

the States must act for themselves, and that they are then thrown upon the last resort, that great inalienable right of the people, revolution, of which my friend from Somerset (Mr. Jones) spoke so eloquently.

Mr. MILLER. The gentleman from Baltimore county, (Mr. Ridgely,) was not present when my argument was made.

Mr. RIDGELY. I took it from the reports in the newspapers.

Mr. MILLER. Those reports do not represent my position fully. I said that in such a case they must resort to the precedent established by the Constitution, resort to a convention of States for the establishment of a new government.

Mr. RIDGELY. Then they must resort to revolutionary means, either peaceable or forcible, for they are necessarily thrown upon the abstract idea of the right of revolution. There can be no constitutional convention assembled by disaffected States, and no unconstitutional withdrawal unless revolutionary; the terms are correlative. There can be no constitutional withdrawal; it must be unconstitutional, and if unconstitutional, be it forcible or peaceable, it must be an attempt to overturn the existing form of government, and therefore revolutionary.

Now, sir, I cannot agree to that doctrine. I agree, as we have said in our bill of rights, that, as an abstract political truth, whenever a people are oppressed they have an inalienable right to throw off the yoke of oppression; nobody disputes that. But we are not now talking of that kind of right. We are talking about written rights, comprehended within the forms of a written Constitution, fenced in and restrained. And it is impossible, as Mr. Webster said, in the remarks quoted by the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Kennard,) it is impossible to conceive of the idea of withdrawal or secession except as inseparable from revolution and rebellion. Thus the gentleman would land us if we follow him into revolution; and by this sort of revolution he virtually vindicates secession, which he assumes to be unconstitutional. I cannot go with him in his conclusions, although I concede all the theories which he laid down as to the separate, independent condition of all these colonies, and their sovereignty, if he prefers that word; because it is only a sovereignty in a qualified sense, for they could only claim absolute sovereignty, if at all, up to the time of the articles of Confederation. At that time they delegated—if the gentleman prefers that phrase also—a portion of their sovereignty for a temporary purpose to the Confederation itself. Therefore they necessarily could not have retained all these attributes of sovereignty. I will agree with him that such a condition of sovereignty existed, and existed intact up to the time of the formation of the Articles of Confederation. But I hold that then, in that embryo state of govern-

ment, in that first form of government established by our forefathers, there was a surrender, *quoad hoc*, of the sovereignty of those Colonies, so far as it was delegated to that Confederation.

A great deal has been said about this inhuman war, of brother arrayed against brother, of father against son; and about this usurped power of coercion. And it has been denied that there was any authority in favor of what these gentlemen call coercion. Now this very same paper from which I have already read, furnishes us some valuable light upon that subject. For I take it for granted that the representations made here by Mr. Everett are founded upon legitimate authority. I presume that no man with national reputation such as he pre-eminently enjoys, would venture to insert here, with quotation marks, sentiments ascribed to different individuals unless they had been really uttered by them. What does he say upon this subject of coercion? Hear him:

"This generation has been so deafened by the iteration of these 'heresies,' as General C. C. Pinckney called them, of separate and independent sovereignty, for which the authority of Mr. Jefferson has been boldly claimed, that many well-meaning persons, North and South, have been led to believe in them. They will be surprised to hear that in another letter from Mr. Jefferson, written before even the present Constitution was framed, (4th April, 1787,) language like the following is found: 'It has been so often said as to be generally believed, that Congress has no power by the Confederation to enforce anything; for instance, contributions of money. It was not necessary to give them that power expressly; they have it by the law of nature.'"

Adopting their own theory that this Constitution is a compact, Mr. Jefferson proceeds:

"When two parties make a compact, there results to each the power of compelling the other to execute it. *Compulsion* was never so easy as in our case, where a single frigate would soon levy on the commerce of a single State the deficiency of its contributions."

I repeat this extraordinary sentiment, extraordinary only as the utterance of Thomas Jefferson: "Compulsion was never so easy as in our case, where a single frigate would soon levy on the commerce of a single State the deficiency of its contributions." What could be more clear and conclusive upon this point? This apostle of democracy, the great father of all the theory of State rights; this great champion of the widest and most latitudinarian construction of State rights, has here boldly asserted that even upon the matter of enforcing the payment of taxes, the government had the right to resort to compulsion and coercion; and to enforce its acts by sending a frigate into the ports of any of the States of this Union, and by force of arms compel and enforce subordination and obedi-