THE NORTH CAROLINA STAR.

THOMAS J. LEMAY, Editor. NORTH CAROLINA—"Powerful in intellectual, moral and physical resources, the land of our sires and home of our affections." LEONIDAS B. LEMAY, Associate Editor.

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ADDRESS
OF THE NASHVILLE CONVENTION
TO THE
PEOPLE OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING STATES.

The following is the address put forth by the Nashville Convention to the people of the Southern States:

To the people of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Missouri and Arkansas:

FELLOW CITIZENS:—In obedience to the commands of those we represent, we have assembled together to confer with each concern your relation with the general government and the non-slaveholding states of the Union on the subject of the institution of slavery. We deem it proper to lay before you, as briefly as the subject will permit, the result of our deliberations and councils.

In order that your condition may be understood, and the conclusions at which we have arrived be justly appreciated, it is necessary briefly to refer to a few past transactions.

It is now sixteen years since the institution of slavery in the south began to be agitated in Congress and resulted by our sister states,—Up to that time, the people of the northern states seem to have respected the rights reserved to the southern states by the constitution, and to have acted under the conviction that the subject of slavery being beyond the legislation of Congress, all agitation with respect to it on the part of Congress was equally forbidden by the constitution. But, at this time, a portion of the people of the north began to assail in Congress the institution of slavery, and to accompany the introduction of the agitating subject with petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and other places under the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, and against what they call the internal slave trade—that is, the transmission of slaves from one southern state to another. Conscious of the fatal tendency of the agitation of slavery in Congress to destroy the peace and stability of the Union, an effort was made, supported by a large portion of the northern representatives, to suppress it by a rule in the House of Representatives which provided that all petitions on the subject of slavery should be neither considered, printed, nor referred. This rule was assailed by the people of the northern states, as violating that clause of the constitution which prohibits Congress from passing laws to prevent the people from peaceably assembling and petitioning for a redress of grievances. In December, 1844, this rule fell before the almost unanimous voice of the north; and thus the unlimited power of introducing and considering the subject of slavery in Congress was asserted.

In the mean time, the course of the northern people showed clearly that the agitation of slavery in Congress was only one of the means they relied on to overthrow this institution throughout the Union. Newspapers were set up amongst them, and lecturers were hired to go abroad to excite them against slavery in the southern states. Organizations were formed to carry off slaves from the south and to protect them by violence from recapture. Although the constitution requires that fugitive slaves, like fugitives from justice, should be rendered up by the states to which they may have fled, the Legislatures of almost every northern state, faithless to this treaty stipulation between the states, passed laws designed and calculated entirely to defeat this provision of the constitution, without which the Union would have never existed, and by these laws virtually nullified the act of 1794, passed by Congress to aid its enforcement. Not content with the agitation of slavery in political circles, the northern people forced it also into the religious associations extending over the Union, and produced a separation of the Methodist and Baptist churches.

The result of all these various methods of assailing slavery in the southern states, was, that it became the grand topic of interest and discussion in Congress and one of the most important elements of politics in the Union. Thus an institution, belonging to the southern states exclusively, was wrested from their exclusive control; and, instead of that protection which is the great object to fall government, and which the Convention of the United States guaranteed to all the states and their institutions, the northern states, and Congress under their control, combined together to assail and destroy slavery in the south. The southern states did nothing to vindicate their rights and arrest this course of things. The Mexican war broke out, and, instead of that patriotic co-operation of all section of the Union, which would have taken place at the better days of the Republic, we came into a just and honorable acquisition of territory, the northern abolitionists, in the very first appropriation of property it was made, undertook to divide the southern section of the Union by the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso, which, if it had succeeded, would have given to the non-slaveholding states, in the distribution of the territory, all the benefits to be derived from its occupancy, and would have left to the people of the south, who were to be equally taxed with the northern people for the support of the government, the burden of defending the south against the Indians and Mexicans, without any compensation. Your rights, your property, your honor, your safety, your all, was thus put in jeopardy. The Wilmot Proviso was but the first of a long series of measures of the same character, which, if not defeated, must have ended in the ruin of the south. Some of these measures were the admission of California with her present boundaries, including a large portion of the territory which you had acquired by treaty, the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and the prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia; and 4th, provisions for the recapture of fugitive slaves in the non-slaveholding states. To understand whether these measures are consistent with our rights and worthy of our acceptance, each of them must be considered separately.

