

violent and bitter ; but they would pass away like the summer clouds, leaving the surrounding atmosphere purer and more serene.

For these and similar reasons, he should oppose this amendment. He did not believe it would answer the end for which it was designed, and he thought its operation would be oppressive. It did not in fact guard the elective franchise, and it was probable that, even if it were enacted, the people themselves would trample it under foot. In conclusion, he would invite gentlemen to go with him, first, in favor of the definition of the right in the Constitution, and then, in giving such powers to the Legislature as would best accomplish the great object which was desired by all.

Mr. SOLLERS obtained the floor ; but yielded for purposes of explanation, to

Mr. HICKS, who said, he had risen to endeavor, if he could, to make himself correctly understood in regard to certain honest confessions he had made the other day, and which had been animadverted upon by several gentlemen. "Honest confessions, it was said, were good for the soul." The gentleman from Cecil had referred to one of the three cases which he (Mr. H.) had cited on a former day, as exemplifying the facility with which frauds upon the ballot-box might be perpetrated.

Mr. SOLLERS (interposing) said that he had yielded only to allow the gentleman to make an explanation and state a fact.

Mr. HICKS remarking that that was all he desired, proceeded to correct a misapprehension as to one of the cases referred to, and said that he had brought forward these cases with no invidious or party purpose. He had, in his remarks the other day, distinctly disclaimed all such motives, and he had endeavored in his course here, to demonstrate the sincerity with which that disclaimer had been made. His own opinion was, that there was not a county in the State of Maryland where these frauds were not practised to a greater or less degree ; although he had no doubt that gentlemen were perfectly sincere in avowing a disbelief of their existence. Nor did he himself believe that they existed to the extent some gentlemen supposed. He thought, however, that these matters were not germane to the question. But the evil ought to be corrected, whatever its extent might be ; and he would go for any proposition, no matter from what quarter or party it might emanate, which would effect that object. At the same time, he would be among the last to impose any improper restraints upon the honest voter.

Mr. SOLLERS apologized for rising to reply to the gentleman from Cecil, but he felt himself called on by an imperative sense of what was due to the State of Maryland, to vindicate her against the charges which had been brought against her. He was a Marylander, "native to the manor born," and he could not restrain himself when he heard the gentleman from Cecil arraign his native and much loved State as rotten to the core from corruption, as the victim of a foul and spreading cancer, the result of which must be fatal, unless the knife be promptly em-

ployed, and that it would require the scalpel of the most skillful surgeon to eradicate it. He knew not where the gentleman from Cecil obtained the information which he has thus communicated to this Convention. If he meant to say that he obtained it from gentlemen on this floor, he denied that any facts had been presented to justify so sweeping and severe a censure. He denied that such facts existed. He knew of no such frauds as those which had been described in such awful terms by the gentleman from Cecil. He demanded the evidence of their existence. Where was it to be found ? It was not so. And it was a libel on the State to utter such things in the ear of this Convention. It might be, that all this was instigated by a jealousy of Baltimore. But whether it was so or not, he would not let the charge pass without notice ; without prompt and stern denial. It was not so. And then the gentleman from Cecil, after specification of all the possible evils which could fall upon a country, held up the examples of Greece and Rome and told us that as we are following their course of corruption, we must participate in their ruin. And in this corruption, which is to destroy us, the gentleman had said that we have all participated. "Speaketh the prophet of himself or of some other man." The gentleman admitted that he had himself contributed to the expenses of an election. Surely then he ought to have been the last to come out with this general denunciation of the State.

He thought it ill became the gentleman from Cecil to stand up in this body and lecture native Marylanders and denounce them for these frauds. What right had that gentleman to say that we are on the brink of perdition ? This he has told us, and that he himself aided to bring us into this condition. It might be all true that learned men from other States should be allowed to come here and teach us our duty. He could not understand it.

He accorded with the gentleman from Cecil in some things he had said. When that gentleman lectured the gentleman from Kent, he agreed with him in all he said about his political morality. But why did he tell us of the downfall of Greece and Rome, and of the probability of their fate becoming ours ? What remedy has been proposed to save us in this dangerous condition ? None. He felt all proper respect for the gentleman from Cecil. But had he offered any remedy ? He had told us that the government was tottering. Where then was the remedy ? A "masterly inactivity." He has talked of correcting public opinion. And the gentleman from Kent, who had followed him, proposed to cure the corruption by correcting public sentiment—by encouraging public schools ! "By enlightening public sentiment," said the gentleman from Kent. Now, with all respect for these gentlemen, and their abstract ideas, he could not understand them.

He could not see, by the course of these gentlemen, that they are doing much towards enlightening the public sentiment when they oppose every effort to maintain the purity of the right of suffrage. When we see gentlemen act-