

RALPHIGH STAR & N. CAROLINA GAZETTE.

THOS. J. LEMAY, Editor and Proprietor.

"North Carolina—powerful in intellectual, moral and physical resources—the land of our sires and the home of our affections."

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No. 6.

REMARKS OF MR. WASHINGTON

Upon the Bill authorizing the Building of a Lunatic Asylum in our State.

Mr. Washington said—

Mr. Speaker: I do not rise to make a speech upon the bill now before the Senate. I hope and believe that it is unnecessary, and if it were otherwise, I am not prepared at this time to do justice to the interesting subject to which it relates. But, Sir, regarding it as I do, the most important bill which has been, or will be before us during the present Session, I cannot suffer the deepest interest which I feel in its fate and my ardent desire that the Senate will on this the last legislative day of the present year, pass it unanimously. Disconnected as it is from political strife and party warfare and appealing as it does not only to our sympathies as men, but to our justice, our patriotism, and our pride, as Legislators, it is a measure in the support of which we may all unite heart and hand in the consummation of which, we should all delight to share.

For what, Sir, are we here assembled? To do the will and alleviate the wants of our constituents—to improve the physical, intellectual and moral condition of the people of the State. What has been done in the accomplishment of this great and glorious object? Much, I am proud to say, much has been done. We have provided for feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, for educating the orphan, and protecting the helpless and disconsolate widow. We have supplied eyes to the blind, tongues to the dumb and ears to such as could not hear. But yet the raving maniac, bereft of reason and forsaken of men, has been left by the Legislature of North Carolina, to pine away in misery, desolation and wretchedness. Sir, way is this? Are they not feet, that they can feel pain? Have they not immortal souls which must be saved or lost? Can we not minister to minds diseased? Is there no relief for the sufferings of the Lunatic short of the grave? Yes, thank God, there is "balm in Gilead" even for their troubles—there is a healing, even for the ill to which they are heir. But it is to be found, Sir, not in darkness and in chains—not in harsh measures, or cruel restraints, but in prompt and proper medical treatment and the exercise of those eternal principles of benevolence, of charity and of love.

To alleviate the untold sufferings of this numerous and unfortunate class of our Fellow Citizens, is the aim and object of the bill now before the Senate. It is a measure which in justice to them, to ourselves, and to our constituents we ought to pass unanimously and at once. It is a measure the consideration of which we dare not postpone. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there are at this moment within the borders of North Carolina one thousand Lunatics, epileptics, and idiots who are utterly incapable of taking care of themselves, and must be taken care of by others. Sir, how shall this be done? They must either be left to go at large, be confined in private dwellings, or the poor houses and jails of their respective counties or be transferred to Hospitals, provided expressly for their accommodation and relief. The safety of the individual as well as the security of the public requires that the raving maniac should not be suffered to go at large. There are Senators on this floor who know the fact that an insane man is now going at large in this city, who has committed a homicide for which he was considered entire irresponsible, and has therefore never been tried or arrested. Sir, this ought not to be. But what is the remedy? Will you confine the madman at his own home and among his friends? Alas, too many are without homes and without friends; while others know at their homes and among their friends, ought but pinching want and squalid poverty. But even among the wealthier classes of the community, where all the physical wants of life can be supplied, and even comforts and luxuries afforded, the confinement of insane persons in private dwellings, has been found not only painful to friends but highly injurious to the Lunatic. One of the greatest masters of the human passions has said, that "Earth knows no rage like love to hatred turned," and it is a remarkable fact that insane persons generally conceive the strongest dislike, and the most bitter hatred towards their nearest and dearest friends. Hence it has been found from actual experience that confinement of the insane at home and among familiar friends has always aggravated the disease; and that a change of scene, of air, and of association, was indispensably necessary to their recovery.

Will you confine them in the poor houses of your respective counties? Mr. Speaker, you and I know very well where these are generally conducted; but where conducted with all the decency and propriety possible, can they answer the desired object? Can they do more than alleviate the physical wants of the sufferer? Can they do ought for his mental maladies? Can they furnish even the requisite safety to the individual, or security to the public? No, Sir, No? Will you then, consider the poor miserable, but unoffending maniac to your county prison? Will you on this put misfortune on an equality with crime? Will you do, grade high minded, honorable men by sun, welcome and forced association with felons and murderers? Will you condemn the unfortunate, but innocent maniac to life-long confinement in chains and darkness, to hopeless despondency and gloom, in a place where he not only reigns? Where

groans are his music and sorrows his companions?

