

The Wilmington Sun.

\$7.00 a Year.

WILMINGTON, N. C., FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1879.

5 Cents a Copy

STEELE'S SPEECH.

A SLASHING EFFORT.

North Carolina Aably Defended—
Frye Laughed out of Court—
Price put in His Little Bed—
Humphrey Spiked—
"Gorged Statesman"—
A Colleague's Praise.

A FELLOW MEMBER'S CRITICISM, BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION.

WASHINGTON, April 19th, 1879.

To the Editor of the Sun:—The Legislative, Executive and Judicial Appropriation bill is still under discussion in the House and the interest in the debate increases.

Today, Col. Steele, of the 6th District had the floor and the State has reason to be proud of his effort. His speech was among the best made on the subject, and this is the verdict of all who heard it. To one familiar with the debates in the House, where none but the very best speakers command attention, it is sufficient praise to say that Col. Steele, in the very beginning of his speech, attracted the attention of the whole House and held it to the close. He has a full voice, a good delivery, a full command of language and today he was, in the outset, put upon his metal by interruptions from the Republican side. His retorts, especially to Frye, of Maine, and Humphrey, of Wisconsin, were admirable. His vindication of North Carolina against the charges that had been made against her, because of Ku Klux days, was full and complete. But I do not propose to review his speech. I only wish to say that all true North Carolinians will read it with pride, and I advise all to read it. Rarely has a speech met with such universal commendation from members of the House on the Democratic side, and the Republicans concede it to have been of unusual ability. It was frequently applauded, and the merriment produced by his ready replies and humorous, yet overwhelming retorts, warned our Republican friends to lend him alone. All enjoyed it, and I commend it to your readers.

[By a pleasant fortuity this letter, the spontaneous expression of a fellow member's sincere and hearty admiration, reached the Sun office at the same time at which the Congressional Record containing the speech it comments on arrived, the letter having been delayed. We print both with great pleasure. We regret that we are not able to give the speech in its entirety. Our report omits the colloquy with Frye, which has already appeared in these columns, and commences with his references to the speech of old man Price of Iowa.]

MR. CHILMANS: The gentleman from Maine need not have made an acknowledgment upon the floor of this House of his ignorance in certain particulars; for charity would suppose that was the cause, rather than something else, of his remarks. That is all I have got to say on that point.

Not long after this a member of this House, and I shall not specify the State for reasons which are satisfactory to myself, who made his appearance upon the floor for the first time about a month ago, being as I suppose, "gorged with statesmanship" (laughter) as another member was once characterized by one of his colleagues, proceeded doubtless to his own great gratification, to discard himself of something which was very much removed from statesmanship but closely allied to that which is far less elevated and noble. It is true that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"—I believe that it is scripture; if it is not, my reverend friend from Iowa will correct me.

Mr. Price made a remark which was not heard.

Mr. Steele.—I presume the gentleman's remark was pretty good, but I did not hear it. That member's heart is overflowing with the gall of human unkindness, and he shows a chivalry in words, in a time of peace, which I suspect far surpasses his heroic deeds when armed men were engaged in deadly strife. He vanquishing calls my attention to certain volumes in the Library of Congress, whose record, he tells us, is "like the history of Hell and the proceedings of the damned." I confess, Mr. Chairman, that I do not know anything of the similitude, having no knowledge nor a desire to have any of the "history and proceedings" to which the member so familiarly refers. (Laughter.) I shall not say, Mr. Chairman, that this member came from the State of Iowa. I take it for granted, however, that he has been a close student and an attentive observer of a region of which he professes such extraordinary knowledge, and I do not see how he acquired such an intimate acquaintance except by a personal visit which enabled him to become a medium for the disclosure of "the unnumbered horrors which hang around the second death." That is from a hymn, too. (Laughter.) Having had the advantage of a personal visit to the dominions over which reigns the monarch of all evil, I trust he will not soon again "to sulphurous and tormenting flames render up himself" but remain awhile on this earth for the purpose of warning sinners against the awful realities of the place of the damned. (Laughter.)

