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CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, DEC. 23.

A letter was received from the Secretary of the Treasury, communicating the information desired by the House of the balances of public money in his hands, &c. which was referred to the committee appointed on the resolution for the purchase of lands.

A letter was likewise received from the Secretary of the Treasury, enclosing estimates of the amount of money required to settle the claims of lands in the Indiana territory, which was referred to the committee on the public lands.

Mr. Coles presented a message from the President stating the expensive sums expended on the public works within the city of Washington.

Mr. Dickson presented a report, stating that the proprietors of sundry rivulets, tributary to Susquehanna and Washington counties, have applied to the Legislature, to incorporate a company to make a turnpike road from Antrim's causeway, to Antrim's mill, or thereabouts, and moved the committee, which was referred, to whom the subject was referred, to consider of the expediency of the same. Friday.

DEBATE

On the motion of Mr. Hamilt to strike out the clause in the bill, which prohibits the importation of slaves into any Territory where such importation may be forbidden by the laws of the U. S.

As we have already stated, this motion was supported by Messrs. Mitchell, Cook, Smith, Thompson, Bedinger, and Bard; and opposed by Messrs. Morgan, Early, Elmer, Alston and Macon.

We regret our inability to give this debate at length; but the great mass of intelligence recently received has obliged us to compress our sketches to giving a sketch, the publication even of which we have been obliged to delay to this time.

The advocates of the motion observed,

That when a former bill on this subject was before the House, a motion had been made to amend a section then under consideration, by striking out the footing of a pecuniary mulct on slaves. Before the question was taken on that amendment, another motion, prior in its nature, was made and carried, that the committee should rise. The House afterwards resumed the bill to a select committee, who reported it in the present form. They regretted then & still regretted that they did not first settle the principle by a vote which might have been an instruction to the select committee in re-draughting the bill. And they thought it their duty, in this stage of the business to take a sense of the committee of the whole on this point. The section under consideration refered to a ship or vessel laden in whole or in part, with persons, the importation or bringing of whom into the U. S. was prohibited. If the vessel was French, the crew of any French owner and master are severally subjected to a pecuniary penalty. But there, was a forfeiture of the vessel or cargo, which belong to a banker of some state, whose citizens and laws prohibit slavery. In that case both the vessel and its cargo are to be forfeited, and by another section of the bill, are to be sold under the authority and for the benefit of the U. S. In the very wave of the provision the cargo will be made to whole or in part, of persons whose importation is prohibited, that is, persons unlawfully and forcibly taken by the crew of a vessel, ship, or navigation, whom they may have employed for that purpose. For, by penal legislation, the last principle, it made no difference, whether the crew of an American slave ship, should have agreed on the coast of Africa, go ashore themselves, or by another party, have kept persons of their prisoners, or by the offer of a price, tempt some tribe or party of the natives to make the seizure for them. The crime is the same, and the injury the same in all these cases. In other cases they are, without their consent, and against their will, by force and arms, torn from their homes, from their families, their parents, their children, their husbands and wives, and besides friends and acquaintance, from all those tender relations, which they, as well as we, have been taught to feel. In spite of entreaties, of cries and tears, they are indescingly dragged to the shore, hurried into a vessel, crowded into the hold, loaded with chains, and transported from their native land. Those of them who do not commit suicide through terror or despair, who do not sink beneath the rigour with which they are treated, or fall a prey to diseases generated by their situation, are brought across the ocean to this country. The moment they arrive in any harbor within the jurisdiction of the U. S. they are met by the law which we now are passing. It finds them by the lawful God and man, entitled to their freedom, as clearly and as much as we are. They are not by any law, human or divine, the slaves of any master. They are not the lawful property of any owner. They are no more the slaves of those who hold them in duress, than the man who is robbed is the property of the highwayman who has seized the spoil. The restitution is a wrongful, violent, and forcible one. It is not voluntary, it is not to a white person. By the same law we condemn the slave dealers, and those who are receivers of the stolen goods. We punish the criminals, and the ship into the place, the property of the thief, which he had only begun. We cannot do more, we do not pretend we do more than restore the Africans to the Atlantic, at the hazard of their lives, and at the risk of character and life to ourselves, to be exposed to sale, or to be retained as slaves, receive the price of their slaves to put into the public treasury; and let the public treasury, and other officers, from generation to generation, live in perpetual poverty as a fund derived from our law. In short, we consign to ourselves, as a government, the profits of the slave trade, which we forbid to the U. S. It is very differently from a government, which should have a former duty, some part of a judgment in favor of the U. S. against the slave trade, which the United States in bound to make as soon as circumstances, in a foreign country, derived from that country may permit. Under the power of the U. S. only operates to transfer from a state or citizen of a state, to the U. S. and shows the belief of the state, or of those who are consent constitution by which the state is constituted. But when a person of the description of those who are to be forfeited, is in a part of the prohibited cargo, and acts accordingly, the person and property, which are to be seized, immediately, rigidly and safely from the U. S. to be sold for the use of the U. S. It was hoped that statute books would never be defiled with such a provision. But, if the Senate, and the House of Representatives, of Congress, has congratulated the U. S. on the operation of that law, when, agreeably to the constitution, we may prohibit the African slave trade, we have reason to hope that the Legislature of the U. S. will not, in the same constitution by which we are consent constitution by which we are constituted, be ashamed. 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