

that it is right in every part of it. I fear there is some reason for refusing to apply this system to Baltimore, which gentlemen have not chosen to express upon this floor. One of the learned gentlemen from Baltimore, [Mr. Brent,] has said that it would be an act of humiliation to the city of Baltimore, if we were to district her. I think he even went further, and said it would be an insult. An act of humiliation and an insult! Is the gentleman in earnest? I cannot understand by what process of reasoning he has succeeded in coming to this conclusion. The district system is undoubtedly a good one. It is honest and fair, and well calculated to give a full expression to the popular will. As the gentleman from Allegany has said, it secures representation to minorities. It enables the delegate to know and understand more fully the wants and wishes of his immediate constituency. It does away with "divided responsibility." What, in fact, are your counties, in comparison with the city of Baltimore, but districts? To sub-divide them would be attended with great difficulties. To district them so as to have the same amount of population in each district, would be a work almost impossible.

It would not do to divide the whole State into election districts, containing an equal population without regard to the separate existence of the counties. Old and long established divisions would be broken up—associations, ancient ties, and county attachments, which have so long bound their citizens together, would be destroyed. There are, too, historical reminiscences connected with the divisions of some of the older counties, which I would fain preserve, not only upon the page of history, but by preserving and retaining the metes and bounds which were fixed by our ancestors. I do not know that such a thing is contemplated by any member of this Convention. Could I be satisfied of the feasibility of properly and fairly districting the counties, I would not hesitate in freely supporting the plan, but I would not consent to district the State without regard to the county divisions. The difficulties presented in reference to the counties, do not apply to the city of Baltimore. She is already divided into some twenty wards, each one as nearly equal as possible in population.

The authority of the gentleman from Baltimore, (Mr. Prestman) who addressed you this morning, and the laws referring to the division of that city into wards, cited by him, sustain me in this assertion.

If she is to have ten delegates, with what ease and facility, and fairness can she be districted, so that one delegate may be sent from each district? If her delegates are to be elected by general ticket, the minority, that may be unrepresented in their views and wishes, is immense. The vote of that city, I believe, is some 21 or 22,000. By the general ticket system more than 10,000 of her voters may be in effect disfranchised, and refused a voice in the legislature. If she is districted, her system of representation is rendered more equal and more perfect. The rights of her people, instead of being thereby re-

stricted and curtailed, are protected and enlarged. There can be no large minorities in her limits unrepresented.

Every interest, every trade and every party may then have an opportunity of selecting its delegate. Can Baltimore object to this? Will she, for a moment, view it as an act of humiliation—as an insult? It is extending to her a system which will oppress none, and which is designed and must, if adopted, promote the general welfare and interest of her citizens.

I have thus, sir, occupied your time and that of the Convention in expressing these views upon the subject of representation. I had hoped if the proposition of the gentleman from Kent could not be adopted, that the plan of my distinguished colleague, (Mr. Merrick,) the chairman of the committee on representation, would have been taken by this Convention as a compromise. It will be found upon an examination of the basis, which he has there adopted, that all the interests of the different sections of the State are properly and permanently protected. It would, I believe, have finally adjusted and put at rest the excitement upon this question. It carries out the views which I have advocated, and leaves with the southern counties the power of self-protection. The main objection urged against it, was that the number of delegates is too large. I think the objection was ill founded. The great safety of republican governments is in the number of its representatives—where the number is not too large and unwieldy. If the representative branch is small, it is liable to the control of factions, and of designing men—and may degenerate into an oligarchy. But the plan was not acceptable to a majority of the Convention, and has shared the same fate which has been visited upon so many others.

My most ardent desire is, sir, that some satisfactory adjustment of this question may be agreed upon. I hope that we will yet unite in harmony, and that when we bid adieu to this hall and the kind hospitality of this good city, we shall all feel that whatever we have done here has been dictated by no narrow or party motive, but has been prompted by elevated views and the earnest wish of guarding and protecting every interest. I trust that the result of our labors will be acceptable—that under the new order of things, Maryland will prosper in whatever may decorate and ennoble her character, continuing, without blot upon her escutcheon, one of the bright stars of this great Union.

Mr. Davis said:

That having submitted a plan for the adjustment of the question upon representation, which the Convention had done him the honor to order to be printed—he felt it due to himself, and the constituency which he had the honor in part to represent on this floor, to make some brief explanation of it.

The plan which he had submitted was as follows:

*First.* So soon as the western portion of Allegany county obtains a population of 9,000 souls, a new county shall be erected in said western portion to be called

county.