

and behold the gentleman is the only member of the body who rises, at a most unusual and untimely moment, to assail the principle of representing the slave population. These remarks are the "first fruits," of this glowing sentiment of singular attachment to our peculiar condition! Why this "hot haste"? Cannot the gentleman restrain his hostility, till the report comes up for discussion? Then is the appropriate period for his denunciation. But why should this principle of representation of the aggregate population be denounced? There was great propriety in adopting federal numbers in the Constitution of the United States, because there was some of the States having no slaves. But as far as relates to internal regulation, there was no motive or consistency in adopting the principle of federal numbers, nor did he fear any sound reason upon which the gentleman could successfully sustain his enmity to this feature of the report. He would be prepared to demonstrate this at the proper period.

Mr. PRESTMAN said that he took occasion to remark, preliminarily to the observations he was about to offer, in reply to the gentleman from Kent, [Mr. Chambers,] that he had sought to evince, at all times, towards that gentleman, and to every member of that body, the most respectful and courteous consideration. He had, however, observed, and was compelled so to declare, that he had not always been met in the same spirit, by the gentleman who had just addressed the Convention. In answer, sir, to a plain and simple inquiry, calculated in no degree to offend the nicest sensibility, he had had a report made upon him, certainly not very parliamentary in style or manner.

Mr. CHAMBERS interposing, declared it was foreign to his wish, to say any thing personal in its character to the gentleman from Baltimore city; on the contrary, he was among the last gentlemen, to whom he would evince any unkindness of feeling.

Mr. PRESTMAN. He did not suppose that the gentleman had designed to give him personal offence, or to attack his motives. There could not possibly be such an issue between them. In that Convention, composed of Maryland gentlemen, he would be slow to believe that any such intention would be manifested. But he did mean to complain and avow that the gentleman from Kent, both in the manner and matter of his remarks, had not extended to him the same frankness and courtesy, which he had invariably manifested, in discussion, with that gentleman, whose great ability he had so often acknowledged and whose friendship he highly prized. But enough of that, sir. He could not say less in justice to his own sense of propriety.

He had been charged with inconsistency in the position he had assumed, in reference to the report, and the ground he had occupied when he submitted a proposition, intended as a full and complete guaranty to the rights of the slave holders of Maryland to be secured in their slave-property against the possibility of legislative emancipation. Sprung, sir, from a race of slave-hold-

ers, he had been impelled alike by a sense of feeling and the dictate of stern duty, to offer his humble aid to guard the institution as it now exist. But, sir, that course has been looked upon with suspicion, and forsooth, his independent action on that subject has been met, not as it should have been, as a token of willingness to dispel all doubt upon this question, vital as some seemed to regard it, but strangely converted into a cause of reproach and mistrust. He could not say that had he anticipated that an effort so entirely free from selfishness, or the expectation of personal advantage on his part, would have been so misconceived by those who represent the slave interest upon this floor, he would have withheld his sentiments and his vote upon that question, but he would say, that if the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) was to be regarded as speaking for that class of delegates, (which, however, he would not assume,) the unanimous vote of this body, to sustain the rights of slave holders, had been most illy deserved.

What, sir, is it inconsistent in a gentleman upon this floor, to seek to guard the property of slave holders, as a chattel interest, if, at the same time, he should refuse to recognize each and every negro as entitled to be ranked with a freeman, in establishing the basis of representation.

Verily, sir, with great deference he would ask, when will wonders cease, if gentlemen will argue such a proposition? In the language of Junius, their "imagination may conceive such a thing, but where shall we find credulity enough to believe it."

As he had often said, he now reiterated, that he had offered that proposition in good faith and for two reasons—first, because, he thought it was right in itself, and would be the means of obtaining the confidence of the slave interest; and secondly, to silence the misrepresentations and slanders, which had been industriously circulated to the prejudice of his constituency. Should the propositions contained in the report of the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) be sustained, what gentleman could doubt, that the new Constitution would be indignantly rejected by more than two-thirds of the freemen of Maryland. Our work would then have been in vain, and the cherished hopes of the people would vanish, and a deep gloom would fasten upon their minds.

Remember, gentlemen in coming to this Convention, composed upon the basis that it is, all our confidence was placed, not in the power to demand and enforce our rights, but in the magnanimity and sense of common justice, which as freemen, and above all, as Marylanders, you would mete out to your common brethren. Surely you will be able to discard in part, if not altogether, the local prejudices which are said to influence, more or less, each and every man in his modes of thinking and acting; and if you are prepared to deny the equality of rights and privileges to each citizen of Maryland, which are now enjoyed in almost every State in the republic, you will honor yourselves by extending the olive