The North Carolina Whig.

A. C. WILLIAMSON, Editor. "Be true to God, to your Country, and to your Duty." T. J. HOLTON, Publisher.

VOLUME I. CHARLOTTE, N C., JUNE 23, 1852. NUMBER 22.

HOLTON & WILLIAMSON,
PROPRIETORS.

TERMS:

The North Carolina Whig will be afforded to subscribers at TWO DOLLARS in advance, or TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS if payment be delayed for three months, and THREE DOLLARS at the end of the year.

Advertisements inserted at One Dollar per square (16 lines or less, this sized type) for the first insertion, and 25 cents for each continuance. Court advertisements and Sheriff's Sales charged 25 per cent. higher; and a deduction of 33⅓ per cent. will be made from the regular prices, for advertisers by the year. Advertisements inserted monthly or quarterly $1 per square for each time. Semi-monthly 75 cents per square for each time.

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Poetry.

From Scott's Weekly Paper.

Angel Whispers.

BY W. C. LODGE.

Angel whispers! will they never
  Cease to tell of golden realms;
Isles of beauty, smiling ever
  In the mystic sea of dreams!
Lands of flowers and gems and spices,
  And an atmosphere of love.
Where the dark eyed girls entice us
  In their fairy fields to rove.

Angel whispers, softly bringing
  From beyond the star lit skies,
Echos of the sweet songs ringing
  Through the vales of Paradise:
Visions of bright fountains gushing,
  Nectar, washing golden sands,
And the red wine rivers rushing
  By the pearl and amber strands.

Loving spirits sent unto us,
  Clothed in sinless robes of light,
And with seraph tones to woo us
  To the regions of delight;
Voices of exquisite sweetness,
  I would clasp your viewless forms,
But your wings of airy fleetness
  Still elude my outstretched arms.

Angel whispers gently stealing
  Where the hush of death surrounds,
With their holy balm of healing
  For the bruised spirit's wounds;
Breathing a delightful story,
  Of bright immortality,
And a land of love and glory,
  Far beyond life's troubled sea.

From the Dollar Newspaper.

Changes.

BY CAROLINE.

Flowers are blushing—streamlets gushing
  From the side of yonder hill;
Nature's aspect, truly charming,
  Laughing like the limpid rill;
Bluebells snaking, glittering dew drops
  In the cups of daisies near;
Bloom and beauty reign supremely—
  'Tis the Spring time of the year.

Flowers are dying—breezes sighing,
  'Tis an omen of decay;
Leaves are falling—lowly breathing,
  All like we must "pass away;"
Chill winds blowing—verdure going,
  Forest leaves are browned and sere;
Nature's changing features showing—
  'Tis the Autumn of the year.

Joys abounding—hearts surrounding
  With the happy light of love;
Eyes are beaming—like stars gleaming,
  In the firmament above;
Holy happy inspirations
  Fill the soul with pleasure rife;
Youth and beauty round are wreathing—
  'Tis the sweet Spring time of life.

Heart of gladness—turned to sadness,
  Now from pleasure forced to part;
And to morrow adds more sorrow
  To the now despairing heart;
Sorrows crowding—cares enshrouding,
  All around with sadness rife;
Eyes cease beaming—dim with weeping—
  'Tis the Autumn time of life.

Ashleial, Pa., 1852.

Miscellaneous.

Doing a Traveller—A Hotel Scene.

BY H. KOSHOOT.

It was one of the extensive hostelries which are to be "tied up to" in most of the large towns in the interior of New York, that the following scene actually occurred, as can be proved by a cloud of witnesses who have heard the landlord tell the story.

The hotel referred to was, on the occasion of which we are speaking, rather full, and the nephew of the landlord lay sick in one of the rooms on the third floor. He was to receive medicine during the night from the hands of a person who had been procured to "watch," with him. The landlord had instructed the aforesaid watcher to administer a potion of some little physic to the patient at twelve o'clock; the dose to be repeated at certain hours of the night.

"He is rather techy," said the landlord, "and you had better keep out of his room until you go up to give him the medicine."

"Oh, for that matter," replied the watcher, who was a novice in the vocation, "I prefer to sit here;" and he eyed the sofa which was in the apartment in a suspicious manner.

"Well," said the landlord, "you won't forget the number of his room?"

"No, sir."

