

THE OPINIONS

OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

UPON

SLAVERY AND ITS ISSUES:

INDICATED BY HIS

SPEECHES, LETTERS, MESSAGES, AND PROCLAMATIONS.

The antagonism between Slavery and Freedom, natural. The policy of the Slaveocracy foreshadowed.

From Speech at Springfield, Ill., June 17, 1858.

We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and past. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Have we no tendency to the latter condition? Let any one who doubts carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination, a piece of machinery so to speak, compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision. Let him consider not only what work the machinery is adapted to do, and how well adapted; but also let him study the history of its construction, and trace, if he can, or rather fail if he can, to trace the evidences of design, and concert of action among its chief architects, from the beginning.

The People warned of their danger, and summoned to duty.—From the same.

Such a decision is all that slavery now lacks of being alike lawful in all the States. Welcome or unwelcome, such decision is probably coming, and will soon be upon us, unless the power of the present political dynasty shall be met and overthrown. We shall lie down pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their State free, and we shall awake to the reality, instead, that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave State. To meet and overthrow the power of that dynasty is the work now before all those who would prevent that concentration. That is what we have to do. How can we best do it?

Free hands and earnest hearts only to be trusted.—From the same.

Our cause must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends, those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work, who do care for the result.

The Popular belief, that Slavery was in the course of ultimate extinction, gave the Country peace. Hatred of Slavery.

From Speech at Chicago, July 10, 1865.

I am tolerably well acquainted with the history of the country, and I know that it has endured eighty-two years half slave and half free. I believe it has endured because

during all that time, until the introduction of the Nebraska bill, the public mind did rest all the time in the belief that slavery was in the course of ultimate extinction. That was what gave us the rest that we had through that period of eighty-two years; at least so I believe. I HAVE ALWAYS HATED SLAVERY, I THINK, AS MUCH AS ANY ABOLITIONIST.

Slavery a Vast Moral Evil.—From the same.

The American people look upon slavery as a vast moral evil; they can prove it such by the writings of those who gave us the blessings of liberty which we enjoy; and that they so looked upon it, and not as an evil merely confining itself to the States where it is situated.

The Infallibility of the Dred Scott Decision Questioned.—From the same.

I have never heard of such a thing [the sacredness of the Dred Scott decision.] Why, decisions apparently contrary to that decision have been made by that very court before. It is the first of its kind; it is an astonisher in legal history. It is a new wonder of the world. It is based upon falsehood in the main as to the facts. Allegations of facts, upon which it stands, are not facts at all, in many instances. And no decision made on any question—the first instance of a decision made under so many unfavorable circumstances—thus placed, has ever been held by the profession as law, and it has always needed confirmation before the lawyers regarded it as settled law.

The Manner in which the White and Black Races can do each other most good.—From the same.

I protest now and forever against that counterfeit logic which presumes that because I did not want a negro woman for a slave, I do necessarily want her for a wife. My understanding is that I need not have her for either; but, as God made us separate, we can leave one another alone, and do one another much good thereby. There are white men enough to marry all the white women, and enough black men to marry all the black women; and in God's name let them be so married.

The Declaration of Independence our Bond of Union with all mankind.—From the same.

In every way we are better men in the age, and race, and country in which we live, for these Fourth of July celebrations. But after we have done all this, we have not yet reached the whole. There is something else connected with it. We have, besides these, men—descended by blood from our ancestors—among us, perhaps half our people, who are not descendants at all of these men; they are men who have come from Europe—German, Irish, French, and Scandinavian—men that have come from Europe themselves, or whose ancestors have come hither and settled here, finding themselves our equals in all things. If they look back through this history, to trace their connection with those days by blood, they find they have none; they cannot carry themselves back into that glorious epoch and make themselves feel that they are part of us, but when they look through that old Declaration of Independence, they find that those old men say that "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal;" and then they feel that that moral sentiment taught in that day evidences their relation to those men; that it is the father of all moral principle in them, and that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh, of the men who wrote that Declaration—and so they are. That is the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty loving men together, and will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world.

The assumption that Slavery is right does not stop with one race.—From the same.

Turn in whatever way you will—whether it come from the mouth of a king, an excuse for enslaving the people of his country, or from the mouth of men of one race as a reason for enslaving the men of another race—it is all the same old serpent; and I hold if that course of argumentation that is made for the purpose of convincing the public mind that we should not care about this, should be granted, it does not stop with the negro. I should like to know if, taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principle, and making exception to it, when will it stop? If one man says it does not mean a negro, why not another say it does not mean some other man? If that declaration is not the truth, let us get the statute books, in which we find it, and tear it out. Who is so bold as to do it?

All quibbling as to the equality of mankind must be discarded.—From the same.

Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man—this race and that race, and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position—discarding our standard that we have left us, let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.

The rights of the Negro. An appeal to the Universal sense of justice.

From Speech at Springfield, July 17, 1858.

Certainly the negro is not our equal in color—perhaps not in many other respects: still in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man, white or black. In pointing out that more has been given you, you cannot be justified in taking away the little which has been given him.

The Slaveholder's responsible for all agitation.

From Speech at Joliet, Ill., Sept. 15, 1858.

All the trouble and convulsion has proceeded from efforts to spread slavery over more territory. It was thus at the date of the Missouri Compromise: It was so again with the annexation of Texas; so with the territory acquired by the Mexican war, and it is so now. Whenever there has been an effort to spread it, there has been agitation and resistance. Now, I appeal to this audience, (very few of whom are my political friends,) as national men, whether we have reason to expect that the agitation, in regard to this subject, will cease while the causes that tend to reproduce agitation are actually at work? Will not the same cause that produced agitation in 1820, when the Missouri Compromise was formed—that which produced the agitation upon the annexation of Texas and at other times—work out the same results always? Do you think that the nature of man will be changed—that the same causes that produced agitation at one time will not have the same effect at another?

