POSITION OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

MR. DAYTON'S SPEECH

At the Cooper Institute Last Evening.

The large hall of the Cooper Institute was filled again last night with a mass of enthusiastic Republicans, to attend the first of a series of meetings to be held by the Central Campaign Club. Though lacking the attractions of blazing fires and roaring cannon, the spirit and enthusiasm of the people was not wanting; and there were but few empty seats in the furthermost end of the hall.

SIMEON DRAPER, esq., called the meeting to order, and nominated Mr. GEORGE OPDYKE for Chairman. The mention of Mr. Opdyke's name called forth a burst of applause; and as he took his seat the cheers rose again, making the walls rechoo to the shouts.

Mr. NORTHUP put in nomination the following as Vice-Presidents and Secretaries:

Vice-Presidents—Hon. Hamilton Fish, Hon. William V. Brady, Charles King, LL. D., Peletiah Perit, Alexander W. Bradford, John J. Phelps, Daniel Ullmann, Benj. D. Silliman, Robert A. West, Wm. Curtis Noyes, Charles H. Russell, Wm. Cullen Bryant, D. Randolph Martin, Robert H. McCurdy, Geo. W. Blunt, Dr. Alexander H. Stevens, Parke Godwin, Francis Lieber, Robt. C. Goodhue, Hon. Abram Wakeman, Shepard Knapp, Edgr Ketchum, James Gore King, Timothy G. Churchill, John S. Belcher, Judge B. W. Bonner, John H. Swift, Henry C. Bowen, John C. Martin, Wm. H. Meiles, Wm. H. Kent, James J. Van Allen, Charles A. Dana, Wickham Hoffman, Edw. H. Faulkner, Samuel Holmes, John Sedgwick, John D. Scott, Richard W. Weston, Wm. Allen Butler, Samuel Waterbury, E. W. Griswold, the Hon. Moses H. Grinnell, the Hon. Henry J. Raymond, Robert T. Haws, Charles H. Marshall, Wm. M. Evarts, Charles A. Peabody, Wm. E. Dodge, Horace Greeley, Cyrus Curtiss, Henry A. Hurlbut, Wolcott Gibbs, Elliott C. Cowdin, Daniel Drew, George T. Strong, George W. Farlee, James H. Titus, Samuel S. Wyckoff, Isaac Dayton, Nathan Chandler, Edward Minturn, A. W. Spies, Wm. G. Lambert, Jackson S. Schultz, R. M. Blatchford, Robert Leroy, Marshall O. Roberts, John J. Townsend, Samuel Bates, Wm. F. Cary, Porter G. Sherman, Isaac H. Bailey, W. H. Fry, Theodore Glaubensklee, Frederick Kapp, John P. Crosby, Wm. A. Hall, Charles F. Dumbmann, Samuel B. Altheuse.

Secretaries—Dr. William H. Church, Jesse Fonda, Dr. Cornelius R. Agnew, Henry A. Oakley, Dudley Field, Nathan D. Sange, W. W. Northrup, Francis G. Young, Wm. W. Stephenson, Iverson W. Knapp, George Hunt, James Mariner, Henry Wedcroft, William S. Opdyke, Murray Hoffman, jr., Charles E. Strerg, Andrew H. Sands, Otis D. Swan, Lorenzo Draper, Geo. Bliss, jr., H. L. Pierson, jr., Alfred C. Hill, Dr. S. S. Childs, Edward Robinsen, jr., Seymour A. Bunce, Alexander Spalding, S. L. Macomber.

Mr. JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS, jr., read the following resolutions:

Resolved, That in the Presidential issues of the campaign of 1860, we recognize the great moral and political questions of the day, in the solution of which, sagacity, statesmanship, and patriotism are demanded.

Resolved, That the so-much condemned Slavery agitation is the natural result of the effort of Southern politicians, with the guilty connivance of Democratic leaders to continue that rule of the minority over the majority, and that predominance of the slave over all other interests, which, with the spread of intelligence, and the increase of population, has become impracticable in this free country.

Resolved, That the Republican party is the Great Protest of the North, as the Union party is of the South, against corruption in government, malfeasance in office, and the repeal of the time-honored Compromise, under which all sections of the country lived in harmony and happiness; and that the day is not distant when, with prejudices removed and in renewed amity, we shall together, with common impulse, labor shoulder to shoulder for Western Empire and Western Freedom.

Resolved, That while we shall indignantly frown upon every attempt, of whatever nature, to interfere with the sovereign right of each State so to deal with Slavery as seems best to itself within its limits, we are, nevertheless, determined to maintain the right of the Representatives of all the States in Congress assembled, to govern the Territories, the common domains of the nation, in the best interest of the whole.

Resolved, That, vindicating the conservatism of Republican principles, we are determined, by an assertion of Free State supremacy, to remove from the arena of National Politics the whole question of Slavery, leaving it to the consciences and sober judgments of our Southern brethren, hoping and believing everything from the promptings of their own humanity.

