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JAMES W. SOMERVILLE, PROPRIETOR. THE UNION—IT MUST BE PRESERVED. OFFICE IN PHOENIX BLOCK THIRD STORY.

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AN ADDRESS
TO THE
Democracy of the United States.

DEMOCRATIC NAT. EX. COM. ROOMS, WASHINGTON CITY, July 18, 1860.

FELLOW CITIZENS—

The undersigned have it in charge, at the instance of the national committee of the democratic party, to address you some words of explanation and counsel. You are all advised, by this time, that a minority of the delegates seceded from our regular National Convention at Baltimore, and have proposed John C. Breckinridge and Joseph Lane as their candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the United States. It is an occurrence without example in our history; and for the consequences which may ensue—involving, possibly, the existence of that Union which our fathers besought us constantly to maintain—there is a grave responsibility somewhere. If the responsibility be upon those of us who have adhered to the ancient organization of the democratic party, whose banners now display the honored names of Stephen A. Douglas and Herschel V. Johnson, as the regular democratic nominees, we can but protest, in all sincerity, that we sought no unjust advantage of our seceding brethren, and have erred, if at all, through mere misjudgment. It appears to us, however, upon a careful and deliberate review of all that transpired at Baltimore as well as at Charleston, that the supporters of Messrs. Breckinridge and Lane, in violating the settled usages of the democratic party, and in abandoning the regular democratic organization, have taken the whole responsibility upon themselves.

QUESTION OF SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES.

Before proceeding to a narration of the disturbances in our National Convention at Charleston, and afterwards at Baltimore, we deem it necessary to explain the past conduct of the democratic party with regard to the difficult question of slavery in the Territories of the United States. The question arose, distinctly, for the first time, when the House of Representatives, on motion of Mr. Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, August 12, 1846, added a proviso to the bill appropriating money in aid of the negotiations of peace with Mexico, in the following words:—

Provided, That as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use, by the Executive, of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted.

The bill was lost, in the Senate, by reason of a controversy upon this particular clause; and so the very introduction of the question into Congress, by Mr. Wilmot, resulted in defeating a bill of the utmost importance, embarrassing the Executive in the midst of a foreign war, and in prolonging that war twelve or eighteen months, expending the treasure of the nation, and sacrificing in subsequent battle the lives of so many of our countrymen.

We need not pursue the alarming agitation thus mischievously commenced; an agitation which defeated General Cass, our nominee for the Presidency in 1848, and, at last, in 1850, brought our Union to the verge of dissolution. That catastrophe was avoided, however, by the firmness and wisdom of the democratic party in Congress, and throughout the country, aided by the most eminent chieftains of the whig party; and the basis of settlement then agreed upon, and afterwards unanimously affirmed by the Whig as well as by the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore, in 1852, was that Congress should not interpose its authority, under any circumstances, whether to prohibit or introduce, abolish or maintain the institution of slavery within the Territories. A total exclusion of the subject from Congress, thenceforth and forever, was the olive branch held out and accepted, North and South, by the two great political parties into which the American people were then divided. We say, fellow citizens, that the North and the South alike accepted this settlement, because not only did agitation and discord cease, but as well the abolition party at the North as the secession party at the South, became almost extinct.

In January, 1854, at the first session of Congress under General Pierce's administration, a necessity arose for the establishment of Territorial governments in Nebraska and Kansas; but a fearful obstacle seemed to lie at the very threshold. The act of Congress, approved March 6, 1820, sometimes called the Missouri compromise, prohibited slavery in all the domain over which these two Territories extended. Obviously, such an enactment was inconsistent with the principle adopted in 1850, and ought then to have been repealed by name. But it had not been repealed, and, although never operative in fact, had acquired all the authority of age; and of the many eminent statesmen who, waiving their scruples in regard to its constitutionality, had accepted it as the determination of another controversy which, in 1820, bade fair to rend the Union asunder. The difficulty seemed, at first, insurmountable, inasmuch as a repeal of the Missouri act might renew the agitation quelled in 1850; whereas, upon the other hand, to leave such an act of Congress in existence would be an abandonment of the very principle through which that happy result had been obtained. The democratic party, after some hesitation, resolved to pursue the principle of 1850 to its logical consequence, to abrogate the Missouri compromise line, so called, even at the hazard of new and more dangerous agitation. It appealed to the whig party for assistance, and some of the Southern representatives of that party, in Congress, responded to the appeal. But the Northern whigs, with a few exceptions, abandoned their Southern allies, and, uniting with the remnant of the old abolition party, raised an alarm throughout the North that the democratic party had thus renewed, in Congress, the identical agitation which it had solemnly promised to discountenance. This "fusion" of Northern whigs and abolitionists was largely strengthened by defection from our own ranks; men who abandoned us, not because they supported the Wilmot proviso, but because they feared the democratic party was about to surrender the doctrine of "non-intervention" by Congress, and become an active agent, through the instrumentality of the federal government, for compelling the Territories, one and all, to accept slavery as an institution forever, unalterable and uncontrollable. Time has now dissipated the fears of many, and they have returned to their old allegiance. The people of the North are beginning to understand, also, that the true responsibility for all the agitation which resulted from the Kansas-Nebraska act is upon those who resisted the application of a sound principle to a merely formal change of circumstances. But, in 1854, suddenly, and almost as if by magical touch, the democratic party of the North and Northwest disappeared. Only thirteen democrats were elected to the House of Representatives in that year from all the non-slaveholding States, California included, and four of that number, almost one-third, were from the State of Illinois.—It required years of constant effort to satisfy the Northern people that the Kansas-Nebraska act was not an act of Southern aggression, but an act for carrying into effect the principle established by the compromise measures of 1850. The undersigned do not mean to palliate a misconception so gross, but merely to relate an indisputable fact.—Our leader in these eventful contests, now the candidate of the democratic party for the Presidency of the United States, did, almost without exaggeration, travel from Washington City to Chicago, in 1854, by the light of his own burning effigies.