"And tell him he must take his medicine without making such a confounded fuss as he made with the last dose. Tell him that I say he must take it—its good for him."

"Yes, sir."

"Good night."

"Good night."

Boniface retired, and the watcher deposited himself on the sofa, from which he was roused by his own snoring at a quarter before one. In dismay and confusion he seized the potion and hurried up stairs.

The sick man was lodged in No. 52, but the nurse in his haste mistook No. 53 for it, and entering the latter, he saw a person lying in the bed, face upward, with his mouth wide open, respiring with that peculiar gurgle in the throat which indicates strong lungs and a plethoric habit.

"Ah!" mentally exclaimed the astute watcher, "HE makes a fuss about taking his medicine, does he? I'm blowed, though, if he don't take one dose quietly—before he wakes up in fact."

The idea of giving a potion of bitter physic to a somnolent patient was sufficiently ridiculous; but when we consider that the watcher had entered the wrong room, and was about to administer it to the wrong man, the affair becomes still more ludicrous.

Our friend, the watcher, acted promptly, and having filled the bowl of a large spoon with the nauseating mixture, he forced it down the throat of a sleeping traveller, who happened to be a healthy Hibernian that had never tasted physic before in his life. The Irishman struggled and bit the spoon severely, but the watcher plunged it still deeper in his throat, saying, as he did so,

"Oh, but you MUST take it—the landlord says you must!"

The nasty dose went down, but when Patrick recovered his breath and began to pour forth his objurgations in his own peculiar rhetoric, the watcher discovered that he had committed an egregious blunder, and, seizing his light, fled from the room.

The astonished and enraged traveller sprang from his bed, and was soon heard rushing about in search of the landlord, swearing vengeance against him and all connected with his house. On he came, tearing through the passages, banging the doors, and roaring like a grizzly—bull.

"Ooo oo oh! It's kilt I am, be dad, any how. Augh! I'm chawked with pison! Divil a bit iv a FARRUM in the wisthern counthry will I buy now—for I am a dead man! The pison is ating me up just. Och! it's enough to make a dog throw his father in the fire! Holy Saint Patrick! Landlord! landlord! land-lo-o-o-ord!"

Pat had, by this time, DESCENDED to the floor on which the landlord's apartment was situated, and the worthy host, hearing this hullabaloo, opened his door and asked what was the matter?

"Ah! is it there ye are? Come out for a bating—or let me come TILL ye! A d—d poorty house yere kapen, to send yere man into an honest traveller's room to pison the innocent divil in his slape! Ugh! the bitter, nasty pison! come out here, an' I'll lather ye like blazes!"

"What's the matter, my good friend?" inquired Boniface.

"Ow! the matter is it?—when I was waked from my swate slape and a big dirty blaggard stood forninst me, ramming a big LADLE down my trote full of pison—an' says he, ye must take it, the landlord says so:—And now, what's the matter, sez you! An' that's one of yere tricks on travellers! Come out here and I'll ba-ate ye. Be the blood of the holy marthers, I'll brake every bone in yer body! I'll tache ye to pison a dacint thraveller, that's goin' to buy land in the wisthern counthry!"

The Irishman here became entangled in the meshes of a wooden settee which stood in his way, and, at the same time, the landlord's wife seized her wrathy lord—although a "host" in himself, she was not willing to risk him in a rough and tumble fight in the dark—and having plucked him back into the sleeping apartment, she locked the door and bolted it securely.

The prospective purchaser of "wisthern lands," having extricated his legs and arms from those of the settee, still thirsted for the landlord's blood.

"Bring me TILL the murtherin ould villyan; let me come at him!"

At this juncture, however, Mike, the hostler, made his appearance with a lantern, which he held up to the physic smeared face of the enraged traveller, with a polite request that he would "hould" his tongue. But Mike was at last compelled to give his fellow-countryman a good beating, which had the effect to restore him to good humor, and when he found that he was not pisoned after all, he retired once more to his bed to dream of the "FARRUM" which he was going to buy in the "wisthern counthry."—*Boston Times.*

The Frenchman who got drunk on board of the Steamboat.

The following ludicrous incident took place a week or two since on board the steamer Worcester, while on her passage from Norwich to New York.

There was a French gentleman and his lady on board, the former of whom was a jovial, imbibical sort of customer, who seemed more fond of the bar forward than the musquito bar of his state room, beneath which at an early hour his buxom dame bestowed herself away.