Mr. OPDYKE then spoke as follows, being often interrupted by cheers:

FELLOW CITIZENS: Accept my thanks for the generous warmth of your greeting, and for the high honor of presiding over such an assemblage as this.

We have met at the invitation of one of the Republican Clubs of this city to hear an exposition of the issues involved in the pending campaign from the lips of one of the most distinguished ornaments of the Republican party. The members of that club, like all other Republicans, have a profound conviction of the truth, the justice, and the expediency, of the principles and aims of their party. They believe them to be in perfect harmony with the Constitution and its guarantees, and that, if carried out, they will prove to be beneficent in all their tendencies and results. Thus believing, they earnestly desire that every citizen should know precisely what those principles are, and what policy the Republican party intends to pursue if the people shall charge it with the responsibilities of administering the government.

A sentiment very different from this controls the actions of those opposed to us. They seem disposed to shun the light, and some of them are willing to ignore principles altogether. They go in for fusion, and are likely to reap nothing but confusion, for the people have a stubborn way of adhering to their convictions, whatever their less scrupulous leaders may urge. For an illustration, look at the spirit that animated the discordant multitude which assembled in and around this hall a few evenings since. From this rostrum urgent appeals were made to them to abandon their conflicting principles and aims, and unite in one heterogenous mass for the sake of what their Chairman, in not very elegant but significant phrase, called the "main chance." But outside the hall, the squatter sovereigns, true to the name they bear, took early possession of the stand erected for the occasion, and boldly denounced the policy of fusion which the inside orators were pleading for, and counseled a faithful adherence to the personal fortunes of their chief.

These encouraging omens, as well as all other signs of the times, clearly indicate that a majority of the people, understanding their true interests, have wisely resolved to transfer the responsibilities of government to the hands of the Republican party; and I deem it most fortunate for the country that the high trust of administering the government is to be confided to one so honest, so able, so conservative, so prudent, and yet so firm, as our noble standard-bearer, Abraham Lincoln. He is precisely the man for the occasion, and I firmly believe that, if he shall be elected, his administration will prove to be so temperate, conciliatory, and wise, that before the end of four years it will win the support of even a majority of the people of the South. Rightly understood, there is nothing in the principles or policy of our party opposed to the true interests of slaveholders; and if, as I am sure will be the case in the event of Lincoln's being made President, our policy is enforced with firmness, tempered with a spirit of conciliation, the people of the South will soon learn that they have altogether mistaken the purposes of the Republican party, and the spirit which animates it. Its principles, aims, and purposes, whatever may be said to the contrary, are not sectional. It aims at nothing less than the best interests of the whole country, and all its parts. And my earnest desire is that, for the remainder of this campaign, our speakers and writers, in discussing its issues, will abstain from all bitterness of expression calculated to irritate our political opponents, whether North or South. As the probabilities of our being charged with the grave responsibility of Government increase, it is fitting we should drop the character of partisans and assume that of statesmen.

Mr. OPDYKE then introduced the Hon. Wm. L. Dayton, who was welcomed with great applause, which culminated in three rousing cheers. Mr. DAYTON, in a few words, warmly acknowledged this reception, and then proceeded to speak as follows:

He who speaks upon the issues of a campaign while that campaign is in progress, and those issues in the course of daily discussion, must of necessity travel over what is to many familiar ground. He may step aside into some byway, or for some new prospect, but just to that extent is he likely to be led away from his ultimate object. While, therefore, I desire to avoid mere political platitudes, I will not seek to gain credit to myself by attempting new views of old things; nor by mixing up axioms of political philosophy with the current issues of an exciting campaign. My purpose is to show

1. That the Republican party is the true Union Constitutional party of the country.

2. That there is nothing in the principles it has proclaimed, nor in the candidate it has selected, which should repell from it any part of the Opposition.

In approaching the discussion of such questions it is necessary to lay aside prejudices and forget names. In a popular campaign names, to thoughtless men, are things. It matters not who are *called* Democrats, or who Union men, or who Republicans; but what code of principles approximates nearest the Constitution, and best subserves the interests of the Union in all its parts. That party which advocates such principles is the true Union Constitutional party of the country.

