

# Refuge of Oppression.

## THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

The greatest crime ever committed by a Chief Magistrate of a free people has been perpetrated by the President in the promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation. A few short months ago, Mr. Lincoln compared such a document to "the Pope's bull against the comet"; and he also said that such a proceeding as this contemplates would institute a John Brown raid on a gigantic scale." These expressions most forcibly characterize the Proclamation and the expected results, so far as the effect upon the slave is concerned; for all intelligent men regard it as a stupendous folly as a means of peaceful liberation of the slaves, and as a direct invitation to the perpetration by them of crimes and horrors unexampled in the world's history. It indeed caps the climax of folly and wickedness. No ingenious man can say hereafter, "If the Administration means this," or "If the war contemplates this," the demands of civilization, the most obvious dictates of humanity, honor and common honesty, to say nothing of patriotism, command the withdrawal of support, promptly and irrevocably. We now know what Mr. Lincoln means, so far as he can be said to have a meaning of his own. We know what Mr. Sumner and the whole band of Abolitionists throughout the land mean; and Mr. Lincoln has been and is, to the extent of his limited ability and narrow intelligence, their willing instrument for all the woe that has thus far been brought upon the country, and for all the degradation, all the misery, all the desolation and ruin which is only too palpably before us. It is not that the Constitution, which the Abolitionists have for twenty years and more denounced as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell," is now, at their bidding, deliberately violated and defied by the national Executive sworn to maintain it. It is not that the people have been made to contribute to the overthrow of institutions which from childhood they have respected and revered, by being taxed presently and prospectively to an extent hitherto unknown. It is not that five hundred thousand men have been induced to take their places in the ranks of the army, under false pretences of a purpose to uphold the Constitution and preserve the Union, and that one hundred thousand of them, at least, have poured out their life-blood for the consummation of an object to which they never did give and never could have given their approbation. All this would have been sufficiently replete with a degree of wrong, disgrace and horror which admits of no expression. But what will the world say of a Proclamation, emanating from the President of the United States, not only in defiance of the fundamental law of the country, for the upholding of which he ought to have been willing to pour out his own blood, but ... defiance of all law, human and Divine, which incites the black race in eight entire States, and in parts of two others, to rise, and with all the barbaric features which must be inseparable from a successful slave insurrection, to slay and devastate, without regard to age or sex—without any condition except that the homes smouldering in ashes shall be the homes of the descendants of men whose fathers fought with our fathers the battles of the Revolution, and whose fathers with our fathers formed and upheld the Constitution now scoffed and defied! Yes, and one other—that the women and children, brutally violated and slaughtered, shall be white women and children! What will the civilized world say when they read these words sent forth by the President of the United States, and countersigned by the Secretary of State?—

"And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare, that all persons held in slavery within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the Military and Naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons. \* \* \* And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States," &c.

They will say, and the bitter thing is, they will say truly, that a crime so fearful as that proposed was never before contemplated by any nation, civilized or barbarous.

But the political effect of this atrocious scheme is no less to be deplored and deprecated by all patriotic men. It will divide the North, and unite the South, thus weakening the Union cause and strengthening the rebellion. That such will inevitably be the effect is the universal opinion of honest and disinterested friends of the Union in the South. Upon this point there is no better authority than the Louisville, Ky., Journal, which says:

"The suppression of the rebellion depends upon the accord of the North, seconded by the discord of the South; but the policy of emancipation creates discord in the North, and concord in the South; it augments the strength and heightens the spirit of the rebellion, while it diminishes the strength and depresses the spirit of the nation. \* \* \* It enfeebles and demoralizes us at home, and endangers and disgraces us abroad."

Here is the whole truth upon this point. This Abolition scheme, unconstitutional, partisan, and atrocious in itself, cannot do any good, but is sure to produce immense harm to the cause of the Union, at home and abroad; and only those who are blind to the most patent facts, and deaf to all the appeals of reason and patriotism, can doubt it.

If it be too late for the people of the United States to utter a voice which shall terrify duplicity and rebuke fanaticism; if it be too late to rescue the people from ruin, financial and political,—is it too late to stay the reckless march of barbarism, to save the remnants of our honor as may warrant us to claim and to deserve a place among the civilized peoples of the earth?—*New Hampshire Patriot.*

The proclamation for emancipating ALL the slaves in the States and parts of States in which majorities of the people are in rebellion, is before the world. Of no avail has it been that eminent jurists have demonstrated with the force of a demonstration in Euclid, that the President has no authority to free slaves en masse, either by constitutional law or by the war power; of no avail is it that the majority of the people hate the pure abolition programme, of which this is the crowning; nothing is it that it tends to embitter and divide the North, and to unite and separate the South; nothing is it that none asked for it but the fanatics, and that an array of intellect, character, patriotism from the West, the Middle States and Border States protested against it. The world is before the world. It is the last card—to use the words of the Oswego Gazette (Republican)—of the imbeciles and crazy-headed fanatics whose proposals have proved so disastrous." Its terms fairly subvert the first Proclamation, calling for seventy thousand men; for they in theory substitute the negro, in the place of the lawful war for the Union and the Constitution. But LAW is not

obliterated by official acts that go out from the pale of law. Who does not know that municipal boards, legislatures, Congress, misled by faction or by imbecility, pass acts which, because beyond the limitations of law set down by the sovereign power, are embodied in the RULES OF THE CONSTITUTION, are pronounced null and void; and then popular uprisings at the polls sweep away the violators with every expression of public indignation?