After giving Holden a touch, Mr. Steele remarked of the adoption of the Constitutional amendments in the manner in which they were passed: This was the greatest outrage upon the freedom of the ballot which was ever committed in this country, and they did it, and they who apologize for it, ought in very shame to "put their hands on their mouths, and their mouths in the dust." It does not become them to speak of the glories of a free ballot. All their litanies are the most transparent of mockeries. However, the deed was done; the amendments are a part of the Constitution—not by a free will of the people of the

South, who were lawfully entitled to determine it, but by their acquiescence and submission. That acquiescence and submission gave them all the vitality which they possess. Notwithstanding the "questionable shape" in which they were inserted, they are now, by the means which I have indicated, as much parts of it, as if adopted according to the methods prescribed. We, of the South, regard them as entitled to our respect and obedience, and yield to them a patriotic submission, because "interest republica, et sit tuis litum." We trust that these provisions, as well as all others of the constitution, will be carried out in their letter and spirit.

Mr. Humphrey—Will the gentleman allow me one question?

Mr. Steele—Yes, but I do not promise that I will answer it.

Mr. Humphrey—You can do as you please about that. Then I ask the gentleman this question: He says that the amendments to the constitution are entitled to their force and effect from the acquiescence and submission on the part of the Southern people.

Mr. Steele—Oh, no, I do not say that.

Mr. Humphrey—Excuse me, I so understood it.

Mr. Steele—My friend is too good a lawyer not to understand what I mean.

Mr. Humphrey—I wanted to ask the gentleman if that is what he said?

Mr. Steele—You know what I meant; and you know, and every lawyer who knows anything about constitutional law, knows that some things having their origin in wrong, fraud, and force, yet, by the submission of the people to them, have become the law of the land.

Mr. Humphrey—Yes; but only when they have their origin in the eternal fitness of things.

Mr. Steele—Oh, yes; John Bunyan, or somebody else. (Laughter.)

Mr. Humphrey—May I ask the gentleman another question?

Mr. Steele—Not now. Under the new order of things produced by these changes of the constitution, the patience of the people of the Southern States was tried to the very verge of forbearance. A swarm of hungry political vultures, with all the hateful characteristics of that—

Wee blaist womer
Detestit, shunned by saint and sinner,
whose appearance on "Misses fine Lunda," at the church, gave Burns the opportunity of writing some of his finest lines, come flocking to the South, to gorge their ravenous carcasses upon what little the ravages of the war had left. Professing an ardor for the newly made citizen, these creatures soon wormed their way into his confidence and thus possessed themselves of the lucrative offices of States in which they really never intended to remain, except so long as the hope of plunder offered a temptation. These are the beings who bear the cutting and suggestive name of "carpet baggers." Not understanding the assertion often made to the contrary by those who did not know the facts or who wilfully perverted them, the term was never applied by our people to any honest citizen of the North who removed to the South to make himself a part of the people, ready to bear their burdens and participate in their joys. These are always welcomed. Under the baleful influence of the adventurers whom I have named, every department of the States which they infested became corrupt. The legislative was largely composed of the ignorant and depraved, the executive was often filled by aliens with no feelings in common with the people, and the judicial disgraced by men who either knew nothing of the law which they were called upon to administer, or were so malignant and venal, that justice was frequently either "sold, denied or delayed."

In my own State there were some honorable exceptions, and these I do not intend to include in my statement. Of our judges I shall speak of but two—one a native, as much opposed to granting suffrage to the negro as any one, until he was appointed to the courts, and got into position for which everybody knew neither his learning nor his character fitted him; and the other a "carpet-bagger" of no ordinary ability, but believed by nine-tenths of our intelligent people to be totally destitute of principle, and moved only by the instigations of the devil and his own evil passions.

In the two districts presided over by these men, the courts failed to do justice to such a degree that in an evil hour some indiscreet men, in their very presence, took the administration of the law into their own hands; and, having done so, often committed grave violations of the very provisions which they assumed to enforce.