From the organization of our Government under the present Constitution to the difficulties with South Carolina, which culminated in 1832, it had been the received doctrine of the country that the United States together constituted one people—one nation. The "Articles of Confederation," by the help of which we had passed through the Revolution, had done their work; their powers for good ceased as soon as the external pressure they were formed to resist had passed away. The people of the separate States then began to look to their own interests, irrespective of the interests of those around them. Their legislation partook of the same selfish character. A centrifugal force, growing out of local, but diversified and to some extent conflicting interests and parents, was driving them asunder, fast and far. It was under these circumstances that the wise men, the patriots of that day, abandoning the "Articles of Confederation," which had been a mere league or compact between the sovereignties, resolved to form a Central Government, which, under the provisions of a single Constitution, would fuse, for purposes therein expressed, the incongruous material into one mass. By it we became one people—one nation. On its face it is declared to be the act, not of the States, not of sovereign ties, but of the people. It says: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The powers necessary to effect the several purposes declared in the Constitution were vested in the government thus created. To deny that the Union thus created was a Union of the people for "the *general* welfare," is to deny what appears upon the face of the instrument. To aver that it was a mere league or compact between the States, is to deny that we are a *nation*—is to deny the truth on our national flag—"E pluribus unum." It says that we are not *one* nation; that our central government is a mere political abstraction, or at best a special partnership between States; a something on paper, to which each State has linked itself for the time being, and from which it may separate itself whenever the strain upon its own particular link shall, in its judgment, be too heavy. If this be so, the Constitution formed "for the *general* welfare" of the people, and to secure "a more perfect Union," is a failure, and the "Articles of Confederation" were as effective to form a nation as the Constitution itself. But this instrument, begotten of the united wisdom of our fathers, and growing out of the necessities of the times, shows, in all its parts, its end and object. In peace and in war; in the clause which gives Congress power to provide for the common comfort of all. And while it grants there powers, it subjects it to the obligations and duties of a nation. If we are in fact united in such wise as to form, for the purposes expressed in the Constitution, one people, I see not how it can be otherwise that, in this, as in every other representative government, "the greatest good of the greatest number"—or, in other words, the will and interests of the majority—shall rule. If otherwise, if you govern or frame rules and regulations for your Territories as a minority shall dictate, you legislate for a part, not for the whole—for the few, not for the many. You legislate, in a word, for sections, and not for the general welfare of the Union. It is this right to legislate for the general welfare, as the voice of a majority of the people, expressed through their representatives in Congress, shall dictate, which lies at the foundation of our Government; and the same right to legislate for the Territories, is the great governing principle upon which the Republican party rests for its support.

Until a comparatively recent period in the history of the country, the power of the Federal Government over the question of Slavery in the Territories had not been denied. Even those persons who claimed to be "strict constructionists" of the Constitution raised no question upon this subject. Indeed, although the doctrine which seemed to limit the powers of the Federal Government was ever acceptable to the people, yet it seems always to have been disregarded when it came in conflict with the common welfare. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution we had no territory except that which was held under cession from the several States, and subject to the terms of such cession. The Constitution, strictly, was formed for the States, not the Territories, and our powers of government over such Territories have their source, perhaps rather in the fact of ownership than in express power, delegated by the Constitution itself, though that, too, in one of its clauses, is supposed to grant such power. Mr. Jefferson, though himself doubting, if not absolutely disbelieving, the existence of the power to acquire territory, yet bought Louisiana in 1803, the very territories out of which our troubles come. So he inaugurated the embargo, a system than which none other could have borne so unequally upon the different sections of the country. It annihilated the industry of New-England, and destroyed the entire shipping interest of the country. Gen. Jackson, in his celebrated proclamation against the nullifiers of South Carolina, in 1832, told them, "This is a Government in which all the people are represented, which operates directly on the people individually, and not upon the States;" and he claimed for the Government the right to exercise stronger powers than had ever been exercised by any preceding Administration. The Government, on every change of administration, has uniformly acted upon the assumption that we were a nation, and that what was for the interest of a majority, within the scope of our constitutional power, was the sound, Union, conservative policy of the country. Thus, for the "general welfare," we bought territory, and paid for it from the common fund. For the "general welfare" we fought for territory, and paid for it by our common blood. In all these acquisitions we have known "no North, no South, no East, no West." So, too, after its acquisition, for sixty years, and through the organization of thirteen different Territories, this power of the Federal Government to control the question of Slavery in the Territories was not disputed. The act erecting Louisiana into two Territories, passed March 26, 1804, and signed by Mr. Jefferson, in its tenth section takes control of this very question. It excludes, in words, even from that slave Territory, all slaves imported since the 1st of May, 1798, or that may, hereafter at any time be imported; and the same section excludes from the Territory all slaves whatever, unless owned by an actual settler in the Territory, who is himself a citizen of the United States. It excluded in effect large portions of the slave property of the country from the Territory. Showing that, at that early day, while the framers of the Constitution, or most of them, were yet living and in public life, and while Mr. Jefferson was at the head of the Government, this modern notion that Congress had no power to control Slavery in the Territories did not exist. But as the country advanced and population increased; as the North gathered strength and the South felt its weakness, new views were at last presented. That prosperity which grew out of the steady industry of a hardy people, struggling in the spirit of competition with each other, and not laboring for a master, was attributed not to its obvious and natural cause, but to what was alleged to be the unequal and partial legislation of the Federal Government. Mr. Calhoun (of whom I desire to speak with all respect) then became the founder, not of a new school in political philosophy, not of a great system or party, but of a *sect*, a political sect, based upon one idea; and that was the interest and perpetuation in this country of the system of Negro Slavery. As his object was to account for a weakness inherent in the South from the nature of their institutions, by assigning a cause outside of themselves, he soon had with him willing listeners and ready followers. His fallacies grew as his followers increased; and soon South Carolina claimed for herself to be one of a system of confederate States, and not a fractional part of a nation. As a sovereign, she arrogated to herself the right to judge in the last resort of the obligations of Federal law, and, like any other sovereign, to nullify its provisions when she might deem them oppressive, or at variance with the Constitution. In the prosecution of this heresy, she further assumed for herself the right of *secession* from what she chose to consider not a union of the people under one Government, but a mere compact or league between sovereign States. This assumption, that each State may look to what it may fancy to be its own interests, though the interests and wishes of a great majority of the people of the country are otherwise, is yet the dangerous dogma of a class of Southern politicians. Mr. Calhoun was its father. It sacrifices the greater to the less—the whole to a part—and is the foundation, directly or indirectly, of all those pestilent theories and pretensions which, revamped by smaller men, have in many shapes and ways vexed the country during and since his time. South Carolina seems to have been the common center from which these doctrines emanated; and to this day, throughout the Southern country, wherever a bevy of extreme men (Disunionists for the sake of disunion) are to be found in one section, it will generally be traced back to some local politician who has emigrated from South Carolina; or who, if not, has at all events made Mr. Calhoun the idol of his political worship. To such men we can only say, as Gen. Jackson did in 1832, no law can be passed which will operate just equally in every section of the country, and under these circumstances the greater interests must control the less. Nullification was put down, but the same heretical opinions out of which it grew continue to exist.

