

tation in this body, did not for one instant suppose the city of Baltimore would demand as a *sine qua non* representation according to population. Why, sir, of all the members of this body, known as reformers, but seventeen voted for the adoption of that principle, when compelled to record their votes upon the resolution of the gentleman from St. Mary's, [Mr. Blakistone.] And among these, of my own knowledg, were several, who in voting for it, did so alone in view of the adoption of the district system.

Mr. WM. COST JOHNSON here remarked that as the hour was late, if the gentleman from Baltimore would acquiesce he would make a motion to adjourn, which Mr. P. assented to,
— And the Convention adjourned.

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WEDNESDAY, March 26th, 1851.

Mr. PRESSTMAN said, that in the remarks which he had made on yesterday to the Convention, he had stated that it was not his intention to discuss the subject now under consideration, beyond the actual necessity of deliberating in a spirit of compromise. He had no disposition now of entering upon an examination of the principles on which the question of representation ought to rest.

He did not believe that a discussion of that character was likely to do good, although he would listen to the speeches of gentlemen on either side, with the utmost deference and respectful consideration. The vice of the argument of some gentlemen, in his judgment, was in this, that they looked to the establishment of a basis dependent upon a principle which can, with mathematical precision, be shown to work no injustice or to fail to recognize, in the remotest degree, perfect equality of rights.

Mr. President, is it not amazing that learned and distinguished gentlemen upon this floor, continue day after day, to talk about the establishment of fundamental principles, with reference to the question of representation, and avow a determination to yield nothing of a favorite theory, when the history of every State in this Union, demonstrates that the subject has been invariably one of concession and compromise, and that the basis of representation in the several branches of the government, is scarcely the same in the Constitution of any one of the States of the Union now, and was not in any one of the original thirteen. The friends of a compromise have been taunted with the expression that their unwillingness to open the doors for a full and free discussion, indicates a conscious weakness in their position. Not so, sir. It is, indeed, from the fear that in the flight of time, they may be left with the work unfinished, and volumes of speeches alone be the fruits, (if they can be so styled,) of our deliberations, which impels the friends of reform to speedy action.

Why, sir, have we come here to learn the elementary principles of government? Is it indeed that this Convention must need enlightenment upon principles illustrated in every political hornbook. Have we not the debates which have been made in the Conventions of every

State, in which a Constitution has been adopted? Have we not the views upon this identical question, of the master minds of the American Union? Must we then rehearse in public, all that we have read in private. No, sir, to his mind the avoidance of these old and hacknied topics which has generally characterized our debate is the best evidence of the practical commonsense of the members. Look, sir, at the result of these discussions in the several States what has uniformly been the termination— abandonment of the original grounds, upon such the controversy was commenced, and the recognition of the spirit of compromise? He had two objects, mainly, in trespassing upon the time of the Convention. Firstly, that he might make known to his constituents the reasons which had induced him to support the measures of compromise; and secondly, to express his acknowledgments at the bold and manly course pursued by the reformers of this body from the smaller counties; he alluded especially to the delegates from Talbot, Queen Anne's and Caroline counties.— Organized, as this Convention is, they have had it in their power at any moment, to defeat the cherished hopes of the reformers of Maryland.

They, sir, are the only representatives of the eastern section of the State, so numerous represented in this body, who have magnanimously voted to limit and abridge their political power. Have they not received revilings from those who came here swearing bitter hostility to all change, and whose best boast it would seem, is their inability to surmount their local prejudices, and to keep an eye single to the chances of the political game as it is to be played upon the stage of "old Buncombe."

Has it not been entertaining, sir, on the one hand, to listen to the out layings of the patriotic heart who comes from a section of the State, where representation according to population is held in abhorrence, while he denounces with flashing eye and vehement gesture, the demoniacal spirit of those who espouse the cause of the majority as a slavish idolatry to the "dear people." When you remember, sir, that the very altar at which he is then worshipping is political ambition, and the ends and means to obtain it, is to pander to the prejudices of the constituency who hold his fate in their hands.

It is not a martyr's crown, but the wreath of political victory with which he seeks to adorn his brow. And then, sir, are the disciples of another school, often heard within these walls, who are so enamoured of popular rights, as to refuse to concede one hairs-breadth of what they term the "inalienable rights of the people," that they would prefer to let all things remain as they are, than surrender a single delegate in the apportionment. The people whom he had the honor to represent were too intelligent, he believed, to expect that in one single effort by a Convention, every principle of Government could be recognised, and established by a standard of their own fashioning. Much would be obtained—now something must be left to time.