The clerk of the boat and a party of his friends were all in a yarn spinning knot near the bar, and the Frenchman stood up among them. Frequently did he call upon Mr. Pettit, the bar keeper, for 'anozzer glass of zat shin cocktail,' and about midnight he became emphatically tight. He was advised to go to bed. After asking 'ano zer glass of zat shin cocktail superbe!' he took the advice and staggard aft to the saloon, where he had secured a state room for himself and lady.

He had been gone about half an hour, when a tremendous row and uproar was heard in the saloon, amongst which could be heard the cry of

"Murder! robbery! Captain!"

All hands rushed up, and there a scene presented itself. Our French friend stood 'a la commiss' and nothing else, and, by the way, a good portion of that was in the hands of Joanna the chambermaid; who stood like an enraged Pythoness, her black eyes flashing—the whites thereof, red as a mad comet—shouting, while with one hand she held the luckless Frenchman by the hair.

"C-p'n—oh Massa Cap'n! Rape! Robbery! Murder!" While her struggling victim shouted equally as loud;

"Let go me, you black tief! Stop pull hair! let me go, by tam!"

The state room door (No. 2,) was open, and the clothes of the middle berth being half dragged out of the room, while the other berths were undisturbed, gave some idea of the trouble, for Joanna, like the Frenchman, had on but one garment.

At this moment aft came Captain Williams, who, from the pilot house forward, had heard the turmoil, and as his tall, noble form appeared, both the Frenchman and Joanna opened upon him.

"Oh, Massa Cap'n, purtec me! Dis vere orio monster hab come here in de night," and here she begun to sob—"he git in my berth and he hug me and, and," the girl's sobs now rendered her quite unintelligible.

"Oh, by tam—let a me go! by tam it is von grand meestake, Monsieur le Captaine! I have found ze wrong state room!"

"What for you hug and kiss me so?" shouted Joanna.

"You lie! you one tam black thief!" yelled the Frenchman. "I no kiss you, you nigger!"

Joanna couldn't stand this no way. One grab at the poor fellow, and one hand brought away a handful of hair, while the other took the remainder of his shirt.

"I'll larn you to call a 'spectable colored woman, niggar! Niggar, eh!" and a blow followed which sent him plumb up against the deserted berth in the wrong state room. Here he grabbed a blanket; and wrapping up in it, once more appeared before the captain who was now attempting to appease Joanna.

"By tam, sare—Monsier Captaine—I will have ze satisfactione—yes sare—you tam niggare girl ave tear my shirt—black my eye, and me very much morteefy."

And now at this critical moment when it required the whole of us to keep the Frenchman and Joanna apart, out of state room No. 3, the very next one, popped a night capped head, the same belonging to Madame P.

She paused a moment, saw that her husband and Joanna had not their walking costumes on, and the 'green eyed monster' rushed before her. She sprang out, forgetting that her night robes were rather short about the ancles—and while she made a dash at her luckless husband cried:

"Zis is ze why you did not come to bed more soon! Eh! you villian, you canaille, nah, wiz one niggare you razzare go to bed zan wiz me!"

"Oh mon dieu! I ave been in ze wrong state room!" cried the poor fellow.

"Yes sare—you ver fond of ze wrong state room! Zis is not the first time I ave hear of your tricks. I shall get one devorse!—Out to mor morning! Sleep wiz one black niggare, pah!" and slamming her state room too, the indignant lady locked herself in and went on sobbing and crying.

Capt. W. succeeded now in getting Joanna once more to retire from public gaze and the poor Frenchman tried to gain admittance to his own room. But it was in vain.

"Go look for your niggare sare. Never more shall you come wiz me!"

"Oh tam zat wrong state room! Tam ze shin cocktail which made me read two for tree!" cried the poor fellow, who at last was stowed away in a vacant room.

We have not learned whether the divorce was ever gained, or whether Mons. P. made up with his lady. They both sloped in different carriages when the boat got in. Joanna has been a shade paler ever since, and declares that her state room door shall never again remain unlocked, when she is within.

Foreign Article.

