

had been absent heretofore should give notice of their absence to the Secretary, that they might appear on the same record with other members contemplated by the order.

Mr. McLANE said he had not offered this amendment in any light mood, and he did not wish that it should be so considered. He thought that the whole affair was out of place, and that it ought to have been let alone. He disclaimed any intention to reflect upon the gentleman who had introduced the order; but he (Mr. McLANE) felt that the result of the continued efforts made here was inevitable. They would not only take away from the Convention the respect of the public, but would in the end, if persisted in, deprive it of its own respect, and lead to every species of disorder. He thought that the true mode was to rely upon the dictates of every member's conscience and sense of duty, and to trust to an enlightened community to do them justice. If, however, the Convention was to cast a censure upon itself, he hoped that it would not be confined to the future, but that it should be retrospective also.

He did not think that any evil had resulted from the absence of members; and certainly he imputed to no gentleman who had been absent any motive or intention unworthy of him as a gentleman or a member of this body; but if any evil had resulted, it had been because the absence of members heretofore had obstructed the action of the committees and prevented them from making their reports. There were members enough to carry on the business of the Convention every day; and if gentlemen did not happen to be here at the call of the roll, he did not think that they should, for that reason, be held up to public reprobation. But if it must be so, let all stand upon the same footing.

Mr. BRENT said he hoped the Convention would not be induced to retrace the step which it had yesterday taken by so decisive a vote. Why was it that a change had "come over the spirit of its dream" in the course of the night? The operation of the resolution had not yet been tested. How then could the Convention know whether it would be successful or not? It was not to go into operation until Monday next. What harm could there be in it? What was the resolution? Mr. B. explained its purposes, and proceeded to argue that if a member was called by any necessity, the Convention could, by letter or otherwise, be informed of the fact, and that the gentleman's own statement of the facts, would be taken by the Convention as a sufficient excuse.

The gentleman from Cecil, (Mr. McLANE) was mistaken if he supposed that that resolution was offered because there had not been a sufficient number of members attending the Committees. He, Mr. B., had no such consideration in view in offering the resolution. He had assigned nothing in the failure of the past (melancholy as that had been) to transact the public business as the reason for the resolution. He looked only to the future; and he did not intend to stop here. If it should be found that this resolution did not

answer the purpose, he should follow it up with another proposition. He would cease to throw grass, and would begin to throw stones. He would offer a resolution to dock the *per diem*. He saw that gentlemen were absent. He saw that they would continue to be so, unless something was done. The gentleman from Cecil had referred to the discredit which was brought upon the Convention, by these propositions. The highest and deepest reproach which could be brought upon the Convention, would result from the failure to present to the people, in consequence of the absence of members, such a Constitution as would command their votes.

He had introduced this order upon high considerations, as he understood them, and not from any miserable desire to cater to a morbid appetite to cast odium upon this Convention. He was not satisfied with the presence of a quorum only. The State had a right to the collective wisdom and votes of the whole body.

Mr. McLANE. I withdraw the amendment which I offered. It is very possible that its purpose may not be understood; and yet it might be understood as reflecting upon the absence of gentlemen hitherto. I will withdraw it. My motive was entirely different. I believe that no gentlemen who has been absent heretofore, should in any degree be censured for it, and I am unwilling to do anything which might lead to such a result.

So the amendment was withdrawn.

Mr. BROWN said he should have voted against the proposition of the gentleman from Cecil, (Mr. McLANE,) and probably with as much propriety as any other member of the body, so far as the matter of absence was concerned. He Mr. B., doubted whether any member, except those immediately from the City of Annapolis, had been less frequently absent than himself. But he was willing that "by-gones should be by-gones." He thought the adoption of such an order would be a reflection upon gentlemen.

Mr. McLANE, (interposing.) I have withdrawn it.

Mr. BROWN. I know it. I shall again vote for the resolution of the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. BRENT,) because I think we have a right to adopt it. We reflect upon nobody, and the punishment contemplated is but a slight one. We record the names of those who are present, but we say nothing about the absentees. I suggest, however, that the gentleman should allow the resolution to lie on the table for a short time. Perhaps the very fact of its having been offered, may produce beneficial results. I think that this body, and especially the reform portion of it, has a right to complain of the continued absence of members from their seats.

Mr. WELLS said, that the effect of the proposition would be to hold up to the reproach of their constituents, gentlemen who might be unavoidably detained from their seats; and there was one great inequality growing out of it sufficient in itself to cause its rejection. If the rule was adopted, a member could come into the Con-