

charge. It seemed, however, to be a matter of general notoriety that these frauds did exist.

The gentleman from Cecil, (Mr. McLANE,) had referred to the 54th article of the Constitution of 1776, by which it would be seen that the framers of that instrument did not refuse to entertain a suspicion that frauds of this kind might exist, because the design of that article was to prevent their commission. That such frauds did begin to prevail to a much greater extent about the year 1838, was manifest from the ordinance passed in May of that year, by the corporation of Baltimore. The enormity of the evil had then become so apparent that, in addition to the Constitutional provisions and to the acts of Assembly upon the subject, the corporation passed an ordinance imposing pains and penalties upon persons twice voting, or voting in the city of Baltimore without the legal right to do so.

It had been said, that the Convention was about to impose new restrictions. Surely, as the increase of population demanded such restrictions, they ought to be enacted. Previous to the year 1802, these evils did not exist to any serious extent. The property qualification was such, that owing to the permanent and known abodes of the voters, the same necessity for such enactments did not exist. Since then, the aspect of things had greatly changed. He, however, was not one of those who believed in primitive purity—and none other. He believed that there was as much purity now in the world, as there ever had been; but a different condition of things existed at the present time. There had been a great increase of population, the exigencies of which had now to be provided for. He referred to the various laws which had been passed by the Legislature at various periods to meet the requirements of the times.

So much for the prevalence of the frauds. What then was the remedy? The evil was plain and palpable—manifest to the eyes of all men, stalking abroad at noon-day before the eyes of men, and calling loudly for a remedy. Where was it to be found? In public opinion and in criminal laws, some gentlemen said. Were they in earnest? Had not public opinion been arrayed, and penal statutes been fulminated against this crime, and of what avail had they been? No more than so much waste paper.

When a mode of redressing one of these evils was presented, gentlemen answered: "That is not the great evil; it is some other, by which we are defrauded of our rights and illegal votes admitted." When a remedy for another fraud was presented, the same answer was given. And thus every measure looking to the cure of the disease was voted down. He had no doubt of the sincerity of gentlemen who opposed these various propositions. Their error was, that each gentleman regarded one particular mode as the only mode by which the evil was to be reached. And his friend from Charles (Mr. JENIFER,) erred with others, in his, (Mr. R's,) judgment. That gentleman thought that a Registry Law was the remedy—another found it in criminal laws; yet if we had them all, they would scarcely accom-

plish the object. We needed them all. He cared not what party was to be built up or put down by them, he would vote for all measures calculated to effect the object to any extent. All these measures were calculated to do so; no one of them could. But that something must be done was obvious.

He referred to the passage of the single district law by Congress—to the fact that Baltimore must hereafter be entitled to at least two representatives in that body, and thence argued the necessity of the resolution as to that city, in order that the intent of the law should not be defeated by persons in one of these districts casting votes in the other. He alluded to the course which had been adopted by Frederick county in regard to the election of certain officers there; and contended that some general restriction of the kind must be imposed. Five days, he admitted, would not accomplish the object as effectually as a longer period, but, as had been remarked by a gentleman who had preceded him, if he could not get a whole loaf he would take half a loaf, since "half a loaf was better than no bread." He desired that every restriction which promised to accomplish the great object in view, should be imposed, and even the restriction of five days residence would give an opportunity to detect and expose the false statements of men who might otherwise fraudulently attempt to vote. He should, therefore, vote in favor of that restriction, limited as it was, and should at the proper time offer the proviso of which he had given notice.

Mr. DORSEY rose; not, he said, to make a speech, but to show what seemed to be a matter of dispute, that these frauds and corruptions did exist in the State of Maryland, and had, from time to time called forth the action of the Legislature for their suppression and punishment.—He agreed with the gentleman from Baltimore county (Mr. BUCHANAN,) that frauds did not exist in that county. But what was the reason? The gentleman had claimed that it was because the people themselves were immaculate and incorruptible, beyond the reach of temptation or the seductions of fraud. Now, perhaps, he (Mr. D.) might assign a very different reason. In Baltimore county there was a Democratic majority of some eight or twelve hundred votes, or more. At all events, it was so enormous, that no party would throw away its money in attempting to colonize it or to commit frauds upon the franchise. (Laughter.) Therefore, it was, that these frauds did not exist in Baltimore county, or in the other parts of the State. (Renewed laughter.) He disclaimed any intention to make imputations on the city. He had never seriously heard the charge of bribery there, although he had heard of illegal voting.

But he had risen to show that this illegal voting had been a progressive kind of crime, and that it ought to be prevented. He then read from the Acts of Assembly the provisions applicable to the point, and argued that the corporation of Baltimore in the ordinances which they had made, had not kept pace with the evil