From the London Times.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

It is scarcely possible to overrate the disastrous, and we fear permanent, consequences of Lord John Russell's late proceedings to his own reputation, to the party with which he is connected, and to the future prospects of the Liberal cause throughout the country. By one and the same act he has contrived to repudiate with factious effrontery a measure not more objectionable than that which he had himself just declared necessary for the defence of the country; to alienate one portion of his supporters, to humiliate another, and to exasperate them all; to place the Ministry at the head of a triumphant majority on the first important division, though it had just taken office with an acknowledged minority in the House of Commons; to detach from his own following and to transfer to that of his opponents the very men whose support it was most essential for himself to that of his opponents the very man whose support it was most essential for himself to win or to regain; and to shake the faith of all parties alike in the character and judgment of such a leader. In a word, Lord John Russel, by his single speech in opposition to the second reading of the Militia Bill, has given the severest blow to his reputation and influence which they ever received, and has lost the game he still pertinaciously affected to play. When he threw down his cards at the commencement of the session, it was easy to perceive that with temper, foresight and resolution a skilful player would still have won the rubber. He chose, however, to go out of office, and to continue his campaign in opposition. From that moment he has accumulated every fault on his unhappy party.—Instead of attempting to reconstruct his power on a basis at once liberal and conservative, he courted the Radicals, and alarmed his truest friends and the country by threats of organic change. Instead of waiting until the course of events should again point to his direction, and invite his influence, he thrust himself forward in every petty dispute, jealous of every rival chief, and hostile to any scheme in which the first part might not be reserved for himself. On the first opportunity which presented itself for a directly adverse movement, instead of magnanimously assisting the Government to perform a public duty, and endeavoring if he could to improve the Militia Bill in committee, he resists the second reading, and only learns by the majority of one hundred and fifty votes against him that the party he still professed to lead will not perform actions so base and unpolitic at his bidding. The minority consisted of the whole body of Radical members, who voted on principle against the Militia Bill under any form, and who would have voted against Lord John's own bill, just as they voted against Mr. Walpole's; and to these must be added a portion of the rank and file of the late Ministry, obedient for the last time to Lord John's commands, though deeply irritated at the degradation inflicted on them by inconsistency and by defeat. On the other side, however, men of the first weight and importance in the Liberal cause stopped short in this career. Lord Palmerston and his personal adherents found themselves entirely detached from their former connexions and more nearly allied to the present Government. Lord Shelburne and Sir Charles Lemon, remarkable for their near connexion with the Marquis of Lansdowne, voted with the Government and against Lord John Russell, Mr. Seymour spoke and voted against his late Premier, Mr. Bonham Carter, the seconder of the Whig address last February, and many others separated themselves from their leader; and the numbers of the minority barely exceeded that of the Chesham place meeting. It is due to the most able and experienced members of the Whig party to express our conviction—we might say our knowledge—that not one of them approved the course Lord John Russell thought fit to take on this occasion. That course was not the result of deliberation between him and the persons with whom he was wont to act; and, if it was to be attributed to the clandestine influence of a domestic cabal, the authors of such advice are fitly punished by the loss of his influence and the injury to his reputation. It would be difficult to meet with a friend or adherent of the late Government gifted with ordinary penetration, who did not foresee that such a course was fraught with irreparable mischief to themselves; and, though the amount of the majority far surpassed all calculation, it proved beyond dispute that the party was less blind than the statesman they had the misfortune to trust.

