

SENATE....

....No. 84.

RESOLUTIONS

RELATING TO THE

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-
Seven.

Whereas, the House of Representatives of the United States, in the month of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, did adopt a resolution, whereby it was ordered that all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers, relating in any way, or to any extent whatever, to the subject of slavery, or the abolition of slavery, without being either printed or referred, should be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever should be had thereon, and whereas, such a disposition of petitions, then or thereafter to be received, was a virtual denial of the right itself, and whereas, by the resolution aforesaid, which was adopted as a standing rule of the aforesaid House of Representatives, the petitions of a large number of the people of this Commonwealth, praying for the removal of a great, social, moral and political evil, have been slighted and contemned: therefore,

Resolved, That the resolution above named is an assumption of power and authority, at variance with the spirit and intent of the constitution of the United States, and injurious to the cause of freedom and free institutions ; that it does violence to the inherent, absolute and inalienable rights of man ; and that it tends essentially to impair those fundamental principles of natural justice and natural law, which are antecedent to any written constitutions of government, independent of them all, and essential to the security of freedom in a State.

Resolved, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress, in maintaining and advocating the full right of petition, have entitled themselves to the cordial approbation of the people of this Commonwealth.

Resolved, That Congress, having exclusive legislation in the District of Columbia, possess the right to abolish slavery in the said District, and that its exercise should only be restrained by a regard to the public good.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 21, 1837.

Read and accepted.

Sent up for concurrence.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk*.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN SENATE, March 24, 1837.

The Special Committee of the Senate, to whom were referred the Report and Resolutions of the House of Representatives on the subjects of petitions to Congress, and of slavery, report the same, with the following amendment, to wit :

Strike out the last resolution, and insert instead thereof the following :

Resolved, That Congress having exclusive legislation in the District of Columbia, possesses the right to abolish slavery and the slave trade therein ; and that the early exercise of such right is demanded by the enlightened sentiment of the civilized world, by the principles of the Revolution, and by humanity.

By order of the Committee.

CHARLES ALLEN, *Chairman*.

Mr. Allen, of Worcester, moves to amend the foregoing Resolves by adding the following resolution :

Resolved, That slavery, being an admitted moral and political evil, whose continuance, wherever it exists, is vindicated mainly on the ground of necessity, it should be circumscribed within the limits of the States where it has been already established ; and that no new State should hereafter be admitted into the Union whose constitution of government shall sanction or permit the existence of domestic slavery.

Mr. Sage moves to amend the foregoing Resolves by adding as follows, to wit :

Resolved, That the doctrine that the great relation of domestic servitude, in some form or other, with greater or less departures from the theoretic equality of man, is inseparable from our nature, and that the form of this servitude can be fixed only by political institutions, is at once immoral and unworthy of republicans ; contrary to the hopes of humanity, at variance with the progress of society, and inconsistent with our State constitution,—still more inconsistent with the truths of natural religion, and the blessed spirit of Christianity.

Resolved, That we repudiate and disavow the idea that free and honest discussion of a great moral and political question, can, under our constitution and laws, be prosecuted as a misdemeanor.

Resolved, That it is the duty of the friends of free institutions and the Union, not merely to affirm the abstract principles of the rights of petition and free discussion, but, by their example and their energies, to be ready at all times to suppress violence and outrage, when directed against the free and unrestrained exercise of these rights by the citizens.