

THE STAR, And North Carolina Gazette, PUBLISHED WEEKLY, BY LAWRENCE & LEMAY.

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COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE STAR.

The Members of the Convention...

We hope that a genuine Carolina heart, a heart which throbs with patriotism at her passed renown, but...

We would ask those who are in favor of unincorporating them, and who believe that a man's fidelity and ability in the discharge of office depend upon his religious creed, what motive for the exercise of these requisites can possibly influence other denominations which is not equally operative upon the Papist.

Love of country and honor of purpose are a sufficient security that the citizen will discharge his duties to the best of his ability.

It would be contrary to fact and common sense to say that the Catholic Church does not possess these qualifications as well as any other.

It is not possible that they possess these virtues, let no rights be withheld from them which are extended to others, then every reasonable ground of disaffection on their part will be swept away.

Every writer on government will sustain me in the declaration, that the most effectual mode to silence the complaints and secure the affections of a particular class or sect in the community, is to extend to them the same privileges enjoyed by the others; reason teaches every man that this is the right of the Catholic, since he discharges as many obligations to government as any other citizen, and the performance of all the requirements of the State supposes and includes a title to all its benefits.

What, shall he bear his proportion of the public burdens, pay his share of taxes, hold his blood as an oblation for his country when it shall please that country to draw it, and yet be disfranchised like a heathen dog? Forbid it! Justice, Christian charity forbid it!

Was it for this that the Catholic worthies of the Revolution were profuse of life and treasure? No, they thought that they were writing, fighting and speaking for a grateful nation that would secure to them perfect religious toleration.

In North Carolina only have they been deceived, disappointed. Yes, North Carolinians, hear it and hear it with the blush of shame, we are the only State of the twenty-four which bars any member of the great Christian family from our inestimable privileges.

Did Thomas Jefferson understand the rights of man? With many who are opposed to the repeal of this 32d Article, his political opinions have the weight of oracles.

When called upon by Virginia to draw up an act of toleration, he made the Catholics as free as others. With what propriety can we denounce established religions as the consummation of injustice, impiety and fatuity while Catholics are put to the ban by this 32d Article? What is the difference between us and the English people in this respect? They have one, and we have some half dozen established religions, for all those religions may be termed established in a limited sense of the word which are admitted to privileges from which others are barred.

We Protestants call this the liberal age. We say that we only are right in religion and that truth is mighty and will prevail. We disclaim all unwarranted claims of an establishment, and we would indeed be the only legitimate and gentlemanly weapons.

Yet we are for putting down our Catholic brethren by authority.

But we are told that they are ambitious, that they will not be satisfied with toleration, but are aiming at some distant day to make their established religion of the United States.

How are they to do this? Does not every man know that the temporal power of the Pope, by which only such an attempt could be any thing more than an insignificant explosion, has been annihilated? If an established religion be their object, they must first become a majority of the whole American people.

There can be no danger of this, when there are four Denominations, each of which singly out numbers them, and which, however they differ on doctrines among themselves, oppose with their united forces all the efforts of the Catholic church as if she were the Whore of Babylon, or the Great Beast of the Revelation.

We are ashamed to have employed so many words to prove that the Catholics are not aiming to have their religion established—but there are many who believe it! The Catholics have in many instances, with power in their hands, exhibited examples of liberality and toleration worthy of the imitation of their Protestant brethren.

While many of the Protestant settlements of New England were kindling the flames of an Auto de Fe against the Quakers and Papists, Lord Baltimore, the Catholic founder of Maryland, established the universal toleration of religion.

In the original foundation of Maryland (by a Catholic,) of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania (by Quakers,) the free toleration of religion was recognized; and these were the first communities in which this liberal and enlightened principle was legally established and acted upon.

When the Irish Parliament was united to that of England, so far from limiting upon the establishment of the Catholic religion, it actually consented that Episcopacy should be supported by government, although seven-eighths of the Irish were of the Catholic persuasion.

Again—in a late debate in the English Parliament, the ministerial party were told that the Irish did not demand equal privileges with the Protestants, but only the removal of some of their grievances.

O'Connell's speech, in Catholic France, no difference is made between Protestants and Catholics, while in Protestant England, several millions of Catholics are subjected to the most odious restrictions.

Having received thus far in our argument on this subject, we would in candour take up the reasons of those who are advocates for the retention of the 32d Art. if we had ever heard of one; but we solemnly affirm that, although we have watched the course of public opinion in reference to this matter, we have never heard a stronger reason for them than that this Article is inoperative, a "brutum fulmen."

Now what must we think of the merits of a constitutional provision and its champions, when their best reason against its repeal is a tolerably good one for annulling it? Is it not puerile to retain in a constitution, the provisions of which should be few, concise and simple, a mere dead letter? But why has it been a dead letter? Plainly because every Legislature has been ashamed to enforce it. We are not versed in constitutional lore, but we perceive no reason why it should not have deprived the State of the services of the learned and accomplished predecessor of the late Leonard Henderson, Esq. nor why it should not now drive to private life, an individual to whom North Carolina is much indebted for whatever of character she has abroad, and in whom are beautifully and harmoniously combined, the suavity of the gentleman, the charity of the Christian, the erudition of the jurist, and the eloquence of the orator.

The only reason we can assign why they have remained unmolested in the discharge of their offices is, that no one ever had the audacity to make an application of the 32d Article to their case. But, says the canine Demagogue, it is acceptable to the people, and "Vox populi vox dei."

He would come nearer the truth if he were to say "Vox populi vox mei."

Since we do not believe that a majority of the people are religious bigots, we are of opinion that they would approve the repeal of this Article if pains were taken to enlighten their minds in regard to it.

This has not been done, for in many places, the least informed of them have been made to believe that it is contemplated to make the Catholic religion that of the State, and not to emancipate it from odious and odious disqualifications.

In conclusion, honoured Fellow-Citizens, shall North Carolina, while other States and nations are relating the shackles imposed for difference in political and religious opinions, draw them closer, or at least confirm and perpetuate them? If we do, we shall not have the same apology for it that our fathers had. There is more light now in regard to the civil and religious rights than in their day.

About the time the Puritanism and Father, who longed for the dawn of the Millennium, Sun of truth and justice cast their eyes about for the signs of its rising, and afar off they descried its dim disk slowly shooting its weak rays through the misty atmosphere of error, revealing objects imperfectly and by halves, as the horizontal sun casts its long feeble beams only upon the side of objects turned towards it, leaving the other in darkness, and gradually it waxed stronger and stronger, cloud after cloud of error rolled itself together and passed away before it.

It is now fully culminated, it has reached the meridian and pours its rays straightly, directly and fall upon us. Shall we shut our eyes to all this light? Shall we alone be behind the spirit of the age? Shall religious bigotry, that blood-thirsty and insatiable Muloth, obtrude itself into your deliberations? With thousands of others we hail the assembling of the Convention as the harbinger of better times.

If the transcendent importance of your duties is fully realized, you have it in your power to do much to raise our dear old languishing mother, North Carolina, from the dust of humiliation. In the flight of nearly sixty years, an assembly commensurate in importance with that of which you are members, has not been held within this State; and is it not possible that once in that time

at least a public body can be assembled which shall bring together no object but the public good, which shall be willing to make a peace offering of party, of bigotry, on the altar of patriotism, and that, too, when they are legislating for all future time? What son, or grand-son of any member of the Convention of '76, does not hear his ancestor's name with an honest pride? It is in your power to transmit a similar legacy to your children by a spirit of liberality and compromise, which will consecrate the hall of your deliberations, while it will be polluted, desecrated by the infectious, soubdrying spirit of party.

PROTESTANT.

Caswell county.

Martin Lawrence & Lemay.

I perceive that there is a material difference between the Baltimore Convention and the Convention of North Carolina.

The Baltimore Convention, "fresh from the people," unanimously say to North Carolina, you must vote for Martin Van Buren for President.

Now, that is a tough pill for southern men to swallow, when they come to think how many votes he has given in Congress against them.

Well, they further say, you must go for Wm. Johnson for Vice President. He is the man we must have to preside over the Senate of the United States.

Now, why, I am told, is he a Hank-nover, a Fard-nover, and other such kind of a man, but a friend to the South is he not, however, that he sustains, in one particular, a near relation to a southerner, but that is a delicate point, and, having no disposition to give it a darker coloring, let it pass.

Now, this is an exorbitant and exorbitant both.

I know but little about who was at Baltimore as delegates, nor how they got their passports.

But I had the curiosity to enquire how it came that there were two delegates elected out of this district, when one would have answered every purpose and the best I could find out was that there was a meeting in Smithfield, after being published in the Standard, calling on the friends of the above named Martin Van Buren to meet on a certain day, and behold there appeared one from Wake, three or four from Johnston, (all in Smithfield) but one, and he met to get himself appointed to go to Baltimore; (I mean from Wayne; good old Wayne—good old Wayne—I wish it had been Wake,) and for sooth, they say (five or six) Gen. Romulus M. Saunders and Dr. J. O. Watson will please to go to Baltimore and give their pledge that Wake, Johnston and Wayne counties will go for Martin Van Buren for President, and W. M. Johnson for Vice President.

Of whom, where is thy blush? But not so with the North Carolina Convention, who are still freer from the people.

