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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THURSDAY, DEC. 4.

The Speaker informed the House that the memorial had been referred to the committee on the subject of the erection of a monument to George Washington.

Mr. Hill presented a memorial from Samuel H. Smith & Thomas Carpenter, requesting that they be admitted to report the debate on the memorial.

As soon as the memorial was read, the Speaker rose and observed that he felt himself responsible to the House for the faithful discharge of the duties attached to his situation.

Mr. Hill said that the members of the House would feel a common interest in having the debate conducted with fidelity.

Mr. Hill observed that as the memorial contained no facts that required the investigation of a committee, and as the House possessed all the information that could guide their decision, he did not discern the propriety of the proposed reference.

Mr. Nicholas immediately withdrew his motion. Mr. Hill then proposed a resolution to refer the memorial to a select committee.

Mr. Hill was forty the gentleman from Virginia withdrew his motion to refer the memorial to a select committee, as he thought the subject required examination before a decision was made.

Mr. Nicholas replied that no debate had taken place which could test the accuracy of the stenographers.

He declared the objections of Mr. O in relation to the number of applicants, perfectly chimerical. Did the gentleman suppose the number would be so great as to make a demand on our facts? As well might he imagine this, as that they would swell to the ideal conceptions he had given them.

A question was then taken on the reference to a select committee, and carried, yeas 31, nays 31.

And a committee of five, viz. Messrs. Otis, Nicholas, Platt, Morris and Hill, was appointed.

FRIDAY, DEC. 5.

Mr. H. Lee moved that the House do pass a committee of the whole on the bill directing the erection of a Mausoleum to George Washington.

On which motion the House divided, yeas 35, nays 31. Mr. Morris took the chair.

The Chairman attending, the bill through, proceeded to read it by paragraphs. The first section is as follows:

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That a Mausoleum of American granite and marble, in a pyramidal form one hundred feet square at the base, and of a proportionate height, shall be erected in testimony of the love and gratitude of the citizens of the United States, to GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Mr. ALSTON, after some remarks which were unable to hear from the remoteness of our position, moved an amendment to the first section, which was, in substance, that a monument of marble be erected in the Capitol, at the City of Washington, commemorative of the great event of the military and political life of GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Mr. H. Lee spoke for several minutes without our being able to hear in connection a single sentence. The amount of his remarks appeared to be that during the last session the House, after long debates, had declared itself in favor of a Mausoleum, and that as no reasons had been assigned for a change of opinion, he hoped they would persevere in the deliberate result of their judgment.

Mr. OTIS was ready to acknowledge himself unacquainted with many of the circumstances embraced by the subject. He, therefore, withheld additional information to that which he had received. His present opinion was that a Mausoleum was preferable to a Monument. He acknowledged that in forming this opinion, he had felt great deference for the judgment of the committee which had recommended it.

Mr. NICHOLAS observed that the bill directed the erection of a Mausoleum of certain dimensions, to ascertain the expense of which an estimate had been made. But that estimate was not satisfactory. It was made without information. The sum to be expended was not fixed. It might vastly exceed any sum now contemplated.

His preference of a monument to a mausoleum arose not from any indisposition to celebrate the memory of our American hero. He could say as much in his praise as any man. Neither a committee of Congress, nor the four Secretaries, on whom the bill devolved the superintendance, felt more zeal for the character of this great man than he did.

Mr. GRAYSON hoped this amendment would not prevail. It was the object of the bill to raise a monument which should last for ages, and which should be a perpetual memorial of the gratitude of America. Such would not be the case, if the pro-

position made by the gentleman from North Carolina should be adopted. The monument proposed by him might be broken and destroyed by a lawless mob or by a set of school boys.

The bill proposed the erection of a monument that would stand unimpaired for ages. It is true, that it will not perpetuate the fame of Washington; his fame required nothing which we could do to give it perpetuity; but it will perpetuate the gratitude of the country. It will be a structure that will command respect; it will be pointed to by our children; they will enter it with reverence, as the spot in which the ashes of this great man is deposited.

It was undoubtedly a subject of sentiment; and subjects of such a kind must be guided by feeling. Various opinions, therefore, may naturally be expected. His opinion was that the national sentiment called for the erection of a structure corresponding in size to the character of the man to whom it was raised.