As a political rule, the Dred Scott Decision not binding. Should be reversed.

From Speech at Quincy, Ill., Oct. 12, 1858.

We do not propose that when Dred Scott has been decided to be a slave by the court, we, as a mob, will decide him to be free. We do not propose that, when any other one, or one thousand, shall be decided by that court to be slaves, we will, in any violent way, disturb the rights of property thus settled; but we nevertheless do oppose that decision as a political rule, which shall be binding on the voter to vote for nobody who thinks it wrong, which shall be binding on the members of Congress or the President to favor no measure that does not actually concur with the principles of that decision. We do not propose to be bound by it as a political rule in that way, because we think it lays the foundation, not merely of enlarging and spreading out what we consider an evil, but it lays the foundation of spreading that evil into the States themselves. We propose so resisting it as to have it reversed if we can, and a new judicial rule established upon the subject.

Discards all affiliation with those who believe Slavery not wrong.—From the same.

I will say now, that there is a sentiment in the country contrary to me—a sentiment which holds that slavery is not wrong, and therefore, it goes for the policy that does not propose dealing with it as a wrong. That policy is the Democratic policy, and that sentiment is the Democratic sentiment.

The way to end Slavery agitation.—From the same.

I have been stating where we and they stand, and trying to show what is the real difference between us; and I now say, that whenever we can get the question distinctly stated, can get all these men who believe that slavery is in some of these respects wrong, to stand and act with us in treating it as a wrong—then, and not till then, I think we will in some way come to an end of this slavery agitation.

The origin of the assault upon the Declaration of Independence.

From Speech at Allen, Oct. 16, 1858.

I know that Mr. Calhoun and all the politicians of his school, denied the truth of the Declaration. I know that it ran along in the mouth of some southern men for a period

of years, ending at last, in that shameful, though rather forcible declaration of Pettit of Indiana, upon the floor of the United States Senate, that the Declaration of Independence was in that respect "a self-evident lie," rather than a self-evident truth. But I say, with a perfect knowledge of all this hawking at the Declaration, without directly attacking it, that three years ago there never had lived a man who had ventured to assail it in the sneaking way of pretending to believe it, and then asserting that it did not include the negro. I believe the first man who ever said it, was Chief Justice Taney, in the Dred Scott Case.

Slavery ignored by the text of the Constitution.—From the same.

In all three of these places, being the only allusions to slavery in the instrument, covert language is used. Language is used not suggesting that slavery existed, or that the black race were among us. And I understand the contemporaneous history of those times to be that covert language was used with a purpose, and that purpose was that in our Constitution, which it was hoped, and is still hoped, will endure forever—when it should be read by intelligent and patriotic men, after the institution of slavery had passed from among us—there should be nothing on the face of the great charter of liberty suggesting that such a thing as negro slavery had ever existed among us. This is part of the evidence that the fathers of the Government expected and intended the institution of slavery to come to an end. They expected and intended that it should be in the course of ultimate extinction. And when I say that I desire to see the further spread of it arrested, I only say I desire to see that done which the fathers have first done.

The Consequences of establishing the Principle that there is no wrong in Slavery.

From Speech at Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 1859.

Then, I say, if this principle is established, that there is no wrong in slavery, and whoever wants it has a right to have it, is a matter of dollars and cents—a sort of question as to how they shall deal with brutes; that between us and the negro here there is no sort of question, but that at the South the question is between the negro and the crocodile. That is all. It is a mere matter of policy; there is a perfect right, according to interest, to do just as you please; when this is done when this doctrine prevails the miners and sappers will have formed public opinion for the slave trade. They will be ready for Jeff Davis, and Stephens, and other leaders of that company, to sound the bugle for the revival of the slave trade, for the second Dred Scott decision, for the flood of slavery to be poured over the free States, while we shall be here tied down and helpless, and run over like sheep.

Room enough for all to be Free.

From Speech at Cincinnati, Sept. 1859.

I say there is room enough for us all to be free, and it not only does not wrong the white man that the negro should be free, but it positively wrongs the mass of white men that the negro should be enslaved; that the mass of white men are really injured by the effects of slave labor in the vicinity of the fields of their own labor.

The Government charged with the Duty of redressing all Wrongs which are Wrongs to itself.—From the same.

We want and must have a national policy, in regard to the institution of slavery, that acknowledges and deals with that institution as being wrong. Whoever desires the prevention of the spread of slavery, and nationalization of that institution, yields all, when he yields to any policy that either recognizes slavery as being right, or as being an indifferent thing. Nothing will make you successful, but setting up a policy which shall treat the thing as being wrong. When I say this, I do not mean to say that this General Government is charged with the duty of redressing or preventing all the wrongs in the world; but I do think it is charged with preventing and redressing all wrongs which are wrongs to itself. This Government is expressly charged with the duty of providing for the general welfare. We believe that the spreading out and perpetuity of the institution of slavery, impairs the general welfare. We believe, say, we know, that that is the only thing that has threatened the perpetuity of the Union itself. The only thing which has ever menaced the destruction of the Government under which we live, in this very thing. To repress this thing, we think, is providing for the general welfare.

What the people by their Votes must prevent.—From the same.

We must prevent the outspreading of the institution, because neither the Constitution nor the general welfare requires us to extend it. We must prevent the revival of the

African slave trade, and the enacting, by Congress, of a territorial slave code. We must prevent each of these things being done by either Congresses or courts. The people of these United States are the rightful masters of both Congresses and courts not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the man who pervert the Constitution.