For ourselves, adhering to the opinion we have long ago expressed, we confess that even the magnitude of this blunder does not take us by surprise. Yet the quality upon which Lord John seemed principally to rest his claims to be considered a great statesman was his profound knowledge of Parliamentary tactics and his consummate ability in the heat of Parliamentary battles. Whatever his former merits may have been in this respect, he seems now to have fought his Waterloo, and that not on the winning side. Men arrive at the same conclusions by slow degrees and by different paths and if it be true that the singular disasters the Liberal party has of late undergone (whilst its principals are still so much in the ascendant that even their adversaries do them homage) are mainly due to the presumption and inefficiency of its chief, we may safely leave it to the course of events to determine the true value of Lord John Russell's leadership. We thought it certainly neither a wise nor hopeful policy to continue to intrust the interests of the Liberal cause in this country to the identical chief who had brought them while in power to their present condition, and who had never been induced the slightest sacrifice of his own consequence or opinions to the public welfare. Nevertheless that experiment has been confidingly made, and it has led to the anticipated result. The party was first weakened while in office by an invincible repugnance to lop off and renew whatever was feeble or worn out. It was then thrown out of office by a freak, caused probably by a sense of inability to meet the consequences of former rash engagements. It has now been divided and we must say in part disgraced, by an act so inconsistent and unpatriotic that we can find scarce any parallel for it in our Parliamentary annals. Reasoning from these known facts, are we not justified in asserting that the author of such mistakes and failures is not the Minister who will ever restore union to a great party or confidence to the country at large? As long as that influence is suffered unduly to predominate over the principles of its late adherents, we are confident that it will fail to combine several of the most powerful and valuable elements of the party, and will repel men who cease to obey where they have ceased to trust. The dissolution of the late Ministry had this advantage, that it swept away the encumbrances under which that Cabinet was sinking, and gave the future chief of a Liberal Government a broader field and less contracted powers of negotiation. Such a negotiation, undertaken with no selfish ends, but in a liberal spirit, and for enlarged objects, might have succeeded in bringing together the strongest and most popular Administration England has beheld for years. But a vote like that of Monday night is all but fatal to such hopes. We seldom, indeed, remember a false move to which more lasting and deplorable consequences may be directly attributed. The only advantage we can extract from it is the hope that it may open the eyes of Lord John Russell's supporters to their real position, and that even his tenacity of power will not be suffered to perpetuate the distress and perplexity in which he has placed them.

NOT A BAD ONE.

The Washington Commonwealth has the following joke, at the expense of our recently appointed Associate Judge of Court of Quarter Sessions, which lacks only one ingredient—truth—to be first rate.

A capital joke is told of a well known Pittsburg auctioneer, recently appointed Associate Judge of one of the courts of Allegheny county. The story runneth something in this wise:—During the delivery of an unconscionably long, prosy speech to the jury, his Honor, who for several nights previous, had been broken of his rest, fell into a comfortable doze, which for some time he was permitted to enjoy, till the attorney, commenting upon the value of certain articles involved in the controversy, had occasion to use the term "sixty two and-a half," whereat his Honor becoming partially aroused, and fancying himself in his auction room, hammer in hand, sung out in that stentorian voice for which he was remarkable—"sixty two an' 'alf, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, all done gent'men, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, why, gent'men, will you let property be sacrificed in that way, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, an' 'alf—not a third of the value of it, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, an' 'alf, why gent'men, is it pos——." At this stage of the "SALE" his Honor was suddenly restored to entire consciousness, by the uncontrollable merriment of the audience, and has never since engaged in the business of auctioneering on the bench.

☞ Be just and fear not.

Political.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

A telegraphic dispatch in our last announced the nominations, for President and Vice President made by the Democratic Convention at Baltimore.

Little of general interest was done by the convention after the nominations, save the adoption of the "Platform," which we copy below. It was decided that the next National Convention shall be held in Cincinnati; and it was further decided that in that Convention each State shall be entitled to twice as many delegates as she has votes in the electoral college. After the adoption of the platform, and the above arrangements, and the voting of thanks to officers, &c., the Convention adjourned, sine die.

PLATFORM.

Resolved, That the American Democracy place their trust in the intelligence, the patriotism, and the discriminating justice of the American people.

Resolved, That we regard this as a distinctive feature of our political creed, which we are proud to maintain before the world, as the great moral element in a form of government, springing from and upheld by the popular will; and we contrast it with the creed and practice of federalism, under whatever name or form, which seeks to palsy the will of the constituent, and which conceives no imposture too monstrous for the popular credulity.

Resolved therefore, That entertaining these views, the Democratic party of this Union, through their delegates assembled in a general convention of the States, coming together in a spirit of concord of devotion to the doctrines and faith of a free representative government, and appealing to their fellow citizens for the rectitude of their intentions, renew and re assert before the American people, the declarations of principles avowed by them when on former occasions, in general convention, they presented their candidates for the popular suffrages:

1. That the federal government is one of limited powers, derived solely from the constitution, and the grants of power made therein, ought to be strictly construed by all the departments and agents of the government; and that it is inexpedient and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers.

2. That the constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements.

3. That the constitution does not confer authority upon the federal government, directly to assume the debts of the several States, contracted for local internal improvements, or other State purposes; nor would such assumption be just and expedient.

4. That justice and sound policy forbid the federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of any other, or to cherish the interests of one portion to the injury of another of our common country; that every citizen, and every section of the country has a right to demand and insist upon an equality of rights and privileges, and to complete an ample protection of persons and property from domestic violence or foreign aggression.