It was after such disastrous consequences to the democratic party, and with hearts full of apprehension, that our delegates from all the States, North and South, assembled at Cincinnati, in June, 1856, to consult with reference to public affairs. Confident in the justice of our cause, and appealing to the sober judgment of the people, the Democratic National Convention, by a unanimous vote, endorsed the Kansas Nebraska act, and resolved to abide by its principles. The result is well known. The nominees of that convention received a sufficient number of electoral votes to secure them in the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the United States. The fact was developed, also, that in other of the Northern States, New York, Ohio and Iowa, at least—the black republicans had prevailed by a mere plurality, and in opposition to a clear and definite majority of the popular vote. At no time since has the black republican party attained power in the States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, by its own strength, but in every instance, by some combination with the remnant of the American party in those States; a remnant opposed to the administration of Mr. Buchanan, but never satisfied to co-operate with abolitionists in a Presidential election.

KANSAS NEBRASKA BILL.

The Kansas Nebraska bill was a compromise of conflicting opinions within the democratic party; some of its supporters believing that Congress had constitutional authority to prohibit the existence of slavery in the Territories; others, that while Congress had not, each Territorial Legislature had such power; and yet others, that neither Congress nor a Territorial Legislature could prohibit slavery, but were both entrusted with the power, coupled with the duty of maintaining and protecting that relation.—To harmonize, in support of the bill, such various opinions, and thus unite the democratic party, North and South, upon a fair and final basis of action, was the task to which Stephen A. Douglas addressed his intellect and influence. Democrats who believed that Congress had power to prohibit slavery within the Territories, upon the one hand, or, upon the other, to maintain slavery, agreed to delegate the entire exercise of such authority, whatever its extent or nature might be, to the Territorial Legislatures, as the agents and substitutes of Congress for that purpose; whilst those who believed that the Territorial Legislatures had inherent authority over the subject—authority not delegated by Congress, but arising from a right of self-government—concurred in a solemn declaration that the action of every Territorial Legislature should be subject to the prohibitions, limitations and principles expressed in the constitution of the United States. And in order to provide a convenient method for attesting the constitutionality of any act which a Territorial Legislature might adopt, whether for the prohibition or maintenance of slavery, in case any citizen should feel aggrieved by such legislation, the right of appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States was so enlarged by the ninth and twenty-seventh sections of the bill as to include "all cases involving title to slaves," decided by the Supreme Court of a Territory, "without regard to the value of the matter, property, or title in controversy," and also, all cases decided by the court last named, or by any district court of a Territory, or any judge of either of the said courts, "upon any writ of habeas corpus involving the question of personal freedom." The plain object of these provisions was to banish all discussion of the subject of slavery within the Territories, except the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave act, from the Congress of the United States, and thus localize, as far as possible, every controversy to which that subject could give occasion.—If, as in the case of Kansas, a Territorial Legislature should exclude slavery; or, as in the case of New Mexico, should protect and maintain it, those who desired to contest the authority of the Legislature, one way or another, could resort to the courts of justice with their claims, and, by the decision of the highest appellate tribunal—namely, the Supreme Court of the United States—all such claims would be determined. It was foreseen, as an argument for withdrawing the authority of Congress, even admitting the existence of such authority, that slave labor would seek only those regions where it could be profitably employed; and wherever it could be so employed, as in New Mexico, including Arizona, it would be sufficiently protected by local legislation. The result has shown that slavery now prevails almost exactly where it would have been established if the Missouri compromise line had never been repealed, but had been, as the South demanded from 1846 until 1850, extended to the Pacific ocean; that portion of the Territory of New Mexico north of 36 deg. 30 min. being an equivalent for the arid regions of California south of the same line.

