

In fact, as we shall be entitled to six from Baltimore city in 1860 under the present basis, it only concedes to us after that time an increase of four.

I rejected it, because by that so called compromise, the counties of Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Carroll, and Baltimore, with Baltimore city, have a majority of 91,316 inhabitants, federal numbers, over the rest of the State, and yet the same counties with the city of Baltimore would be in a minority of five delegates, and if you take the white basis, a majority of 162,177 inhabitants would be in a minority of five delegates; thus by this much boasted compromise, a majority of the people are left in the power of a minority in other parts of the State.

I rejected it, because it applies justice to the counties and denies it to Baltimore city. And because it assumes a ratio of six thousand as just and proper, running all over the State, until you come to the limits of Baltimore city—then you are to stop and proclaim to the people of Baltimore, “you are a *floating population* of rowdies, foreigners, mobites, ruffians, and banditti, and we will not trust you with the same equal power, which we take to every man of ourselves in the counties, and instead of giving you your rightful proportion on the basis assumed, we will give you as a boon, a crumb of comfort, what we choose arbitrarily to grant, and therefore take ‘four,’ more than the largest county.” This would be in effect to mark the city of Baltimore as a *plague spot* on the map of the whole State, from which justice and equality were to be forever banished. That gentlemen who have advocated this proposition are personally actuated by patriotic motives, I am willing to concede; but I have nothing to do with their motives. I look to the effect produced by their acts, and that effect is to stamp on the new Constitution, an invidious and unjust discrimination against my constituents.

There has been much clamor raised against the floating population, as it is termed of Baltimore city. The public eye in the counties, has been actually blinded by clouds of prejudice, to the facts, that we have numerous churches raising their spires to the Heavens; that we have libraries and schools daily dispensing the light of intellect among our people; religious and charitable societies without number to inculcate all the teachings of the moral law; mechanic arts, whose skillful laborers are toiling day and night; and a commercial enterprise which crossing and recrossing the mountain wave, brings wealth and luxury to our favored emporium.

Are not such a people worthy of equal rights with the yeomanry of the land? Other gentlemen may be afraid to trust them with power, but as one of their humble delegates, I will never consent to put a degrading stigma on such a constituency. Vain the cry which has been echoed in these halls against the rowdies, as they are called, of Baltimore. They are comparatively but few in number, and can be quelled by a firm and energetic administration of the laws. Are some two hundred rowdies, at the outside,

to be the cause for disfranchising and degrading a whole population of 169,000 souls?

We are told by the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) to judge the tree by its fruits, and say whether the territorial dynasty has ever abused its power in the history of Maryland? Suppose this were true, the argument would perpetuate despotism wherever its reign was mild and just. What, sir, am I to lay my head on the footstool of a tyrant, because he may be kind and benignant in his nature? No, sir; I would as soon rebel against arbitrary power, however well it might be tempered by mercy, as I would against the bloodiest Nero that ever disgraced a throne?

But the history of the past proves the assertion to be untrue. For long years have the people struggled, at times almost hopelessly, against the iron rule of territorial power. How many years did it require of fierce and bitter contest, before the people could wrest the election of their Governor from, and break up the equal representation of counties? That was achieved in 1836, and from that date a gentleman from Somerset, [Mr. Dashiell,] dates the downfall of the political dynasty heretofore wielded by counties as distinguished from the people. (Here Mr. BRENT read copious extracts from the speech of Mr. DASHIELL. See Register of Debates, Feb. 11; page 208, for that speech.)

Sixteen years have rolled away since that first triumph of the people—sixteen years of further struggle for rights still withheld, and now we are here in this Convention formed on the territorial basis, and I am contending almost single-handed for equal rights against the strength of small counties, all powerful here, but weak in their minority of population. And here you will see right and justice sacrificed to appease the territorial power that tyrannises over numbers, by denying to them their due weight in the government.

Are these no bitter fruits of such a tree as territorial supremacy? I tell you here, Mr. President, that if you now but modify and mitigate this system of inequality and oppression in the popular branch of the Legislature, the struggle will again be renewed until the people have obtained all their rights, so long withheld. Make a just compromise now or you will lose all. Let the small counties take warning from the fate of Charles I. If he had made judicious compromises, in season, with his people, history teaches us that he might have saved his crown; but, he claimed inexorably the full prerogatives of his power, until the popular feeling was so aroused, that his subsequent attempts at compromise were rejected with scorn, and he lost his head as well as his throne.

So, I would, in no harsh spirit, warn gentlemen from the small counties to take heed, lest, while they hold on to their territorial power to the exclusion of every fair and just compromise, they may ultimately find it too late to save themselves, even in the Senate, which they could now honorably do, with every prospect of such a compromise being undisturbed for perhaps a cen-