

tem of despotism? Is there any expression in the whole protest that impeaches the motives of any gentleman upon this floor? I defy any one to point it out. There is nothing there but an expression of opinion in regard to the character of the principles which regulate the action of the house; and the opinions of the individual members signing that paper, as to the consequences resulting from the adoption of these general measures. If we are to be debarred the privilege of expressing our sentiments to this extent, I would not give one farthing for the remnant that would be left of the liberty of speech.

I repeat again, that paper has been cautiously drawn, to avoid reflecting upon any one member of this body, or all of the members of this body. We differ in our opinion, I have no right to doubt, with as much honesty on the part of the majority as on the part of the minority. We differ. That difference is stated. The majority have stated their opinion in the form of resolutions. We state our differing opinion in the form of a protest. And I am astonished that the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) can make an insult to arise from such a proceeding.

Mr. SCHLEY. The question being upon the reception and placing upon the journal of this offensive protest, I withdrew the motion to lay upon the table. I have used the words "offensive protest," and in reply to my friend from Baltimore county (Mr. Ridgely,) I would say that offence and insult may be conveyed as well in acts as in language. The gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers) wants to know what insult or offence this proposed protest conveys. He asks for one offensive word in it. I will not refer him to the word. There is much in it, and in the whole tenor of it, that conveys offence and insult to this body. I look upon the whole of it as not only offensive to this body, but as an argument against the federal government, meant to have its effect.

Now what is the object of entering this protest upon the journal? Is it to assure the liberty of speech to the gentleman from Kent, and the minority with whom he acts? Have they been debarred any liberty of speech? Have they been debarred any response to the action of this house? Look at the reports of your debates; I venture to say they teem with arguments upon their side. Look at your journal; were they denied the privilege of expressing their opinion of those resolutions when they were up? Have they not, by yeas and nays, entered their response, their protest against them?

And is this simply a protest? No, sir; it goes beyond the limits and purview of a protest into argument and denunciation. The gentleman says it is cautiously drawn. Aye, and insidiously, too, permit me to add.

Mr. CHAMBERS. That is a more offensive term than any used in the paper.

Mr. SCHLEY. What is its object? Is it merely to protest against the action of this body? If that be its only object, has not that object been already accomplished upon the journal of debates of this body? No, sir; it has another object. I can only tell inferentially what that object is, not knowing the secret purposes of either the gentleman who prepared the paper, or the gentlemen who have signed it. I can only deduce its object inferentially. Its object is to keep up a prolonged agitation in this State; its object is to denounce the action of this convention, the recommendation of this convention; its object is to aim a blow at the government of this country, to which we have professed a supreme allegiance. And so believing, I shall vote against its being recorded upon the journal.

Mr. PUGH. The one objection more than any other that I have to putting an argument of this character upon the journal is, that it is an argument which, under the circumstances, we have no privilege of answering. Many of the gentlemen who have signed this protest were not in their places, as they should have been, at the time these resolutions were offered for the consideration of this convention. If they had been here, they would have had the privilege of entering their protest by voting. But since they were not here, they now come forward and ask to have their reasons entered upon the journal. If that privilege is granted, then they will have an advantage over many of us, because any of the majority who were so unfortunate as to be absent at the time when we could have entered upon the journal our approval by voting for these resolutions, have not been allowed the privilege which is now asked to be extended to several of the gentlemen who have signed this protest, who were not here at the time those questions were before the convention. They should have been here and should have voted.

Those who were here and who did vote, have received all they could ask of this convention, in my judgment, all that it was expected at that time any member of the convention wanted. This was supposed to be one of those subjects that it was not expected or intended should be a subject of debate. It occurred to the majority of this body, that these subjects were of that character upon which it was necessary to give an immediate expression of the opinion of this convention; and subjects upon which it was not necessary at all to waste time in debate; that an expression of opinion was to be given pro or con, right at once.

Many of these gentlemen were not here at the time; they now come forward and want to put themselves upon the record. But how does that affect other members of the body