

guarding the purity of the Elective Franchise. Its operation would be equal upon all classes, and it would enter with an impartial tread into the cottage as well as the palace. It may not be so perfect, that no case of hardship can occur under it. Perfection is not within the grasp of the human mind. Yet its general beneficial results will greatly over-balance any temporary and individual hardship it may occasion.

He proceeded to say, it had been stated that frauds upon the Elective Franchise, in the way of double voting, colonizing, bribery, and so on, existed in some parts of the State to an alarming extent. That frauds existed and had been practised, he had no doubt. He spoke in terms of high praise of his own county, and said bribery at elections there was a thing unknown. Whether these frauds existed or not, was not very important to the consideration of this question. If they did not now exist, they might hereafter, and it was the duty of the statesman to guard against them in either aspect. Whenever any measure to guard the honest voter in the exercise of his right was brought forward, it should have his support. He here referred to the supposed case, mentioned by the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. RICAUD) to shew that this amendment might operate unjustly, and stated how, in his opinion, the same state of things might occur, even to a greater extent, under the restrictions already adopted requiring a residence of twelve months in the State and six months in the county.

The object of the amendment is to prevent the ready transfer of voters from one district to another in the same county or city, and the "colonizing" of men in a certain district to influence and control the election there. The principal objection urged against the amendment is, that the means are inadequate to the proposed end. The time of residence was not as long as he desired. He would have preferred thirty, or even sixty days; but as these longer periods had been rejected, he was now willing to take the short term proposed. It certainly throws some impediment in the way of double voting and "colonizing," and will no doubt, in great measure, act as a check upon both. If a residence of five days is required, the difficulty of colonizing would be increased by that much, and men could not, on the day of election, with such facility, (as they might in the absence of such a provision,) go from district to district, voting in each one. He trusted the amendment would be adopted, and that this Convention would be able to embody in the Constitution such guards as will effectually prevent fraudulent voting.

Mr. STEWART, of Caroline, stated that after listening with great attention to the discussion, he entered into it, feeling his inability to throw any new light on the subject. But as he was desirous that his views should be understood, he would briefly give the reasons which influenced his vote. He had been induced to do this principally because he had seen a paper published in the district he represented, advocating the Registry Law. He had thought it proper through this Convention, to lay before his constituents

his views on the subject. Against every attempt to impose these restrictions on the right of suffrage he had given his vote, and in order to satisfy himself of the correctness of his course, he had listened to all that had been said on the subject, and had not heard a single argument to lead him to any change of his own convictions on the subject.

He referred to the statement of the gentleman from Dorchester, (Mr. HICKS,) relative to the individual who was about to deposit an illegal vote, and the polite attempt of the gentleman from Dorchester to arrest his vote, in consequence of the interference of a friend who said the man was going to vote the right ticket; and put it to that gentleman whether he would have been more successful in preventing this illegal vote from being given, if a five days residence had been required.

Mr. HICKS hoped the gentleman from Caroline would state the other case of the man who had voted in four different places.

Mr. STEWART, resuming, disavowed any intention to make an attack on the gentleman from Dorchester. His only design was to show that there was nothing in this case to induce him to vote for the pending amendment. Neither the statement of the gentleman from Dorchester, nor the argument of the gentleman from Cecil, had brought him to that conclusion. If the gentleman from Calvert, (Mr. SOLLERS,) believed that there were no frauds committed in the ballot box, why does he not evince his sincerity by lending his aid to strike at all restrictions on the freedom of suffrage. He (Mr. S.) knew of no frauds of the kind spoken of in the elections in his county. He knew of no voters from Delaware coming over the line to vote in Caroline. There was, indeed, a fraud which he would not specify, but which he would be happy to contribute his aid in preventing.

He attributed this fierce tirade against the corruption of the ballot box, to the fact that Baltimore city always voted by large majorities in a certain way, and presumed that it was the wish of those who uttered these tirades, that in framing the Constitution, instead of looking to the whole State, we should have an eye to Baltimore only. He felt great respect for the city of Baltimore; she occupied a proud position for her commercial enterprise; without her, we should not have seen our flag floating on many a distant sea; she was justly the pride of Maryland, and it was the duty of every citizen of the State to unite in sustaining her character. And if he should be charged with being under the influence of Baltimore, he must bear the imputation as well as he could. He himself had connexions in that city. He knew of many instances of young men who had gone there, accumulated fortunes, and returned to their native counties, thus forming a tie between the counties and city. The effect of this restriction in the city of Baltimore would be to throw the poor into the hands of the wealthy. By the aid of money the dwelling of the poor man might be purchased over his head, and its tenant turned out of doors five days before an election; and in this way the