The general outlines of the bill might now be adopted; and if there existed a variance of opinion the supporting members of it might be modified.

Mr. H. Lee said, if it were the wish of gentlemen to avoid the adoption of measures commemorative of the talents of the great man we have lost, it would be as well to tell us to go to once. For his part he saw little difference between the adoption of the amendment and the rejection of every plan proposed that was adequate to the occasion.

General Lee, there is not a rich man in Europe who loses his mistress, that does not raise a trophy to her memory; and still it be said that we, who have subsidized the most irreparable loss in the death of our chief, shall be said that we refuse to pay him honors which are lavished so liberally upon such inferior objects? If you do not mean to come forward on this occasion, lay so—Then we shall understand the reason of opposition to the ground taken by this House last session.

But should this honorable spirit, kindled by an enthusiasm in the virtues and talents of our departed benefactor, subside, and be chilled by the adoption of the proposed amendment, he would console himself with the hope, and would rather they would be given over than disgrace themselves and their country by so laborious an act.

It is true, Sir, that the celebrity and the glory of Washington hang not on our plaudits—History will transmit to posterity the laurels of his fame glimmering with un tarnished purity. It is not in our power either to increase or diminish it. But, Sir, we may limit his virtues and his great example. We are deeply interested in holding them forth as illustrious models to our souls. Is there, then, I ask you, any other mode for perpetuating the memory of such transcendent virtues, so long, so impressive, as that which we propose? The grandeur of the pile, we wish to raise, will impress a sublime awe on all who behold it. It will survive the present generation. It will receive the homage of our children's children; and they will learn that the truest way to gain honor amidst a free people, is to be useful, to be virtuous.

This will not be the act of an individual. It will be the act of a Government expressing the will of a Great Nation—seize then, I pray you, with rapture the occasion that is now presented, thankful to the Supreme disposer of events for giving you an opportunity of rearing some future Washington. This is a great object; brown them upon all the little efforts made to defeat it.

It is certainly true that if you erect a Mausoleum, you must expend some public money. But are you not the guardians of the public treasure? Does not the selection of the best objects to which to appropriate it, devolve on you? And can there be a greater, more patriotic purpose than this? Is it not your great duty to promote the public good; and can that be more completely promoted in any other way? The sum asked is seventy thousand dollars, who can then me in what manner the same good can be effected by so small a sum?

But, it is said, that the bill vests a discretion in the Secretaries, and they may exceed the estimate. But, Sir, are the Secretaries unworthy of confidence? Do not we know that we may safely rely upon them? Besides, if thought expedient, the expenditure may be limited. Thus sure, without prodigality on the one hand, or parsimony on the other, you may do honor to yourselves and your country.

Mr. MACON did not pretend to know much about that kind of things proposed by the bill; but he believed, from the little he did know, that such a thing had not been attempted for a thousand years. The expense, attending the proposed measure, had been treated lightly. For himself, he was not disposed to consider seventy thousand dollars a trifling sum. He thought it a great sum; and believed every man in the country thought as he did. In forming his idea of any particular sum, he was not carried away by the visionary notions of speculation; he looked at the labor it required to produce it; and he well knew how hard it earned was the money from which this enormous sum must proceed.

He further believed that no man could tell how much the Mausoleum would cost. The seventy thousand dollars was probably only a beginning; and when the object was once begun, experience tells us that we must finish it at all events; let it cost what it might. The base was fixed at a hundred feet. Why not decide its other proportions? Did not the silence of the bill on this point show the ignorance of gentlemen? All was doubt. What strengthened his opinion of the total want of information, was the exhibition last session of two estimates; one of which was predicated on a base of sixty feet, require sixty-seven thousand dollars; the other was predicated on a base of one hundred feet, making the structure nearly three times as large, and required only seventy thousand dollars. Could it be correct? Both estimates certainly could not be true. The probability was that neither could be depended upon.

For what purpose was this great mass to be raised? He saw no good purpose likely to be answered by it under the sun. Can itones show gratitude, let them do it by making a history of the life of Washington a school-book. Our children then will learn and imitate his virtues—This will be rendering the highest tribute to his fame, by making it the instrument of enlightening the mind and improving the heart.

