

in the city before a person had a right to cast a vote. It would be very unjust if it did, because large portions of the population were mechanics and laboring men, who have to rent houses, and were obliged to move from ward to ward, as changing business might require. They must be indulged in this. It was fair and reasonable; but, if they were compelled to reside six months before they would be entitled to a vote, one half of these persons would be deprived of the elective franchise. It was fraught with evil as it now was, being divided into two congressional districts, because they could move from one district to another, two or three hundred voters, to carry that district. These votes were taken without objection, and voters had a right to have them taken when there was a *bona fide* change of residence. The honorable gentleman now proposed to ratify this system. Instead of having two districts—a plan fraught with evil now—the gentleman proposed to have the whole city divided into little apartments, when the people could move from one to another two or three days before the election, and have a right to vote, which right he, (Mr. Dorsey,) did not propose to destroy. Under such a system they might calculate how many votes would be necessary to carry a certain district, and transfer them from a district in which they already had a majority, to the other. This, however, was not fraudulent voting, because it was legal. But could not any one see that this was corrupting popular franchise, or at least that it had a tendency to corrupt it? It would be impossible to avoid this result, unless it was required that persons should reside in a district six months before they would be entitled to vote, which would be unjust.

Mr. BRENT of Baltimore city in reply to Mr. HOWARD, said that he was quite sure a sense of justice in the Convention would accord to him the floor, in order that he might defend himself from the unprovoked attack made upon him by the gentleman from Baltimore county, (Mr. Howard.) This attack was the more remarkable, considering that their personal relations during the session had not been at all friendly. It seems that I have committed the unforgiveable sin, of acting in this Convention for myself, upon my own conscience and responsibility, without deferring to the superior judgment of others. Yes, sir, the sin of simply voting now, and speaking on this subject of representation consistently with the positions and declarations taken and made by me long ago, and then approved and sanctioned by gentlemen who had subsequently gone in for compromise measures.

Mr. PRESSMAN. Will you name them.

Mr. BRENT. Not here, because I dislike to introduce names unnecessarily, but I will give the names to you or any one else in private.

Mr. GWINN. Have you any objection to giving the names in public.

Mr. BRENT. The gentleman I allude to, is not now in the hall, but I can and will satisfy any gentleman who will call on me for information.

I do not allude to this matter, to censure oth-

ers, but to show that my course at the time indicated, was sanctioned by at least one of the most distinguished of our members, who has since conscientiously become a compromise man, while I have not.

I have taken and maintained this position, and will to the end, and I am responsible alone to my constituents. For doing this and exercising the democratic privilege of expressing my independent sentiments, I am to be lectured and intimidated by the gentleman from Baltimore county [Mr. Howard.] Great as that gentleman's position *has been*—high as his station *has been*, I tell him that there are no terrors in his brow that can drive me from my position here. That gentleman has thought proper to travel from his own county to stand *between me and my constituency*, and has said that for a quarter of a century he had resided with and represented their sentiments whenever he wished it, except on one occasion.

I have nothing to say about his knowledge of the sympathies and wants of the people twenty-five years ago, and nothing to say in regard to the course of that gentleman so long ago, but I speak of the present time, and for the men whom now I have the honor in part to represent. Whatever might have been considered correct twenty-five years ago, the people are not now going to be satisfied with it. I think I know the sentiments of the people of Baltimore city as well, or indeed better, than that gentleman. He supposes that because he *once* knew the wants of this people, he is now entitled *ex cathedra* to speak for them. But I can tell him that there is a new generation of men since then, and considerations are operating now which did not then.

The gentleman from Baltimore county has said, that my course was designed effectually to destroy all hopes of a new Constitution.

Mr. HOWARD. I did not say "designed," but the word was "calculated."

Mr. BRENT. Well, then, my course, he says, is *calculated* to destroy all chance of obtaining a new Constitution. That gentleman is welcome to his opinion, but it does not weigh a feather with me. I think for myself and do not consider such an adjustment of the question of representation, as that gentleman has advocated, would at all strengthen the chances of the new Constitution being adopted; but on the contrary, would greatly prejudice and hinder its success.

That gentleman, (Mr. Howard.) had exercised the privilege of expressing his opinion upon my course, and instead of combating or meeting my arguments, has undertaken to crush and destroy me with the weight of his name, and the expression of his opinion against my conduct.

I now claim the equal privilege of expressing my opinion touching that gentleman's public conduct, and I charge upon his head, more than any other man's in this body, the entire responsibility of the delay to organize and the final defeat of a reform organization of this Convention, in the beginning of the session.

That gentleman has moreover said, that the