what he does: he will inform you that he enjoys the fruits of his labor, under his own fig tree, with his wife and children around him, in peace and security. Go to every other member of society, you will find the same tranquil ease and content; you will find no alarms or disturbances! Why then tell us of dangers to terrify us into an adoption of this new form of government." * * *

"This Constitution is said to have beautiful features; but when I come to examine these features, sir, they appear to me horribly frightful: among other deformities, it has an awful squinting; it squints towards monarchy: and does not this raise indignation in the breast of every true American? Your president may easily become king: your Senate is so imperfectly constructed that your dearest rights may be sacrificed by what may be a small minority: and a very small minority may continue forever unchangeable this government, though horribly defective. Where are your checks in this government? Your strongholds will be in the hands of your enemies: it is on a supposition that your American governors shall be honest, that all the good qualities of this government are founded: but its defective and imperfect construction puts it in their power to perpetrate the worst of mischiefs, should they be bad men; and, sir, would not all the world, from the eastern to the western hemisphere, blame our distracted folly in resting our rights upon the contingency of our rulers being good or bad? Show me that age and country where the rights and liberties of the people are placed on the sole chance of their rulers being good men, without a consequent loss of liberty? I say that the loss of that dearest privilege has ever followed, with absolute certainty, every such mad attempt, and if your American chief be a man of ambition, and abilities, how easy it is for him to render himself absolute! The army is in his hands, and if he be a man of address, it will be attached to him, and it will be the subject of long meditation with him to seize the first auspicious moment to accomplish his design; and, sir, will the American spirit solely relieve you when this happens? I would rather infinitely, and I am sure most of this Convention are of the same opinion, have a king, lords and commons, than a government so replete with such insupportable evils. If we make a king we may prescribe the rules by which he shall rule his people, and interpose such checks as will prevent him from