Practically, therefore, the whole dispute has been settled; so that when Senator Brown, of Mississippi, demanded, at the session of Congress just concluded, that the laws of Kansas prohibiting slavery should be annulled, his demand was only seconded by Senator Johnson, of Arkansas, and Senator Mallory, of Florida; and upon the other hand, when the black republicans proposed a bill for abrogating the laws of New Mexico in favor of slavery, all the democratic representatives in Congress, South and North, as well as all the Southern opposition members, agreed in resisting it. The fact is notorious, also, that by the assistance of Mr. Thayer, of Massachusetts, and others of his party in the House, the democrats and and Southern oppositionists were enabled to defeat a number of Territorial bills containing the Wilmot proviso. It was evident, therefore, when our National Convention re-assembled at Baltimore on the 18th of June, that the wisdom of the democratic party, in adhering to the doctrine of "non-intervention" through every trial and reverse, would soon be rewarded by a triumph no less signal than that which attended our opposition to the Bank of the United States and our devotion to the principles of the Independent Treasury act. If, in the estimation of all, except three supporters of the Senatorial caucus resolutions, so called, declaring that Congress ought to intervene for the protection of slave property in the Territories "when necessary," the express abolition of slavery in Kansas by Territorial act did not constitute a case of necessity for such intervention, what possible case ever could arise? No democrat will deny the obligation of the federal government to suppress insurrections within a Territory, and to enforce, even as against Territorial enactments, a final judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States. Nor can it be denied that Congress may, in certain extreme cases beyond the power of redress by judicial interposition, revoke or amend a charter of Territorial organization. For what useful purpose, then, was the agitation of so dangerous a question renewed by President Buchanan in his last annual message, or inflamed by the resolutions of a Senatorial caucus, and finally thrust upon the Democratic National Convention at Charleston?

EXCUSES FOR ALTERING THE CINCINNATI PLATFORM.

It is said, in excuse, that the principles enunciated by the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of Dred Scott, lead to the conclusion that a Territorial Legislature has no more authority over the subject of slavery than Congress, and that Congress, equally with the Territorial Legislatures, is under obligation to protect as well the possession as the title of slave property in the Territories. We do not now intend to debate this assertion one way or another. It is admitted, universally, that no such question was presented by the record of Dred Scott's case, nor argued by counsel at the bar; and whatever the conclusion at which any democrat might arrive, upon reading the opinions delivered by the several judges, that conclusion cannot be so clear of doubt as to warrant him in censuring those who, with an equal desire to ascertain the truth, have attained another conclusion. We must all agree that if the Supreme Court did not intend to decide that question (as many believe) it would be an act of bad faith, in violation of the very terms of the Kansas Nebraska bill, to commit the democratic party, as a national organization, to either side; whereas, if the court did so intend, nothing is more certain than that whenever the question shall distinctly arise, and be fairly argued, the court will express its determination in language so plain as to command universal acquiescence. The judgment of the Supreme Court in Dred Scott's case has been carried into full execution; and whatever judgment it may hereafter pronounce, in a case depending on the validity or invalidity of Territorial enactments, must be and will be executed with equal alacrity and confidence. But, evidently, until some Territorial Legislature shall, by its enactments, have impaired the right of property in slaves, there can be no use in agitating such questions; and if, as the authors of the Senatorial caucus resolutions have declared by their votes, the case of Kansas be not a proper case for Congressional intervention, it is difficult to imagine any other in which a necessity for such intervention will arise.

It is said, however, that the democratic party thus occupies an equivocal position, and that the Cincinnati platform is rendered susceptible of two interpretations. This pretext is merely plausible. The platform has no double meaning, and but one sensible interpretation. It declares against Congressional intervention plainly, openly and unequivocally; but refers the question what power—if any—a Territorial Legislature can exercise for the prohibition or the maintenance of slavery, as a Territorial institution, to the adjudication of the Supreme Court of the United States. Democrats may differ as to what the court should or will decide but they have stipulated, whatever the decision may be, to carry that decision into effect.

