

The Slavery Question in Congress--The Real Crisis at Last.

[From the New York Herald.]

Three new States--Kansas, Minnesota and Oregon--are waiting at the doors of Congress for admission into the Union, the first with a slave State constitution, the other two as free States. There is no complaint from any quarter, touching the constitutional proceedings in Minnesota and Oregon; but in Kansas the slavery question has been reduced to a shape so pointed and critical that upon its solution the admission of Minnesota and Oregon will depend, or perhaps, a sectional dissolution of the present Congress.

Never before has the slavery question been presented in a form so positive, pointed and perplexing as this in reference to Kansas. In her behalf a slave State constitution is submitted, when it is known that at least five-sixths of the people of Kansas are opposed to slavery, but if the majority by refusing to vote in the late regularly authorized constitutional election, have permitted slavery to be carried by default, they are themselves only to blame, and with them should rest the consequences. All these late skirmishes in Kansas between conventions, constitutions, legislatures and conflicting elections, are mere surplusage, and amount to nothing since the ratification of the Lecompton constitution. Congress must, therefore, decide either to admit Kansas as a slave State, under the Lecompton constitution, or to abide the consequences of its rejection.

We shall see, too, in this contest, whether the boasted courage or the alleged pusillanimity of the South will prevail. The case is now so perfectly clear, that if this Lecompton constitution be rejected, it will be rejected on account of Slavery, that no man can doubt it. We apprehend, therefore, that the South, ready to accept the said constitution, without the slavery clause, will make it an ultimatum with the slavery clause. Enabling acts, therefore, like that of Mr. Douglas', and provisos like those of Mr. Senator Pugh's, are now too late, or are wholly unnecessary. Without any Congressional provisos, the people of Kansas, with her admission as a State, will be fully enabled and empowered to proceed at once to remodel their organic laws from the first section to the last. And we fear it is too late to talk of special enabling acts for a new Constitutional Convention, when the Lecompton programme has been recognized and encouraged by the government at Washington, from the beginning to the end of the chapter.

It is a great mistake, also, to suppose that as this question now stands, it is a mere issue between the administration and Gov. Walker, or between Senator Douglas and the Southern fire-eaters, or between this faction and that faction, or this party and that party for the Presidential succession. The question has been enlarged with the recognition of slavery in the Lecompton Constitution, into a question of Northern acquiescence in the result, or the submission of the South to the pressure of a Northern majority. And as it is manifest that the submission of the South in this case will reduce that section to a mere dependency of the North, we may safely anticipate the most determined Southern resistance against all attempts and all devices to set aside the Lecompton Constitution.

The South cannot now with safety consent to abandon the good old principle of adjusting the slavery question in the admission of new States, under which a slave State and a free State have been admitted or provided for at the same time since the adoption of the federal constitution. On the other hand, the crisis is altogether unfavorable for any attempt to coerce the South into submission. Years ago the religious bonds which had united the North and South in holy communion in the great Protestant churches of the confederacy were broken asunder. Since that day the old social relations of fraternity and harmony which once existed between the two sections have been changed into sectional hates and prejudices, and organizations of a sectional character, social, religious, literary and political, including sectional churches, sectional schools, sectional books, Southern committees of inspection and Northern underground railroads, have been formed.

Superadded to all this, our late disastrous financial revulsion has unhinged and thrown into chaos all our previously existing commercial relations with the South, as well as with Europe. Hence the minds of Southern men and of Northern men have become unsettled concerning the financial and commercial reciprocities which should be paramount between the two sections; and many a Southern politician for the first time is beginning to calculate the material advantages of Southern confederacy. Hence this sudden and general Southern *furor* in behalf of Walker and his filibustering programme for "a great Southern confederacy based upon military principles."

With this state of things subsisting between the two sections, the refusal of the North to admit Kansas as a Slave State may prove to be the last parcel which breaks the camel's back. The provocation to the South will only be the more pointed and offensive from the fact that two new free States are at the same time awaiting their admission into the Union. Will the Northern members of Congress, then, insist upon the rejection of the Lecompton Constitution because of its recognition of slavery? We hope not. Or, will the Southern members consent to it? If they do, they will show to the world that all their complaints, grievances and threatenings, and all their Southern rights movements, plans and combinations of the last thirty years, have all been empty bluster, fuss and fury, gas and humbug.

Our present impression is, however, that, as the case stands, unless Kansas shall be admitted to the South in the way of an equivalent to the South for the admission of the new free States of Minnesota and Oregon, the Southern members of the two houses will adopt a very bold and startling movement in retaliation. We are persuaded that with the rejection of Kansas as a slave State they will withdraw in a body from Congress, issue a manifesto from Washington requiring the Southern State Legislatures to take the matter in hand; and that, having done this, the said Southern members of Congress will await in Washington their recall home, or their orders for a surrender, at discretion, to the will of a northern majority. In a word, this Kansas difficulty has been reduced to a solution by the Lecompton Convention, to which the North may consent, without even losing Kansas, but from which the South cannot retreat without humiliation and disgrace. A few days more and we shall know the drift of the wind.