Time rolled on, and in the course of events a contest with Mexico brought with it at its close a large accession of territory. Of this territory, the greater part, be it remembered, lies south of 36° 30', the Missouri Compromise line. Before, and upon its acquisition, the great Whig party, and a large portion of the Democratic party of the country, North and West, demanded that this territory should remain as it was, free territory; that sound policy and right feeling required that, in the noon of the nineteenth century, under the broad light of its civilization and Christianity, the greatest republic of the world should not be made an active instrument in the spread of Slavery over a wide area of territory before that time devoted to freedom. This sentiment was universal with the Whigs of the Free States. I think there was not one Whig State North or West whose Legislatures did not pass resolutions embodying this sentiment, and for which resolutions very many of the Democrats in those bodies voted. In my own State resolutions were passed by two successive Legislatures. They were concurred in by all the Whigs, and a portion, at least, of the Democracy. Indeed, the feeling of the Whig party, as expressed in such formal resolutions and in the primary assemblies of the people all over the country, north and west, was, as before said, universal. But in the midst of this state of things, the South at once presented the old question, the right of each State to an equal interest in the common territories. She alleged that the Federal Government was a sort of special partnership between sovereignties; that the territories were the common fund, not of the people of the country, but of these seperate States, and that each could withdraw itself from the political firm as its interests or choice might dictate. As a consequence, it was contended there could be no constitutional legislation which did not operate for the equal benefit of all the States, and if there were, the dissatisfied State or States could withdraw. It was needless to remind them that no law had been, or could be passed, which might not operate unequally, so that somebody, somewhere, may be injuriously affected. That over the territories Congress must have power under the Constitution, or it existed nowhere. The right of a State to have all the territories open to Slavery, and to secede from the Union for the want of it (the old Calhoun fallacy), was revived anew; but the Whig party, and no important portion of it, ever adopted the fallacy or anything which looked toward a recognition of it. Yet during the clamor and threats of secession which followed, some of our public men said that a provision in the Territorial laws for securing the same to freedom was useless—or in the language of Mr. Webster, "it was but reenacting the laws of God." But the Constitutional power was universally claimed by the old Whigs and a large portion of the Democracy North and West, and conceded even by some of the men of the South. This claim, as before remarked, extended to the exclusion of Slavery from all the Territories newly acquired, as well north as south of 36° 30'. The claim of power was never abandoned. The doctrine, as Whig doctrine and Democratic doctrine, by many of the Democracy was held good to the last. The only doubt was as to the policy of its exercise.

The Compromise bills of 1850 settled, as was supposed, for practical purposes, the condition of all our Territories; and the National Conventions of 1852 assenting to the Compromise Measures as a finality. It was hoped that this question of Slavery for the time being was at rest.

