

THE CIVIL RIGHTS BILL.

The passage of the Civil Rights Bill by both Houses of Congress, by more than a two thirds vote over the President's veto, is an event in the legislation of this country which causes great joy to all who place justice and right above a temporizing policy. To the freedmen it is only a simple act of justice, and the nation owes it, in consistency with itself and in solemn duty to God, to see that all which that bill proposes is sacredly carried out. It is only one step in the line of duty; another one remains for us to take—to give to the emancipated slaves the privilege of the elective franchise. We say it is the *right* of every male over twenty-one years of age, made by that bill a citizen, who has not forfeited that right, by crime, and who is taxed to support the government, to vote on the same conditions as other citizens. We are glad to chronicle thus much of progress; the other step is inevitable. At most, it is only a question of time. The distance from premise to conclusion is so short, the inference is so easy, clear and irresistible, that the American people cannot long withstand conviction on this subject. It can be much more reasonably predicted now, than emancipation could ten years ago. It is as inevitable as progress, as sure to come as time is to roll on. We would like to have the use of the ballot given to the freedmen at once. They need it as an important means of education and elevation; but if compelled to wait for it, we shall wait in certain hope of its realization at no very distant day.

We are sorry that the President had any disposition to veto the bill on its simple merits. We have no doubt that ten years from this time, should he then be alive and sane, he will regret the record which that act has made in his official life. We regret still more that he gave it his veto in defiance of its passage by more than a two thirds vote of both Houses of Congress. It is creditable neither to his head nor to his heart. But we rejoice and thank God that our Senators and Representatives stood firm and strong by the right, and made the bill a law in spite of the Presidential veto. Unless pronounced unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States, the President's oath of office binds him to its execution. It will go upon the Statutes of the nation; and if Andrew Johnson refuses to enforce it, there will arise other Presidents after him who will do their duty.

In the passage of that bill over the veto, we have a real and a glorious triumph of principle over policy, and the people will heartily sustain it. It is a happy coincidence that it passed the House of Representatives on the first anniversary of Lee's surrender of the rebel army to the *inevitable Grant*. An abstract of the bill will be found on the next page.