

did not make some protest against those efforts, which tend to fasten upon us, of the southern counties, a total disability to protect our peculiar interests; without the power to do which, we shall be a mere cypher in a legislative point of view, in comparison with other portions of the State. I cannot witness these efforts and hear our counties and interests thus practically denounced, as small, trifling, and unimportant, without feeling a disposition to repel these attacks, even though, I may be fully aware, that the defence which I shall make, will be lame, feeble, and insufficient for the accomplishment of any desirable object.

These efforts come mainly, from a quarter, from which, we expected them. We are not without a warning, before hand given, that this object, though smothered and evaded, in a measure, in the discussions which took place before the people, more especially, in the less populous counties of the State, was the leading object of a large majority of the self styled, exclusive Reformers of this Convention. And it has been reiterated again, and again, by such gentlemen, that they do not regard as Reformers, those members of the Convention, who refuse to come to their aid; but who perseveringly and rightfully too, stand by those principles of conservatism, which they deem imperatively necessary for the preservation and protection, of their just and equal rights, privileges and interests. If to be opposed to representation according to population, or to such a plan of representation, as will place it beyond our power to protect certain local and peculiar interests, which are attached, or belong almost exclusively to the southern counties of the State, constitutes an anti-reformer, then am I, Mr. President, proud to be called an anti-reformer; and even though, it may be a little stigmatizing so to be considered, according to the fastidious tastes of some gentlemen, still sir, I claim to be an anti-reformer, if this is the standard rule, by which the title to the name of reformer is to be tested.

The leading features of reform, as canvassed and agitated before the people, have frequently been repeated and referred to by gentlemen, in the course of the present discussion, and invariably, with very few exceptions, the question of apportionment of representation was treated in those canvassings, by those who now call themselves the only reformers, as a minor feature of reform—one to which so much importance was not attached, and was not due, as was attributed to it by those gentlemen, who are now characterized as anti-reformers, and who, in their discussions, warned the people of the importance that would be attached to this question, by these same self-styled reformers, when the Convention should come to act upon it. To the very letter, sir, these predictions have been verified. How often has this question been referred to in discussions here, by these “soi-disant” reformers, as the all-absorbing question of the session? How often have we been told that unless the more populous portions of the State get what they desire on this subject, they will reject the

Constitution which we shall form? They thereby make the settlement of this question, according to their own peculiar notions, a “*sine qua non*” upon which, the instrument which we shall frame, shall be accepted. Here, then, is a gross inconsistency on the part of many, between the positions assumed before the people in canvassing for an election to this body, and the positions now occupied by those gentlemen, and to be occupied by others, who have not as yet made any open demonstration, but who have shadowed forth in various ways their intentions on this subject.

There are in this body of reformers two classes. One class is in favor of representation according to population, to the fullest extent; and the other for representation according to population in the counties, with restrictions upon Baltimore city. I regard both positions as untenable and inappropriate, when applied to the peculiar situation of Maryland.

Precedents which establish principles, as applicable to measures of policy, or any other matter, which are found by subsequent experience to work well and prove worthy of adoption, are well worthy of the favorable consideration of all men. Consequently, we have frequently heard precedents and examples, quoted and referred to, by gentlemen, for the purpose of sustaining the positions which they have assumed, and they have been generally dilated upon, and regarded as strong arguments in favor of such position. It is right that it should be so—more especially, when we have the evidence, that the establishment of such principle, or the adoption of such a measure of policy was prompted by pure, devoted and disinterested patriotism. Founded on precedent, is the maxim in law, “*res judicata pro veritate accipitur.*”

Having this maxim in view, I will suppose, and for the purpose of sustaining his position of representation according to population, the gentleman from Frederick, [Mr. Johnson,] has made reference to the chartered privileges enjoyed by the first settlers of the colony of Maryland. The gentleman caused much of that old charter to be read in the hearing of the convention, and seemed to congratulate himself, that he had found something so ancient, upon which to sustain his doctrine. But in his review of the charter, he failed to show the applicability of the principle and doctrine of equal rights, as established by that charter, and conferred upon the first settlers of the colony, to the circumstances and condition of the people of Maryland now. There is something slavish—something that smacks of the relation of master and servant, in the manner in which these rights were conferred and received, which is irreconcilable with the gentleman's previously expressed opinions of the people's sovereignty, by virtue of which alone, they are entitled to equal rights.

Again, sir, when that charter was so graciously granted—when these boasted rights and privileges were so kindly conferred, there were many considerations, not applicable in our day, which operated upon the grantor of the charter, as in-