But the country had hardly drawn breath after the painful excitement of that controversy, before the same question was revived in a new shape. Mr. Douglas, who had introduced a bill for the organization of the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas, offered an amendment thereto which contained in the somewhat coarse but expressive language of Col. Benton, "a stump speech in its belly," the object of which was to repeal the Missouri Compromise. By this ill-timed and unfortunate act of legislation, the condition of all the Territories of the country, north as well as south of 36° 30', was unsettled, and we were thrown back to the starting point. But against this act large portions of the Democracy most earnestly protested, and the Whig party North and West was united to a man. They adhered to the principle of restriction north of 36° 30', and opposed vehemently the repeal of the old Compromise. I should here add a fact which, in this connection, should not be forgotten, and that is that Mr. John Bell, then a Southern Whig, voted for the abolition of all laws or usages in the Territory of California which would prevent the introduction of Slavery into that Territory, and although voting finally against the Kansas-Nebraska bill, he did not vote, as has been so often said against that important provision by which the Missouri Compromise was repealed. On the contrary, *he voted for the amendment, which declared that compromise inoperative and void.* A reference to the proceedings of the Senate of the 15th of February, 1854, will verify the truth of this statement. He is chargeable, I am sorry to say, with a share of the responsibility of that act. But if there were any question upon which the old Whigs of the Free States were united, (aided as they were, by many of the Democrats), it was that of freedom to the Territories, and the right of the majority of the representatives of the people in Congress assembled to decide that question. In other words, they repudiated the old fallacy of Mr. Calhoun and his followers, that a State could judge for itself of the constitutionality of Federal Law, or withdraw itself from the Union for any such cause, as was claimed.

The Kansas trouble followed as the inevitable consequence of the repeal of the old Compromise. The immediate and violent efforts of the South to force Slavery north of that line, produced corresponding efforts on the other side. The extraordinary conduct of Mr. Pierce and Mr. Buchanan, and their Administrations respectively, in their endeavors to aid the pro-Slavery cause; the indignant protest of the people of Kansas, and the Democratic Governors of that Territory, appointed by the Presidents themselves, are yet fresh in the recollection of all who hear me. They form a dark page in the political history of this country.

I shall not stop to review that struggle; but we look only to the result—the repudiation of the Pro-Slavery Constitution by a majority of more than ten thousand of the legal voters at a subsequent election, held under the authority of law, and the protection of the army of the United States. Can any fair man, or any law-abiding citizen, complain of the conduct of the Republican party in upholding the rights of the majority against the frauds and violence by which the rights of that majority were endeavored to be crushed out? can any man say that such conduct, however much we may differ about its details, was not in the main constitutional, conservative and just.

The platforms and principles of all branches of the Opposition in 1856 denounced the Democracy for its proceedings in Kansas.

The platform of that party which met at Baltimore on the 17th September of that year, (which assumed to call itself Whig), attributed the distorted condition of our national affairs and the fact that a portion of our country was ravaged by civil war, and large sections of our population embittered against each other, to the culpable neglect of duty by the then National Administration. They only deprecated in their resolutions all attempts to foment strife, and to encourage geographical divisions. The platform of the American party, which met at Philadelphia February 19th of that year, had a double aspect; one looking indirectly to the recognition of the rights of the inhabitants of the Territories to frame their own Constitution and laws, with a view to their admission as States; the other announcing their opposition to the "reckless and unwise policy" of the then existing Administration, as shown among other things, in "re-opening sectional agitation by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise."

Throughout the campaign that followed, the supporters of Mr. Fillmore, constituting the body of both these parties, proclaimed throughout the North and the West that he was as sound upon this question as the best Republican of the time. This was the staple of their public harangues and their party addresses. Without this, he could never have received from the Whigs of the Free States, or from the Democrats who sympathized with them, any considerable support. To have given it upon other terms would have made them false to their professions and false to their past history. This sketch of the proceedings and conduct of parties brings us up to the commencement of the present campaign; and I respectfully submit that the conduct of the Republican party has at no time been otherwise than constitutional, just, and wise; that it has grown naturally out of exigencies forced upon the country, and it stands upon principles known and recognized by the fathers of the Constitution, and by conservative statesmen from the organization of the government to the present time.

It now remains for us to inquire whether there is anything in the present position of the party which should repel from it the cordial support and cooperation of all branches of the Opposition.

It has been objected that the party, as now constituted, is fanatical, radical, and revolutionary; that it ignores that conservatism which is essential to the well being of the country. I deny the whole arraignment; and I ask, before it shall be permitted to affect the minds of thinking men, that it be made out by proof. And this proof should be drawn, not from garbled extracts, or the utterances of individuals, but from authentic and official sources. It is said,

1. That it is the declared policy of the Republican party that no other slave State shall ever be admitted into the Union.

Whatever may be the views of individuals in reference to this question, I cannot be mistaken when I say that such a purpose or policy has never been avowed by the party, or by any of its constituted agents. The resolutions for the admission of Texas actually provide for the admission of two more States out of that portion of her Territory south of 36° 30', "with or without Slavery, as the people of such State may desire." Among others, I may be pardoned for saying I opposed this provision at the time of its passage; but it became a law, in despite of all opposition; and should the time ever arrive (I trust it may be distant) when the country shall be called upon to constitute a State out of that Territory, I doubt not it will be admitted, if it have all other requisites, with or without Slavery, as the people of such Territory may desire. But there is a recent exposition of the principles of the Republican party as applied to this question, which should put this objection at rest. The Republicans in Congress on the 1st of April, 1858, by their vote on the bill for the admission of Kansas, submitted the whole question whether it should come in as a State, with or without Slavery, to the votes of her people. The original Lecompton bill contained, it will be remembered, this clause: "The right of the owner of a slave to such slave and its increase, is the same, and is inviolable as the right of the owner of any property whatever." It likewise forbade all emancipation, except on stated terms, and was in the strongest sense Pro-Slavery.

