

The wise and good men who had framed the Constitution and government in 1776, had taken instruction from experience. The idea of representation according to population, had never obtained at any period in our past history; never. Yet the government of Maryland would compare with that of any State in the Union, when tested by the best of all rules—the rule that the “tree is to be judged by its fruit.” No people had ever lived in greater security, or more perfect protection of all that a citizen could claim, nor had the sun ever shone upon a people who enjoyed more fully and certainly the rights of person and property and reputation, than the people of Maryland. In short no government had ever accomplished the great purposes of its institution more thoroughly and effectually, than this had. All this had been our experience during the long period of our existence, with a representation altogether territorial, during most of that period, and until now chiefly territorial. Of late, it had become a matter of speculation, for politicians to cultivate a taste for change, to hold up the idea of a perfect equality, absolute and unqualified, of every individual. He sincerely believed that a more difficult or laborious task had never been undertaken by professional politicians, than that of persuading the satiated and well-contented citizens of the State, that they were in condition of suffering, very much worse than they had any conception of—that they were in fact, in a state of oppression and depression—in a state of political degradation and humiliation, although entirely unconscious of it; and that the government had failed to accomplish the objects for which it was established, and the promises it had guaranteed, though all the while they had supposed quite the reverse. In short, that while they had felt and acted as freemen, enjoying the largest liberty, they were in fact many of them in a condition of political slavery.

It had been a difficult task to induce such a belief. It was natural to expect such difficulty. It would scarcely be expected, that when a sane man felt and acted, as if in the full and perfect enjoyment of his personal freedom, he would be easily persuaded by argument and general principles, that his person was incarcerated, and his limbs fettered with chains. But drops will in time wear into the stone. The cry of reform was re-echoed through the State; it was the panacea for all our woes. In 1836, the work of reform was to be completed. Those who had so loudly demanded reform—(*ecce signum*, said Mr. C., pointing to Mr. Brown, of Carroll) were put to the lead. The lion—this population representation—was rampant. He would not say it “roared,” because the expression might be misapplied—but it had roamed throughout the State, claiming his just share of the spoils—his necessary quantum of food. Well, preparation was made, and the arrangements, expressly looking to a representation to be determined by the census of 1850 and that of 1860, were supposed at least abundant for a breakfast and a dinner. But how has it proved? Why exactly as it might have been expected, just as it always will happen,

when the attempt is made to make a lion cease to be fierce by giving him blood. The breakfast now is scarcely fairly over, and the whole preparation is demolished, and we are now called upon for an infinitely increased supply from our stores, to gratify his demands and satiate his appetite. Yes, and the cry is “more,” “more,” and will still be “more,” while we have anything to devour. This is not all. We are, in addition to these further demands, now reproached with a want of liberality for not contributing a larger supply for “spoils.” And now, while he had the gentleman from Carroll in his eye, he would notice his remark the other day. He said to us, “have not these men the Senate?” “Is there not an equal representation in the Senate?” Yes! all true—there was an equal representation in the Senate, but was that any part of the consideration for the compromise of 1836. By no means. Prior to that time, every part of the State had an equal claim to representation in the Senate. Each of the counties elected two electors to constitute a college of electors, by which the Senate, of fifteen members, was selected from any part of the State. Nothing was farther from the fact than the idea of the present organization of the Senate, being a boon granted by the larger counties, or by the Western to the Eastern Shore. No mistake could be greater. All the surrender on that occasion was made, as it asked to be now, by the Eastern Shore and the small counties, to the city of Baltimore and the large counties. The current is still to run in the same direction. We must now make a further surrender, and how are we to be paid? Why, by allowing us to retain a part of what was not taken from us in 1836. The flock had been divided, and our portion assigned. Well, now we are to be compelled to make another division; and of what are we told the division must be made? Of the whole flock? No sir! No. Of the portion left to us by the former division—nothing else. Our sheep are to be counted out—none others—and a re-division of these only made. We may, perhaps, have a few little lambs left us, but scarcely enough to prepare another meal for this insatiate lion—strengthened as he is, by every acquisition of fresh “spoils.”

Whoever would look at the history of the compromise of 1836, would find that promises were made, pledges given by those who called themselves “reformers” in the Legislature, that the order of then established was to remain till after the next census of 1860. Aye! it was to be permanent. And what do we find, is permanence? Why here in 1850 this permanent arrangement is at an end, and the cry of “reform” is as loud and long as ever, and the pursuit after the spoils of office as ardent. He did not admit the sufficiency of the Senate to protect the interests of the small counties; past experience justified him saying this. The Senate could not withstand the popular pressure in 1836. The increase of power, by the arrangement of that time had strengthened the aggressive power of the other branch. The Senate yielded in 1849 and brought about this Convention. How then with a large