

fully on this momentous affair—that he will examine for himself—and consider that he has not only the good of this Commonwealth under his consideration, but the welfare of the United States.

Dr. Willard entered eagerly into the field of ancient history—and deduced therefrom arguments to prove that where power had been trusted to men, whether in great or small bodies, they had always abused it—and that thus republics soon degenerated into aristocracies. He instance Sparta, Athens, and Rome.—The Amphictyonic league, he said, resembled the Confederation of the United States—while thus united, they defied Xerxes—but were subdued by the gold of Philip—who bought the Council to be the master of the country.

Hon. Mr. Cabot (in reply to the gentleman from Uxbridge) exposed the absurdity of conclusions and hypotheses drawn from ancient governments—which bore no relation to the confederate government; for those governments had no idea of representation, as we have. He however warned us against the evils which had ruined those states—which he thought was the want of an efficient federal government.—As much as the Athenians rejoiced in the extirpation of a Lacedemonian, will, if we are disunited, a citizen of Massachusetts, at the death of a Connecticut man, or a Yorker. With respect to the proposed government degenerating into an aristocracy, the Hon. Gentleman observed, that the nature and situation of our country rendered such a circumstance impossible.—As from the great preponderance of the agricultural interest in the United States—that interest would always have it in its power the election of such men, as would, he observed, effectually prevent the introduction of any other than a perfectly democratic form of government.

Hon. Mr. Cabot, went fully into a continuation of the arguments of the hon. gentleman last up.—In a clear and elegant manner, he analyzed the ancient governments mentioned by Dr. Willard, and by comparing them with the proposed system, fully demonstrated the superiority of the latter, and in a particular manner the section under debate.

Sir, in the paragraph in hand—Congress, &c.

Here, sir, (however kindly Congress may be pleased to deal with us) is a very good and valid conveyance of all the property in the United States—to certain uses indeed, but those uses capable of any construction, the triflers may think proper to make. This body is not amenable to any tribunal, and therefore, this Congress can do no wrong—it will not be denied that they *may* tax us to any extent, but if we gentlemen are fond of arguing that this body never *will* do anything but what is for the common good. Let us consider that matter.

Faction, sir, is the vehicle of all transactions in public bodies, and when gentlemen know this so well, I am rather surprised to hear them so fanquine in this respect. The prevalent faction *is* the body—these gentlemen, therefore, must mean that the prevalent faction will always be right, and that the true patriot will always outnumber the men of less and less principles. From this it would follow, that no public measure was ever wrong, because it must have been adopted by the majority, and so, I grant no power ever was, or ever will be abused. In short, we know that all governments have degenerated, and consequently have abused the powers reposed in them, and we should imagine better of the proposed Congress than of myriads of public bodies who have gone before them, I cannot at present conceive.

Sir, we ought (I speak with submission) to consider, that what we now grant from certain motives well grounded at present, will be exacted of posterity as a prerogative when we are not alive, to testify the tacit conditions of the grant—that the wisdom of this age will then be pleased by those in power and that the cessions we are now about to make will be actually clothed with the venerable habit of ancestral sanction.

Therefore, sir, I humbly premise we ought not to take advantage of our situation in point of time, so as to bind posterity to be obedient to laws, they may very possibly disapprove, nor expose them to a rebellion which at that period will very probably end only in their farther subjugation.

The paragraph in question is an absolute decree of the people. The Congress *shall* have power—it does not say that they shall *exercise* it—but our necessities say, they *must*, and the experience of ages say, that they *will*, and finally, when the expence of the nation, by their ambitions are grown enormous, that they will oppress and subdue.—For, sir, they may lay taxes, duties, imposts and excise!—One would suppose that the Convention, sir, were not at all afraid to multiply words when anything was to be got by it. By another clause, all imposts and duties, on exports and imports, wherever laid, go into the federal chest.—So that Congress may not only lay impost and excise, but all imposts and duties that are laid on imports and exports, by any state, shall be a part of the national revenue—and besides, Congress may lay an impost on the produce and manufactures of the country, which are consumed at home.—And all these shall be equal through the states.—Here, sir, I raise too objections.—If, that Congress should have this power, is it a universal, unbound power—then, as far as I think, no free people ought ever to consent to it, especially so important a matter as that of property. I will not descend, sir, to an abuse of this future Congress, until it exists, nor

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At present Congress have no power to lay

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Sir, I shall be told that these are imaginary evils—but I hold to this maxim, that power is never given (of this kind, especially) but it is exercised, nor ever exercised but it was finally used. We must not be amused with fictions of probabilities, but we must be assured that we are in danger, and that this Congress could not treat us, if they were ever so much disposed.

To pay the debts, &c.

These words, sir, confess an ornament

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This clause, sir, is the very finewax of the constitution. And I hope the universality of it may be singular; but it may be easily seen that it tends to produce in time, as universal power, every other respect. As the poverty of individuals, prevents luxury, to the poverty of public bodies, whether sole or aggregate, prevents parsimony. A nation cannot, perhaps, do a more impudent thing than to supply the purse of its foreign neighbour with parimony, which results from parsimony. And I venture to predict, that the wisdom of this age will then be pleased by those in power and that the cessions we are now about to make will be actually clothed with the venerable habit of ancestral sanction.

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Sir, in my humble opinion, those things

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They, doubtless have their influence in a grand effect, and so are essential to the system.—But, sir, I view the lecture to which we have at length arrived, as the remant of the fabric, and this clause as the key-stone, of (if I may apply the metaphor) the magic talisman on which the fate of it depends.

Allow me, sir, to recall to your remembrance that yesterday, when States were in doubt about granting to Congress a five per cent. impost, and the simple power of regulating trade—the time, when to deliberate was the patriotic mind, that power was to be transferred with reluctance, with a sparing hand—and the most obvious utility could scarcely extort it from the people. It appears to me of some importance to consider this

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