It has been argued, also, inasmuch as one duty of government is the protection of property in return for the allegiance of its subjects, that the federal government cannot abdicate authority with respect to the Territories, but should constantly exercise a power of immediate legislation for the protection of property as well as persons within them. This proposition, also, is merely plausible. It ignores the fact that Congress must have, and has always, exercized a choice of instrumentalities. It ignores the fact, also, that the duties of government have been divided under our American system into those of federal and those of State, Territorial, and even of county, parish and municipal character. All these taken together constitute the government of which, and of which only, the proposition can truly be predicated, and unless we adopt the maxims of the old federal party which our fathers repudiated in 1798, 1799 and 1800, we must deny that the government of the United States can afford any protection, except in a federal capacity, to property of any description; all other duties of protection having been wisely confided to State or Territorial, and, in some cases, to merely municipal authorities. It is true, undoubtedly, that all forms of property recognized by the laws of the respective States composing our confederation, are entitled to equal regard by their common federal agent; but to affirm that it shall, under the pretence of protecting a right of property, usurp any power not clearly delegated by the States, in the terms of their compact with each other is to affirm a doctrine fraught with the most fatal consequences. The question is not whether property in slaves, or any other form of property, shall be protected in the States or in the Territories, or elsewhere; the question is by which of the several divisions of government with us, and to what extent by each, this protection shall be afforded. It is a controversy, therefore, involving, the whole ground of difference between the democratic party and the various parties by which, in the history of our country, the democratic party has been opposed. The first inclination of every democrat should be to resist, as far as he can lawfully, the exercise of any power by the federal government, within the States, within the Territories, or anywhere else, until a clear and definite delegation of such power by the several States can be proven from the language or necessary import of the constitution of the United States.

We have thus endeavored to show you, fellow citizens, that the conduct of the democratic party, with reference to the subject of slavery in the Territories, has been distinguished for moderation, for wise and wholesome statesmanship, for regard to the limited nature of the federal government, to the reserved rights of the States and the people, to the peace, the welfare, the continual preservation of that Union which has has made us a miracle among the nations.

CHARLESTON CONVENTION.

When our National Convention assembled in the city of Charleston, on the 23d of April, it exhibited a condition of affairs unlike that of any other other political convention of this year. Every State of the Union was fully represented. What American citizen, whether of Southern or Northern birth, from the Atlantic or the Pacific coast—from the inland seas which border upon Canada, from the valley of the imperial Mississippi, from the State looking out of the Gulf of Mexico—did not rejoice on beholding what seemed to be, in very truth, a council of the whole republic? Why that council failed in its purpose, wherefore it was distracted, by whom and in what manner, we must now proceed to relate.

The Democratic Convention of Alabama assembled at Montgomery in January, 1860, to appoint delegates from that State to the Charleston Convention. It chose to declare the opinion entertained by a majority of its members, that no Territorial Legislature had any right to prohibit the institution of slavery, and that the constitution of the United States was under immediate obligation to maintain and protect that institution everywhere, "in the States, in the Territories, and in the wilderness in which territorial governments are as yet unorganized." To such a declaration of opinion by the States of Alabama, there could be no reasonable ground of objection upon the part of other States, each of them being at liberty to concur or to dissent. But Alabama did not pause here; she instructed her delegates to present those resolutions to the Convention at Charleston; and in case the opinion therein expressed was not adopted by that convention, her delegates were immediately to withdraw and, as if conscious of the antagonistic attitude assumed by such instructions toward the democratic party at large, the Montgomery Convention appointed a committee upon whom should devolve the duty as soon as the Alabama delegates had withdrawn from the Convention at Charleston, of calling a State Convention to decide upon ulterior measures. We desire to speak with entire respect of the State of Alabama; and without questioning her right at any time to adopt such resolutions as to her seemed best, we are constrained to say that the attitude which she thus assumed, with regard to the democracy of other States, was a violation of the usages and principles upon which only a national organization of our democratic party can be maintained. If each of the States had followed her example—and each of them was the peer of Alabama—the National Convention could not have proceeded one step; there would have been no room for counsel, for interchange of opinion or sentiment, for conciliation, harmony, and united action.

After the Charleston Convention had prescribed the rules of its proceeding and verified the credentials of all its delegates in the usual method, it appointed a committee of one from each State to report a platform of principles. That committee, after long and tedious sessions, made three reports; one by the members from seventeen States, one by the members from fifteen States, and one by Mr. Buttler from the State of Massachusetts. The first (majority) report was in substantial accordance with the instructions of Alabama to her delegates; the second consisted of an addition to the Cincinnati platform, declaring that the democratic party would abide by whatever decisions had been, or might thereafter be made by the Supreme Court of the United States; the third was the Cincinnati platform without any important addition. After a full and earnest debate, it became evident that the Convention was not satisfied with any of those reports; and accordingly a motion was made and carried to recommit all of them—Alabama, as well as the rest of the States which afterwards seceded from the Convention, voting for this recommitment.