I am not the advocate of the "higher law" regarding it always as a dangerous experiment and often productive of evils of greater magnitude than those which it proposes to remedy. In one of these districts, composed of part of some of the counties which I represent—where the "masked ruffians" live, as they are sometimes called—the members of the bar, who were not only party politicians, but meeting and unanimously agreed upon a memorial to the General Assembly of the State, which was intended by them to be the foundation of articles of impeachment against the judge, in which it was distinct, by language that his incompetency was so glaring that his conduct tended to increase, and did increase, rather than diminish crime. His stupidity was so great that I have understood it was said, and I believe that it was said, that the prominent judge of his own party (I will not say he was from the bench of the Supreme Court) declared of him, that "like an owl, he was blind in proportion to the light shed upon him." (Great laughter.)

It was in these districts "where sin was robbed in ermine and in gold," and for these causes, and no others, which I have indicated, that the organization known as the Ku Klux had its origin, mostly flourished, and exercised in the main its unlawfully prerogatives. It is error to charge that it was composed exclusively of Democrats. In nearly every case where this band inflicted punishments which the courts failed to impose, acting upon the principle that "diseases deservingly grown by desperate appliances are relieved," the evidence is overwhelming that the parties upon whom its avenging hand was brought down, had been guilty of offenses against the criminal law, and some of these offenses were felonies of the highest grades. In a few instances, however, the persons upon whom it was used had no power to harass unoffending citizens and subject them to

outrages under the forms of legal process without the hope of legal redress. It would have been better to admit, had a suffering people been content to have borne longer the "weary life" to which they were subjected, and trusted in a final vindication, when the goddess of justice once more became seated upon her throne. But the infirmities of human nature are not confined to one State nor one section of the country, and they who accuse a people of wrong are not always guiltless themselves. They should be careful how they "throw the first stone."

When the offenses occur in the South they are ascribed to political feeling by those whose joy it is to "laugh at our calamities and mock when our fear cometh." When at the North they are either overlooked by partisans, whose only desire is to see a party unpopular, or attributed to the passions which are the inheritance of frail mortality. If a negro is maltreated or killed in our section, whatever may have been the provocation, even such as referred to by the gentleman from Kansas, (Mr. Haskell,) whether murder, arson, or rape, tears of sympathy are shed over his fate, "as fast as the Arabian trees their medicinal gum," by those whose only feeling for him is a selfish wish to use him as "a hewer of wood and drawer of water" for their political enjoyment.

In their excessive zeal for him, most generally hollow and pretensions, the more "trappings of woe," there is no tender chord of feeling to be touched for the people of the South, "greatly brought, perplexed in the extreme" by the treatment which they receive, which kindled and fed the fires of civilization that have sent their gladsome light to illumine the darkness of earth.

What I have said in regard to the causes which contributed largely to the infractions of the public peace in my own State, can I doubt but be truthfully said of similar occurrences in the other States of the South.

The favorite policy of the Republican party, to keep up its control in the country and at the same time insult and degrade the white people of the South—a policy, as I have said, based upon an acknowledged violation of the Constitution—resulted, as every thoughtful man must have known it would result, in placing in authority over the lives and liberties of our people quite a number of men entirely unfitted to hold the scales of justice, and who never would have held them but for the abnormal condition of affairs which party madness and fanaticism and malice created. The natural fruits of such a stupendous outrage upon "truth, justice, and the Constitution" came in due course of time, and the wonder is that the "abused patience" of the people was quite so long. The very men who had imposed these heavy burdens upon us themselves would not have exhibited the forbearance which was shown by the helpless victims of their political malice. The act was not one of genuine courage or lofty statesmanship or generous humanity; and now, when the purpose has failed, when the fruit which was expected to have the taste of nectar has "turned to ashes," the authors of the wrong, in their desperation, charge that the natural law which makes intelligence control ignorance is violated, and that we are intolerant of any differences on the part of those who were educated under the same influences and under what is pharisaically called a higher civilization than the one beneath whose shadows we were reared. We are told, and the country is told, (for what purpose is apparent to every intelligent man,) that the Southern Democratic party are "intolerant of any differences on the part of those who were educated under the same influences and under what is pharisaically called a higher civilization than the one beneath whose shadows we were reared. 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