After a full and elaborate investigation of the frauds by which the Lecompton Constitution was adopted and returned to Congress, the Democratic members with a few worthy exceptions, voted to admit Kansas as a State, under that fraudulent Constitution. But an amendment was offered in the House to this bill. This amendment provided for the immediate admission of Kansas as a State, but upon this condition, "That the said Constitutional instrument shall be first submitted to a vote of the people of Kansas, and assented to by them or a majority of voters at an election to be held for that purpose." And as soon as such assent was given, the President was to announce the same by proclamation, and Kansas was forthwith, without further proceedings, to become a State. But should such Constitution be rejected, Kansas was then, after an election in due form, to make for herself a Constitution and State Government, as in the amendment provided, and when done the President, by proclamation, should announce the same, and Kansas was forthwith to become a State. The whole question of Slavery or no Slavery was, by this amendment, submitted by the Republicans in Congress—including Mr. Giddings and others who have been held most extreme on this subject—to the action of the people of the Territory, and they bound themselves in advance to abide the result. The amendment passed the House by the united votes of all the Republican members, aided by a few of the Northern Democracy. When it went to the Senate, it was there sustained by Mr. Seward, Mr. Hale, Mr. Hamlin and others, embracing every Republican in that body, though the Democratic majority prevented its final passage.

In the face of this—the last official exposition of the principles of the Republican party on this point—can it be fairly said that it is an avowed principle of the party that no State shall hereafter be admitted from our Territories, unless there is an Anti-Slavery clause incorporated into its constitution? True it is that, notwithstanding the prior success of the Pro-Slavery cause in their Territorial elections, the Republicans were satisfied that, upon a fair vote of the people of Kansas, they could beat their adversaries; but this, though it may have affected the action of individuals in the given case, did not alter the *principle* recognized by the Republican members in their votes upon that amendment.

There is another source to which the public may fairly look for an exposition of the views of the Republican party upon this question, and that is to the known and publicly expressed opinions of its nominee. Mr. Lincoln having been put forward as the representative of the party for the time being, it is chargeable, on the one hand, and entitled to the benefit on the other, of his known opinions. And this is more especially true where those opinions have been deliberately expressed, in answer to interrogatories proposed. It so happens that Mr. Douglas, in his debate with Mr. Lincoln, propounded an interrogatory upon this very subject; and in answer to that interrogatory Mr. Lincoln, on the 27th of August, 1858, said: "I do not now, nor ever did stand pledged against the admission of any more Slave States into the Union," and he adds: "I would be exceedingly sorry ever to be put in a position of having to pass upon that question. I should be exceedingly glad to know that there would never be another Slave State admitted into the Union; but I must add that, if Slavery shall be kept out of the Territories during the Territorial existence of any one given Territory, and then the people shall, having a fair opportunity and a clear field, when they come to adopt the constitution, do such an extraordinary thing as adopt a slave constitution, uninfluenced by the actual presence of the institution among them, I see no alternative, if we own the country, but to admit them into the Union."

This may be said to embody the principles of the Republican party. The truth is, the whole trouble and doubts which have been thrown over the views and purposes of the party upon this point, have originated in confusing the rights of the Territory to legislate upon this question of Slavery, irrespective of the supervision of Congress, while it continues to be a Territory, and the right of the Territory to frame its own Constitution preparatory to its admission as a State. While the Republicans have held that so long as it continues the creature of the Federal Government, and legislates only as its agent, such legislation is subject to its revision, they have never denied, as a principle, that it had the right under the Constitution to frame its organic law according to the will of the majority of its people. They contend that the Territory shall be kept free for the purpose of influencing the action of its people when it shall be about to slough off its Territorial existence and assume its position as an independent State. Any other purpose or object would be futile, for when a State, whatever might have been its action as a Territory, it would at once have full and absolute control over the whole subject.

2. It is, in the next place, objected that the principles of the Republican party contemplate, or rather tolerate a violation of the acts of Congress; and, more especially, of that which is commonly called the Fugitive Slave law.

It is not to be denied that the great body of the party all over the country hold that law, as I do, most unwise and unjust, forced upon the North with a total disregard of its sensibilities, and in some of its provisions of doubtful constitutionality. Yet, no line can be found in any platform of the Republican party, or in any other place of authority, which encourages or contemplates its violation. The South is, no doubt, entitled to have the provision of the Constitution which applies to the return of fugitive slaves fairly carried out, but she cannot justly hold the North accountable for the feelings of individuals who look upon the law in question as offensive in its requirements and objectionable in its details. Nor can the Republican party be held justly accountable for a feeling of aversion to a law which requires the citizens of the North to act as a sort of police for the catching of runaway negroes. I venture to say that a law imposing duties half as offensive upon our brethren of the South could not be executed in their section at all.