On the same day (April 28) the committee again reported, and again the reports were three in number; the third, by Mr. Butler, of Massachusetts, being the same which he had previously submitted. The second report of the majority consisted of these three resolutions:—

First—That the government of a Territory, organized by an act of Congress, is provisional and temporary; and, during its existence, all citizens of the United States have an equal right to settle with their property in the Territory without their rights, either of person or property, being destroyed or impaired by Congressional or Territorial legislation.

Second—That it is the duty of the Federal Government, in all its departments, to protect, when necessary, the rights of persons and property in the Territories and wherever else its constitutional authority extends.

Third—That when the settlers in a Territory, having an adequate population, form a State Constitution, the right of sovereignty commences, and being consummated by admission into the Union, they stand on an equal footing with the people of other States; and the State thus organized ought to be admitted into the Federal Union whether its constitution prohibits or recognizes the institution of slavery.

Nothing could be more vague and unsatisfactory than those resolutions; they deal in "truisms" of the tamest significance, or rather, as the controversy then stood, of no significance at all. It would have been a sufficient reason for their rejection (if no other resolutions had ever been presented) that these magnified a thousand fold the alleged faults of the Cincinnati platform.

The second report from the minority of the committee, presented by Mr. Samuel, of Iowa, consisted of the Cincinnati platform with this addition:—

Inasmuch as differences of opinion exist in the Democratic party as to the nature and extent of the powers of a Territorial Legislature, and as to the powers and duties of Congress, under the Constitution of the United States, over the institution of slavery within the Territories,

Resolved, That the Democratic party will abide by the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on these questions of constitutional law.

No further amendments or resolutions being admissable by parliamentary rule, the Convention proceeded to a vote; first rejecting the report of Mr. Butler, and then substituting the report of Mr. Samuel for that of the majority. The question recurring upon the adoption of Mr. Samuel's resolution, a delegate from North Carolina (Mr. Brown) obtained the leave, by unanimous consent, to address the Convention, and thereupon expostulated against the resolution (as it then stood) in very earnest terms. It was immediately rejected by a vote of 238 to 21; the States of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Georgia, and Florida declining to vote on either side.—With a view to the amendment of that resolution, so as to remove the objections thus suggested, a motion for reconsideration was entered. Such amendment could only be accomplished by rejecting the resolution, and then reconsidering the vote; the previous question having been seconded and sustained by the Convention before the delegate from North Carolina had spoken.

Pending this motion for reconsideration, before any vote upon it, and, consequently before any amendment of Mr. Samuel's resolution could be proposed, the Alabama delegation withdrew from the Convention, followed by ten of the delegates from Louisiana, thus leaving that State without a vote; the entire delegations from Mississippi, Texas, and Florida, and the larger part of the delegations from South Carolina, Georgia, and Arkansas. These delegations withdrew in the most formal manner; not contenting themselves with speeches on the subject, but delivering written protests to be entered at large upon the journal of the Convention.

EXCUSES FOR THE SECESSION AT CHARLESTON.

Various excuses have been assigned for this extraordinary conduct, but none of them, in our judgment, will bear examination. It has been said, for instance, that the Convention adopted an unfair rule of voting, or one which enabled a minority of the delegates to control the majority. Here is the rule in so many words:—

That in any State which has not provided or directed, by its State Convention, how its vote may be given, the Convention will recognize the right of each delegate to cast his individual vote.

This rule was adopted on Tuesday, April 24, by a vote of 394 against 207 delegates, which sufficiently demonstrates its fairness, if any demonstration were requisite. It acknowledges the right of every State to bind her delegates, but secures to each delegate his own vote, as against any combination of his colleagues, where the State has not chosen thus to subordinate him. The rule was applied, at Charleston, in the decision of all questions; and no complaint was then made of it (in their protests or their speeches) by the delegations which withdrew. The first complaint, so far as we can ascertain, was in the address published by eighteen members of Congress, after the Convention had adjourned from Charleston to Baltimore. The rule operated as hardly upon the one side as upon the other; witness the fact that delegates from Alabama and Louisiana were compelled to withdraw from the Convention by the act of their colleagues against their own will, and that ten delegates from Georgia, who remained in the Convention, were not allowed to vote (under General Cushing's decision) because a majority of the delegation had withdrawn.

Of what possible importance can the assertion be that a different result, either in regard to the platform or the candidates, would have attended a rule authorizing each delegate to control his own vote, without reference to the instructions of his State? In New York, Alabama, Indiana and Louisiana, for example, the Convention which instructed the delegates was the convention which appointed them; and but that all these delegates were understood to accept their appointments, severally, with an obligation to obey the instructions, it is very certain the Convention would, in each case, have made other appointments. And, after all, how much reliance can be placed in assertions or calculations as to what any delegate would have done, at Charleston, in different circumstances. All such assertions or calculations are based on rumors, surmises, information at second hand, or assurances privately signified.

