

mend the fable of the woodsman, who asked of the trees of the forest, an axe handle; the request being so modest, the principal trees, at once agreed to it, and determined, that the plain, homely ash, should furnish the handle; but no sooner had the woodsman fitted it to his purpose, than he began to hew down the trees in all directions. The oak, seeing the havoc, whispered to the cedar—"the first concession has lost us all; if we had not sacrificed our humble neighbor we might have yet stood for ages ourselves."

No, sir, if the principle is right, feasible and safe, that masses, however fluctuating and heterogeneous they may be, should be represented according to numbers, without regard to minorities, sectional interests, and circumstances surrounding the whole body politic—why then let there be no compromise; let us have the naked principle itself affixed to the Constitution, and become the sole element of power, in all time to come, in these ancient Council Halls of our Fathers. Let us not invalidate a principle by impairing its efficiency under a compromise, which like all other compromises, originate in notions of expediency, and generally end in disappointment. There was a compromise in 1836, has it produced any good? What evidence have you? I wish it were not on the other side.

It is not numbers of Legislators, and volumes of acts of Assembly we want; that does not benefit the people, however much it may politicians. You increased the delegates then, and with that came an increase of taxation. I wish to see a quietus on this question of representation, so little talked of before the people, and so much declaimed in this hall; let us acknowledge the principle at once, or make no compromise at all.

I abhor this partial treatment of any important question, and although I am, from every consideration of sound policy, opposed to the doctrine here set up, yet if my judgment was otherwise, nothing short of a full recognition of the whole principal in the Constitution would satisfy me. No, sir, on this question, let us have no compromise none whatever.

I have no faith in a contract, where one of the parties is so trammelled and fettered as to be compelled to make the best terms he can, though the right should be on his side; such a contract will not long be observed, and I for one say, that if Baltimore city, armed with the doctrine of representation of numbers, can so exort from the counties a tacit acknowledgment of the soundness of the principle, by any compromise of concession whatever—then Baltimore ought not, and certainly would not, regard the contract as binding, but would throw it off at her own convenience, call a new Convention, and break down every barrier to a full recognition of the principle in its broadest character.

Mr. President, gentlemen favoring this generous compromise, tell us that they will preserve territorial representation in the Senate, and that is to be the grand conservative feature in the system. Why, this appears to me, to be an incongruity of itself; acknowledge the principle in

the popular branch of the government, and yet fetter its action, by acknowledging an other principle in the Senate! I do not understand that system of ethics, which tenders a boon with one hand and withholds it with the other. If the principle is to be acknowledged at all, let it have full and free scope to develop itself, let there be no restrictions.

But do not gentlemen perceive the fallacy of such a course? After you acknowledge the majesty of numbers in the House, suppose some leading question, of great interests to Baltimore city, should receive the sanction of a large majority in that body, and should be lost by one vote in the Senate, and that vote should come from Caroline or Calvert county; what kind of a spectacle would that present in legislation, where 9,000 souls are permitted to thwart the wishes of 571,000! Would such a thing be tolerated long? Would not the moral force of public opinion obliterate from your organic law such heterodoxy as that? Where would you find one man, with moral courage enough, to oppose his judgment to such a host? We are not to expect prodigies of men, like ourselves; the thing would be unreasonable, and could not survive the shock of public indignation. No, sir, if the Senate is to impose any restraints upon the action of the House, that Senate must be backed by moral sentiment, reflected in the House, through the delegates of the people. There would in my humble judgment, be no analogy in the case like that supposed, and one of a similar character in the Senate of the Federal Government, where sovereign States are represented.

Mr. President, some time ago, the gentleman from Baltimore city, [Mr. Presstman,] offered a resolution on the relations existing between master and slave, in this State. As near as I can recollect, it was very similar to the provisions in the present Constitution on that subject. I was much gratified at his orthodoxy on that point; not doubting, but the same is the case with all other gentlemen of this body. That gentleman guessed rightly, in supposing that our opposition to representation of numbers, was owing *in part* to our geographical position in the State, and our intimate relation to that institution, which has but recently been, and still is the subject of so much excitement throughout this Union. And when his colleague, (Mr. Brent) followed immediately after with the declaration, that he wanted the appropriating power of the Legislature restricted—I confess I was at a loss to account for our concurrence of opinion on two subjects, of so much real interest to the State at large and yet find ourselves differing so widely on another question of mere theoretical principle. While ruminating on the subject, I thought of Hamlet's ghost, and though the language may not be apropos, yet the suspicions the gentleman from Somerset, at the time, [Mr. Dashiell,] warrant the quotation:

"Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee."