

unheard of in the United States except in Rhode Island, and as the doctrine of the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. PRESSTMAN.)

He, (Mr. D.,) designed no reflection upon gentlemen, but he must say, that in every age of the world, persons were found ever ready to minister to the popular cry and popular caprice. It was an old saying "*vox populi, vox Dei.*" He (Mr. D.,) would run after no masses—he would minister to no morbid sentiments. He referred to the effects which a similar doctrine had produced in former ages of the world, and more recently in France; and to the various forms and *isms* which it had assumed in our own country. He was no advocate of this absolute and uncontrolled license of the mob; and he hoped the day would never come when the sound and reflecting portions of any community, were to give up the restraints of law, and submit to the rule of a violent and unprincipled mob.

Mr. HICKS said, he did not like to detain the Convention by any remarks of his, but it might probably be expected that he would say a few words on the proposition he had submitted. He was perfectly serious in offering that proposition. He thought it legitimate and proper; and it was no new idea. It had not originated with him. If gentlemen would refer to the proceedings of the Convention of '76, they would find that a similar effort was made in that body, and although the provision was not inserted in the Constitution, yet the 59th article was adopted as a compromise. How? Why, by declaring that any part of the organic law, directly affecting the interests of the Eastern Shore, should be changed by a two-thirds vote of the legislature.

It must be apparent to every gentleman that, owing to the peculiar geographical position of the State of Maryland, some such arrangement seemed to be demanded by the different interests of the Eastern and Western Shores. And it seemed to him, that, whilst the work of reform was going on, it might be as well to guard every point. He had not the slightest ill-feeling towards the Western Shore—nor any desire, if he had the power, to withdraw the Eastern from the Western Shore. But his object was to provide for a crisis such as might occur in the history of those who were to come after us—by asserting the right of the Eastern Shore to withdraw—not by means of revolution, but peaceably; and to unite herself with Delaware or Virginia, whenever the interests and happiness of the people might require it.

We had been told that the only question was one of political power. This did not alarm him as much as it seemed to have alarmed others. Baltimore was increasing largely—she would continue to increase—and, as a matter of course, would look vigilantly to her own interests. She wanted the construction of a number of public works, in order that the various interests which must always cluster around a large and growing city, might be drawn together and concentrated for her benefit. To all this, he had no objection; but the old adage that "a burnt child dreads the fire," was as true as it was trite. He and his

people had no desire to trammel the interests of Baltimore; they were proud of her; they cared not to what extent her public works might be carried on, provided they were not taxed heavily for them. They had no prejudice towards her—their object, no less than their duty was, self-preservation alone. All they asked was that power should not be given to one part of the State to oppress another, and that, if such a time should every arrive, the people of the Eastern Shore might be permitted, quietly if they could, to make such an arrangement as would secure their own protection.

Allusions had been made to his opinions on the subject of reform, and he had been taunted with being an anti-reformer. There was no foundation for the charge. For twenty-five or thirty years his name had been recorded in favor of all the most important reforms in the State. But some gentlemen here seemed to think that no man was to be regarded as a reformer, unless he chose to follow them to the bitter end of all their wild and ultra schemes of reform.

He repeated, what he had on a former occasion stated, that he had voted against the call of this Convention; yet that call having been determined upon, he had come here honestly to give to the people all such reforms as he thought they needed. He wished Baltimore to prosper, but he was not willing to concede to her all the reforms that she demanded. He was not willing to award undue political and legislative influence to her, and thus to place other parties of the State at her mercy, or within her control. When he came here, he was disposed to give her and the larger counties of the State, an increased representation; but he had found opinions so various and conflicting, that he thought the best course now might be to settle down upon the old basis, or upon some other approximating to it.

It has been hinted to me this morning (concluded Mr. H.) that if the time should ever come when we, of the Eastern Shore, should avail ourselves of the right which this provision would guarantee, we ought at least to carry with us our portion of the debt of the State of Maryland. Sir, I scorn the idea that we would ever withdraw, without paying the last dollar of our due proportion of that debt. I should feel ashamed of the people of the Eastern Shore, if I believed that there was a man amongst them who would entertain such a proposition. I have only to add that I hope my amendment may be agreed to, whether that of the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Presstman,) is rejected or not.

Mr. STEWART of Caroline, said, it seemed to him that the right claimed by the amendment of the gentleman from Dochester, [Mr. Hicks,] was within certain restrictions and limitations, already recognized. The amendment provided "that any portion of the people of this State, shall have the right to secede and unite themselves and the territory occupied by them to such adjoining State as they shall elect." Secede from what? He supposed from the other part of the State—that the Eastern Shore should have the right to cut loose from the Western Shore, and attach herself to some other State.