

branch of reconciliation which may lead to an harmonious adjustment. Do not, as the report of the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) would counsel, shut your eyes and turn a deaf ear to the claims of those, who by every principle of nature, sanctioned by nature's God, are entitled to be considered your equals.

Mr. CHAMBERS said :

The gentleman has by way of boast, it would seem, told us he represents 160,000 constituents. Does he mean to claim any peculiar privilege on this floor on that account? If he expects this he labors under a sad mistake. My constituents, said Mr. C., are few in comparison, and he who now speaks for them, one of the humblest of the members on this floor. But if that gentleman or any other, thinks proper to prefer claims of superiority on the score of a large constituency, he had only to say he claimed a stand on the same platform with the most important personage here—aye, even if the other should represent one hundred and sixty times the number of the gentleman's 160,000. He claimed the same rights, the same privileges, and the same authority here for every individual member, no matter what might be the amount of his constituency.

He hoped the measures of the Convention were not to be carried by "authority"—above all, the authority of numbers not here to speak for themselves, and for whom he assumed the privilege of thinking, their delegates did not always exactly present the true index of sentiment.

As little did he regard the declaration of the gentleman, if designed as a *threat*.

Mr. PRESSTMAN said he did not so design it.

Mr. C. If the good people of Baltimore or any other part of the State prefer the new Constitution to the old one, they will of course vote for its ratification. Those who are not satisfied with it will of course vote against its ratification. But this would not make him adopt a principle he believed to be mischievous, nor abandon one he believed calculated to promote the interest and happiness of the people of the State.

He must be permitted again to say, he could see no propriety in this premature attack upon the report of the minority. Why not assail the report of the Chairman? It assumed the aggregate population. Why not attack the report of the two gentlemen, (Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Howard,) who had united in discarding the principle of federal numbers? Federal numbers never had been known as an element in our system of representation till 1836—never. Under such circumstances, he felt it a just cause of remark, that this unreasonable mode of putting a black mark upon the report, to go out with it, to prejudice and prejudice it, had been indulged.

*Erratum.*—In No. 17, page 118, first paragraph, in the remarks of Mr. Buchanan in reply to Mr. Biser, substitute the words "although, (according to his own account) he had been a long time in *travail*, he was most happily delivered at last" for these words: "He has *trav ailed* much and his new born delivered," which, by a typographical error found its way into the Register of that date.

TUESDAY, February 18, 1851.

The Convention met at eleven o'clock. Prayer was made by the Rev. Mr. GRIFFITH. The roll of the members was called.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. THOMAS said, that before the House proceeded to the regular business for the day, he desired to correct an error in our published debates, to which his attention had been kindly turned by a friend. He did not habitually read the debates. He very seldom looked at the printed journal. He relied upon his recollection of passing events in this body, and would not have known; but for the information derived from another, that in his absence, language imputed to him without warrant, had been commented on in the course of debate.

It would be remembered by the House, that several days ago, when the subject of apportioning representatives to the Legislature was under consideration, he had said, that the distribution of political power was the most difficult duty that this Convention had to perform. This remark, he supposed, did not admit of but one construction. And he was surprised to hear that the obvious meaning of this language was not apprehended by every one in whose presence it had been uttered.

Now, sir, what is meant by distributing political power, when applied to the action of this body engaged in apportioning representatives to the Legislature? We propose to give to the Legislature a law—making political power. We propose then to give to the voters of the several counties and to the city of Baltimore, the right to elect representatives to this Legislature. And in doing this, in authorising the voters, separately, to direct, by their suffrages, how the political power we are to give to the Legislature shall be exerted, we distribute to each citizen at the polls, in effect, a portion of that political power which the Constitution has conferred upon the Legislature. This, then, is the obvious meaning of his language. He had said nothing about offices or office-holders, and made no reference to the one or to the other.

While he was speaking, immediately after he had used the words he had now explained, he heard the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) say, "and offices." To that language, he made no reply. He considered it at the time, to be one of those jests that the gentleman pleases sometimes to indulge in, and did not turn from the course of his remarks to notice it in any way.

Mr. T. referred to that part of the report of our debates wherein he is represented to have granted that the gentleman from Kent was right in saying that we were engaged in distributing offices, and said that he was authorised by the reporters, who were sitting before him, to say, that there was, in that part of these reports, an error.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was proper for him to say a word upon this subject, because he was one of those who had referred to the expressions of the gentleman from Frederick, (Mr. Thomas,)