While there are such rational modes of distinguishing the memory of Washington, can Congress so far forget the interest of the nation; can they so far forget their own duty, as to expend millions on a useless and pernicious ostentation? Since the invention of types, monuments are good for nothing. The records of history will remain long after their decay or destruction.

We are told that the best mode of perpetuating the memory of Washington is to erect a Mausoleum. I have heard, said Mr. Macon, of Arifides, I have heard of Hamden; but I have never heard of monuments raised to their memories. Yet their virtues shine as bright now, as they did while they lived.—I have heard of a place called Westminster Abbey, full of the monuments of kings; yet notwithstanding these memorials, I have heard very little of them after they left this world, and I question very much whether any man, let him have heard what he may, if he were to go there could tell one of them from the other.

But, it is said, that the monument, proposed by the amendment, may be thrown down and destroyed by mobs or school boys. God forbid that this should be the case. I do not believe, said Mr. Macon, this to be possible. If it were made of glass, brass, or iron, it would be safe; all would revere, all would respect it.

The House is told by one gentleman, who advocates the Mausoleum, that a rich man in Europe cannot lose his mistress without raising a monument to her memory. Was the gentleman serious when he made this remark? Would he place the memory of Washington on a footing with that of a rich man's mistress? Better, Sir, said Mr. Macon, far better would it be, more honorable to the Government, and more conformable to the wish of our deceased friend, to devote the seventy thousand dollars, designed for a Mausoleum, to the education of the poor. Then indeed, we might flower ourselves with having extended the sphere of his virtues, by making those understand and imitate them, who, uneducated, could not comprehend them.

It is thought that by raising a magnificent monument to Washington, he could give duration to his fame, or carry his name into a foreign country which it had not yet reached, he would give the measure his support. But such effects would be produced. It might indeed adorn this City; and that was the only plausible argument in favor of it.

Let us gentlemen act in this business, let them look to Egypt; there they will behold precedents in profusion; men made gods, and statues and monuments & mausolea covering the whole face of the country; but where will they find the virtues or the talents of the men they meant to commemorate; Now is the time to make a stand against this monument mania. Washington is admired and beloved by all. No one can be charged with a desire to diminish his fame by opposing a useless expenditure of money.—The precedent we now establish will be auspicious to our future measures. If we decline raising a Mausoleum to Washington, no man who succeeds him, can expect one raised to his memory. On the other hand, if we now raise one to Washington, every pretender to greatness will aim at the same distinction.

Mr. MACON concluded by declaring himself hostile to the bill, and friendly to the amendment, because it proposed a plan that was more rational, more economical and more conformable to the resolve of the old Congress, than that contained in the bill.

The Committee then rose without coming to any decision, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again.

MONDAY, DEC. 8.

A Report was made in violation of the memorial of S. H. Smith and T. Carpenter, desiring admission within the bar to take the debates.

The Speaker informed the House that it was the intention of Mr. CONDY, the present clerk to give in his resignation, which he understood would be done to-morrow, and stated the necessity of there-upon proceeding to an election of a new clerk.

The report of the Committee of claims on the petition of Oliver Pollock, which is unfavorable to the prayer of the petitioner, was agreed to by the House.

TUESDAY, DEC. 9.

The Speaker read a letter from Mr. Condy, the present clerk, informing the House through him that the state of his health did not permit his continuance in the office of clerk, which he resigned, with expressions of regret for the necessity that imposed this conduct upon him, and of thanks for the kindness and indulgence which he had received from the House.

The House then proceeded to the Election of a Clerk, Messrs. Champlain and Newell, who having counted the ballots, reported them as follows:

For John C. Oswald, 51 votes.
John Beckley 48
Jesse C. Oswald appeared and was sworn by the speaker.

The House then took up the report of the Committee to whom was referred the Memorial of Samuel H. Smith and Thomas Carpenter, desiring admission within the bar to report the debates and proceedings of the House.

The report is in substance—that it is not expedient that the House should take any order on the memorial presented.

It will be recollected by the reader, that the original motion made was by Mr. HILL, which was that Mr. Speaker would be requested to admit the stenographers within the bar.

Mr. CHAMBLISS moved the reference of the report to a committee of the whole.

Mr. GRAYSON opposed the reference. The House divided; for the reference 43; against it 46.