He that gathereth not with us, scattereth.—From the same.

The good old maxims of the Bible are applicable, and truly applicable, to human affairs; and in this, as in other things, we may say here, that he who is not for us is against us; he who gathereth not with us, scattereth.

The extent of the judgment and feeling against Slavery in the Nation.

From Speech at Cooper Institute, Feb. 27, 1860.

Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed. There is a judgment and a feeling against slavery in this nation, which cost, at least, a million and a half of votes. You cannot destroy that judgment and feeling, that sentiment, by breaking up the political organization, which rallies around it. You cannot scarcely, scatter and disperse an army which has been formed into order in the face of your heaviest fire; but if you could, how much would you gain by forcing the sentiment which created it, out of the peaceful channel of the ballot box into some other channel. What would that other channel probably be? Would the number of John Browns be lessened, or enlarged by the operation?

The Constitution of the United States vindicated. Its framers did not intend it to be a Pro-Slavery instrument. The Stand and Deliver Argument.—From the same.

When this obvious mistake of the Judges [that the right of property in the slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution] shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?

And then it is to be remembered that our fathers, who framed the Government under which we live, the men who made the Constitution, decided this same constitutional question in our favor long ago, decided it without a division among themselves when making the decision; without division among themselves about the meaning of it after it was made, and, so far as any evidence is left, without basing it upon any mistaken statement of fact.

But you will not abide the election of a Republican President. In that supposed event, you say, you will destroy the Union; and then you say the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us!

That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth—"Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you; and then you will be a murderer!"

To be sure, what the robber demanded of me, my money, was my own; and I had a clear right to keep it; but it is no more my own than my vote is my own; and the threat of death to me to extort my money, and the threat of destruction to the Union, to extort my vote, can scarcely be distinguished in principle.

The slaveholders implacable. Their demands unreasonable. We cannot yield without surrendering our self-respect.—From the same.

The question occurs—What will satisfy them? Simply this: we must not only let them alone, but we must somehow convince them that we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them, from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this has had no tendency to convince them. Alike unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural, and apparently adequate means, all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly—done in acts, as well as words. Silence will not be tolerated—we must place ourselves avowedly with them.

Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced, and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension, its enlargement. All they ask, we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask, they could readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right, and our thinking it wrong, is the precise fact upon which depends the whole contro-

very. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition, as being right; but thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view, and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this!

Let us abide by our Faith and do our duty.—From the same.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us to the end dare to do our duty, as we understand it.

The Man before the Dollar.

From letter to Boston Jefferson Anniversary Committee, April 5, 1859.

The Democracy of to-day hold the liberty of one man to be absolutely nothing, when in conflict with another man's right of property. Republicans, on the contrary, are both for the man and the dollar; but in the case of conflict, the man before the dollar.

Be no slave and have no slave.—From the same.

This is a world of compensations: and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.

The inalienable rights of man reaffirmed.

From letter to Dr. Canisius, and other German citizens, May 17, 1859.

It is well known that I deplore the oppressed condition of the blacks; and it would, therefore, be very inconsistent for me to look with approval upon any measures that infringe upon the inalienable rights of white men, whether or not they are born in another land, or speak a different language from my own.

Conscious of his immense responsibility. A calm and trustful reliance upon Divine Providence. Asks prayers for that Divine Assistance on which Washington reposed, and which will give him success.

From Speech on leaving Springfield, February 1, 1861.

A duty devolves upon me which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He never could have succeeded except for the aid of the Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him; and in the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support, and I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain.

The enforcement of the laws in all the States a simple duty, which with the help of the American people, shall be faithfully performed.

From the Inaugural Address.

I consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken, and, to the extent of my ability, I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins me, that the laws of the Union shall be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this, which I deem to be only a simple duty on my part, I shall perfectly perform it, so far as is practical, unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisition, or, in some authoritative manner, direct the contrary.

Rebels the authors of their own calamities. No constitutional rights infringed upon. Friendly words of advice. No cause for disaffection.—From the same.

That there are persons, in one section or another, who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny. But, if there be such, I need address no word to them.

To those, however, who really love the Union, may I not speak, before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories,

and its hopes! Would it not be well to ascertain why we do it! Will you hazard so desperate a step, while any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence! Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from! Will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake! All profess to be content in the Union, if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution, has been denied! I think not. Happily, the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this.

The majority of the people the only legitimate sovereign of this nation.—From the same.

A majority held in restraint by constitutional check and limitation, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it, does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism.

The Supreme Court not the masters of the people.—From the same.

The candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon the vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by the decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, as in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own masters, unless having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

The Government will make no assaults. The aggressors to be held accountable. An oath registered in Heaven to protect the Government. A touching appeal to patriotism.—From the same.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you.

YOU CAN HAVE NO CONFLICT WITHOUT BEING YOURSELVES THE AGGRESSORS. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend" it.

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.

The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot's grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

The question of the ability of a Constitutional Republic to protect itself against the attacks of a discontented minority, now to be settled. The necessity of exercising the War Power.

From Message of July 4, 1861.

In this act [the attack on Fort Sumter] discarding all else, they have forced upon the country the distinct issue, immediate dissolution or blood, and this issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question, whether a constitutional Republic or Democracy, a government of the people, by the same people, can or cannot maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few in numbers to control the Administration according to the organic law in any case, can always, upon the pretences made in this case, or any other pretences, or arbitrarily without any pretence, break up their government, and thus practically put an end to free government upon this earth. It forces us to ask, "Is there in all Republics this inherent and fatal weakness!" Must a government of necessity be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence? So viewing the issues no choice was left but to call out the war power of the Government, and so to resist the force employed for its destruction by force for its preservation. The call was made, and the response of the country was most gratifying, surpassing in unanimity and spirit the most sanguine expectation.