Mr. Speaker, I do not possess the power of the orator; if I did, I could, on this subject, scenes unfold which would barrow up the spirits of Senators and make their very souls rise in mutiny, at the monstrous oppression inflicted upon this poor and unfortunate class of our fellow men.

Not only, Sir, does every generous emotion of the soul, but every consideration of policy and of interest, proclaim the necessity and propriety of Hospital treatment for the Insane. There, the proper medical assistance and moral discipline can at all times be procured;—there, the finer and nobler feelings of the heart be cherished and developed.

But, Mr. Speaker where is the treatment to be found? In distant States? Sir, the poor cannot be carried there at all, and thence only at great risk, much in convenience, and heavy expense. It has been ascertained by actual calculation, based upon authentic statistical information, that the money now expended for the support and medical treatment of our Lunatics at the Hospitals of other States, is amply sufficient to support a Hospital within our own borders: the advantages and benefits of which, the poor might share.

—Besides, Sir, shall the proud and patriotic State of North Carolina—the glorious "Old North," be dependent upon her sister States for the support, maintenance and care of her Insane? Sir, the idea is revolting to my feeling as a man—it is mortifying and humiliating to my pride as a Statesman. Dignify it as you may, shrink from it if you will, but there is one course for us to pursue on this subject, consistent with our duty to our fellowmen, to ourselves, or to our God, and that is, to establish at once, a Lunatic Asylum at home. Why should we hesitate? This is no new question before the Legislature of North Carolina. As early as the year 1825, the General Assembly adopted the following Preamble and Resolutions, which I beg leave to read:

"Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God, in his wise Providence, to visit many of our race with mental maladies, producing obscurations of the light of reason, sometimes partial and temporary. And whereas, it has been ascertained by experience, that like those of the body, they are capable of cure—and often yield to skillful and judicious treatment; And whereas, the management of these affections of the mind requires the use of means which can only be successfully applied in institutions set apart for that purpose. And whereas, the sufferers under such calamities have a just claim upon the sympathy and assistance of all those who enjoy the inestimable blessings of sound understanding; And whereas, in other nations and in other States, Asylums have been established, and have been found to be of great benefit to the afflicted, and to be a blessing to the community, whose exertions have been signally blessed and prospered by the Almighty; And whereas, in this work of enlightened benevolence, dictated by humanity, approved by religion, and encouraged with success by Heaven, North Carolina hath yet made no effort. And whereas it is a charity which every people generous, humane, and intelligent should commence with fervor and pursue with zeal in which emulation is virtue, and success is glory: There, fore,

"Be it Resolved by the General Assembly of North Carolina, That it is expedient to establish and endow a Lunatic Asylum in this State.

"Resolved further, That Bartlett Yancy and John Stanly be appointed Commissioners to collect information, and prepare a plan to carry into effect the object of the foregoing Resolution; and that they report such plan as they deem advisable, with an estimate of the expenditure necessary to its erection, to the next General Assembly."

The Preamble and resolutions which I have just read, Mr. Speaker, are the production of one of the most gifted minds in this or any other country. They were drawn up by the Rev. Dr. Hawks—under circumstances of peculiar and touching paths, which delicacy and propriety forbid me to mention; and would, no doubt, have been carried out by the Legislature, but for the untimely fate of the distinguished gentleman appointed to execute the object of the Resolutions. From that time to the present, the Executive Department of the Government has continued to furnish the Legislature with the most important statistical information on this interesting subject, and to urge them to action, in terms at once eloquent, solemn, and impressive; and yet, Sir, up to the present Session, nothing has been done by the representatives of the people to remedy the evil complained of. And even now, at this day, we are told the time has not yet arrived for action on this subject; that the people are not prepared for this important work. Sir, when will a more convenient season ever arrive? Why should we delay our action on this great and glorious work? Are not new cases of insanity accumulating daily? Are not the cases already existing becoming more difficult of cure? Are not hundreds of our fellowmen sinking in the grave around us, deprived of their reason, wretched and miserable? Sir, we must not hesitate. It has been reserved for us to complete the good work which our forefathers began. It is an honor of which I am proud; it is a duty which I dare not neglect.

