

CHAPTER II

THE POWERS OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The form of government under which we live, wisely established by our forefathers, is that of a representative, self-limited democracy, as distinguished, on the one hand, from an absolute or direct democracy and, on the other hand, from an absolute monarchy, either of which is an unsafe foundation upon which to rest the political institutions of a free people. The fault of the former is that it constitutes an impossible attempt to carry on the highly complex and multiplex political activities of modern civilization with the crude methods of primitive society; the vice of the latter is that it completely suppresses the *will*, if not the *wishes* of the governed. The dangerous tendency of the one is toward anarchy, for where everybody rules by direct action, the distinction between government and people disappears, with the result, finally, that there is no government at all, but only a mob, passing spasmodic and temporary resolutions. The sure course of the other is toward despotism, for where an autocrat rules, government ceases to be an appliance to preserve liberty and becomes a weapon to destroy it. Representative government avoids both extremes: the first, by devolving the actual operations of government upon agents selected by the people themselves, who thus have the opportunity to appropriate the services of their most