

has been flourishing, and is entirely free from debt, a large majority of the people have, for the last forty years, called loudly on the privileged landholders to give up their exclusive right of voting, and to extend the suffrage to all the adult males, in accordance with the system established in all the neighbouring States. The dispute turned mainly on a question of a very abstract nature for the comprehension of the multitude, though in reality one of great constitutional importance; namely, whether the change should be made according to the forms prescribed in the charter of 1663, or might be effected by the people in its capacity of sovereign, without regard to any established forms. The latter method was advocated by the democratic leaders as most flattering to the people, and with such success that they organized a formidable association in opposition to the government. Their demands did not differ very materially from those which the legislature was willing to concede, except that the democrats claimed the suffrage, not only for every American-born citizen, but also for the new-comers, or the settlers of a few years' standing. Both parties agreed to exclude the free blacks. At length, as their wishes were not complied with, the "Suffrage Convention" resolved to intimidate their opponents by a military enrolment and drilling, and were soon joined by several companies of militia.

The governor of Rhode Island was so much alarmed as to call on the President of the United States to afford him aid, which was declined on the ground that no overt act of violence had been committed. The insurgents then elected a separate