

fifteen years ago, left them. I shall therefore vote against these propositions.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I entirely concur in the remarks of the gentleman from Charles county (Mr. Edelen,) and that is precisely the reason why I propose this amendment. I say that it is competent for these local tribunals in the several counties, who know what they need and want, to arrange all these things.

Mr. EDELEN. This amendment provides that—"The legislature shall not pass local or special laws for the punishment of crimes or misdemeanors." Does the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge) mean to take the power from the legislature of the State where it has been committed by the constitution, and give it to county commissioners, or some inferior or subordinate tribunal?

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. No, sir. "The gentleman from Baltimore city" does not propose any such thing. But he proposes that a theft committed in Charles county, shall be punished the same as if it had been committed in Allegany county. He proposes that the practice of the courts, if regulated by the legislature, shall be such that the learned gentleman from Charles county, knowing what the law of the State is, can practice with perfect readiness in Allegany or Washington county. He proposes that so far as the legislation of the State is concerned, it shall be uniform upon this subject.

The instance cited by my colleague (Mr. Stirling,) in reference to certain crimes, is no objection to the provision I have offered; on the contrary, it is an argument in its favor. Police regulations are left with propriety, in every incorporated city, in the hands of certain tribunals or powers in that locality. The very theory of this whole amendment is to carry out precisely what the gentleman from Prince George's (Mr. Belt) proposes.

Mr. STIRLING. I want to ask the gentleman a question.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I do not like—

Mr. STIRLING. One question on this point.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. Well, I yield the floor entirely.

Mr. STIRLING. I do not ask that. I wish merely to ask one question of the gentleman. If you say the local legislature shall not pass any local law in regard to crimes, will not that prohibit the legislature passing a local law allowing Baltimore city to punish a crime?

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. It will not do any such thing. It is a perfect absurdity to say that because the legislature is prohibited from laying out a road, it cannot say that the county commissioners may not lay out and fix a road. If we say, as this amendment says, that the legislature shall not pass local laws fixing the boundaries of election districts, is that saying that they shall not give

to some authority or tribunal in the county the power to regulate election districts?

Mr. EDELEN. I will ask the gentleman from Baltimore city a question.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. No, sir; I am tired of this catechising and disputations way of debating questions. I have offered an amendment, the full purpose of which is to place in the hands of the people the government of the people. Take instances; gentlemen have seen them here. Men come in from Howard county, we will say, with a little petition asking for a road a mile long. It is referred to the delegation from Howard county. That delegation may know something about it, or they may not. What influences are brought to bear upon them the legislature knows nothing about. They report a bill granting the prayer of the petition. It is called up at some night session specially devoted to local business. The house is assured that it is purely a local measure, that it has no bearing whatever upon the rest of the State, and it is voted for as a thing of course. It may be that the very next week after the bill is passed, remonstrances come in here against the measure; but it is too late. Thousands of dollars worth of property is affected by it; the interests of various parties are affected by it.

The purpose of this amendment is to prevent the legislature acting upon any such matters, but that the power may be conferred upon some local authority to act under such regulations as the legislature may prescribe by general law; which would properly be giving notice to all persons concerned that the matter would be acted upon on a certain day at a place named, where all who desired could appear and be heard. It would be doing everything with perfect fairness, by a local tribunal selected among those who know something about the matter.

Every member who was in the legislature at the time will remember what we had to say about the Opossum Hill school-house, and some years ago about the Pimlico road. But what did the gentleman from Worcester county know about the Pimlico road? or the gentleman from Washington county know about the Opossum Hill school-house?

The purpose of this amendment is to confer the power in relation to certain matters upon those who know something about them; not have bills smuggled through the legislature, or lobbied through by bargains among members, one going to another, and saying: "I have a local bill which will come up pretty soon; I will vote for yours, if you will vote for mine." I propose to remove this kind of corruption from the legislature, and save to the State thousands upon thousands of dollars in the time of the legislature, (which is an item of no slight importance,) and to make the laws of the State uniform, as far as practicable. These are the objects