was going on in the North, and Southern arrogance and abuse helped it along.

With the South smarting under a sense of existing wrongs and filled with forebodings of greater and permanent future ones; with the Northern Democrats feeling sure of defeat for the party and political ruin to themselves if further concessions to Southern views were made; with the Republicans, a young party made up largely of young men, eager for the fray, hopeful of success, sure of being right and determined to stop the spread of slavery; with many sober-minded Americans, most of them old men, fearful of disunion and its incalculable consequence, the Presidential year had begun.

CHAPTER XIX

DEMOCRACY'S GREAT DEBACLE

1857-1861

The Charleston Convention—The Two Platforms—Disruption—Two Conventions—Constitutional Democrats and Regulars—Adjournment Con
tvention at Baltimore—Another Ball—Douglas Nominated by Re
gulars—Douglas's Letter Offering to Withdraw—Breckenridge Nominated
by Roling Convention—Constitutional Democrats Endorse Him—
Constitutional Union Convention Names Bell—Republican Convention
Nominates Lincoln—The Platforms—The Campaign—The Tariff—Ef
forts to Fuse—The Returns—Buchanan's Task and Performance—
Scott's View—Undecidedness of Country—Buchanan's Policy and Lin
coln's—Buchanan—The Party.

The Eighth Democratic National Convention assembled at
Charleston April 23, 1860, with full delegations from every state.
From contemporaneous accounts it seems that if those Democrats
who witnessed the 1854 Democratic Convention in New York
would divide its size by five and multiply by the same figure the
intensity, the heat, passion and disension manifested there, they
could form a fair conception of the Charleston gathering. Whom
the gods would destroy they first make mad was often and aptly
quoted at Charleston in 1860.

The conditions preceding the convention resembled much the
Democratic conditions of 1827-8. For a year and more the
Northern wing of the party had proclaimed a candidate to whom
the Southern wing was strongly opposed. The question was
constantly agitated whether or not the South would support
Douglas if he were nominated. Some said that he would not
carry a single Gulf state; others that the South would stand by
the ticket, but very reluctantly; while others maintained that
there were a great many Douglass men in the South who for
various reasons were unwilling to avow their sentiments. On the
way to the convention a Mississippi delegate bet an Indiana
Douglass delegate $1,000 that Douglass, if nominated, would not
carry Mississippi, but other delegates protested and the wager
was withdrawn.

There was a great seeking in the months preceding the con
vention by the Douglass men for a popular Southerner to take
The prominent party, the one of the Democratic Party, proposed the direct election of the President. Instead of the nomination of the party to most of the members of the Congress, the direct election of the President by the people would provide the party with better political advantage. The direct election of the President would result in the interest of the party for the good of the country. It would also result in the interest of the party for the good of the country.
The section of the motion was:

"Resolved, that it is the sense of the Convention that the Convention make the following recommendations to the Democratic Party:

1. The Convention recommends the adoption of the plank of the Democratic Party which advocates the recognition of the right of self-determination for all peoples, and the promotion of peace and prosperity for all nations.

2. The Convention recommends the adoption of the plank of the Democratic Party which advocates the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

3. The Convention recommends the adoption of the plank of the Democratic Party which advocates the expansion of social security and the protection of the rights of workers.

4. The Convention recommends the adoption of the plank of the Democratic Party which advocates the protection of civil liberties and the promotion of democratic governance.

5. The Convention recommends the adoption of the plank of the Democratic Party which advocates the promotion of international cooperation and the prevention of conflicts.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Jones."
THE STORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

In 1812, the Democratic Party was created as a response to the Federalist Party. The Democratic Party was founded by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who wanted to create a party that represented the interests of the common people.

The Democratic Party's platform focused on issues such as the protection of individual rights, the expansion of democracy, and the reduction of federal debt. The party opposed the Federalist desire for a strong central government and supported the idea of a weak federal government that was primarily responsible for national defense.

The Democratic Party was instrumental in the passage of the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed individual freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, and the press. The party also advocated for the expansion of federal authority and the federalization of the economy.

The Democratic Party's influence grew over time, and it had a dominant role in American politics for most of the 19th century. However, the party faced challenges during this period, including internal divisions and the rise of the Republican Party.

