

10th Congress.]

No. 244.

[1st Session.]

SLAVE TRADE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, FEBRUARY 23, 1808.

Whereas it is declared by the first section of the bill of rights of the constitution of this commonwealth, that "all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and indefeasible rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own happiness." The principles contained in this declaration, founded upon sound reason and the immutable laws of justice, have, by the laws of this State, been in a good measure realized. By recurring to the ninth section of the first article of the constitution of the United States, it appears that Congress have the power to prohibit the importation of such persons as any of the States now existing may think proper; yet, by the section aforesaid, Congress have the power to permit the several States to import slaves, a power which it is conceived is incompatible with reason and justice, and ought not to be vested in any Government on earth, more especially in a Government professedly founded on the equal rights of man. Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, That the senators from this State in the Congress of the United States be instructed, and the members from this State in the House of Representatives, be earnestly requested to use their influence to obtain such an amendment to the constitution of the United States as thereafter to prevent the Congress of the United States and the Legislature of any State in the Union from authorizing the importation of slaves.

G. C. LANE, *Speaker of the Senate.*
Attest: GEORGE BRYAN, C. S.

IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Whereas it is declared by the first section of the bill of rights of the constitution of this commonwealth, that "all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and indefeasible rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own happiness." The principles contained in this declaration, founded upon sound reason and the immutable laws of justice, have, by the laws of this State, been in a good measure realized. By recurring to the ninth section of the first article of the constitution of the United States, it appears that Congress have the power to prohibit the importation of such persons as any of the States now existing may think proper; yet, by the section aforesaid, Congress have the power to permit the several States to import slaves, a power which it is conceived is incompatible with reason and justice, and ought not to be vested in any Government on earth, more especially in a Government professedly founded on the equal rights of man. Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, That the senators from this State in the Congress of the United States be instructed, and the members from this State in the House of Representatives, be earnestly requested to use their influence to obtain such an amendment to the constitution of the United States as thereafter to prevent the Congress of the United States and the Legislature of any State in the Union from authorizing the importation of slaves.

SIMON SNYDER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, February 13, 1808.

Resolved, That the Speaker of this House sign and transmit to the Senators and to the members of the House of Representatives from this State in the Congress of the United States each one copy of the resolution adopted by the Legislature, relative to an amendment of the constitution of the United States for the purpose of preventing the importation of slaves.

Extract from the journal.

JAMES THACKARA, *Clerk of the House of Representatives.*

IN SENATE, SATURDAY, February 13, 1808.

Resolved, That the resolution instructing the senators and requesting the representatives from this State in the Congress of the United States to endeavor to procure an amendment to the constitution of the United States to prevent the importation of slaves into the said States or the Territories thereof, be signed by the Speaker of the Senate, and that one copy thereof be by him transmitted to the senators from this State, and one copy to the representatives therefrom in the Congress of the United States.

Extract from the journal.

GEORGE BRYAN, C. S.