

of representation as first settled by our forefathers, while they were yet in a state of colonial vassalage to the crown of England. On that occasion, sir, which was nearly two hundred years ago, they awarded to each county or district a representation of four members. That representation was continued in the Provincial Assembly for more than one hundred years. It was adopted in forming the Convention which framed the first Constitution of our independence, and by that Convention was re-adopted for the House of Delegates of Maryland without an effort from any quarter of the State to prevent it. Not a murmur had been raised against this basis, which had existed for so long a time. It had worked no evil in government; therefore, experience was favorable to its re-adoption. They who framed that instrument were men of wisdom and undoubted patriotism. They had learned to appreciate the rich blessings of liberty and equal justice in a school of trial, of which, we sir, can form no adequate conception. Pure, disinterested, patriotic and devoted to the general good of all, they sought not to increase the power and influence of one county at the expense of another, as now intended, and that, too, sir, by the delegates from a county, which at that time had little less than one fourth the population of St. Mary's, and but little less than one fifth that of Charles county. I mean Allegany county. By the consent of these and other counties now smaller than herself in population, but not presenting such a disparity in that respect now as then existed, she was ushered into the sisterhood of counties in full dress, sir, clad with all the rights, powers, privileges and immunities which were possessed by her elder sisters. Aye, sir, she was thus clad by her mother, (if I may be allowed so to speak,) for St. Mary's has often and aptly been denominated the mother of counties. But, alas! sir, that filial and reverential regard, which, on occasions of pilgrimage from other counties to our shores, has been so loudly and eloquently professed for the venerable matron, evaporates into thin air and empty sound, when invoked to aid in warding off the injustice and oppression that is sought to be fastened upon her.

The charge of ingratitude may excite a smile on the self-complacent faces of those who are engaged in perpetrating this act of injustice. But, sir, if they desire fully to appreciate my feelings, let them, if they can, change situations with me, in imagination, and they will feel, as I do, that the act will be one of ingratitude. It will be a disfranchisement unwarranted by any necessity that has existed, exists now, or is ever likely to exist. And all this, sir, is to be visited upon us for being guilty of the unpardonable sin of having a sparse population within our borders. How was it, sir, when Allegany had forty-eight hundred inhabitants, and St. Mary's had fifteen thousand five hundred? Allegany was guilty of the same sin then of which St. Mary's is guilty now. But it was not regarded then as a sin, or even as a misfortune, so far as the distribution of representative power was affected. But, sir, a change of circumstances often begets a change of opinions and conduct; oftener of conduct than of

opinions. The man who has risen from poverty and obscurity to abundance and wealth, often contemns his less fortunate neighbor for his misfortunes, and courts the company of the wealthy and high stationed. He affects to forget his former associations, and no longer remembers the help of those by which he has risen so high on fortune's ladder. He becomes proud, pompous and dictatorial in his dealings with those whom he now arrogantly regards as his inferiors, but whose patronage and aid, he once solicited with a becoming modesty. Does the history of that man present any simile to that of Allegany? Are there any features of striking resemblance in the conduct of that man and that county? Others may answer. I ask, sir, by whose aid has she grown wealthy and populous? Who helped to bore her mountains and unearth and bring to market her hidden treasures? St. Mary's county and others similarly situated. And now, forsooth, when our dearest interests are at stake, when that power which we have so long enjoyed and used for the good of others more than ourselves, is assailed and about to be wrested from us and bestowed elsewhere, whom do we find foremost among our assailants? Allegany, if the gentleman from that county, (Mr. Weber,) speaks out her views.

I have digressed somewhat, sir, from the object which I had in view, when I called attention to the basis of representation, as first settled in Maryland. I intended to allude to it as a precedent, established and re-established, and worthy the approbation and adoption of this body. It was not found while it existed, to work any evil in government. No experience ever found it injurious or oppressive to any section of the State. Established when it was, and by whom it was, and having answered so well, the purposes for which it was established, I repeat, sir, that it is worthy of our approbation and adoption. As a precedent and example, sanctioned by a long experience, it applies with much force, as a reason, or argument in favor of the proposition which I have submitted. But, sir, I am not wedded to that proposition. I wish only to apply to the present basis, (which is the nearest I had hoped to approach it,) whatever of force and argument may be deduced in favor of it, from past experience. Has any evil been shown; has any act of oppression and injustice been pointed out, as the result of this basis? Has it not worked favorably to every section of the State? Has Baltimore city been defeated in any favorite measure she has presented to the consideration of the legislature? Why then this hue and cry about injustice, oppression, inequality and all such things? Let gentlemen point them out, when they talk about them, tell us what they are, when they declaim against them—show their grievances, when they demand a remedy. If any such evils exist, they are conversant with them. If the musty records of past legislation, could have furnished them, they would have been produced. If of more recent date, they would have been fresh in their memories. But, sir, these are things that cannot be found. They cannot be pointed out. Gentlemen have searched and studied—