The Benefits of our Free Institutions. The intellectual caliber of our Volunteer Soldiers.—From the same.

It may be affirmed, without extravagance, that the free institutions we enjoy have developed the powers and improved the condition of our whole people beyond any example in the world. Of this we now have a striking and impressive illustration. So large an

army as the Government has now on foot was never before known, without a soldier in it but who has taken his place there of his own free choice. But more than this there are many single regiments, whose members, one and another, possess full practical knowledge of all the arts, sciences, professions, and whatever else, whether useful or elegant, is known in the whole world, and there is scarcely one from which there could not be selected a President, a Cabinet, a Congress, and perhaps a Court, abundantly competent to administer the Government itself."

The Rebel Declaration of Independence a burlesque; their Constitution a sham. The rights of man and the authority of the people pressed out of view. This is a struggle to elevate the condition of humanity.—From the same.

Our adversaries have adopted some declarations of independence in which, unlike the good old one penned by Jefferson, they omit the words, "all men are created equal." Why? They have adopted a Temporary National Constitution, in the preamble of which, unlike our good old one signed by Washington, they omit "We, the people, and substitute "We, the Deputies of the Sovereign and Independent States." Why? Why this deliberate pressing out of view the rights of men and the authority of the people? This is essentially a people's contest. On the side of the Union it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government, whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men, to lift artificial weights from all shoulders, to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all, to afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life, yielding to partial and temporary departures from necessity. This is the leading object of the Government, for whose existence we contend.

This is the People's Government, and they will maintain by the Bullet the decision by Ballot. Pampered Officers have proved false, but not one common soldier or sailor has deserted his Flag. A Lesson to be taught the beginners of the War.—From the same.

It is worthy of note, that while in this, the Government's hour of trial, large numbers of those in the army and navy who have been favored with the offices have resigned and proved false to the hand which pampered them, not one common soldier nor common sailor is known to have deserted his flag. Great honor is due to those officers who remained true, despite the example of their treacherous associates; but the greatest honor and the most important fact of all, is the unanimous firmness of the common soldiers and sailors. To the last man, so far as known, they have successfully resisted the traitorous efforts of those whose commands but an hour before they obeyed as absolute law. This is the patriotic instinct of plain people. They understand, without an argument, that the destroying the Government which was made by Washington means no good to them. Our popular Government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it our people have settled; the successful establishing and the successful administering of it. One still remains, its successful maintenance against a formidable internal attempt to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world, that those who can fairly carry an election, can also suppress a rebellion; that ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors of bullets. And that when ballots have fairly and constitutionally decided, there can be no successful appeal back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal except to ballots themselves, at succeeding elections. Such will be a great lesson of peace, teaching men that what they cannot take by an election, neither can they take by a war; teaching all the folly of being the beginners of a war.

The War Power employed with regret. Compromise could not cure, and would be a dangerous precedent.—From the same.

It was with the deepest regret that the Executive found the duty of employing the war power. In defence of the Government forced upon him, he could but perform this duty, or surrender the existence of the Government. No compromise by public servants could in this case be a cure, not that compromises are not often proper, but that no popular Government can long survive a marked precedent, that those who carry an election can only save the Government from immediate destruction by giving up the main point upon which the people gave the election. The people themselves, and not their servants, can safely reverse their own deliberate decisions.

The President, unswayed by position and power, does not forget that he is a man and an American citizen.—From the same.

As a private citizen, the Executive could not have consented that these institutions shall perish, much less could he, in betrayal of so vast and so sacred a trust as this free people had confided to him. He felt that he had no moral right to shrink, nor even to count the chances of his own life in what might follow.

Men in authority, rising with the occasion, must think and act anew. If they are self-sacrificing and earnest in their patriotism, history will do them justice. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free.

From Message of December 1, 1862.

The dangers of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We, of this Congress and this Administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power, and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth. Other means may succeed—this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.

An Appeal to the patriotism of the people.

From Proclamation of April 15, 1861.

I appeal to all loyal citizens to favor, facilitate and aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity, and the existence of our National Union, and the perpetuity of popular government; and to redress wrongs already long enough endured.

Compensated Emancipation recommended.

From Proclamation of May 19, 1862.

On the sixth day of March last, by a special message, I recommended to Congress the adoption of a joint resolution, to be substantially as follows:

Resolved, That the United States ought to cooperate with any State which may adopt a gradual abolitionment of slavery, giving to such State pecuniary aid, to be used by such State in its discretion, to compensate for the inconveniences, public and private, produced by such change of system.

The resolution, in the language above quoted, was adopted by large majorities in both branches of Congress, and now stands an authentic, definite, and solemn proposal of the nation to the States and people most immediately interested in the subject-matter. To the people of those States I now earnestly appeal. I do not argue—I beseech you to make the argument for yourselves. You cannot, if you would, be blind to the signs of the times. I beg of you a calm and enlarged consideration of them, ranging, if it may be, far above personal and partisan politics. This proposal makes common cause for a common subject, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not like Pharisæe. The change it contemplates would come gently as the dew of Heaven, not rending or wrecking anything. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done, by one effort, in all past time as, in the Providence of God, it is now your high privilege to do. May the vast future not have to lament that you have neglected it.

Our national sins acknowledged, and prayer for clemency and forgiveness recommended.

From Proclamation of March 30th, 1863, appointing a day of fasting and prayer.

May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied, enriched, and strengthened us; and we have daily imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

The coming of the Emancipation Proclamation announced.

From Proclamation of Sept. 26th, 1862.

