

Under these circumstances it was seen that a compromise was necessary between the contending parties and their interests to secure a new constitution. The act itself, by which the convention was called, was a virtual acknowledgment that the constitution to be framed should be a work of compromise on the subject of representation, since it fixed the representation in the convention. Each county and Baltimore City was given the same number of representatives as they then had in both branches of the General Assembly.

The majority of the members were hampered in making compromises by the instructions given by their constituencies. These instructions were generally of such a character as to give to certain parts of the State some superior advantage, or prevent a reduction of their relative influence in the future legislatures.

Closely connected with the subject of representation was that of slavery, the only subject upon which the convention was unanimously agreed. Mr. Presstman, of Baltimore City, had anticipated the representatives of the counties more particularly interested in slavery, and submitted a proposition providing that the legislature should have no power to abolish the relation between master and slave as it then existed in the State,<sup>9</sup> and that the committee on the legislative department be instructed to report a bill to that effect.<sup>10</sup> This was regarded as a decided advance in the way of conciliation on the subject of representation, since it came from the part of the State where no great interest in slavery was felt; and a reciprocal concession was expected in return from the southern counties in regard to representation.

The southern counties were considering not only the immediate protection of slavery within the State, but the future, when the institution of slavery would be practically confined to southern Maryland. At the present rate of

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<sup>9</sup> See chap. i, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Debates, vol. i, p. 113.