In the 20th century, the Democratic Party continued to adapt to changing political landscapes. The party has had a leading role in the passage of several landmark pieces of legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

Today, the Democratic Party remains a major force in American politics, and it continues to advocate for issues such as social justice, equality, and the protection of individual rights.
in states where Lincoln was strongest. The complete votes were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Douglas</th>
<th>Breckenridge</th>
<th>Bell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popular Vote</td>
<td>1,986,452</td>
<td>1,370,957</td>
<td>840,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Vote</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the vote in the slave states Breckenridge received 674,009; Bell, 512,000; Douglas, 162,000, and Lincoln, 22,000. Thus a majority of over 20,000 votes were against Breckenridge in those states. In the free states Douglas received 1,115,000 votes to 285,000 for Breckenridge. The two Democratic tickets received a total of 260,000 more votes than the Republican single ticket. All these figures are affected by the fact that they do not embrace South Carolina’s vote.

It was in the face of threatened and practically certain secession that Buchanan prepared his final message. Three months later Lincoln faced the fact accomplished; Buchanan’s task was the more delicate—to avert secession if possible.

It is not necessary to discuss the right of secession further than to outline the situation confronting the Democratic President—the attitude of the public mind of his day on the question. Secession had been advocated, threatened, denounced, and deplored in every section of the country at one time or another ever since the government had been formed. Only Jackson and Webster of the great leaders had ever squarely denied the right, and Webster in 1851 had declared that if the free states did not carry out the constitutional duty of restoring escaped slaves the “slave states were not bound to observe the compact of Union.” It is not improbable that in 1860 two Americans out of three believed a state had a right to secede either as a constitutional or a revolutionary right, or were in doubt over the question. Republicans such as Charles Francis Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge and others grant a much larger percentage.

A President, unlike a king, governs under a special, not a general, commission. His party platform on which he is elected by the people is his commission—the sanctioned policy and program of the country for his four years of administration. If party government in America does not mean this, it means little or nothing save a struggle for offices. Buchanan’s commission had distinctly asserted that adherence to the constitutional guaranty of slavery and a faithful execution of the Compromises of 1850 were necessary to the continuance of the Union. The platforms of the three contending parties had all negatived interference with the rights of the states. The election of 1860 had shown a two-thirds vote against the cardinal doctrine of the Republican platform—“the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in the territories.” All parties had declared for the continuance of the Union.

The election of 1860, just held, gave little indication of any fundamental change in popular opinion. The Republican candidate, though elected, had received less than forty per cent of the popular vote; the two wings of the Democratic Party, differing materially only on one phase of the question, had polled forty-seven and a half per cent of the total vote. The Republicans lacked 500,000 of a majority; the Democrats, allowing for South Carolina’s vote, lacked scarcely 50,000. No certain voice of the people of the United States told Buchanan their will.

Buchanan’s final message reviewed the situation and the course of events leading up to it. That the slave states had just cause to secede he strongly contended. For more than three-fourths of the time the government had been in existence they had been practically in control; there was not one federal law in existence infringing their rights and the federal courts upheld them. The mere election as President of a fellow citizen of an opposing party was no just cause for dissolving the Union; the agitation of the slavery question by the Abolitionists was censured and the state laws inimical to the enforcement of the fugitive slave law, but these evils, he said, could be remedied by courts and Congress.

The right of a state to secede was vigorously denied, but he could find in the Constitution no power given to the President or to Congress either, to carry out the state. The remedy he proposed was amendments to the Constitution, and he called on Congress to propose to the several states the remedy for the existing evils.

Horace Greeley in his Tribune, the leading exponent of public opinion in the North, was saying: “If the cotton states shall decide that they can do better out of the Union than in it, we insist on letting them go in peace.” Greeley, who had brought about Lincoln’s nomination, surely represented Republican opinion. Indeed, he was called the Republican oracle.

The most illuminating evidence of the state of public opinion with which Buchanan had to deal is “Scott’s Views,” an official letter from the commanding general of the United States army to the President. Scott was a hero of the War of 1812, our commander-in-chief in the Mexican War, long a leading Whig and in 1852 that party’s candidate for President, and, withal, a man of unquestioned loyalty.

General Scott unequivocally conceded the right of secession, and suggested, and outlined geographically, four possible “new Unions” as a smaller evil than the one Confederacy forming. He
The story of the Democratic Party

By

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