5. That it is the duty of every branch of the government to enforce and practice the most rigid economy in conducting our public affairs, and that no more revenue ought to be raised than is required to defray the necessary expenses of the government and for the gradual but certain extinction of the public debt.

6. That Congress has no power to charter a national bank; that we believe such an institution one of deadly hostility to the best interests of the country, dangerous to our republican institutions, and the liberties of the people, and calculated to place the business of the country within the control of a concentrated money power, and above the laws and the will of the people; and that the results of democratic legislation, in this and all other financial measures upon which issues have been made between the two political parties of the country, have demonstrated to practical and candid men of all parties, their soundness, safety and utility in all business pursuits.

7. That the separation of the moneys of the Government from banking institutions is indispensable for the safety of the funds of the government and the rights of the people.

8. That the liberal principles embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned in the constitution, which makes ours the land of liberty, and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the Democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the present privilege of becoming citizens and owners of soil among us, ought to be resisted with the same spirit which swept the alien and sedition laws from our statute books.

9. That Congress has no power under the constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States, and that such States are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining to their own affairs not prohibited by the constitution; that all efforts of the abolitionists or others made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences, and that all such efforts have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people, and endanger the stability and permanency of the Union, and ought not to be countenanced by any friend of our political institutions.

Resolved, That the foregoing proposition covers and was intended to embrace the whole subject of slavery agitation in Congress, and, therefore, the democratic party of the Union, standing upon this national platform, will abide by and adhere to a faithful execution of the acts known as the compromise measures, settled by the last Congress—the act for the reclaiming of fugitives from service or labor included, which act, being designed to carry out an express provision of the constitution, cannot, with fidelity thereto, be repealed or so changed, as to destroy or impair its efficiency.

Resolved, That the Democratic party will resist all attempts at renewing in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made.

Resolved, That the proceeds of the public lands ought to be sacredly applied to the national objects specified in the constitution; and that we are opposed to any law for the distribution of such proceeds among the States, as alike inexpedient in policy, and repugnant to the constitution.

Resolved, That we are decidedly opposed to taking from the President the qualified veto power, by which he is enabled, under restrictions and responsibilities amply sufficient to guard the public interest, to suspend the passage of a bill whose merits cannot secure the approval of two thirds of the Senate and House of representatives until the judgment of the people can be obtained thereon, and which has saved the American people from the corrupt and tyrannical domination of the bank of the United States and from a corrupting system of general internal improvements.

Resolved, That the Democratic party will faithfully abide by and uphold the principles laid down in the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions of 1798, and in the report of Mr. Madison to the Virginia Legislature in 1799; that it adopts those principles as constituting one of the main foundations of its political creed and is resolved to carry them out in their obvious meaning and import.

Resolved, That the War with Mexico, upon all the principles of patriotism, and the laws of nations, was a just and necessary war on our part, in which every American citizen should have shown himself on the side of his country, and neither morally or physically, by word or deed, have given aid and comfort to the enemy.

Resolved, That we rejoice at the restoration of friendly relations with our sister republic of Mexico, and earnestly desire for her all the blessings and prosperity which we enjoy under Republican institutions; and we congratulate the American people upon the results of that war, which have so manifestly justified the policy and conduct of the Democratic party, and insured to the United States "indemnity for the past and security for the future."

Resolved, That in view of the condition of popular institutions in the world, a high and sacred duty is responsible upon the Democratic party of this country, as the party of the people, to uphold and maintain the right of every State, and thereby the Union of the States, and to sustain and advance among us constitutional liberty, by continuing to resist all monopolies and exclusive legislation for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many, and by a vigilant and constant adherence to those principles and compromises of the constitution, which are broad enough and strong enough to embrace and uphold the Union, as it shall be, in the full expansion of the energies and capacities of this great and progressive people.

AN ADDRESS
To the PEOPLE of North Carolina,
ON THE SUBJECT OF
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

A Meeting composed principally of Western members of the Legislature, without distinction of party, was held in the Capitol, on the evening of the 1st January instant, to consider what measures were necessary to be adopted to secure to THE PEOPLE of North Carolina the right to amend their State Constitution, so as fully to answer the great ends for which it was originally established; and to maintain the equality of rights, which lies at the foundation of all free and popular governments.