It is my purpose, upon the next meeting of Congress, to again recommend the adoption of a practical measure tendering pecuniary aid to the free acceptance or rejection of all slave States, so called, the people whereof may not then be in rebellion against the United States, and which States may then have voluntarily adopted, or thereafter may voluntarily adopt, immediate or gradual abolishment of slavery within their respective limits; and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, upon this continent or elsewhere, with the previously obtained consent of the government existing there, will be continued.

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act nor acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

The protection of the Army and Navy tendered to the escaped bondsmen of rebels.—From the same.

Attention is hereby called to an act of Congress entitled "An act to make an additional article of war," approved March 13, 1862, and which act is in the words and figures following:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That hereafter the following shall be promulgated as an additional article of war, for the government of the army of the United States, and shall be obeyed and observed as such:

ARTICLE.—All officers, or persons in the military or naval service of the United States, are prohibited from employing any of the forces under their respective commands for the purpose of returning fugitives from service or labor who may have escaped from any persons to whom such service or labor is claimed to be due; and any officer who shall be found guilty by a court-martial of violating this article shall be dismissed from the service.

"SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That this act shall take effect from and after its passage."

Also to the ninth and tenth sections of an act entitled "An act to suppress insurrection, to punish treason and rebellion, to seize and confiscate property of rebels, and for other purposes," approved July 17, 1862, and which sections are in the words and figures following:

"SEC. 9. *And be it further enacted,* That all slaves of persons who shall hereafter be engaged in rebellion against the Government of the United States, or who shall in any way give aid or comfort thereto, escaping from such persons and taking refuge within the lines of the army; and all slaves captured from such persons or deserted by them, and coming under the control of the Government of the United States; and all slaves of such persons found on [or] being within any place occupied by rebel forces and afterwards occupied by the forces of the United States, shall be deemed captives of war, and shall be forever free of their servitude, and not again held as slaves.

"SEC. 10. *And be it further enacted,* That no slave escaping into State, Territory, or the District of Columbia, from any State, shall be delivered up, or in any way impeded or hindered of his liberty, except for crime, or some offense against the laws, unless the person claiming said fugitive shall first make oath that the person to whom the labor or service of such fugitive is alleged to be due is his lawful owner, and has not borne arms against the United States in the present rebellion, nor in any way given aid and comfort thereto; and no person engaged in the military or naval service of the United States shall, under any pretense whatever, assume to decide on the validity of the claim of any person to the service or labor of any other person, or surrender up any such person to the claimant, on pain of being dismissed from the service."

And I do hereby enjoin upon and order all persons engaged in the military and naval service of the United States to observe, obey, and enforce, within their respective spheres of service, the acts and sections above recited.

The promise redeemed. The great historical event of the century. Freedom proclaimed to the Slave.

From Proclamation. January 1, 1863.

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, in time of actual and armed rebellion against the authority and Government of the United

States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemine, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans,) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk, and Portsmouth,) and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves 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 hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self defense; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

Sympathy with the Rebellion depicted, Liberty of Speech, Liberty of the Press, and the Writ of Habeas Corpus designed to protect Liberty, not to subvert it.

From the Letter to Erastus Corning and others, June 12, 1863.

Prior to my installation here it had been inculcated that any State had a lawful right to secede from the National Union, and that it would be expedient to exercise the right whenever the devotees of the doctrine should fail to elect a President to their own liking. I was elected contrary to their liking; and accordingly, so far as it was legally possible, they had taken seven States out of the Union, had seized many of the United States forts, and had fired upon the United States flag, all before I was inaugurated, and, of course, before I had done any official act whatever. The rebellion thus began soon ran into the present civil war; and, in certain respects, it began on very unequal terms between the parties. The insurgents had been preparing for it more than thirty years, while the government had taken no steps to resist them. The former had carefully considered all the means which could be turned to their account. It undoubtedly was a well-pondered reliance with them, that in their own unrestricted efforts to destroy Union, Constitution, and law, altogether, the Government would, in great degree, be restrained by the same Constitution and law from arresting their progress. Their sympathizers pervaded all departments of the Government and nearly all communities of the people. From this material under cover of "liberty of speech," "liberty of the press," and "habeas corpus," they hoped to keep on foot amongst us a most efficient corps of spies, informers, suppliers, and aiders, and abettors of their cause in a thousand ways. They knew that in times such as they were inaugurating, by the Constitution itself, the "habeas corpus" might be suspended; but they also knew they had friends who would make a question as to *who* was to suspend it; meanwhile their spies and others might remain at large to help on their cause. Or, if, as has happened, the Executive should suspend the writ, without ruinous waste of time, instances of arresting innocent persons might occur, as are always likely to occur in such cases; and then a clamor could be raised in regard to this which might be, at least, of some service to the insurgent cause. It needed no very keen perception to discover this part of the enemy's programme, so soon as by open hostilities their machinery was fairly put in motion. Yet, thoroughly imbued with a reverence for the guaranteed rights of individuals, I was slow to adopt the strong measures which by degrees I have been forced to regard as being within the exceptions of the Constitution, and as indispensable to the public safety. Nothing is better known to history than that courts of justice are utterly incompetent to such cases. Civil courts are organized chiefly for trials of individuals, or, at most, a few individuals acting in concert; and this in quiet times, and on charges of crimes well defined in the law. Even in times of peace bands of horse-thieves and robbers frequently grow too numerous and powerful for the ordinary courts of justice. But what comparison, in numbers, have such bands ever borne to the insurgent sympathizers even in many of the loyal States! Again, a jury too frequently has at least one member more ready to hang the pannel than to hang the traitor. And

yet, again, he who dissuades one man from volunteering, or induces one soldier to desert, weakens the Union cause as much as he who kills a Union soldier in battle. Yet this dissuasion or inducement may be so conducted as to be no defined crime of which any civil court would take cognizance.