But Mr. Speaker, how shall this Hospital be built? It is ascertained that an establishment to accommodate two hundred and fifty persons, cannot be built for less than eighty six thousand dollars. How is this amount to be raised? "That is the rub."

Some gentlemen say, let us appropriate a small amount at the present session, as an entering wedge, and leave the balance to be provided by succeeding Legislatures. Sir, I am opposed to that course. I am unwilling thus to deal with the people. In the course of my experience, I have found that it is best always to deal honestly, fairly and candidly with our constituents. If we do what is right, the people will sustain us—and upon that principle, I am for providing (\$86,000) eighty six thousand dollars, the whole amount necessary for this work, now and by this bill.

Again, Sir, it is insisted that we should appropriate the amount necessary for the work out of the Treasury, and leave future Legislatures to provide for the payment of the money. To this Sir, I am opposed. We have already expended a sufficient amount of money without providing the means of raising it. "Out of debt out of danger," is an admirable motto, not only in private but in public affairs; and anxious as I am for the success of this work, I would not vote a dollar for it without at the same time providing ways and means of raising it. The bill now before the Senate is admirably framed for that purpose and the author of the 5th section (Mr. Dobbin) is justly entitled to the thanks, not only of the Legislature, but of the people of the State at large. Under its provisions, the amount necessary will be raised in four years, with the least possible inconvenience to the people. But, Sir, the idea of taxation in any shape is horrible to the minds of some gentlemen. I am glad it is so. Think God our people are comparatively free from taxation. With less taxable property than we possess, Maryland raises from her people more than half a million of dollars yearly by taxes; while we collect out of our people, for State purposes, only about \$89,000; less than the revenue of the City of Richmond alone.

Where, Sir, is the oppression of the people under this bill? It exists only in the imagination of Senators; it can not be shown by calculation, or supported by figures. Under its provisions, the poor man with five hundred dollars worth of land and no slaves, pays about eight and three quarters cents per year; and in about four years about thirty five cents; hardly the price of two good water melons! Now, Sir, suppose you were to start out with a subscription to raise money for this noble object? Do you believe you would find a man, however poor he might be, who would not willingly, and cheerfully give his fifty cents, or his quarter of a dollar. No, Sir, not one!

But, Sir, it was said by the Senator from Ashe (Mr. Bower) that he could not vote for the bill, because the money is to be raised by taxation on lands and negroes only, not even embracing town property. The Senator certainly spoke without reflection for slaves in towns are certainly taxed by this bill and lots being included under the term "land," will be compelled to contribute their full share to this noble and patriotic work. And pray, Sir, why should this tax not be put upon lands and negroes?

Who are the special objects of our care under this bill? They are pauper Lunatics, who are now supported by the poor tax of the respective counties in the State which is levied chiefly upon lands and negroes. When this hospital shall be completed and the Lunatics removed to it, the expense of supporting them in the Counties will cease; and for that reason, the several County Courts of the State, are authorized and empowered by this bill, to reduce the poor tax of the county, in precisely the same ratio in which the tax to the State is increased; so that in fact, the tax levied and raised under this Act, will not be an additional tax, but will simply be transferred and paid to the State, instead of the several counties.

But Mr. Speaker, suppose that we were to hear that on some distant island of the Sea, there were ten citizens of our beloved State confined in a dark and gloomy dungeon without the possibility or hope of relief or rescue, save by our interference. Think you we would stop to count the cost of a few dimes or dollars in extricating them from their position? No, Sir, we should be ready to sacrifice our lives, or fortunes, our all for their relief. Then, why should we draw back or hesitate now? There are ten times ten, at our very doors in a much worse condition.

Mr. Speaker, the work in which we are engaged is grand and glorious; worthy the emulation of us all. It shall receive my cordial and zealous support, regardless of all consequences. Yes, Sir, I would vote for this bill if I knew it was to be the last act of my public life.

Gentlemen need not fear however, to meet the constituents on this question. The people are generally more just more generous than their Representatives. I have the honor to represent on this floor an enlightened and liberal constituency, who know how to feel the woes of others. And, Sir, whatever other political aims or blunders I may have committed for my vote on this measure, I shall expect to receive at their hands their welcome plaudits. Well done good and

faithful servant." I say to my friends on this floor, be of good cheer. Before us we have the bright example of our sister States, to guide and direct our steps on this subject, around us we have the approving smile of woman—"Heaven's last, best gift to man."—to urge us on to this our duty. In the eloquent language of another "I conjure you then, by your duty as wise legislators by all the feelings of humanity and philanthropy, by the precepts of our Holy Religion to resolve never to leave the seats which you now occupy, or to behold your own beloved offspring—until you have done your duty towards these afflicted children of Providence, by passing this measure for the improvement and amelioration of their condition."