The idea that, in our polity, one man can possibly have the enormous power, in war or in peace, to so change the local institutions of the States of this land as to determine relations that shall exist between eight millions of whites and four millions of blacks, is so monstrous that we wonder patriotic men can give it a thought. This is kingly power. This old world rulers did when they said, "The State—it is me." This may be Oriental or European, but it is not Republican or American. The only power that the citizen of the United States bows to is the LAW of the land. ALL WILL OF COURSE RANGE THEMSELVES UNDER THE WILL OF THE LAW, as Jefferson's great words; and this law is embodied in the Constitution, so far as regards the rights of the States, and what is against this law the Courts will pronounce null and void. For instance: When the rebellion is over, the law-makers in Virginia, in all the States which are now called Confederate States, will be those who are constituted such by the local constitutions, beyond a question—anything to the contrary in this or any other proclamation of President Lincoln.

Does the Constitution authorize this proclamation? Ask the fanatics who hounded the President until they won the game! We like their frankness. They say no! They ridicule and laugh to scorn those who say the Constitution does authorize it! and because it does not, they throw it to the winds. They say, too, the Constitution recognized the right of the States to have slavery or not to have it, and therefore it is a covenant with hell; and because of this, they, to get emancipation, boldly propose to go out of the pale of the Constitution, and said so. They teach that this instrument is no law to them. Theirs is the higher law! Are we not writing the precise truth? This is treason, but it is not the low cunning of hypocrisy, which, while it overrides the supreme law, insults also the public intelligence by pretending to observe it. With this set, it is not organic law—it is not popular power, moving sublimely on in appointed channels—they claim to be guided by; but majorities to produce results they go for, let the law of the land be what it may. This is physical force. It is the mob! Its type is Robespierre.

Does the war power authorize this proclamation? What has been said as to this war power by profound jurists is as conclusive as reason itself. This power simply is, a right to use the physical force of the chief of an army to knock away obstructions in the way of successful military operations. It is as wide in breadth as the range of his cannon, and is as permanent as the time he occupies in his operations. Washington could lawfully, at Germantown, have battered down Chew's house, as he occupied fields and gardens; but after he passed away, did the land, or what might remain of the house, garden and field, become thence the property of Washington? or of the country? How ridiculous! Yet the arbitrary power that is now, at the instance of radicalism, summoned to gratify party, decrees millions of slaves to be free forever! Of course, this must mean free quite independent of the local law-making power; free in the places where they live!!

It is, however, beyond the power of one man to change the supreme law of our country. This will stand as the permanent. This law recognizes the volume of written and unwritten law, known as the State, to which each State, as coequal, is indebted to the comforts of Home. When the rebellion is under, this fact must remain. It is above and beyond official reach. For the sake, then, of the great Government of the Fathers, for the sake of the human race, let there be no other thought than that of standing by the constituted authorities as against the rebellion. Outside of this is anarchy. Let the patriotic reflect that, in our system, there is a legal way of righting every wrong. Is it asked, must things go as they are going on two years more? Let it be remembered that December brings a new Congress; that the voice of the people will continue to rise higher and higher for the grand Union of the Fathers; and that this public opinion will command a return to the Constitution as the only means of saving the Republic.—*Boston Post.*

We consider this *pronunciamento* unnecessary, unwise and ill-timed, impracticable, outside of the Constitution, and full of mischief. Its first effects will be more thoroughly to unite and exasperate the whites of the South in their resistance to the Government of the Union than they have ever been united heretofore, and to establish over their slaves a more rigid surveillance and discipline than ever heretofore exercised over them. No signs of disaffection among them will be permitted beyond the lines of our armies; or should they, hap-hazard, break out into revolts and massacres, after the fashion of Nat. Turner, in his Southampton slaughter, the desired plea will be furnished for armed European intervention to put an end to what then may be properly called this inhuman war. President Lincoln evidently has some misgivings upon this point, or he would not enjoin the slaves concerned to "abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence." He seems to realize the danger that, in sowing the wind, he may reap the whirlwind. But let us hope that this proclamation will prove nothing worse than a nullity, and a harmless tub to the abolition white. It will assuredly do no good as a war measure while our fleets and armies are held at bay around the edges of the rebellion. President Lincoln may issue a new emancipation proclamation every day in the week through the winter, but unless, in the meantime, we shall have expelled Jeff. Davis and his government from Virginia, all these emancipation decrees will be in truth as ridiculous as the Pope's "bull against the comet."—*N. Y. Herald.*

For the most part, it was regarded as a farce coming in after a long tragedy, while a few radical people seem to have had great faith in it, and were fully of the opinion that the rebellion was at an end from and after the date of its issue. The President endeavors to whittle the weapon into a shape to suit all sorts of people. He declares it to be wholly on military grounds, but elsewhere pleads that it is an act of justice. He seems quite uncertain whether he did it as a great apostle of freedom, or as a great soldier. With all respect to him, we are compelled to believe that he is neither of these, and we have no confidence in the usefulness of the weapon he wields, or in the justice of the act he has performed. On the contrary, we know that in places like Key West, where he commands his army to free the slaves of loyal men, without compensation or the hope of compensation, he has done a great injustice, for which there is no excuse. In such places he has accomplished the ruin of white men, and indirectly injured their Northern creditors and friends.—*New York Journal of Commerce.*