The logic of the Torpid Copperheads overturned.—From the same.

The man who stands by and says nothing when the peril of his Government is discussed, cannot be misunderstood. If not hindered, he is sure to help the enemy; much more, if he talks ambiguously—talks for his country with “buts” and “ifs” and “ands.” Of how little value the constitutional provisions I have quoted will be rendered, if arrests shall never be made until defined crimes shall have been committed, may be illustrated by a few notable examples. General John C. Breckinridge, General Robert E. Lee, General Joseph E. Johnston, General John B. Magruder, General William B. Preston, General Simon B. Buckner, and Commodore Franklin Buchanan, now occupying the very highest places in the rebel war service, were all within the power of the Government since the rebellion began, and were nearly as well known to be traitors then as now. Unquestionably if we had seized and held them, the insurgent cause would be much weaker. But no one of them had then committed any crime defined in the law. Every one of them, if arrested, would have been discharged on *habeas corpus* were the writ allowed to operate. In view of these and similar cases, I think the time not unlikely to come when I shall be blamed for having made too few arrests rather than too many.

“Must I shoot a simple-minded Soldier-boy, who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of the wily, agitator who induces him to desert?”—From the same.

I understand the meeting, whose resolutions I am considering, to be in favor of suppressing the rebellion by military force—by armies. Long experience has shown that armies cannot be maintained unless desertion shall be punished by the severe penalty of death. The case requires, and the law and the Constitution sanction, this punishment. Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert? This is none the less injurious when effected by getting a father, or brother, or friend, into a public meeting, and there working upon his feelings till he is persuaded to write the soldier-boy that he is fighting in a bad cause, for a wicked administration of a contemptible Government, too weak to arrest and punish him if he shall desert. I think that in such a case, to silence the agitator and save the boy is not only constitutional, but withal a great mercy.

Constitutional Power in cases of Public Danger.—From the same.

If it be wrong on this question of constitutional power, my error lies in believing that certain proceedings are constitutional when, in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety requires them, which would not be constitutional when, in absence of rebellion or invasion, the public safety does not require them; in other words, that the Constitution is not, in its application, in all respects the same, in cases of rebellion or invasion involving the public safety, as it is in times of profound peace and public security. The Constitution itself makes the distinction; and I can no more be persuaded that the Government can constitutionally take so strong measures in time of rebellion, because it can be shown that the same could not be lawfully taken in time of peace, than I can be persuaded that a particular drug is not good medicine for a sick man, because it can be shown to not be good food for a well one. Nor am I able to appreciate the danger apprehended by the meeting that the American people will, by means of military arrests during the rebellion, lose the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech and the press, the law of evidence, trial by jury, and *habeas corpus*, throughout the indefinite peaceful future, which I lie before them, any more than I am able to believe that a man could contract so strong an appetite for emetics during temporary illness as to persist in feeding upon them during the remainder of his healthful life.

President Lincoln occupies a level higher than any Party platform.—From the same.

In this time of national peril I would have preferred to meet you on a level one step higher than any party platform; because I am sure that, from such more elevated position, we could do better battle for the country we all love than we possibly can from those lower ones where, from the force of habit, the prejudices of the past, and selfish hopes of the future, we are sure to spend much of our ingenuity and strength in finding fault with, and aiming blows at, each other. But since you have denied me this, I will yet be thankful, for the country's sake, that not all democrats have done so. He on whose discretionary judgment Mr. Vallandigham was arrested and tried is a democrat, having no old party affinity with me; and the judge who rejected the constitutional view ex-

pressed in these resolutions, by refusing to discharge Mr. Vallandigham on *habeas corpus* is a democrat of better days than these, having received his judicial mantle at the hands of President Jackson. And still more, of all those democrats who are nobly exposing their lives and shedding their blood on the battle-field, I have learned that many approve the course taken with Mr. Vallandigham, while I have not heard of a single one condemning it.

The example of General Jackson cited.—From the same.

It may be remarked: First, that we had the same Constitution then (when General Jackson suspended the writ of habeas corpus at New Orleans, and arrested Judge Hall, and others,) as now; secondly, that we then had a case of invasion, and now we have a case of rebellion; and, thirdly, that the permanent right of the people to public discussion, the liberty of speech and of the press, the trial by jury, the law of evidence, and the habeas corpus, suffered no detriment whatever by that conduct of General Jackson, or its subsequent approval by the American Congress.

The Commander-in-Chief must take the responsibility, and ask justification from the People.

From Letter to the Vallandigham Committee, January 29, 1863.

You ask in substance whether I really claim that I may override all the guaranteed rights of individuals, on the plea of conserving the public safety, when I may choose to say the public safety requires it. This question, divested of the phraseology calculated to represent me as struggling for an arbitrary personal prerogative, is either simply a question who shall decide, or an affirmation that *nobody* shall decide, what the public safety does require in cases of rebellion or invasion. The Constitution contemplates the question as likely to occur for decision, but it does not expressly declare who is to decide it. By necessary implication, when rebellion or invasion comes, the decision is to be made, from time to time, and I think the man whom, for the time, the people have, under the Constitution, made the Commander-in-Chief of their army and navy, is the man who holds the power, and bears the responsibility of making it. If he uses the power justly, the same people will probably justify him; if he abuses it, he is in their hands, to be dealt with by all the modes they have reserved to themselves in the Constitution.

The whole Matter narrowed down to a Question between Patriotism and Treason.—From the same.

