

instances, and the power to appoint *ad interim* in many of the most important

To do this usefully, he should know well the character of those who are to be selected. A fitness for some of these high offices, is not to be evidenced but by a course of life and conduct passing over many years. The very language of our Constitution, pays respects to this principle, by requiring a given age as a qualification. The man who has passed his life amongst us, knows the character, and has observed the course of life, of his prominent fellow citizens.

Has the foreigner the same advantage? Can the man who is here but since yesterday, be possibly able to exercise an equally sound judgment, in selecting persons for office? Is the State as likely to be well served in the various departments, which his appointees are to fill?

It must be obvious, that in executing such a trust, he must either act without sufficient information, or he must be the *lectum tenens* for some party favorite, whose opinions govern the Governor.

If, however, these arguments were not conclusive, he had one more question to propound. Why, if no distinction should be made—why require any residence at all? Why not admit the foreigner to hold office just so soon as he is a naturalized citizen? The argument is abandoned, and the whole principle surrendered, by a short time, as effectually by a longer time. We have natives enough, and are likely always to have enough, to preside over us; let us not intimate a fear, or a doubt, of their ability to fulfil this high trust, without calling in the aid of foreigners.

Mr. FENCER said, the section, if amended, as proposed, would discriminate between foreigners and the native-born. In order to prevent this, he would submit a modification, which would effect all that the committee had in view. Whilst it required a proper residence, it made no discrimination between the classes of citizens. It put all on the same footing.

Mr. DORSEY stated that he did not regard the allusion of the gentleman from Kent as having reference to him. He believed himself discharging his duties as independently of all views to popularity as any member in this Convention. He certainly desired to retain and deserve the good opinion of his fellow citizens. But he would never swerve from that course pointed out by a sense of duty, to win popular favor. It was said that this proposition is an invitation to foreigners to occupy the gubernatorial chair of the State. He did not so regard it. But suppose it were so to be regarded. That invitation assumes as a condition precedent to its acceptance, that the accepted must be eminently distinguished for his patriotism, intellectual acquirements and many other virtues which should adorn the station. He had not the slightest objection to extend the same invitation to every qualified citizen of the State, whether native-born or naturalised.

He referred to the old constitution of 1776, to show that in the choice of Governor, there was no express requisition of citizenship—it contained no restriction of this kind. The foreigner is

there placed on an equality with the native. And no inconvenience has heretofore ever resulted from that equality. We have never had a foreigner in the gubernatorial chair. But if, at any time hereafter, some eminently qualified foreigner should reside among us, who, in a time of war, should save our State from conquest and desolation, rendering it services above all price, by successfully leading the sons of Maryland in the field of battle, and who should be as pure and patriotic as Lafayette, and he residing five years among us after being naturalised, and being eminently possessed of every valuable and intellectual acquirement, beloved and trusted by the people, were proposed by them as a candidate for Governor, would you shut the doors of office against him? He would impose no such restriction when no danger would result from its non-existence—no benefit follow its imposition. He would leave the people to elect him who was the object of their choice.

He was disposed to say, that the same residence of five years after naturalization, should be required of a native citizen of another State, to qualify him to fill the office of Governor of Maryland. It had been said that five years was not a sufficient time to enable a foreigner to obtain that knowledge of the interests of the State which is necessary. He appealed to gentlemen whether a naturalized foreigner whom the people would be willing to select, might not be as likely to be qualified within that period, as many of our own aspirant citizens now are? We ought to put all on an equal footing.

Mr. D here read the clause from the old Constitution, relating to this subject, and said that he had lived seventy-five years under this Constitution, which interposes no barrier between foreigners and the gubernatorial chair, yet no foreigner had ever occupied that chair. Still, he thought, it was an omission in that Constitution, and he was therefore willing to impose a restriction to a residence of five years after naturalization. If we take the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore county, [Mr. Buchanan,] and place foreigners on a footing with the citizens of the other States of the Union, it would be amply sufficient. He thought that the office of Governor was not the only important branch of our government. The Legislature is quite as much so; and if we intend to be consistent in our course here, we ought to have required a somewhat similar restriction as to residence, in relation to members of that body, as we now require in the case of the Governor. Yet this had not been done. He would not propose such an amendment, because he thought it was unnecessary. He referred to a naturalized foreigner with whom he was acquainted, who was worthy and intelligent, and who, with himself, had once represented the city of Baltimore in the Legislature, and no inconvenience had resulted from it. He stated that a foreigner was not disqualified to hold the highest station in the courts of the United States or of this State, and as both the Legislature and the judiciary were left open to naturalized foreigners, as well as natives, why was it thought necessary to raise this excessive distinc-