

sentiment, and force the already too tender sensibility into disease in its most aggravated form. There was an idea abroad that *might* alone would triumph, and that the counties with their sparse population were to be trodden down and robbed of their political existence. He trusted no such destiny was in store, and he would see oil poured upon the troubled waters—calming and restoring their deep agitation. Again he invoked the Convention to abandon abstractions that might have such fearful tendencies. And he respectfully asked the gentleman who had introduced this amendment, what good result he expected from the proposition inserted in the unguarded form in which he had offered it for consideration?

Mr. PRESTMAN here said he was not apprised of the best mode of carrying it out at present.

Mr. DIRICKSON resumed. He understood the gentleman then to express a willingness to take a leap fearlessly in the dark—to urge the adoption of theories, the tremendous consequences of which no man had anticipated or could begin to realize until the very crisis was upon him. Born of the people, he sympathised in all their hopes and wishes. He was part and parcel of them. He would have their every right so solemnly shielded that the very tyranny of numbers itself would stand abashed and rebuked whenever tempted to break down the sacred barriers by which they were guarded and preserved.

He had heard with great pleasure the very able remarks which had fallen from his honorable and highly esteemed friend from the county of Dorchester, (Mr. Hicks.) He had alluded to the peculiar legislation of 1836, as affording the most distinguishing evidence of the spirit of reform which had ever marked his whole political career. So far as the policy of that period had manifested itself in weeding out ancient drawbacks upon the rights and privileges of the people, and in more thoroughly republicanising our present form of Government, it merited and received his gratitude and approbation. But to his deep regret he was compelled to say, that when he remembered the innovation then made upon the representative system, he was compelled to regard it as the darkest hour in the modern annals of our State.

It was then that the principle of the amendment new submitted, received, in its most modified and limited form, a sort of *quasi* adoption. Then the entering wedge was pointed—and, under the specious and deceptive guise of compromise, a change was effected, which, if now expanded to the extent advocated, might rend the State to fragments. The idea here sought to be engrafted in the bill of rights, was nothing less than the basis upon which certain gentlemen might rear their darling hobby—"representation based purely upon population." He could not for an instant give countenance to any scheme with such an aim in view. Neither the past history of our State, nor its present condition and geographical position, warranted or justified it. The statesman who would provide wise laws for the government of a large community, must not be swayed in his judgment by mere abstract

rights, but looking calmly over the whole field and weighing every circumstance in the balance, so draft his code that, whilst the interests of all received its beneficial influence, individual liberty and sectional independence, should be every where plainly and distinctly secured. The legislation of past days had shown no disposition upon the part of the smaller counties to use their present power detrimental to the prosperity of other portions of the State; on the contrary, they now exhibited the noble spectacle of an honest people cheerfully discharging every obligation made essential by our common debt, without present benefit or future hope.

By their combined aid and assistance, the mountains have been divided—canals opened—railroads created, and a great city reared up in all its magnificent proportions. Why then, this continued and ungrateful clamoring against the power essential to their security and independence? Why, to illustrate a mere abstraction, seek to humiliate their pride by placing them in a position but little short of mere colonial dependencies?

A distinguished gentleman from Carroll county, some days since, in speaking of that small minority of the Convention who had voted for representation upon a purely popular basis, had said, with a manner and a menacing expression, that might indicate a threat, "that their constituency was named 'Legion.'" Sir, the day of menace and threats had gone by. The duty of those who represented the smaller counties was plain and open before them. The magic of the word "Legion" could not deter them from their high and resolved purpose. They could not now desert, in the hour of peril, without proving shamefully recreant to the sacred trusts which had been confided to them by a generous people.

To the words of the honorable gentleman from Dorchester, (Mr. Phelps,) whilst speaking of the fertility and beauty of the Eastern Shore, in view of a separation that might too soon be hurried upon us, he had listened with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain. With pleasure he felt the consciousness that there was no land upon which Heaven had smiled more kindly, and surely no people more open hearted in their generous hospitality. He trusted the hour of separation and secession would never come. He was a Marylander by birth—a Marylander by nature and by habit. Every association of the past, and every hope of the future, entwined his affections about his native State. There was not within her whole borders one spot, from the topmost peak of the Alleghanies to yon distant shore, upon which the eternal thunder of the Atlantic's roar is unceasingly heard, which he did not love and cherish as consecrated ground. The deeds of her patriots and sages—of her warriors and statesmen, were one common property, and one common inheritance. No community or brotherhood was ever bound by stronger ties or happier reminiscences; and, fratricidal indeed would be that policy which, tearing asunder these bonds, would make one of the brightest of the old thirteen, a "Niobe" amid the brilliant galaxy of her sister States. He indulged the hope that gentlemen