Your nominee for Governor, (Vallandigham,) in whose behalf you appeal, is known to you and to the world, to declare against the use of an army to suppress the rebellion. Your own attitude, therefore, encourages desertion, resistance to the draft, and the like, because it teaches those who incline to desert and escape the draft, to believe it is your purpose to protect them, and to hope that you will become strong enough to do so.

After a short personal intercourse with you, gentlemen of the committee, I cannot say I think you desire this effect to follow your attitude; but I assure you that both friends and enemies of the Union look upon it in this light. It is a substantial hope, and by consequence, a real strength to the enemy. It is a false hope, and one which you would willingly dispel. I will make the way exceedingly easy. I send you duplicates of this letter, in order that you, or a majority, may, if you choose, endorse your names upon one of them, and return it thus endorsed to me, with the understanding that those signing are thereby committed to the following propositions, and to nothing else:

1. That there is now a rebellion in the United States, the object and tendency of which is to destroy the National Union; and that in your opinion an army and navy are constitutional means for suppressing that rebellion.

2. That no one of you will do anything which, in his own judgement, will tend to hinder the increase, or favor the decrease, or lessen the efficiency of the army and navy while engaged in the effort to suppress that rebellion; and

3. That each of you will, in his sphere do all he can to have the officers, soldiers, and crews of the army and navy, while engaged in the effort to suppress the rebellion, paid, fed, and otherwise well provided for and supported.

And with the further understanding that upon receiving the letter and names thus endorsed, I will cause them to be published, which publication shall be, within itself, a revocation of the order in relation to Mr. Vallandigham.

No compromise with rebels in arms practical.

From Letter to James C. Conkling, August 26, 1863.

I do not believe any compromise embracing the maintenance of the Union is now possible. All I learn leads to a directly opposite belief. The strength of the rebellion is its military—its army. That army dominates all the country and all the people within

its range. Any offer of terms made by any man or men within that range, in opposition to that army, is simply nothing for the present, because such man or men have no power whatever to enforce their side of a compromise, if one were made with them.

The Emancipation Proclamation justified, Its Benefits pointed out: "The Promise made must be kept." "The Job was a great National one, and let none be banned who bore an honorable part in it." "Thanks to all!" The memories of Black Men and of "some White Ones," when Peace shall come.
—From the same.

You disliked the emancipation proclamation, and perhaps you would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional. I think differently. I think the Constitution invests its Commander-in-chief with the law of war in time of war. The most that can be said—if so much—is that slaves are property. Is there, has there ever been, any question that by the law of war property, both of enemies and friends, may be taken when needed? And is it not needed whenever taking it helps us, or hurts the enemy? Armies, the world over, destroy enemies' property when they cannot use it, and even destroy their own, to keep it from the enemy. Civilized belligerents do all in their power to help themselves or hurt the enemy, except a few things, regarded as barbarous or cruel. Among the exceptions are the massacre of vanquished foes and non-combatants, male and female. But the proclamation, as law, either is valid, or is not valid. If it is not valid, it needs no retraction. If it is valid, it cannot be retracted any more than the dead can be brought to life. Some of you profess to think its retraction would operate favorably for the Union. Why better *after* the retraction than *before* the issue. There was more than a year and a half of trial to suppress the rebellion before the proclamation issued; the last one hundred days of which passed under an explicit notice that it was coming, unless averted by those who revolt, returning to their allegiance. The war has certainly progressed as favorably for us since the issue of the proclamation as before. I know, as fully as one can know the opinions of others, that some of the commanders of our armies in the field, who have given us our most important successes, believe the emancipation policy and the use of colored troops constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion, and that at least one of those important successes could not have been achieved when it was, but for the aid of black soldiers. Among the commanders holding these views, are some who have never had any affinity with what is called Abolitionism, or with Republican party politics, but who hold them purely as military opinions. I submit these opinions, as being entitled to some weight against the objections often urged that emancipation and arming the blacks are unwise as military measures, and were not adopted as such in good faith. You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you. But no matter; fight you, then, exclusively to save the Union. I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge you to continue fighting, it will be an apt time then for you to declare that you will not fight to free negroes. I thought that in your struggle for the Union, to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to that extent it weakened the enemy in his resistance to you. Do you think differently? I thought that whatever negroes can be got to do as soldiers, leaves just so much less for white soldiers to do in saving the Union. Does it appear otherwise to you? *But negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us, if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept.*

The signs look better. The Father of Waters again goes untroubled to the sea. Thanks to the great Northwest for it. Nor yet wholly to them. Three hundred miles up they met New England, Empire, Keystone, and Jersey, hewing their way right and left. The sunny South, too, in more colors than one, also lent a hand. On the spot, their part of the history was jotted down, in black and white. The job was a great national one, and let none be banned who bore an honorable part in it. While those who have cleared the great river may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely and well done than at Antietam, Manassas, Gettysburg, and on many fields of lesser note. Nor must Uncle Sam's web-foot be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present; not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow muddy bayou; and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been, and made their tracks. Thanks to all for the great Republic, for the principle it lives by and keeps alive—for man's vast future—thanks to all.

Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay, and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case, and pay the cost. And then there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue and with clenched teeth, and steady eye and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they have strove to hinder it.

*The proclamations in regard to slavery inviolable.**From the Annual Message, December 8, 1863.*

But if it be proper to require as a test of admission to the political body an oath of allegiance to the United States, and to the Union under it, why not also to the laws and proclamations in regard to slavery.

Those laws and proclamations were put forth for the purpose of aiding in the suppression of the rebellion. To give them the fullest effect there had to be a pledge for their maintenance. In my judgement they have aided, and will further aid, the cause for which they were intended.

To now abandon them would be not only to relinquish a lever of power, but would also be a cruel and astounding breach of faith.

