

been presented, and it appeared to him not to go far enough to effect the purpose. A more stringent oath would be necessary, and in other respects, he considered that proposition as less effective than the amendments he had now offered.

He then went on to compare the proposition of the committee as presented by Mr. CHAMBERS, with the amendments he had just read and to show wherein he thought the defects of the former were supplied by the latter.

He proceeded to state that the people everywhere were looking to the Convention to adopt measures for the greater security of the right of suffrage, and he had offered these amendments to show the earnestness and sincerity with which he sought the same object.

He was conscious that the amendment he had offered, yesterday, to the proposition of the Committee restricting the power of the Governor as to the remission of punishment for bribery, was received by some unfavorably, because he had introduced a qualification providing that the Governor should be clothed with the power of remission in cases where the prosecution was false and malicious. In his experience, however, he had known cases of this character, and that juries had sometimes rendered their verdicts under the influence of party feelings. He was willing, therefore, to deprive the Governor of the power of entering a *nolle prosequi*, or granting a pardon in these cases, except where he was satisfied by sufficient evidence that the prosecution was malicious or untrue. He was not willing to entrust these cases to the jury, or to the Legislature, but he would confer this power on the Governor, who was more likely to act with deliberation, and to remit the punishment on being satisfied that malice and falsehood were at the bottom. In such cases he was unwilling to take from the offender every chance of restoration to his position in society.

Mr. MITCHELL said he rose with very great reluctance, but as he differed from his colleague and felt conscientiously bound to support the amendment, he wished to state the reasons which induced him to do so. It was well known that in all the counties there was a large proportion of poor men. Poor men have very large families generally. (Laughter.) It is the practice among those who desire to help this class, and to stand well in their neighborhood, to give out corn about the months of June and July. I know that about that time the corn-houses are thrown open, and as the natural effect is to give them popularity at home, if they should chance to be candidates for office, the people of that neighborhood would usually vote for them. Now, if any malicious individual should lay hold of this circumstance, he might bring these gentlemen into Court, and by a jury picked by political opponents, they might, notwithstanding their known popularity would have elected them, without any such act of liberality, be convicted under this section, as it had been reported, and be forever disfranchised. He could not make a speech, because he found he was getting frightened here. (Cries, "go on, go on.") Mr. MITCHELL I cannot do it.

Mr. DIRICKSON said, that the spirit of harmony which now seemed to manifest itself in every quarter upon this subject, must be regarded as a most happy change, and one highly gratifying, alike to the Convention and the entire community. Scarce a week had yet elapsed since the fiercest battle had been waged against every proposition, designed peculiarly to purify the elections of the city of Baltimore, and to wipe away forever, the stain of fraud, so frequently and so gravely charged. Then it seemed impossible to effect any beneficial remedy. Gentlemen trembled, lest forsooth, the liberty of free suffrage should be fettered by some slight restriction, and however wholesome such restrictions were shown to be in their purifying tendency, the result had shown how willingly the responsibility had been avoided. Such, however, was not the feeling, and caution now exhibited upon the subject of bribery, an evil supposed mainly to exist in the various counties of the State, rather than in its populous towns and cities. Developments and admissions had been made most humiliating to our "State's pride," and he warned those who were making such unhappy confessions, that

"A chiel's amang us takin' notes,
And faith he will print 'em,"

and that their degrading aspersions would therefore go forth, telling fearfully against the purity of their constituency, and the integrity of our noble State. That this political disease might exist to some extent, it was unnecessary to deny; but, surely, it was not yet in that exaggerated form which the heated fancies of political moralists had induced them to imagine. He had from boyhood, mingled freely with his fellow men, and though he regarded the evil of bribery as baneful in its effects, he could not yet consider it as a great political cancer, devouring the body politic, and requiring so fearful a remedy as that now proposed for its suppression. The great object of all punishment was to prevent the commissions of crime, by imposing and awarding such pains and penalties as would be justified by the character and heinousness of the offence. In this view he asked whether the terrible punishment specified in the amendment of the gentleman from Kent (Mr. CHAMBERS,) was in just proportion to the character and criminality of this evil practice. It might be that the elevated position which that distinguished gentleman had so long occupied, with such signal ability, had prevented him from visiting the hustings and mingling in the exciting scenes that ever, from the very nature of our government, surround the polls. Then under the influence of intense party feeling and in the midst of great strugglings, men with the most unblemished moral character and the most spotless integrity, might almost imperceptibly be hurried into the commission of deeds, which, however improper, could scarcely under all the circumstances, be denominated even by the strictest moralist as highly criminal. He could not for an instant, concur with the honorable gentleman from Anne Arundel, (Mr. DORSEY,) in ranking this evil as above the high crimes of murder, and arson, and larceny, in its