

time when such frauds could not be committed. The excitement itself prevented their perpetration; because there were so many increased means for its detection. He insisted, therefore, that his friends on the other side were mistaken in asserting, that frauds were committed to an enormous extent in the City of Baltimore. What might be the case in the counties he did not know—but so far as Baltimore was concerned, the difficulty was not to prevent frauds, but to commit them.

Mr. BUCHANAN then examined the position which had been taken, that a suspicion of fraud existed because men delayed application for their naturalization papers, in the expectation that other parties would contribute to their payment. Suppose this to be the case. He, for one would plead guilty to the charge, and would hold himself responsible for that high offence. Suppose it to be true, that a man did contribute out of his own pocket a portion of the means to enable an individual entitled to naturalization, to procure his papers. Was that wrong? Was it not in accordance with the very spirit of our institutions? Had we not invited the people of other lands to emulate our career, and take a light from the lamp of freedom which was burning here? What had we done in the case of the Greeks, and the Poles, and, more recently, in the cause of Hungary? Had we not held out to them the light of our example, and told them that they were not only entitled to be free—but entitled to the glorious liberty which we ourselves enjoyed? And had we not substantially said to them, come and cast your lot with us, and we will show you how free we are? Suppose then, that a son of Erin should make an appeal to him (and he took one of that race of men as an illustration, because in the hour of trial and of dark adversity he had ever found them true)—suppose such an individual should make an application to him (Mr. B.) He should examine into the matter and see whether he was entitled to his naturalization papers. Suppose he found him to be so—but that he was unable without aid to obtain his naturalization papers; or, at all events, that for reasons satisfactory to himself, he should call his (Mr. B.'s) aid, and he should grant it. Was this fraud? Was there any thing wrong in it? If the man was entitled to his papers, and he (Mr. B.) should choose, of his own volition, or upon the appeal of the individual himself, to aid him in obtaining his papers, was there any thing more in the transaction than any good freeman, or any generous mind, might properly and rightfully do?

Mr. B. then alluded to the general nature of the testimony on which these allegations of fraud rested—that of the Newspaper press—as being unsatisfactory and insufficient. Disclaiming any charge of corrupt motive, he submitted that newspapers did sometimes say very extraordinary things in regard to the course and characters assumed, moral and political. The Convention itself had in the course of its debates, had some experience on that point. And, in high party times especially, one newspaper might be got to advocate any one doctrine, and another to advocate another—each devoutly believing in the orthodoxy of his own doctrine. And if gentlemen

were about to throw their arms around the whole press, and say that the Convention were bound to believe that these monstrous frauds existed because they were charged, he knew not where it would lead them. There was then no proof to show the existence of these frauds.

But his friend from Anne Arundel (Mr. DONSEY.) had adverted to the reports which were abroad, in Baltimore City, that these frauds were committed from time to time, and to an alarming extent. Surely no such hearsay evidence could be depended upon. Before no tribunal—and least of all before such a high tribunal as this—was any such testimony to be received. He challenged his friend from Kent to show the fact upon which, as a lawyer or as a Judge, he could pronounce that fraud did exist.

But the gentlemen from Anne Arundel came to the relief of the gentleman from Kent, and said “Oh! it makes no difference, the provision only affects a few; it has no retrospective influence.” Suppose that a few persons only were to be affected. Was that any reason for the adoption of such a provision? Were the feelings of a whole class of honest men to be wounded, or were they to be disfranchised because a few might be guilty of these frauds? If there were only a few, it was more facile to discover who they were, and to punish them. But he denied that the operation of this provision will be perspective alone, and not retrospective. Even if it were only perspective it would be a flagrant act of injustice on the part of the Convention. But it was retrospective also, and Mr. B. proceeded to sustain this position; and expressed his belief that the system of buying votes was carried on to a greater extent upon the Eastern Shore than in any other part of the State of Maryland. At the same moment he paid a passing compliment to the incorruptible integrity of the people of Baltimore County, and remarked that a man might as well attempt to run away with the Washington Monument, as to approach one of them with a bribe. He took it that that county preserved within her own borders purifying influences enough to save the whole State. [Laughter.]

It behooved the Convention, whilst attempting to guard against frauds on the part of naturalized citizens, to be careful that it did not break the good faith of the State with them. The policy of the country, from its earliest days, had been to encourage immigration. In the stormy days of the Revolution, when France came to our rescue, the policy of the country was, not to repudiate and insult those of her sons who tendered their services and their lives in our cause, but to lean upon them—to put them in the van of our armies and to entrust them with the charge of our dearest and most sacred rights. He referred to the services which had been rendered to the country, previous to the adoption of the constitution, by the foreign population, and cited especially the cases of La Fayette, De Kalb, Steuben and Pulaski. In relation to Steuben, so gratified was the United States at his emigration to this country that, as was well known, Congress passed a vote of thanks to him for coming and offer-