It is a remarkable feature in the history of our State, that the free people of the State never have had a voice in the formation of that instrument, by which alone their lives, their fortunes, and their personal liberty is protected. The first Constitution was formed at Halifax, 18th December, 1776, immediately after we had thrown off the British yoke, when our ancestors were not fully alive to the interests of the people—but still retained a reverence for British usages, where property was always more respected, and had more political weight than the rights of the people. The delegates to that Convention, in consequence of that natural deference to their ancient customs, were elected only by freeholders and householders; and that Convention made the Constitution so formed, the organic law of the State. The people who formed neither of these classes, and who constituted a much larger mass of the population of the State, had no voice in the election of delegates; and the Constitution was not submitted to them for their approval or rejection.

At the time this Constitution was formed, all the counties in the State, except eight, lay east of Raleigh, which has been regarded as the dividing line between the Eastern and Western portions of the State. By its provisions, each county, without regard to its wealth or population, was entitled to send one Senator and two members to the House of Commons; and the towns of Wilmington, Newbern and Halifax to which were added, in 1788, Fayetteville, in the East, and Hillsboro' and Salisbury in the West,—each, one member in the House of Commons. Under this Constitution we lived, suffering grievances, the memory of which has not yet left us, constantly struggling to amend it, until 1835, when the Legislature, in the plenitude of its mercy, granted to the people of the State the privilege to say whether they should amend the Constitution in some few points. The delegates to that Convention were required to be sworn not to transcend the limits prescribed to them by Legislature, itself but the servant of the people.

The result of their labors was the Constitution under which we now live. By it, the number of members in the Senate is fixed at fifty; and in the House of Commons at one hundred and twenty. Each county is entitled to elect one member at least, and the remainder are elected by the counties in proportion to their federal population—that is, to all whites are added three out of five slaves, and the sum total constitutes the federal population. In the Senate; the counties elect Senators in proportion to the taxes paid into the public treasury, without regard to the sources whence those taxes originated—whether from the permanent wealth of the country, or from those taxes imposed to restrain the vices of the community.

The clause prohibiting any one from voting for Senator unless he was the owner in fee of fifty acres of land, contained in the Constitution of 1776, was still retained. To this clause in our Constitution, public attention has been directed for the last two years; and its anti-republican and aristocratic character severely denounced as a remnant of the feudal times, when the people were mere serfs or servants of the landlords.

In consequence of this denunciation of one particular feature of our Constitution, public attention has been directed to its provisions. Our people, in 1835, when called upon to decide upon the amendments submitted to them, only had to decide between the old and new; and they naturally preferred the latter, as it gave, in one branch, more political weight to the mass of the people of the State. It was the first instance when they were regarded at all by their own State Constitution. Being natural lovers of peace and order, and always obedient to the laws of the land they raised no clamors against them, until they were called upon to look into their Charter of Liberty, and see that it contained one feature wholly repugnant to republican equality. In this opinion we all concur. It is right and proper that the PEOPLE who are governed, should elect those who govern them; and directly at war with that sacred principle contained in the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are free and equal," to exclude from this natural privilege any freeman because of his not being a freeholder.

Equally opposed to this principle is the rule by which political power is measured by the basis of representation in the Senate.—To place it in its most favorable light, the Senate represents property, and not persons—money, not men—matter not mind. But its odiousness does not stop here. You are all familiar with the subjects of taxation, and these taxes are represented—not you, the people. All white males between the ages of 21 and 45 are subject to a poll tax; and all slaves, male and female, between the ages of 12 and 50 are subject to the like tax. So that three fifths of the negroes are represented in the House of Commons, and all the negroes, between the ages above enumerated, are represented in the Senate. If your wives and children have no political rights. Pedlars, billiard tables, bowling alleys, circus riders, playing cards, retailers of spirituous liquors, brokers, merchants, watches and carriages are all taxed. They have their Senators in the State Legislature. But your wives and your daughters; your old men who have served their country; your young men who are rising up to be its hope and its stay; and your poor men upon whom misfortune has laid its heavy hand; have no one there to plead their cause and protect their rights. Is this liberty?—Is this Freedom?—Is this Republican equality?