We have a striking illustration of this in another branch of the same general subject. The laws which prohibit the African slave-trade, and forbid the importation of slaves, are, as repects their enforcement in the Southern States, little else than a dead letter upon the statute book.

The slaver—whose offense is piracy, and whose punishment is death—goes from their midst unwhipt of justice. The African negro, who has just been torn from his country, and who has all the rights of a freeman, is sold there in defiance of law as a slave. They not only do not return him to the country where he belongs, but they do not discharge him from bondage. They disregard wholly the moral obligation, and the legal obligation likewise, unless the negro is without the pale of humanity. It seems to me that the complaint of the South that there are individuals in the North who cannot school their feelings to the point of holding that this Fugitive Slave law is just what it should be, comes, under the circumstances, with a very bad grace. If the execution of this law were more difficult than it is, some apology, I should think, would be found by the South itself, in its own inability or neglect to enforce the laws of the country upon a kindred question. But whether this be so or not, it is certain that the Republican party can neither control nor answer for the consciences of men. It can only say, as it often has said, it recognizes fully the obligation of public law, and neither seeks nor desires its violation. But the candidate of the party now before the country has gone much farther than this. He has said, in the speech already referred to, not only that he "is not in favor of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave law," but he added, "inasmuch as we are not now in an agitation in regard to an alteration or modification of that law, I would not be the man to introduce it as a new subject of agitation upon the general question of Slavery." This is going far enough, I should think, to satisfy the most fastidious in regard to his conservatism upon the point in question. It may fairly be held, for the purposes of this campaign at least, to dispose of this objection to the principles of the Republican party.

3. There is one other matter of a general nature connected with this question of Slavery upon which the party has taken decided ground; and that is, an utter and unqualified opposition now and hereafter to all attempts which may lead to a reopening of the African slave trade. It would be disingenuous to say that at this time any one of the great parties of the country has avowed this purpose as its party policy. They dare not yet do it, though the extreme Southern party, now represented by Mr. Breckinridge, is fast tending in that direction. Should a like advance in boldness be made within the next four years, as within the past four years, it will not surprise me at all to find at an early day the matter pressed as the true policy of the South. Unless their sectionalism and Pro-Slavery fanaticism can be stayed by the election of a Republican President, my word for it, the question of the repeal of that law which denounces the slave trade as piracy, and prohibits the importation of slaves, will be mooted in Congress within the next four years. They say it is already decided that slaves are property; as much so as horses and cattle, goods and merchandise; and that the citizens of each State have a constitutional right to carry them into the Territories, and no power exists in Congress or the Constitution to prevent it. It is but one step further to say that all discrimination against this species of property as respects imports is unconstitutional and unwise; that it is a subject with which the Federal Government has nothing to do. That so long as the importer does not bring in disease, or anything subjected to exclusion in virtue of health or police laws, they can exercise their own choice of articles recognized as property by the Constitution. South Carolina has already said you shall not impose import duties which may injuriously affect Southern interests; if so, may she not argue, still less can you make an absolute prohibition.

There is, however, one relief to this view; the South are not at all oblivious to the fact that they have vast investments in this species of property, the value of which will be greatly reduced by opening our ports to foreign importations. The States interested in raising and selling negroes would soon understand in that event the principles of a protective tariff. Should the law against the import of slaves be repealed, it would scarcely be more marvelous or absurd than some other things that have happened, should we find them, at some future day, demanding from Congress a tariff for the protection of their home industry! At present, however, there is no party, as such, which avows as its policy the reopening of the African slave-trade, but the proselytes to the doctrine are on the increase. The question has already been prominently stirred in their Democratic Conventions. At Charleston, in April last, it was contended that "the doctrine of protection to Slavery in the Territories is a mere theory—an abstraction." It was said, "we can never make another Slave State with our present supply of slaves," and it was asked of the South to come up in a proper spirit and demand of the North all their rights, and "to take off the ruthless restrictions which cut off the supply of slaves from foreign lands." These are the men of Southern views, "pure and simple," many of whom are disunionists *per se*, and nearly all are new enrolled as the supporters of John C. Breckinridge. They are the men with whom the Union party, as it calls itself—the supporters of John Bell—have in New-Jersey and elsewhere affiliated—Union and Disunion coming together, without a principle or interest in common—unless it be (which I am not willing to say) the extension of Slavery. But upon this question of the reopening of the slave-trade, neither branch of the Democracy dare yet announce any policy differing from that contended for by the great Republican party.

There are one or two other matters connected with this general subject of which it may be well for a moment to speak. The propriety of abolishing the slave-trade between the States has occasionally been commented upon as one of the supposed purposes of the Republican party. It is enough to say that no such purpose or principle has ever been recognized as its rule of party action. Nor has the subject had that prominence which would justify us in saying that any considerable number of the party had given to it such attention as its importance would seem to demand, preliminary to any action or result whatever.

The abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia is another of those questions connected with this general subject which demands a passing notice. The party, as I have already said, is justly chargeable on the one hand, and entitled to the benefit on the other, of the principles avowed upon these questions by their candidate. He has summed up this matter in these words: "I should not, with my present views, be in favor of endeavoring to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia, unless it could be done on these conditions: First, that the abolition should be gradual; second, that it should be on a vote of a majority of the qualified voters of the District; third, that compensation should be made to unwilling owners." This, I need scarcely say, leaves the whole matter to the action of the people of the District, themselves subject to the conservative terms therein stated, and would be the exercise of a power of which the most extreme man of the South could not justly complain. Indeed, within the whole range of public men, I doubt if one can be found, not absolutely pro-slavery in his antecedents and sentiments, who, upon this distracting question of Slavery, has uniformly expressed himself with more outspoken freedom, and yet with a more just regard to the rights and feelings of the South, than Abraham Lincoln of Illinois.

I now submit to the unbiassed judgment of all fair men, whether there is anything in the antecedents or doctrines of the Republican party, or its candidate, which should repel a cordial cooperation upon the part of all those who are opposed to the abuses and principles of the Democratic party.

But there is a class of persons who will say this is not the Republicanism against which we contend, but it is the radical Black Republicanism of the party. It is those men who ignore the Constitution; who would ride over the Supreme Court; who would abolish all distinction between races; who would have blacks and whites intermarry; whose principles we abhor. But who has been authorized to make up such a code of principles for the Republican party? The platform of the party is its best exponent. Next come the official acts of Republicans in Congress; and, lastly, the expressed opinions of its nominee. No man can find anything like these doctrines in these sources of authentic information. The whole misapprehension has arisen from assuming that the principles of the party are those attempted to be fixed upon it by our adversaries. To aid them in this they have seized upon the garbled expressions of individuals wrested from their context, and attached to them a meaning which their authors perhaps did not contemplate. Of this class of expressions is "the irrepressible conflict," words used by a distinguished statesman of the Republican party. No man has greater respect for that gentleman than I have, and they do him injustice, I am sure, when they say that he assumes to enunciate more than his own opinions. He does not claim, nor can any man claim (unless put forward as its representative), to act as the mouthpiece of the Republican party. This might be answer enough, but it is just and proper to say that in one sense there is an irrepressible conflict between Freedom and Slavery. They stand the opposites of each other; they are antagonistic systems, and must remain so until Slavery shall pass away for ever. The influence of free principles are forever in conflict with the influences which support and uphold Slavery. The world over there is, and ever has been, an irrepressible conflict between the principles of right and wrong, of good and of evil; and we are taught to believe that this conflict will last until the good shall triumph. "Sooner or later comes the Millennium."

Mr. Seward says the "irrepressible conflict means that the United States must and will, *sooner or later*, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation." The expression analyzed is but the enunciation of a philosophic truth. Sooner or later the prophesy will doubtless be fulfilled. The conflict is in the moral world, and the silent forces of an enlightened sentiment and Christian feeling, commingling with industrial influences and natural causes, will operate, we trust, until the whole system shall be undermined and the fabric swept away; but that, however much the philanthropist may hope for it, we cannot expect in our day or generation. But this expression has been seized upon as foreshadowing something beyond the ordinary conflict of sentiment and principle. The South seems to have received it as the gage of battle. It has been harped upon until many excitable but honest minds believed that an actual conflict of some kind, they know not exactly what, between the North and South, was intended, in which freedom or Slavery must go to the wall. The system in the States will never be uprooted by mere agitation. Slavery may in that way be kept out of the Territories where it is not, as the young plant takes root only when undisturbed, and goes down in the wind; but the tree that has been planted and grown, when shaken by the storm, strikes its roots for security deeper in the earth. A sentiment innocious and trite in itself, will sometimes be *graven* in the public mind by the form of expression. Thus the "irrepressible conflict," like "the higher law," when analyzed may not amount to much more than has been often said before; but the form of expression, giving the minds of extreme men an opportunity to enlarge its meaning, fixes itself in the memory and subjects it to criticism. "To the victors belong the spoils" had, in substance, been said a thousand times, and without criticism or comment, but when Mr. Marcy compressed the idea in these words, it seemed to indicate something more, and brought into one view the whole system of corrupt electioneering and party plunder which controlled the Democratic camp and at once made the system and the sentiment obnoxious to just criticism. No such general form of expression, wrested from its true and obvious meaning, shall, with my consent, be fixed upon us as part of the creed of the Republican party.

That there are men considered by some of extreme views connected with the party is not denied; and so there are men of extreme views connected with our adversaries. And if you are to choose your political companionship between the two, would you prefer one who is an enthusiast in behalf of Freedom, or one who is an enthusiast in behalf of Slavery?