

We extract the following from the speech of the venerable General Samuel Smith in the case of Trigg vs. Preston, as reported in the volume of Contested Elections by Clarke & Hall, p. 82, showing the mode of conducting elections in those early days which we are accustomed to regard as especially pure—he said, “that at the elections in the Eastern States the citizens met in small bodies and conducted the business with that order and decency which became the true Republican character, but it was the misfortune of the Southern States that the citizens assembled in large bodies; hence it appears that an election in the Southern States is nothing but a nursery of superlative mischief. It was in evidence before the House that at the election one person had been seen with a club under his coat. But (sir,) said Mr. Smith, I suppose that five hundred of my constituents had clubs under their coats, so that if this be a sufficient reason for dissolving an election the committee may begin by dissolving mine. If the committee are to break up every election where persons are seen drunk they will have a great deal of work upon hand, sir, &c.”

Such was an election in Baltimore many years ago, and if statements set forth in the resolutions passed a few days since by a party convention of that city be correct, rival “factions” in the same political organizations do not hesitate, at this day, “to manufacture majorities in many of the wards of the city,” and to “gratify their insatiate thirst for rule by employing the services of hired ruffians calling themselves by filthy names.” It is but just to say that such charges are understood by the community rather as the expression of exasperated political feeling, than the cool convictions of the judgment, but they prove that long practice in the abuse of political opponents begets a facility in the application of violent epithets even to political friends.

But the testimony for both sides further proves that whatever may have been the wish of the people of Baltimore as to other candidates, at the election in November, there was a general disposition felt to retain Mr. Purnell in the office, the duties of which he has discharged with a fidelity which has gained from his political opponents during this investigation, their unqualified approval. It is proved by Messrs. Wallis, Sangston, Thomas, and other Reformers and Democrats examined in the case, that the Reform movement was only designed to extend to municipal affairs and the candidates within the city alone, and that members of that organization were left free to exercise their preferences in the selection of State officers. It is further shown that a large number of the prominent Reformers had formerly been Whigs and Americans;