

lation to his [Mr. C.'s] remarks, as to the character of the men by whom these frauds were perpetrated, proceeded to reply to the position that juries would not execute the law, if the crime was punished too severely. His, [Mr. C.'s] hope lay in this: we were taking a new start—we were about to have a new Constitution—old things and old measures were passing away. There was to be a line chalked between the time present and the time passed. He was disposed to hope, and he believed, that the honest, respectable, intelligent portion of the people, [which was the immense mass of the community,] was so satiated, so gorged with the miserable state of things which existed, and for which all former remedies had proved inefficient, that they would readily avail themselves of the means to get rid of it. He did not think that the mitigation of the punishment contemplated by the amendment, was calculated to accomplish the end sought to be attained.

Mr. SELLMAN desired as much as any man, he said, to prevent bribery and corruption. He did not, however, believe that these crimes existed to the extent stated. For upwards of twenty years, he had represented a constituency comprising more than three thousand voters. Nine-tenths of them, he believed were pure, and no man dare approach one of them with an improper motive.

He read the provision of the old Constitution on this subject, and asked gentlemen to state of what good it had ever been productive. Had any convictions taken place or any indictments been preferred under it? He would like his colleague, (Mr. DORSEY,) to give his experience on that point.

He thought the punishment here proposed was too great. Still, if gentlemen would show him its necessity, he would vote for it. He believed that all punishments should be so proportioned to the offence committed, that there could be no difficulty in enforcing the law.

He suggested the good results which would follow, by the constant presentation of this subject of bribery and corruption to the consideration of grand juries. He did not think that any general provision in the Constitution would reach the evil. He desired to see it put down, and thought that moderate means would be the most effectual. He preferred the amendment limiting the punishment to five years, but would vote for the other proposition if that could not be passed.

Mr. SPENCER briefly recapitulated the ground he had taken yesterday on this question, and proceeded to say that he concurred in the views that had been expressed by the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. CHAMBERS.) He [Mr. S.] would go with that gentleman to the utmost extent in crushing this evil and would vote for the clause as it now stood.

If, as had been intimated, there had been no convictions, it was not the law which prevented it, but it was the morbid sentiment that prevailed among men of position, which had led to that result. Replying to the argument as to the pro-

priety of charging grand juries on the subject, he said that some of the most eloquent and probing charges he had ever heard from the bench, were addressed to this very evil. It was a mistake to suppose that there had been no prosecutions and convictions; but the great misfortune had been, that when courts and juries had done their duty, the Executive in high party times, had interfered to arrest the legitimate results. Carry out the principle which he had laid down upon that point, in his amendment—infuse by the action of this Convention a high moral sentiment in the public mind, and the object so long desired would at length be accomplished.

Mr. JENIFER felt, he said, that he could not give a silent vote on this question, but would detain the Convention only with a very few words. The object which all gentlemen had in view was to prevent corrupt voting. But it seemed to him that the proposition before the committee was calculated more than any other to defeat that object. He believed that the amendment limiting the term of condemnation would have a beneficial effect. Under that amendment he believed that a conviction would be obtained as soon as the case might present itself. The penalty, without the amendment, was too rigorous—so much so as, in his judgment, to prevent persons being prosecuted. Under the limited punishment, the first conviction would go far to arrest the evil. But make the punishment perpetual, and the clause would remain, as that in the existing Constitution had done, a dead letter.

Mr. J. U. DENNIS thought that the heaviest brand of condemnation should be stamped upon that man who would prostitute the elective franchise. But he had risen mainly to say a word in reply to the gentleman who addressed the committee a short time since (Mr. SELLMAN.) Mr. D. then took up the statement which had been made by Mr. SELLMAN as to the incorruptibility of nine-tenths of his constituents; and entered upon a mathematical calculation to show that, upon the principle that one-tenth *could* be corrupted, there were five hundred and thirty nine of his constituents that might be approached in that way.

Mr. SELLMAN explained that he did not intend to say that there were not more than nine-tenths that were incorruptible. He believed that there were.

Some conversation followed between Messrs. SELLMAN and DENNIS.

Mr. BRENT, of Baltimore city, stated that he should vote for the amendment disqualifying the party convicted, from voting or holding office for five years, but should afterwards rely on a substitute referring this whole subject to the Legislature and making it obligatory to pass full and suitable laws for the prevention of these offences. It seemed to him that gentleman had been so much stunned and confused by reports of election frauds all over the State, that they were running wild on the subject. One gentleman has said that the bribing of a voter was worse than murder. Mr. BRENT, would not for one moment justify such an act, but if it is worse than murder, why not make it a capital offence at once,