

injustice to the city of Baltimore, yet there was some thing in his course which convinced me that he would vote for it, notwithstanding all he had said; and if he did, what would become of his argument? What would become of his theory in relation to population? What would become of the respect due to the immense wealth of the city of which the gentleman talks so much? The gentleman stood prepared to compromise them at two-fifths of what he insisted, was their just weight. Sir, his argument is worth nothing when contradicted by his vote. But he designs further agitation, no matter what may be done here! I commend that declaration to the notice of the gentleman from Washington, and the gentleman from the Eastern Shore, who are acting with him on this question! Sir I repeat, the gentleman from Baltimore city—the Attorney General—is the only consistent man on that side of the question. He dares to look his own theories in the face, and act them out.

Mr. President, I have been drawn off in a direction I did not design to pursue. I return to my friend from Allegany. I have another word for him on the subject of wealth. He maintained that wealth ought to be represented.

Mr. WEBER explained. He said he was for representation based on white population and wealth combined.

Mr. CRISFIELD. This idea of wealth being represented, was rather a ticklish subject, and it might lead gentlemen where they had not bargained to go.

If Allegany, or Washington, or Frederick, by reason of their greater wealth, were entitled to more political power than Somerset, why not carry the principle a step further, and say that the man who had the most wealth, should have the most votes?

Mr. WEBER explained. He had not proposed to make property the basis of representation. He had simply said, if the gentlemen chose to take the South Carolina basis—white population and taxation combined, he would have no objection. The table he had presented, a copy of which he had furnished the gentleman, showed that he had calculated both the direct and miscellaneous taxes, the taxes upon business as well as the taxes upon property.

Mr. CRISFIELD proceeded. I am sure that the gentleman from Allegany did not think of the consequences to which his theory leads. I am quite sure he did not think his proposition was so vulnerable and so likely to become odious, as it now seemed, or he never would have presented it.

But the conclusions I have drawn from it are natural, and in every way legitimate. If counties are to have representation in proportion to their wealth, why are not individuals? Can any reason be assigned why the principle, if true, is not as applicable to persons as to counties? No reason can be assigned. It is a doctrine which cannot be defended. Gentlemen must either abandon it, or render themselves obnoxious to the charge of a want of proper respect for popular rights.

Mr. President, I shall not occupy your time

with an examination of the statistics produced by gentlemen, to show that Baltimore city and the west, are superior to us in wealth. It would be quite easy to show that those in relation to the taxes apparently paid by the city are satisfactory. It would not be at all difficult to demonstrate that very many of the indirect taxes, collected in that city, and for which she now claims additional influence, are in truth, paid by the people of the rural districts, in the shape of increased price on commodities purchased in that city. But I will spare this body and myself the labor of the investigation and admit that the city and the west, are greatly our superiors in wealth and population.

But does it thence follow, that we must submit to their demands? Are these the only elements to be regarded in the distribution of political power?

The gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Gwinn,) cannot conceive on what principle representation is to be based, if not on property and population. There is another principle, which lies far deeper, which gentlemen seem to have overlooked. Government is not an invention simply to increase and preserve wealth, and to concentrate the power of numbers. Its object is to protect the governed—the whole from a common enemy—the parts from each other. Protection is its great end; and hence its powers must be so apportioned, as that every class, every interest and every part of the State may have enough of power to defend itself from the assaults of hostile interests. That government which fails to place within the reach of every class of its subjects, power sufficiently strong to secure it from the oppression of every other class has not attained the object of its institution, and is not entitled to be called free.

It is a great mistake to suppose that majorities have any natural right to govern. It is true, that from necessity, they may assume such powers as self-preservation requires. But this is only in cases of great and immediate danger, and the assumption can be justified only as long as the peril continues: and its safety can otherwise be preserved. It becomes tyranny as soon as the extremity has ceased to press. It is the same right which every one possesses to preserve his own life and liberty; it arises in similar necessity, and must be exercised with similar limitation by society. It never can justly become the foundation of regular and systematic government. The only rightful authority, which belongs to majorities, arises from compact. In a state of nature, one man has no right to control his fellow, or one class or section of a community to control another class or section. Each is equally free equally independent and possesses equal rights. In forming governments each member of society acts for himself; he surrenders such powers as he can do without, and retains such as are essential to his own protection. So with different classes of society, and different sections of the State. Each gives up to be administered by the common authority, for the common benefit such powers as promote that object; and retains such, as from a view of the dangers to