The south is excluded by the bill from the whole of that part of California lying in the Pacific including one hundred and fifty thousand square miles of territory; and, if this be done by the legislation of Congress, it matters in which it is done is of no importance. California belongs to the United States, and all according by the individuals in that territory, whether from the United States, or from the rest of the world, appropriating the soil to themselves by erecting a government over it, is of no validity. They constitute a people in no sense out of the Union; but are citizens of the state or country from which they have come, and to which they still owe their allegiance.—When they have Congress to impose territory out and admit in the area of these individuals, creating California into a state and excluding slavery therefrom, it is the same thing as if Congress had originally passed a law to this effect without the intervention of these individuals. The exclusion of slavery from California is done by the act of Congress, and by no other authority. The Constitution of California becomes the act of Congress, and the Wilmot proviso mentioned is the Wilmot proviso passed and enforced by the legislation of Congress.

But this is not the conclusion of the business by the act of Congress, which almost excludes southern citizens from California, has declared that it and subject to plunder and practically enforce by this act. A free people cannot be satisfied with the mode in which they are deprived of their rights. A sovereign state will disdain to acquiesce in what may be, in the stripped of its property, and degraded from its equality with her sister states. It is enough that the outrage is done. The mode is of little consequence. There is, therefore, in the mode of extending the Wilmot proviso over the territory of California presented by the bill nothing to mitigate the indignation of the southern states, or to baffle their determination to redress the wrong, if inflicted. They are excluded from the whole territory of California, a territory large enough to contain four large states.

If the concessions proposed by California contained nothing about slavery, would the north allow her to enter the Union? Such were the territorial bills proposed for California at the last Congress, but they rejected them, because the south was not excluded from this territory, in express terms. The inhabitants of this territory have been left without any civil government, solely because the south would not consent to be legislated out of them with her institutions; and, now that this object is accomplished by the constitution presented by California, these conservatives—these advocates of law and order—are eager to admit her, without right or precedent, into the Union. We are aware of the inconvenience the inhabitants of California may have suffered for want of a civil government established by Congress; and therefore, are prepared to yield much on account of the circumstances in which they have been placed. In the resolutions we have adopted and submit for your approbation, you will perceive that we recommend you to assent to the admission of California as a state on certain conditions.

The next measure is in perfect keeping with the first feature of "the compact." It takes from Texas territory sufficient for two large states, and adds them to New Mexico. What the bill contains with respect to slavery will be of little consequence; for it is designed that next winter New Mexico thus constituted shall follow the example of California and be admitted as a state with a constitution excluding slavery from its limits—for without such exclusion, she cannot hope to be admitted by the non-slaveholding states into the Union.—The effect will be, that territory, over which slavery now exists, equal to two states, will be wrested from the South, and will be given up to the non-slaveholding states. The pretext is, that there is some doubts as to the boundaries of Texas. Texas, by her laws, when she was admitted into the Union, had but one boundary toward the West, and that boundary was the Rio Grande.

Yet the pretension is set up that her territory does not extend to within three hundred miles of the Missouri compromise line, where Congress, in recording her into the Union, determined that her territory should be divided between the slave holding and non-slaveholding States. Texas is the only State in the Union which has the solemn guarantee of the government of the United States in every possible form to her boundaries. Yet this is the government which disputes them; and under the pretext that they are very doubtful, proposes to take from her nearly one half her territory. It is by virtue of such pretensions that by the bill 2 States are to be taken from the Southern and given to the Northern States, and this wrong is aggravated by compelling us to pay for it through the Treasury of the United States.

Congress, in the resolutions admitting her into the Union, recognized this boundary, by laying down a line of limitation between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States—being the Missouri compromise line—the extension of the Union has ventured to advocate something of justice to the south, he has been rebuked by the Legislature of the state he represents, and virtually denounced for his fidelity to the constitution. This resource, then, under the ordinary operations of the constitution, is of no avail.

And how is it with the present Congress, the only other source of redress in the usual administration of the constitution? For six months it has been in session, and during this whole period of time slavery has been the absorbing topic of discussion and agitation. Yet nothing has been done to heal the discontents which so justly exists in the south, or restore a bleeding constitution. All we have received has been bitter denunciations of our institutions by many members of Congress, and threats to coerce us into submission.—Although nothing has been done, a report has been made in the Senate by a committee of thirteen members which is pending in that body; and as the measures it proposes have been pressed upon the south as unworthy of her acceptance, it is proper to lay before you a brief consideration of the matters it contains.

The report embraces four distinct measures: 1st, the admission of California as a state, with the exclusion of slavery in her constitution; 2d, territorial governments to be created over the territories of Utah and New Mexico, with nearly one half of Texas to be added to the latter; 3d, the prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia; and 4th, provisions for the recapture of fugitive slaves in the non-slaveholding states. To understand whether these measures are consistent with our rights and worthy of our acceptance, each of them must be considered separately.

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