

Political.

The Power of Congress to Legislate on Slavery.

Mr. BEATTY:—The great question before the people is slavery in the Territories. If the legislation of the National Congress hereafter upon this subject was safe, wise and constitutional, adherence to its action is the true conservative doctrine of the country—the real safeguard of the Union.

The Constitution was "ordained to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." To secure the blessings of liberty, not the evils of slavery, was the great climax in that enumeration of its objects which constitutes its preamble.

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EXAMPLES OF LEGISLATION ON SLAVERY. In 1787 the Continental Congress accepted the session of all the territory north of the Ohio and westward of the Mississippi, made by Virginia, and applied what is now called the ordinance of '87, prohibiting slavery or involuntary servitude forever, except for crime, in the entire territory.

This movement of the revolutionary fathers to rid the world of the responsibility, and the country from the evils of Slavery, was not a Northern measure. The whole South supported it with entire unanimity.

The ordinance of '87 consecrated all the North-west Territory to free men, free labor, and free institutions. Five great states are already formed out of it, which for wealth, enterprise, intelligence and progress, stand without a parallel in this or any other country.

Had the Government been administered in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, this would have been the last exercise of a prohibitory power, as the whole territory of the nation was covered by this prohibition, and the argument based upon the right of the South to carry Slaves into the public domain would never have been invented.

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The Missouri Compromise was proposed by the South through Mr. Thomas, Senator from Illinois, who had uniformly voted with the Slave States against all restriction on the State of Missouri, and it was adopted by 34 yeas against 10 noes.

Mr. Monroe, the President, felt the responsibility of the case, and, before giving the bill his signature, proposed in writing to each member of his Cabinet the following interrogatories: "Has Congress a right, under the power vested in it by the Constitution, to make a regulation prohibiting Slavery in a Territory?"

stant for the admission of Missouri into the Union consistent with the Constitution?"

The Cabinet was unanimous as to the constitutionality of restraining Slavery in the Territories. Calhoun being a member of this Cabinet of course was satisfied that Congress possessed the power which had just been exercised, or surely he would, at once, as one of the President's constitutional advisers, have challenged the measure as unconstitutional.

During the session of 1837, Mr. Calhoun introduced a resolution, admitting the power of the Federal Government over Slavery in the Territories; but deprecating its abolition where it existed on grounds of expediency, which being slightly modified at the instance of Mr. Clay, passed the Senate by a vote of 35 yeas to 9 nays.

The resolution admitting Texas as a State of the Union, also recognizes the power of Congress to legislate on Slavery. Mr. Milton Brown's proposition for annexation contained this clause: "And such States as may be formed out of that portion of the said territory lying south of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude, commonly known as the Missouri compromise line, shall be admitted into the Union, with or without Slavery, as the people of each State asking admission may desire."

To be continued.

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