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

January 23, 1849.

Mr. Satterthwaite presented the following Protest:

The undersigned being of the minority do hereby solemnly protest against the vote of the majority of the House of Commons, on the 20th day of January 1846, which

1. Resolved, That the proceedings of the Convention, by which the Federal Constitution was framed clearly demonstrated that the institution of slavery was maturely considered and that the Union of the States was finally secured by incorporating into that instrument distinct and ample guarantees of the rights of the Slaveholder. But if any vote of a majority of the General Assembly could give either more "distinct or more ample" guarantees, it may at least be doubted whether we add to those guarantees by solemnly asserting what are the rights of slaveholders under the Constitution only for the sake of volunteering our advice is disregarded, it and that for no better reason than that it has been done before! thus commending the Constitution as the better theory! but its violation as the better practice for statesmen, and for the protection of Southern rights!

F. B. SATTERTHWAITE, EDWARD STANLY.

We adopt the foregoing as our protest.

JNO Y. HICKS, D. F. CALDWELL.

CONGRESSIONAL.

Washington, Jan. 24.

SENATE.

Mr. Calhoun was again in his seat to day having nearly recovered from his recent indisposition.

On motion of Mr. Douglas, the Senate then took up the bill for the admission of California as a State into the Union, and Mr. D. by permission, offered the substitute for the bill of which he had before given notice, and the character of which was at the time of such notice, stated in my report [providing that the law shall go into effect on the 4th of July, next, that a Convention shall at once assemble and from a constitution &c. &c.]

Mr. Turney offered an amendment to the first section, so as to include within the limits of the new State the whole of Upper California, and to provide for territorial governments in regard to that portion not included by the bill.

Mr. Foote also submitted his amendment to the bill—[before reported.]

After considerable debate, the bill and amendment were referred to a select committee of seven.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Mr. Washington Hunt from the committee on commerce, reported a bill to extend the revenue laws of the United States over the territory and waters of Upper California, and to create a collection district therein. Read twice; and after debate, committed to the committee of the whole on the state of the Union.

Washington, Jan. 25.

SENATE.

Mr. Badger introduced a resolution instructing the Committee on Printing to enquire into the expediency of discontinuing the present contract for publishing the proceedings and debates of the Senate. Adopted.

Bill to extend the pension of Salsley Darley of North Carolina, widow of a revolutionary soldier, and aged 103 years, was passed.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

A resolution reported from the committee on commerce, by Mr. Hunt, was adopted, requiring Secretary of the Treasury to ascertain and report the most suitable site, for marine hospitals at Buffalo, Oswego, Alpechicola, Galveston, Detroit, Wilmington, N. C., Newport R. I., Erie, Pa.

Mr. McKay introduced a bill to authorize the coining of gold dollars, at the U. S. mint.

Also, a bill to provide for the settlement of the accounts of officers engaged in the collection and disbursement of monies in Mexico.

Also, a bill to regulate the mileage of delegates and members of Congress. These bills were severally read the second time and appropriately referred. Adjourned.

Washington, Jan. 26, 1849.

SENATE.

Mr. Niles submitted a resolution, directing the Postmaster General to communicate to the Senate the particulars of the postal arrangement made with Bremen, for the reception and distribution of the mails from the U. States, the reduction of postage—if any—in Bremen and other neighboring States, on letters from this country, and the services performed by the post office at Bremen in relation to our mails, and his opinion of the effects of such arrangement on the intercourse and commercial interest of the U. States in connexion with the mail line to Bremen. Adopted.

Mr. Underwood presented the credentials of Mr. Metcalf, elected a Senator from Kentucky for the unexpired term of Mr. Crittenden resigned.

On motion of Mr. Hannegan, the Senate then went into executive session; and, after some time spent therein, adjourned to Monday.

extent give encouragement to "reckless politicians" of the South, as well as of the North, who seem determined to "rule or ruin." Whereas, this General Assembly must know that such an impression would be doing great injustice to our constituents.