I may add, at this point, while I remain in my present position, I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress.

"So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soldiers as any."

From the same.

Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion, full 100,000 are now in the United States service, about one-half of which number actually bear arms in the ranks, thus giving the double advantage of taking so much labor from the insurgent cause, and supplying the places which otherwise must be filled with so many white men. So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soldiers as any. No servile insurrection or tendency to violence or cruelty has marked the measures of Emancipation and arming the blacks.

The war power our chief reliance. The Army and Navy.—From the same.

While I do not repeat nor detail what I have heretofore so earnestly urged upon this subject, my general views and feelings remain unchanged; and I trust that Congress will omit no fair opportunity of aiding these important steps to the great consummation. In the midst of other cares, however important, we must not lose sight of the fact that the war power is still our main reliance. To that power alone can we look for a time to give confidence to the people in the contested regions, that the insurgent power will not again overrun them. Until that confidence shall be established, little can be done anywhere for what is called reconstruction.

Hence our chiefest care must still be directed to the Army and Navy, which have thus far borne their harder part so nobly and well; and it may be esteemed fortunate that in giving the greatest efficiency to these indispensable arms we do honorably recognize the gallant men, from commander to sentinel, who compose them, and to whom more than to others the world must stand indebted for the home of freedom disenthralled, regenerated, enlarged and perpetuated.

*In his right hand he carries gentle peace
To silence envious tongues. He is just, and fears not;
All the things he aims at are his country's,
His God's, and truths.*

THE AMNESTY PROCLAMATION

Whereas, In and by the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the President "shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of impeachment;" and

Whereas, A rebellion now exists whereby the loyal State Governments of several States have for a long time have been subverted, and many persons have committed and are now guilty of treason against the United States; and

Whereas, With reference to said rebellion and treason, laws have been enacted by Congress declaring forfeitures and confiscations of property and liberation of slaves, all upon terms and conditions therein stated; and also declaring that the President was thereby authorized at any time thereafter, by proclamation, to extend to persons who may have participated in the existing rebellion in any State, or part thereof, pardon and amnesty, with such exceptions and at such times and on such conditions as he may deem expedient for the public welfare; and

Whereas, The Congressional declaration for limited and conditional pardon accords with the well established judicial exposition of the pardoning power; and

Whereas, With reference to the said Rebellion the President of the United States has issued several proclamations with provisions in regard to the liberation of slaves; and

Whereas, It is now desired by some persons heretofore engaged in the said rebellion to resume their allegiance to the United States, and to reinaugurate loyal State governments within and for their respective States.

Therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare and make known to all parties who have directly or by implication participated in the existing rebellion, except as hereinafter excepted, that a full pardon is hereby granted to them

and to each of them, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves, and in property cases where the rights of third parties shall have intervened, and upon the condition that every such person shall take and subscribe an oath, and thenceforward keep and maintain such oath inviolate, and which oath shall be registered for permanent preservation, and shall be of the tenor and effect following, to wit:

"I, _____, do solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Union of the States thereunder, and that I will in like manner abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified, or held void by Congress or by decision of the Supreme Court, and that I will in like manner abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President made during the existing rebellion having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the Supreme Court. So help me God."

The persons excepted from the benefits of the foregoing provisions are all who are or shall have been civil or diplomatic officers or agents of the so-called Confederate Government; all who have left judicial stations under the United States to aid the rebellion; all who are or shall have been military or naval officer of said so-called Confederate Government above the rank of Colonel in the army, or of Lieutenant in the navy; all who left seats in the United States Congress to aid the rebellion; all who resigned commissions in the army or navy of the United States and afterward aided the rebellion, and all who have engaged in any way in treating colored persons or white persons in charge of such, otherwise than lawfully as prisoners of war, and which persons may have been found in the United States service as soldiers, seamen, or in any other capacity.

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that whenever in any of the States of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina a number of persons, not less than one tenth in number of the votes cast in such State at the Presidential election of the year of our Lord 1860, each having taken the oath aforesaid, and not having since violated it and being a qualified voter by the election law of the State, existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall reestablish a State Government, which shall be republican, and in no wise contravening said oath, such shall be recognized as the true Government of the State, and the State shall receive thereunder the benefits of the constitutional provision which declares that—

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion, and on application of the Legislature, or the Executive when the Legislature cannot be convened, against domestic violence."

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that any provision which may be adopted by such State Government in relation to the freed people of such State which shall recognize and declare their permanent freedom, provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent, as a temporary arrangement, with their present condition as a laboring, landless, and homeless class will not be objected to by the National Executive.

And it is suggested as not improper that, wherever a loyal State Government in any State, the name of the State, the boundaries, subdivisions, the constitution and the general code of laws as before the rebellion, be maintained, subject only to the modifications made necessary by the conditions hereinbefore stated, and such others, if any, not contravening said conditions, and which may be deemed expedient by those framing the new State Government.

To avoid misunderstanding, it may be proper to say that this Proclamation, so far as it relates to State Governments, has no reference to States wherein loyal State Governments have all the while been maintained. And for the same reason it may be proper to further say, that whether members sent to Congress from any State shall be admitted to seats constitutionally, rests exclusively with the respective Houses, and not to any extent with the Executive.

And still further, that this Proclamation is intended to present the people of the States wherein the national authority has been suspended, and loyal State Governments have been subverted, a model and by which the national authority and loyal State Governments may be reestablished within the said States, or in any of them.

And, while the mode presented is the best the Executive can suggest with his present impressions, it must not be understood that no other possible mode would be acceptable.

Given under my hand at the City of Washington, the eighth day of December, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:

(L. S.) WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.