Your bill of Rights says "That all political power is vested in and derived from the PEOPLE ONLY." Is power in the State of North Carolina derived from "THE PEOPLE ONLY?" Let it not be said that taxation and representation go hand in hand. That principle has no application here. It is true that our ancestors fought in the Revolution upon the principle that they were not to be taxed by a body in which they were not represented. But who represented? certainly the people—those who paid the taxes—not the taxes themselves. Our ancestors never claimed that their property should be represented. They claimed, and justly too, that THEY should be represented. In the Senate PROPERTY is represented, and not THE PEOPLE; and the same principle which prompted our ancestors to that glorious contest, and sustained them in it, which terminated in the achievement of our Liberties, should prompt us to war against this most odious anti-republican remnant of feudal aristocracy by which the people are taxed by a body in which they are not represented.

Apply the principle, and see its injustice. Ten men in any one county, own as much property and pay as much public tax as five hundred men in another county. They all own the same species of property. Each of the five hundred is equally interested in the preservation of his little mite as either of the ten. Each one has perhaps made it by the labor of his hands, by the sweat of his brow. It is all he has, by means of which to maintain and provide for his family. It is the dependence of his children for education—for sustenance. And yet, by the present system, the ten are equal to the five hundred. Is this justice? Is this Liberty? Let war break out—let civil commotions arise,—whose lives are exposed for the protection of this property? Who are sent forth to fight the battles of your country? The five hundred go forth to fight the battles of your country; to vindicate its honor; to maintain its glory, leaving their wives and little ones to struggle on in poverty and indigence;—while the ten stay at home, enjoy their wealth; and boast of the honor and glory of their country, the bravery, the freedom, and equality of its citizens. Save us from such freedom—save us from such equality! It is no freedom—it is no equality. It is downright tyranny in its most odious form. The few grinding into the dust the many, under the iron heel of power—power under the pretence of being derived from "the people only."

Under the operation of this principle, there are some startling facts. According to the census of 1850, and the apportionment of Senators made under the provisions of the Constitution by the Legislature of 1842, seventeen western Senators represent a majority of the white inhabitants of North Carolina. At the apportionment which will be made in 1852, a still greater discrepancy will be found to exist. The improvements which have heretofore been made, and are still in progress in North Carolina, tend to a great increase of the value of property and of the subjects of taxation in Eastern Carolina. The Wilmington Railroad, to which the State has contributed so much, has added greatly to the value of property of every description near it and the amount of taxes is proportionably increased. The Raleigh and Gaston Road; the Cape Fear improvements; the appropriations to Neuse river; to Tar river; to the Weldon Railroad; all have the same tendency. And the immense amount of money, therefore, expended heretofore in North Carolina, will have the effect directly, under the present Constitution, for the next twenty years, to cause us in the West, where we have a MAJORITY of the free white people of the State, to have in the Senate only THIRTEEN MEMBERS; while the MINORITY of the white people will have THIRTY-SEVEN MEMBERS!

We do not desire to be understood as opposing in the least a proper system of Internal Improvements, nor as making any complaints against what has heretofore been done by our Legislature. Nor are we to be regarded as taking ground against the proper protection of property. We should be pained to see the day come in North Carolina when a system of Agrarianism would be pre-eminent; when our people would be less observant of law; less regardful of right. The true theory of Free Government is the proper protection of its citizens in the enjoyment of life, liberty and property. The right of property is a right attached to the person of a citizen, and he is to be protected in its enjoyment. Taxes are uniform; and he who possesses a little is as deeply interested in its enjoyment as one possessing a greater share; and equally—nay, more opposed to the imposition of high taxes.

Property has no rights independent of persons. You can give it no rights, nor privileges, nor immunities which affect it alone. It is no [illegible] real exercise of [illegible], nor enjoys rights, but in consequence of its possession, you may give its owner political power and privileges. If, then, you protect citizens in the enjoyment of property, is not the possessor of hundreds equally entitled to protection as the owner of thousands—it is only [illegible]. If you take from the poor his hundred—it is ALL [illegible]. [illegible] If [illegible] the [illegible] more grinding [illegible] be [illegible] ? It is a curious [illegible] the [illegible] of high taxes, and it is [illegible] should, it is [illegible] in [illegible] it diminishes the aggregate of [illegible], although the amount taken [illegible], and every poor man hopes and expects to improve his condition, and one day to become [illegible]. Hence it is that in western North Carolina we are more interested