We could, by the same style of argument, refute the whole of them; but we choose to deal with the subject as men, and not to amuse ourselves with suppositions or possibilities. The method of voting was an affair to be determined by the Convention; and it was determined at Charleston, as we have shown, by a majority of almost two thirds.

Another complaint is, that the report of the majority of the committee on resolutions was not adopted by the Convention—as being the voice of a majority of the States. Several answers suggest themselves at once.

1. Such was not the method of voting adopted by the convention, and never had been the method in any previous convention.

2. If the rule had been that a majority of the Committee should prescribe the platform, and not a majority of the Convention, it is evident from their votes (afterward given) that several of the States would have chosen other representatives upon the committee.

3. The first majority report, as we have shown, was not acceptable to the delegations which subsequently retired. Every one of them voted for its recommitment.

4. The second report of the committee never did, as a whole, command the assent of a majority, the committeeman from Missouri (General Clark) announcing that he would move, at the proper time, to strike out this all important resolution:—

That it is the duty of the Federal Government, in all its departments, to protect, when necessary, the rights of persons and property in the Territories and wherever else its constitutional authority extends.

It required the committeeman from Missouri to constitute the majority (seventeen) of which we have heard so much. Without farther argument, therefore, this pretext disappears.

It has been said, finally, that the States which favored the second majority platform were Democratic States, and that all the others were hopeless, or, at least, unreliable. We could, if it were necessary, prove this to be untrue; but even if it were true, in the largest sense, what folly to be governed by such considerations. Those seventeen States had not a majority of all the electoral votes, and could accomplish nothing without assistance. No wise General, upon the eve of an engagement, would subtract from the weakest column of his army in order to reinforce the strongest; he would, on the contrary, take means to strengthen the feeble, even at the expense of the firm.

But, in a higher sense, and upon the noblest consideration of Democratic policy, such invidious distinction between the States ought to be discouraged.

Our party has ever commended itself alike to the North and to the South, as a party in which all the States will find their interests equally protected and their honor equally observed; and whenever we abandon that safe ground, we falsify our ancient and proudest profession, and degrade our National Convention to the level of the Convention at Chicago. Every true Democrat believes that Massachusetts as well as South Carolina, would ensure her noblest development, as a State, under the influence of Democratic policy; and, therefore, in all National Conventions, the Democracy of Massachusetts—feeble and even as insignificant as others esteemed them—have been treated as brethren and as equals. By means of such a rule Polk, Cass, and Pierce, and Buchanan, were nominated for the Presidency, and three of them elected. What need of any other rule at Charleston? What, assuredly, but the presence, for the first time in our history, of an intense, fanatical and mischievous spirit of sectionalism on the part of the delegates who seceded?

If the rule for which those delegates contend had prevailed heretofore, some of our National Conventions would have been curiously constituted. That of 1844 would have consisted only of delegates from Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Virginia; that of 1848 of delegates from Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New York and Pennsylvania, in addition; that of 1852 of delegates from Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin; while that of 1856 would have excluded the States of Tennessee and Kentucky, which voted for Mr. Buchanan, but included Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin, which voted against him.

It will scarcely be argued that delegates ought to be admitted into a National Convention and there denied the right of voting in accordance with their own convictions.—The objection amounts to nothing, therefore, unless to the disfranchisement, from time to time, of such of the States as for any reason peculiar, local or temporary, vote against our Presidential nominees. How would such a rule operate four years hence?

The boast of the Democracy is in its national character and sympathies; therefore, although our Democratic brethren of Massachusetts have not achieved a victory in any Presidential election since 1820, we do not despise them, but gladly admit them, on terms of equality, to our National Conventions.

The truth is, that the seceders at Charleston were actuated by other motives than a sincere regard for the welfare of the Democratic party, or attachment to Democratic usages and principles. They were determined to rule the party, or else to ruin it.—No political organization can exist upon such terms; because he would be less than a man who could submit to them. We have sufficiently guarded the rights of minorities heretofore by requiring each of our nominees to receive two-thirds of all the electoral votes given in a National Convention; but whenever we acknowledge that one fifth of the delegates may (as at Charleston) demand an addition to our platform, and, upon the refusal of such demand, may rightfully secede, we render it impossible for our party to exist any longer. Let no man deceive himself in this regard, because here is the whole controversy at Charleston reduced to a plain, definite, and unavoidable issue.

WHAT OCCURRED AT CHARLESTON AFTER THE SECESSION.

Finding itself thus suddenly deprived of the counsel and assistance of the Democratic party in eight States, the Convention abandoned all attempts to modify or enlarge the Cincinnati platform, and proceeded to the nomination of candidates.

*But, in order that no reasonable objection should be alleged to the validity of its nominations, the Convention altered the rule of all former Conventions, and required not merely two-thirds of the electoral votes given, but two-thirds of all the electoral votes.