They say, Mr. Philo White, you cannot do our printing, we will give it to Mr. Giles, who is one of the people of his own district, and not a Baltimore delegate from the Salisbury district; and they say it, in language not to be misunderstood, that we want a White man for printer, and not a Van Buren man.

The members of our North Carolina Convention are men of the freest order of intellect; and I repeat again, "fresh and last from the people; and, I think, next August, the people will say, at the election, we are free and not to be transferred to any man by the Baltimore Caucus.

STATE CONVENTION.

Wednesday, June 10.

The Convention was opened with prayer by the Rev. Dr. M'Pheeters.

Mr. Lesner laid on the table a resolution proposing the appointment of a Committee to whom should be referred so much of the act providing for this Convention, as relates to the reduction of the number of the members of the Senate and House of Commons, for the purpose of reporting a plan for carrying the same into effect.

Mr. Jacobs, from the Committee appointed to report the number of votes given in favor of a Convention at the election in August, 1833, as well as at the late election, and also the number of qualified voters in the State, made a Report; which was ordered to be printed.

The Resolutions yesterday referred to a Committee of the whole coming up for consideration, the President called Governor Swain to the Chair.

Dr. J. S. Smith moved that the Committee take up the 11th resolution, which has relation to the meeting of the General Assembly, whether it shall be on the 1st or 2nd of August.

He thought it best to take up this Resolution, in preference to the 3d in relation to Borough members, which was first in order.

Several members objecting to this course, and desiring the Resolutions to be taken up regularly, the question was taken for first considering the 11th and negatived.

The third Resolution, which directs an enquiry, whether any and what amendments are proper to be made as to the exclusion in whole, or in part, of Borough Members from the House of Commons, was then taken up for consideration.

Dr. J. S. Smith moved to strike out the whole of the Resolution, after the word "Resolved," and insert "It is expedient to abolish Borough Representation entirely."

The question being called for on this amendment,

Mr. Gaston rose and said, that he trusted that this proposition would not be decided without discussion. While it is our duty, sir, said he, to the extent of our power to remove whatever blemishes we may discover in the Constitution, we should proceed with great caution, lest we introduce evils which we know not of. And it is prudent, when making a change in the political institutions of the country, to depart no farther from existing usages than necessity requires. There are always inconveniences resulting from such

changes—and often such as were not foreseen.

Our forefathers must have had some reasons which induced them to give to a few of the incorporated towns in the State a distinct right of representation.

Perhaps a little consideration may enable us to discover the most obvious of these reasons. The great purpose of all government is to promote the happiness and insure the safety of every portion of the citizens. Power must be conferred which is adequate to these purposes, but care should be taken to place it in the hands of those who are not likely to abuse it to the purposes of wrong and oppression.

Where there are portions of the community, who, in addition to the interest they feel in their country's good, have certain interests of their own—whose occupations and pursuits and property are of a kind distinct from those of their fellow-citizens generally—and these portions are relatively weak in comparison with the rest of the State—there is always danger lest their rights should be overlooked or invaded. It is essential that there should be secured to them some friend who will see that their grievances shall be made known and their wants communicated, where relief may be had, and that they shall not be made to bear more than their fair share of the public burdens.

Many of the subjects of taxation are to be principally found in incorporated towns. Taxation without representation always must lead to oppression. However disposed the Legislature might be to do exact justice in the apportionment of taxes, unless the interests of these towns were distinctly represented, they might be in the situation of a judge who heard but one side of a cause.

The representatives from a few towns, in protecting the interests of their immediate constituents, became thus to a certain extent guardians of the interests of all the towns in the State. They were so few that their votes could have but little influence on the decision—but they secured for these interests a fair hearing.

Another reason no doubt had its weight with the framers of our Constitution. Agriculture is the great interest of this State. It is decidedly an agricultural State—but it is not exclusively so. Every enlightened man knows that commerce is the best friend of agriculture, yet every man of experience knows that feuds will sometimes occur between the best friends. There will be occasional jealousies and rivalries; and these, unless restrained, will break out into acts of enmity. There is eminent need on these occasions that the few and the weak should find a protector in the Legislative Hall. The strong may protect themselves, but the weak must invoke the protection of authority. And even when there are no misunderstandings, and no conflicting interests, representatives are nevertheless wanted, who, from their pursuits and associations, are familiarly cognizant with those subjects to which the great body of the Legislature must necessarily be strangers. How can we expect commercial concerns to be made intelligible to a body of country gentlemen so as to procure a wholesome legislation upon them except through the representatives of towns? For correct information in every art recourse is had to those who profess it. You go to the builder for estimates before you erect your house, you consult the physician when your health is attacked, and ask advice of the lawyer when your property is contested. On questions which you have never had occasion to consider—totally foreign from your habits—you are called upon to legislate. Surely it is wise that there be some associated with you on whom you may rely for correct information.

