

*Extract from the answer of the Massachusetts Senate to the Governor's Speech of 17th January, 1806*

"We shall look with a still more cautious eye upon every innovation attempted to be made upon our national constitution. The integrity, experience, and extensive information discovered by the illustrious characters who framed that valuable instrument and the series of public prosperity enjoyed under it, intitle it to our highest veneration; its excellence appears with still greater lustre, when compared with the ephemeral constitutions of many nations which have flitted across the eye in rapid succession, and then sunk into total oblivion. We are not insensible, that our form of government must be imperfect, as was the nature of its authors: but we recollect, at the same time, that *any proposed alteration under the name of amendment is liable to the same imperfection.*

"Believing therefore that *the principles of the constitution are as well adjusted as human infirmity will permit, and that a small innovation may essentially pervert its original tendency* we shall exert ourselves to preserve it in its present form, except in cases where its operation shall be found extremely unequal and oppressive."

I offer these great and solemn truths to the consideration of all who have an interest in the welfare of their country.

I. A separation of the States cannot be effected without an immediate CIVIL, and an almost continual BORDER WAR; and it must inevitably place us at the mercy of England, and make this Country the sport of the European Powers at all future times.

II. As well might we expect to re-unite, without flaw, the fragments of an elegant porcelain vase, shattered to pieces, as to restore the Union, if dissolved but for one hour.

III. A period of war, and invasion, and danger, is utterly unfit for repairing or amending a Constitution. Nothing but convulsion can arise out of the attempt.

IV. General Washington, in his last legacy, one of the noblest efforts of human wisdom, impressively urged his countrymen to frown indignantly upon any attempt to impair or dissolve the Union.

V. To hostile European Powers, a dissolution would be of immense and incalculable advantage.

VI. It would be inexpressible folly and madness to reject the policy dictated by Washington, and follow that which