Fifty seven ballots ensued, and in the course of those ballots, repeatedly, a majority of the entire Convention indicated Stephen A. Douglas as their choice for the presidential office.

The enemies of that distinguished statesman have asserted many times that his friends were disposed to force him upon the National Convention. The falsity of this will appear from the fact that his friends could have nominated him at Charleston, after the secession, in accordance with the ancient rule demanding two-thirds of the votes given; whereas they altered that rule immediately, and required two-thirds of all the electoral votes, or nearly four fifths of the votes which remained.

ADJOURNMENT TO BALTIMORE.

At last, unable to discharge satisfactorily the trust confided to it by the democratic party of the United States, in consequence of the secession to which we have referred, the Convention adjourned from the 30 of May to the 18th of June, and from the city of Charleston to the city of Baltimore, calling upon the democracy of the several States, whose delegates had retired, to fill the vacancies caused by such retirement. The resolution was proposed by Mr. Russell, chairman of the Virginia delegation, and unanimously adopted, in these words:—

Resolved, That when this Convention adjourns to-day, it adjourn to reassemble at Baltimore, Md., on Monday, the 18th day of June, and that it be respectfully recommended to the Democratic party of the several States to make provision for supplying all vacancies in their respective delegations to this Convention when it shall reassemble.

It is impossible to misconstrue this resolution. There was no vacancy whatsoever in the Convention, except such as had been caused by the secession of certain delegates; and unless the States of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Texas, South Carolina, Georgia and Arkansas were there by invited to elect new delegates, the State of Virginia, and all other States which remained in the Convention at Charleston, deliberately stultified themselves † That the seats of the seceders were understood to be vacant at Charleston appears also from the decision of General Cushing, sustained on appeal, that the minority of the Georgia delegation could not vote in the Convention after the majority had seceded. That the seceders intended to resign all claims of membership is evident from their speeches and protests at the time of secession. No language could have been employed to express more plainly the determination of those delegates to retire from the Convention at once and forever.

CONVENTION OF THE SECEDERS AT CHARLESTON.

Having thus separated themselves from the democratic party at Charleston, the seceders forthwith organized a party of their own, assembling in regular convention at St. Andrew's Hall on the 30th of April, electing permanent officers, adopting rules and appointing a Committee upon Organization and a Committee upon Resolutions. The latter committee reported, on the 2d of May, certain resolutions (the second majority report) which had been rejected by the Democratic Convention; pending which, as their journal informs us,

Mr. Yancey, of Alabama, moved that the report be amended so as to strike out the words "of the United States" after the word "Democracy," and insert "Constitutional" before the same word as often as it occurs in the report.

Can there be any doubt as to the temper of such proceedings? Mr. Yancey desired to adopt even a new name as well as a separate organization; and it is notorious that he was the master spirit of the whole secession movement. Others, it would seem, were not quite so bold; and therefore, after some debate, his amendment was withdrawn.

Several days of hesitation, doubt, and controversy among themselves ensued; but at length ascertaining that the Democratic Convention had adjourned to meet at Baltimore, on the 18th of June, the seceders were compelled to adopt some definite course. Mr. Jackson, of Georgia, then proposed this resolution, and it was adopted:

Resolved, That the Democratic party of the United States, who are opposed to the doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty, and in favor of the platform of principles recommended by a majority of the States in the Charleston Convention, and unanimously adopted by the delegates of eight withdrawing States, be invited to send delegates to a Convention to be held in Richmond, Virginia, on the second Monday of June; and, in order to secure concert of action, that the basis of representation be the same as that upon which the states have been represented in the Charleston Convention.

Another quotation from their journal is somewhat significant:—

On motion of Mr. Barry, of Mississippi, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the delegates from South Carolina be requested to publish the proceedings of this Convention, and to incorporate them in a pamphlet containing so much of the proceedings of the Convention from which this Convention withdrew as explains the causes of our separation from it.

On motion, it was

Resolved, That the South Carolina delegation be appointed a committee to make arrangements for the Convention to be held at Richmond.

We pause here to ask, in all candor, how these gentlemen could any longer claim to be members of the party whose Convention had adjourned to Baltimore, and, especially, to be members of that Convention?

SUBSEQUENT ACTION OF THE SECEDERS.

The Richmond Convention proved a miserable failure. None of the Northern States, and no Southern States, except South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas and Georgia, ever appointed a delegate to attend it.—The seceders returned to their constituents from Charleston, and all of them distinctly surrendered, at home, their commission in the Convention which had adjourned to Baltimore. A brief recital of what transpired in each State becomes now essential.

SOUTH CAROLINA.