Our forefathers had probably never derived from experience, under our colonial state, that the representatives of boroughs (as they are termed) were usually distinguished for intelligence, firmness and independence, and might have been unwilling to deprive the legislative councils of the aids of such men. It cannot be forgotten that the collision of minds strengthens the mental faculties. When men are brought into close connection, and interchange habitually their opinions on the various subjects which engage their attention as social beings, there will be this collision. He who represents constituents, to every one of whom he is intimately known, and with whom he every day associates, feels that his legislative acts are not subjected to that misrepresentation, in his motives to that misconception which might with greater success be attempted against one less favorably situated. If such attempts be made, they must be made openly, and can be instantly met. He is not under the necessity of travelling first to one and then to another corner of a county to explain and vindicate his conduct. Without claiming for him an extraordinary portion of virtue, he can venture with more confidence to follow out, and to sustain with manliness his own convictions of right. If the framers of our Constitution thus believed, our experience under the Constitution has proved that

this belief was well founded. It is not always that the towns which have the right of representation in our General Assembly have sent their ablest and best men; but all will admit that generally the town members have been among the most intelligent, liberal and independent members of that body.

Are not these, and reasons like these, sufficient to warn us against a hasty determination to abolish altogether borough representation? There may be some of the seven towns to whom the right has been given that are now too unwise to be permitted to retain it. If such be the case, let us re-form as to them; but under the idea of re-forming, let us beware of rash innovation.

It may be added Mr. G. that I am under a bias from the circumstance of my residing and having always resided in one of the towns to which decapitation is threatened. However this may be, it cannot detract from the force of the reasons which I have suggested, if, upon consideration, it appears to the committee that they indeed have force. From the citizens of that town, I have received no communications on the subject; but I can not doubt their opinions. With a full knowledge that one of the questions which was to be referred to this Convention was the propriety of disfranchising them of a right which must be dear to them from long enjoyment and experience of its utility, with a voice almost unanimous, they gave their suffrages for a Convention. They resolved to perill this right in an attempt to reconcile discordant sectional interests, and to remove those heart-burnings which mistrust and prejudice had spread through our land.

In this hope he had concurred with them. He earnestly trusted that the attempt might be successful, but it could not be unless a spirit of harmony was encouraged here. This spirit certainly required that in what was called the struggle for power a minute and calculating jealousy should be suppressed. A member more or a member less on one or other side of the State was in itself a matter of very little moment. As indeed a struggle for power he viewed the subject in contention as greatly exaggerated by the fears of the one and in the aspirations of the other section of the community. Of his friends from the East, who had heretofore possessed it, he would ask, what mighty benefits have we ever gained from it? And to his brethren of the West he would say—and he hoped that they would not regard an old man as presumptuous in venturing the prediction—should they succeed in gaining the glittering prize, they will assuredly find its intrinsic value far below the estimate which they now put upon it. In the formation of a government the citizens can meet upon no other ground than that of precise equality of power—but in the arrangements of a government it is impossible to pursue a scheme of mathematical equality. Care should be taken that the deliberate will of the great body of the community should predominate—but care must also be had that the voice of all and every portion of it should be heard.

Dr. J. S. Smith said, as he had submitted the amendment to the Convention under consideration, it would be expected that he should offer some reasons in its support. He had long considered the subject of Borough Representation; and had come to the conclusion that it ought to be abolished. He had read in one of these Boroughs for nearly forty years, and he was well acquainted with the evils arising from their annual elections. The practice of giving members to Borough towns was derived from England, where it was introduced for the encouragement of trade. Such establishments might have answers to the purpose of the British Monarchical Government, but they are not suited to our Republican System. Before the existence of the General Government, Town Representatives might have been useful for the encouragement of Commerce; but by the Constitution of the United States all matters of Commerce are embraced by the Federal Government, so that there is no longer any necessity for Borough Representation on this point. He knew of nothing but the inspection laws that was necessary to be attended to by our Legislature in behalf of those Borough Towns. It is true, that men of talents are frequently sent to the Legislature to represent these towns; but if the towns were deprived of the privilege of sending members, the same men would probably be elected from the counties in which the towns are situated. Besides, professional men and country merchants are frequently sent to the Legislature by the counties, and commercial men could, wherever they pleased, present any objection to the General Assembly by way of memorial, which would doubtless be attended to.

Has the moral condition of the Borough towns, asked Dr. S. been improved by the privilege which they possess of sending members to the Legislature? On the contrary, the annual elections, it is notorious, in most of the