us. But this is an extreme statement, responsive to a still more extreme suggestion.

The history of political parties in this country for many years past, is not creditable to us; and their present posture is such that no one can fortell what a single year will bring forth. If the whole North could act in concert permanently, they must have the permanent control of the Federal Government; and the wide conviction of the North, that the whole policy of the General Government has been for some years dictated by the slave States, and the whole policy of the slave States dictated by the cotton States, has come very near to casting the majority of every Northern State temporarily into the Republican ranks. It would be an abuse of the Federal power, not less atrocious certainly, to extend than to curtail slavery by the systematic use of it; and the North has believed that this was done, and the rise and extension of the Republican party is the fruit of this conviction. Disabuse the North of this delusion—do it fairly, truly—and the Republican party will shrink at once to the comparatively insignificant faction of radical abolitionists upon whom it was originally based. On the other hand, the united South never could fail to carry with it, in all its just demands, and in all its temperate utterance, a sufficient number of the States of the North to make the rights and interests of the Slave States perfectly secure in the Union. This is all the control any minority can justly claim under a free constitution; and this is never lost under such a constitution, except by gross mismanagement. If, therefore, there is a foregone conclusion to break up the Confederacy, the alleged tenor of the Republican party will answer as a pretext; but Kentucky dreads no party, and will use no such pretext, but will make any party in power respect her rights.

If, on the other hand, there is a true desire to perpetuate the Union, no one is warranted in saying that the Republican party cannot be prevented from coming into power; or that, even if it should come into power, the nation would not be both competent and resolved to keep it in proper bounds, or arm and suppress it. I grant that hardly a greater evil can fasten on the politics of the country than to treat them by geographical lines, or array parties upon questions touching which the interests or convictions of different sections of the country are supposed to be entirely antagonistic. The present posture of the country is the fruit of this political treatment of slavery, and the present condition of the representatives of the people in the Lower House of Congress, is a most offensive symptom of the public health under that treatment.

The question of slavery in the Territories, practically developed as that question was in the case of Kansas, has probably had greater influence than any other, both upon the present condition of political parties and in bringing the public mind to its present agitated state. The issue to which the question in its abstract form and in the Democratic party has been brought is this: that on one side the people of the South very generally believe and claim that the Supreme Court has decided that every slaveholder has the constitutional right to take slaves into every Territory, and neither Congress nor the people of the Territory have any power to prevent this: in other words, that every Territory is, by the Constitution of the United States, a slave Territory. On the other side, the Democratic party at the North very generally and decidedly repudiate these statements as untrue and these claims as monstrous; and assert for the people of each Territory constitutional power to determine and regulate for themselves the question of slavery. In the meantime the Republican party, perhaps unanimously, assert that Congress has complete power to

exclude slavery from all the Territories, and desire this power to be exercised in every case as it has been in several. Almost the entire North is therefore directly arrayed against both the fact and the right of what the greater part of the South asserts is the law of the land under the decision of the Supreme Court. In the South itself, however, there is a farther and singular development of opinion. It has been attempted in Kentucky and other Southern States to make it a part of the political creed of the opposition to demand of Congress a slave code for the Territories; while in the same region non-intervention by Congress, except in extremity, if at all, has appeared to be the doctrine of the Democratic party. The result is that the entire North repudiates, and under existing circumstances will continue to repudiate, the idea that the Federal Constitution, or the Supreme Court, makes all the national Territories slave, while almost the entire South believes and claims that all the national Territories are slave by that Constitution. The dispute is enlarged, not settled, not even transferred This is a most calamitous result of attempting to turn over questions pre-eminently political to tribunals wholly judicial; as if public men were warranted in supposing that great nations, in the highest state of political excitement, believed any more in the infallibility of Judges than they did in the infallibility of Senators, Kings or Popes.

Even if the decision of the Supreme Court had been so clear that no man could doubt what was decided, and so cogent that no man could gainsay its justice as between the parties to the particular cause then heard, it would have been a miracle if the decision had settled any political question. Its main effect was obliged to be—let the decision be what it might—to exasperate all parties, and to render any peaceful adjustment of any aspect of the slave question far more difficult than before. In truth, the constitutional right which the South supposes she has secured can be of no practical value, even if it were universally conceded. For if she remains in the Union, she cannot carry on the foreign slave trade; and unless she can do that she cannot profitably send slaves enough into any Territory we possess, nor masters enough with those she may send to prevent their emancipation as soon as the Territory becomes a State. The experiment in Kansas is surely decisive. If, on the other hand, any portion of the South will deem it a sufficient reason to secede, that more slaves may be imported from Africa, and new slave Territories formed; either, half the slave States will not secede for that reason, or if all secede and a Confederacy of all the States is formed, that Confederacy cannot be expected to allow the African slave trade to be renewed. With regard to slavery in the Territories and the power of the General Government over the subject, there never could be any subject concerning which wise, just, moderate, and forbearing conduct was more imperatively demanded—none with regard to which the opposing interests of the two great divisions of the nation ought to be treated with more scrupulous fairness. If ever such a temper and such a spirit shall return to the counsels of the Republic, the temporary and disputed power of Congress over the subject cannot fail to be exerted in some manner satisfactory to opposing claimants. But so long as parties, on one side or the other, seek by every means to assert extreme claims, irrespective of equally extreme claims, in others, nothing remains but to fight the question out in each Territory, or, what is worse, to fight it out over the ruins of the Republic, or what is worst of all, break up the Union and fight it out afterwards. As a Southern man, I deplored and still deplore the repeal of the Missouri compromise as a great political error, pre-eminently injurious to the South. As an American citizen I deplore the fearfully undue importance which

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)—May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

1860