

two-fifths of their slaves should not be enumerated, in the apportionment of representation; and the free States agreed, that there should be the same abatement in the proportion of taxes to be paid by the slave States; and it was further agreed that fugitive slaves should be restored to their owners. That was a compromise, fair and equal in its provisions, supported by mutual equivalents, and made between parties, who were independent of each other, and in every way, competent to contract. Here several numbers are proposed as a rule, to be prescribed by the sovereign power in the State, and not by agreement; nothing is offered in exchange for it; no compensation is to be made; and the consent of those to be effected by it, is not asked. Where, then, is the analogy between the cases? Would that portion of the State, which insists on federal numbers, as the basis of representation, be willing that taxes shall be apportioned by the same rule? Are they willing that the proportion of taxes to be paid by the slave-holding counties shall be abated two-fifths, as a compensation for this reduction of their political influence?

Allegany is now paying a tax on about three and a half millions of property. Prince George's on over nine and a quarter millions. Now Allegany proposes to curtail Prince George's of two-fifths of the political influence of her slaves. Will she also relieve her of two-fifths of her burdens? When the bill of rights was under consideration, we found gentlemen from the west voting with great alacrity, that "every person ought to contribute his proportion of public taxes for the support of government, according to his actual worth in real and personal property." Were gentlemen now willing to yield up the power of taxing every part of the State equally? Present such a proposition to them, and we should soon be told there was no compromise in that. We should find the gentlemen from Allegany and Washington counties, and all who are now acting with them except certain gentlemen from counties where slaves were abundant, and who were themselves large slave-holders, strongly opposing such a proposition.

Maryland, Mr. President, is a slave State, and has been from an early period. That institution has uniformly been sustained and encouraged by our laws; and even during the session of this body we have, by a solemn vote, determined that the legislature shall not interfere with the relation of master and slave. That vote was unanimous. Slavery then exists by the unanimous concurrence of the whole State.

Every part of the State deemes it under existing circumstances, an institution so interwoven with the interests of Maryland, as to be inseparable from them. If it be wrong or injurious, all are equally responsible, and, as a consequence, all are bound to share the burden. The number of slaves in the State is ninety thousand three hundred and fifty-five—nearly one sixth of the whole population. They displace the same number of freemen. If they were expelled their places would soon be filled by a free population.

Now, we all know that slavery is very une-

qually distributed through the State. In the whole State, the slaves are to the whole population, as one to six; in Allegany as one to thirty-one, and in Prince George's, more than one-half of the whole population are slaves.

Thus while the institution of slavery displaces or excludes from the whole State a free population equal to one-sixth of the population from Prince George's it displaces a number more than equal to one-half, and from Allegany a number only equal to one-thirty-first part of the whole of its population.

The effect of adopting the basis of federal numbers, is to throw the loss occasioned by slavery, thus established and sustained by the unanimous consent of all, on the particular portions of the State in which slaves happen to be most numerous. No argument is necessary to expose the glaring injustice of such a proposition.

But we are told that federal numbers were agreed to by the act of 1836. It is true that the small counties did then agree to federal numbers, but how? At that time each county had an equal representation in the House of Delegates. The smaller counties yielded up a portion of their political power, but they yielded for an equivalent. They received in return what was supposed to be ample security for their protection and safety. The act of 1836 was a compromise; and was assented to as such. Now, one of the parties to that compromise, who has enjoyed, and is now enjoying its benefits, seeks to alter its terms, and yet reproaches us, because we do not feel willing to be bound by the terms of that arrangement under the circumstances as proposed to be changed. Sir, it is neither just, nor according to rules of fair dealing among private persons, to hold one party to a strict performance of a contract, which has been violated by the opposite party. The western counties accepted the compromise of 1836, and at the time were content with it; and we now say to them if you are willing to abide by that arrangement, we are willing; but if you repudiate its provisions, we will no longer adhere to federal numbers.

The gentleman from Allegany, (Mr. Weber,) wishes to go even further than federal numbers; he wishes that representation should be distributed, on the basis of white population. In his generosity, he is willing to exclude the entire black race from the enumeration; he does not press it, but would be willing that his county should derive no increase of power from that class of population, if the other counties also excluded them from the count. This is a wonderful act of generosity! And pray, sir, what would the gentleman lose by it? What is the amount of the sacrifice which he is prepared to make on the altar of harmony and fraternal kindness? In Allegany there are 397 free blacks, and 724 slaves; in all, 1,121. In Prince George's there are 1,138 free blacks, and 11,510 slaves; in all, 12,648. Now, the gentleman from Allegany says, I am willing that my 1,121 blacks shall go for nothing in the distribution of political power, if Prince George's will consent that