Sixth. The undersigned protest against the vote of the majority, because all such Resolutions are useless, and unprofitable, more especially as the majority have themselves voted that the institution of slavery was "maturely considered" in the convention which framed the Federal Constitution, "and that the Union of the States was finally secured by incorporating into that instrument distinct and ample guarantees of the rights of the Slaveholder." But if any vote of a majority of the General Assembly could give either more "distinct or more ample" guarantees, it may at least be doubted whether we add to those guarantees by solemnly asserting what are the rights of slaveholders under the Constitution only for the sake of volunteering our advice is disregarded, it and that for no better reason than that it has been done before! thus commending the Constitution as the better theory! but its violation as the better practice for statesmen, and for the protection of Southern rights!

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Mr. J. R. Ingersoll, from the Judiciary Committee, to which had been referred the memorial and accompanying papers of Anson Little, complaining of the official conduct of Alfred Concklin, U. S. District Judge for the Northern District of New York, reported a resolution, authorizing the Committee to send for persons and papers.

On motion of Mr. Roekwell of Conn., the House went into Committee of the Whole on the Private Calendar, and considered and reported to the House, more than seventy private bills, which were read the third time and passed.

On motion, at 3 o'clock, the House adjourned.

Washington, Jan. 27.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

The resolution of the Judiciary committee, respecting the investigation of charges against Judge Concklin, of the Western District of New York, was then taken up. Mr. Conger addressed the House in explanation of the subject, as due to the occasion.

The resolution was then passed.

On motion of Mr. Thompson of Pennsylvania, the House went into committee, [Mr. Burt in the chair,] and took up the bill to establish a Board of Commissioners to settle private claims.

An amendment offered by Mr. Knapp was discussed by the mover, and Messrs. Murphy and Atkinson.

Other amendments were offered and discussed, when

The committee rose, and, without taking action on the bill, the House adjourned.

January 29.

SENATE.

Mr. Cameron presented a petition, numerously signed by citizens of Pennsylvania, praying such amendment of the Constitution and laws of the United States as will bring about the abolition of slavery throughout the Union, the motion to receive which was laid on the table.

Mr. Douglas, from the select committee to whom was referred the bill for the admission of California as a State into the Union, together with the several amendments in the same reported, a new bill providing for the admission of the States of California and New Mexico, which was read.

After the bill was read, making certain grants of land to Asa Whitney, to aid in the construction of a railroad by sea, land, and after some conversation, and the admission of amendments, was passed over informally.

The bill to make compensation for the transportation of troops and stores of the United States, by railroad across the isthmus of Panama, was also taken up, and after the presentation of amendments, was laid aside for the purpose of taking up the today's appropriation bill, the discussion of which occupied the Senate until eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

After transacting some other business, the House went into Committee of the Whole, and proceeded to the consideration of the West Point appropriation bill.

The Revolutionary and Navy Pension appropriation bills were then considered, after which the Committee rose, the three bills mentioned were severally passed, and the House adjourned.

Tuesday, January 30.

SENATE.

After the consideration of the usual morning business, the Senate resumed the consideration of the bill authorizing certain encouragement to Messrs. Aspinwall, & Co., of New York, in the construction of a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, which after debate by Senators Benton, Foote, Downs, Wescott, and Douglas, was laid over until to-morrow. The Senate then adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

The House, after the reception of reports &c., resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union; the Territorial bills had been made the special order for this day; but the Naval Appropriation bill, being a prior order, took precedence. This bill was taken up, and various speeches were made. Charles Brown, of Pennsylvania occupied his hour in a discussion of the subject of slavery, denouncing the North and all an anti-slavery movements.

Mr. Strong, of Pennsylvania, spoke on the merits of the bill itself.

Wednesday, January 31.

In the Senate today after the transaction of the usual morning business, the subject of the Panama railroad, being the special order of the day, was resumed, and discussed by Messrs. Webster and Clayton in favor, and by Jefferson Davis in the negative.

When on motion of Mr. Dickenson, the subject was postponed until to-morrow; and the Senate went into executive session, and soon after adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Reports were made from the several standing committees.

Mr. Edwards, from the Committee for the District of Columbia, to propose a bill to prohibit the instruction of slaves into the District for sale or hire. He moved that it be printed, and referred to the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.