Masonic Home,
Wichita, Kansas, MJDPJDG.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Your letter of recent date came very soon after I had written you, but too late to recall my letter. I hope that this crossing of the mail has not caused you any uneasiness.

Yes, the Nebraska bill when first introduced made no mention of slavery. Then Senator Atchison, President pro tempore of the Senate, and a leader in the slavery-ectension cabal, proposed that Douglas resign his position as chairman of the Committee on Territories. This was then a powerful committee, and Douglas' attitude on the subject of slavery was not agreeable to the cabal. His resignation would have played directly into the hand of these gentlemen. He seems to have an uncanny way of knowing the purposes of these men, and doubtless knew that they had the votes to put him out. He did not urge the repeal of the Mo. Compromise. Rather, it seems to me, he submitted to it, as the lessof two evels.

In order to understand the workings of Douglas' mind we must take into consideration the condition of his party. It was sadly divided on the slavery question. at this time, 1854, he was a very prominent leader, and steadily grew in power. his strength lay principally in four States of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pensylvania, al of which were strongly democratic. These free (four) State Democrats would not have slavery among themselves, but for the most part were not concerned with the agitation for the abolition of the Institution. A man who said that slavery was wrong looked to them, or many of them, like an abolitionist. Therefore Douglas' lips were sealed on that subject. His concern was chiefly for the integrity of the Union. He knew that secession was brewing. It had been threatened more than once. If the slavery-extensionists could not have a free hand, it would come to the fore again. His action in introducing the amendment saved him the chairmanship, and kept the control of this powerful committee out of the hands of the cabal. At the same time he protected the rights of the settlers in the right to decide for themselves the character of their domestic institutions.

Mr. Wilmot had a perfectly legal right to introduce his Proviso. But in so doing he did violate the spirit of the Mo. Compromise, which gave to the people of the region south of thirty-six-thirth the right to have slavery or not as they should see fit. Congress had a perfect right to adopt that proviso, if it should see fit, but to do so would deny to the people of that region the right to have slavery, as provided in the Compromise, ~~and yartngotr biolsyrf yhr dpitiy og yhr~~ Compromise.

Now it is possible that I am attributing to Douglas some sentiments which he did not entertain. But I think that they fit into the history of the case peefectly. One reason why I am so anxious to get the story that he was offerred the leadership of the new party is to know more of the reasons of his actions. he m

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must have disclosed some of the inner workings of his mind in his refusal.

Indeed, I find what seems to me a close parallel between Lincoln and Douglas on the subject of slavery, the apparent differences between them was due to environment ~~K~~ not of real purpose. Lincoln preached the wrong of slavery. This, for the reasons given above, Douglas could not do. Lincoln wanted the abolition vote, but was careful to explain that he was not an abolitionist.

I read a curious story once, which I have been trying to relocate. Perhaps you can help me to do so. Lincoln made a speech at the State Fair grounds, and went home. Soon a messenger came with the information that a group of abolutionists had held a consultation, and were coming to assure him of their support. Now he was glad to have their support, but he did not want to get it in that way. Hurriedly hitching up his horse to the buggy, he called Robert, and drove to the country.

Now I am afraid that I am going to shock you. I believe the election of Douglas to succeed himself in the Senate to have been most fortunate. It is to me unthinkable that Lincoln could have ~~kakdxkhaxxxx~~led the free-State Democrats to join the Republicans in defeating the bill to force Kansas into the Union with the Lecompton Constitution. Yet twenty-two of them did so with the leadership of Douglas. A change of three votes out of twenty-two would have made Kansas a free State.

I thank you sincerely for your suggestions as to the disposition of the article. I do not think that the Kansas Hist. Soc. publishes a magazine. I have never heard of it. but wil write my ~~fr~~ friend Kirk Meacham, the Sec'y, for information. I shall also write the Ills. Soc'y, and ask if anybody there knows about the all-important Story. I got the American Conflict from the State libraty the other day, thinking that Mr. Greeley must have known of the story, and might mention it, but he does not. By the way, did you ever print the story that I sent you many years ago about Mr. Greeley's sudden right-about-face toward the Lincoln Adninistration?.

To return to Douhlas. A couple of yers ago I read Mr. Blaine's "Twenty Years Of Congress". To my surprise and displeasure Mr. Blaine, while paying Douglas a well deserved tribute for his stand for the Union, declares flatly that his position on the Kansas question was dictated solely by his desire for place; that Illinois was for a free Kansas, therefore Douglas was for a free kansas. At the same time he accuses him of making concessions to the Southern exponents of slavery, which positions seem to me to be incompatible. Later I read the memoirs of Carl Schurz. I had always had a hearty admiration for Gen'l Schurz, hut in the course of the memoirs I learned that he heard Douglas deliver his Philippics against the secessionists in the Senate; drive them from point ot point to utter annihilation, yet he sees nothing in this worthy of admiration; he sees only a buffoon who threw himself into the lap of a colleague at the close of a speech. And at the Inauguration he saw in Douglas only a convenient peg on which Mr. Lincoln hung his hat. It is not pleasant to have one's ideals and idols shattered. "ith kindest regards, Walter Graves.

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