

XXXVII

THE BEGINNINGS OF A GREAT CONFLICT

No more words;
Try it with your swords!
Try it with the arms of your bravest and your best!
You are proud of your manhood, now put it to the test.
Not another word;
Try it with the sword!

Franklin Lushington.

225. A House Divided against Itself.—The election of Lincoln did more to stir up bad feeling on the slavery question than anything that had yet happened—more than the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, more than the Dred Scott decision, more than the Brooks-Summer affair, more than John Brown's Raid. The excitement was greatest in the South. The people of the South regarded the triumph of Lincoln as a death-blow to their power. By balancing slave States against free States (p. 224) the South for many years had been able to wield as much power as the North. But in the development of the country the scales had not been kept even. After the admission of Texas (in 1845) not a single slave State had entered the Union, whereas between 1845 and 1860 Iowa, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, and Oregon had all come in as free States, and this admission of free States had given the North control of both houses of Congress. The power of the South had been slipping away long before 1860, and the election of Lincoln seemed to prove beyond doubt that henceforth the North would lead and that the South would be compelled to follow.

The people of the South viewed the new order of things with distrust and alarm. They felt that Lincoln and the Republicans would not treat them fairly. In the campaign the Republicans had declared against the extension of slavery, and they had come into power on that issue. Lincoln also had said that if he was