

Report of the
Committee.

of a large number of their present constitutional representation, otherwise it is said the Southern States will be great gainers by the rebellion.

“The question before Congress,” says the Report, “is whether conquered rebels may change their theatre of operations from the battle field, where they were defeated and overthrown, to the halls of Congress, and through their Representatives seize upon the Government they fought to destroy; whether the National Treasury, the Army of the nation, its Navy, its forts and Arsenals, its whole civil administration, its credit, its pensioners, the widows and orphans of those who perished in the war, the public honor, peace and safety, shall all be turned over to the keeping of its recent enemies without delay and without imposing such conditions, as in the opinion of Congress, the security of the country and its institutions may demand.” It is somewhat difficult to conceive how this “change of base” could be successfully accomplished.

The institution of domestic servitude and the right of secession, both involving the right of self-government, as it was asserted by the Confederate States, were the subjects of contest upon the “battle field,” where they were defeated and overthrown.”

How “in the Halls of Congress, through their Representatives,” they could hope for better success, reverse the decision of the “battle field” and “seize upon the Government, passes our comprehension.

It is undoubtedly true that freeing the slaves enlarged the basis of representation in the former slave States. But it was an incident which it was well known constitutionally attached to the fact of freedom.

Leaving those States still in a hopeless minority “in the halls of Congress, the incident is small compared with the sum-total of their losses.

It would be inadmissible to question the sincerity of the Reconstruction Committee in their apprehensions of such extreme danger from the admission of Southern Representatives in the halls