The delegates who represented this State in the Charleston Convention declined further service; whereupon a new delegation was appointed in State Convention, at Columbia, May 30, and accredited to Richmond only. The foremost of these new delegates, Hon. R. Barnwell Rhett, had been for many years a zealous opponent of the democratic party, and, as appears by his letter of May 10, 1860, only attended the Richmond Convention in that character.—One paragraph from the letter will be sufficient:—

You say, "Have we not heretofore opposed national party conventions, and is not the Richmond Convention a national party convention?" I answer, no. A national party convention is the convention of a party which is based on national principles, that is, principles common to all portions of the United States. The Richmond Convention is not such a convention. Its declared principles are not national for not a single Northern State has dared to avow them. It is a sectional convention, called by one section of the Union to support rights and interests belonging to one section of the Union, and acknowledged by but one section of the Union. It arises out of the debris of the one great national party in the Union—the Democratic party—and is intended to counteract its policy. It is true that all those of the Democratic party in the United States, who agree with the platform the eight Southern States lay down as their criterion of party affiliation, are invited to attend the Richmond Convention. This is, certainly, an objectionable feature in the Convention; but it does not alter its character as a Southern Convention to support Southern rights and interests. The Black Republicans invited all in the United States who agree with them in their abolition designs to join with them in their Convention at Chicago. Suppose delegates should go into that Convention (as they will) from Southern States, would that divorce it of its sectional character? Certainly not. Nor will the fact that from a few or many States in the North, delegates may attend the Richmond Convention, change its character as a sectional Convention.

Another delegate, Hon. Armistead Burt, thus addressed the Convention, by which he was appointed, at Columbia, June 2:—

Mr. Wright, of Spartansburg, rose and nominated Hon. A. Burt, of Abbeville.

Mr. Burt rose and begged to inform his friend that he was most egregiously mistaken if his nomination was to be considered a concession to the convention party. He had not one element of the National Democracy in him. I was raised a nullifier of the strictest sect. I was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and would be recreant not only to friendship, but to principle, if I were to apostatize, and find myself in the ranks of the National Democracy. I will say, if you will allow me only a few words, that for more than sixteen years I have entertained an opinion that has never been changed. It was my misfortune in 1851, to differ with friends whom I loved as dearly as a man loves near friends; and, from February, 1856, I have never doubted, so help me God, that the Southern States would soon have to choose between slavery and disunion.

Mr. Burt received after this declaration all but one and one-eleventh of the votes cast, and was of course elected.

Such are the avowed sentiments of two gentlemen with whom the seceders from the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore, afterwards united at Richmond in affirming the nomination of Messrs. Breckinridge and Lane.

FLORIDA.

The State Convention of Florida reappointed most of the delegates who had seceded at Charleston, but accredited them to the Richmond Convention only; and yet those delegates while they did not even claim admission into the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore, were admitted into, and constituted a part of the meeting at the Maryland Institute, by which Messrs. Breckinridge and Lane were nominated.

MISSISSIPPI.

The delegates from this State who seceded from the Convention at Charleston were reappointed to the National Democratic Convention at Baltimore, as well as appointed to the Convention at Richmond. They were acknowledged by the former as regular delegates, but refused to take their seats.

TEXAS.

The Charleston seceders from Texas were reappointed to the National Convention at Baltimore, as well as appointed to the Convention at Richmond, by the State Democratic Committee, in virtue of a power specially conferred. They also were acknowledged by the former Convention as regular delegates, but refused to take their seats.

LOUISIANA.

The seceders from this State avoided trial before a regular Convention of the Democratic party, but called upon the delegates by whom they had been chosen—delegates whose duty and office had expired—to reassemble at Baton Rouge, and represent the Democracy in circumstances not contemplated at the time of their appointment. A mere "rump" of those delegates did reassemble, without authority from the people,

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* At Baltimore, on motion of Governor Wickliffe, of Louisiana, the following resolution was adopted unanimously in lieu of that proposed by Mr. Samuels at Charleston:

Resolved, That it is in accordance with the true interpretation of the Cincinnati platform that, during the existence of Territorial governments, the measure of restriction, whatever it may be, imposed by the Federal Constitution on the powers of a Territorial Legislature over the subject of domestic relations, as the same has been or shall hereafter be finally determined by the Supreme Court of the United States, should be respected by all good citizens, and enforced with promptness and fidelity by every branch of the Federal Government.

† Surely this was the interpretation of this resolution by the Convention, for we find at Baltimore that the following resolution, which was introduced by Mr. Church, of N. Y., was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That the credentials of all persons claiming seats in this convention, made vacant by the secession of delegates at Charleston, be referred to the committee, which is hereby instructed, as soon as practicable, to examine the same, and report the names of the persons entitled to such seats.

1860