

popular branches, and the reasons for them. Suppose the people of Maryland are overwhelmingly in favor of a certain reform; say, 99-100ths of them in any one year. In comes this conservative, aristocratic branch, and says, "No, you don't; we clog the wheels; we stand in the way; we say that though public sentiment has utterly revolutionized, you elected us for six years, and we will keep back the wheels of progress for six years at least." It is not good thus to inaugurate hostility at once between the two branches of the Legislature. However overwhelming the people may be in favor of a certain measure, however large the majority for it in the popular branch, the aristocratic branch say they shall not have it. I am not in favor of aristocratic privileges anywhere, nor an aristocratic government. I am in favor of a purely representative government. The only reason why I oppose annual elections is because I know the evil effects of elections, held according to our present constitutional theory, "free and frequent." You have seen the deeds around the poll, and you ought to know whether it is demoralizing, disorganizing, or not. I think two years quite often enough for the election of representatives of the people. And if I had the ordering of matters, not only the popular branch but the conservative aristocratic branch should be subject to the same popular will. My friend says: suppose a man comes here this year and does a thing which his constituency repudiates; how long has he a right to do this? I say, suppose a gentleman in the aristocratic branch does this same thing, as they have done. I know counties of this State in which if the people had a chance at their present senators to-morrow, they could not get a corporal's guard to vote for them. Does not the principle apply there? It is said to be a very bad rule that will not work two ways; but this is so very bad that it will not work in the same direction even, about too different things.

Individually this is a matter of no moment to me. But I think we ought to have annual sessions of the legislature, and I do not think there is any necessity for annual elections. As the idea has been brought before this body that Maryland has an aristocratic branch of the Legislature, I take occasion to express my opinion, that if she has, I for one am anxious to get rid of it. I for one will hold the senator of the State of Maryland to equal responsibility with members of the House of Delegates. I shall vote for annual sessions of the Legislature, because I think seriously that the interests of the people of the State demand an annual meeting of the Legislature. I shall vote against annual elections, because I believe under the circumstances, under which elections are now and have been held, with the drunkenness, rioting and scenes of violence, which characterize our

popular elections, their influence is bad. I believe they are demoralizing, disintegrating, destructive.

Mr. STIRLING. As a matter of principle, I have no very great objection to annual elections or annual sessions. I rather think that as a matter of principle, annual elections have the advantage; although that is a mere question of time. I hold that elections should be frequent. When we come to the question: how frequent, there is a difference of opinion. And permit me to say that the distinction between one year and two years is not very great. What has induced me to oppose this change is the belief that the people of this State are in favor of biennial sessions, and biennial elections. There is one fact about this matter which is very instructive; and that is that this particular provision existed in the old Constitution, and was submitted to the people of this State at the ballot box separately; and it was carried by a large majority. I think from this fact, and from the experience that I have had, that the great mass of the people of the State are in favor of biennial sessions. I do not think there is any doubt about it; for they voted for it at the ballot box when they had nothing to look at but that distinct proposition. We have lived under it for fifteen years, and it has given satisfaction, and has worked better than the old system.

Mr. CLARKE. I voted to reconsider the second section of this report; but upon reflection I agree with the remarks of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling.) My first impression was that the people demand annual sessions and annual elections. But the great danger and the great evil is over legislation, over taxation, over accumulation of indebtedness, which always results from every session of the Legislature, and much of this will be saved by biennial sessions. A large amount of taxation will be saved, which I think it is very important at this time that the people should be relieved from.

In reference to my friend from Howard (Mr. Sands,) who I think is to a great extent a democrat, I think he would better be classed with the radical democracy. I believe he is disposed to advocate democratic doctrines, and to return to his first love, the democracy.

Mr. SANDS. I was a great admirer of Fremont, when he crossed the plains and the Rocky mountains, and when I read his book, Fremont was a man of genius, as I thought; but he got into such bad company that I had to quit him.

Mr. CLARKE. I understand that the gentleman is now returning to his first love. I understand that he commenced his career as a democrat before know-nothingism grew up.

Mr. SANDS (in his seat.) May the Lord forgive me!

Mr. CLARKE continued: I think he is very