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A LESSON OF DESPOTISM.

War Claims at St. Louis.

EXTRACT FROM THE FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER.

WAR DEPARTMENT, Washington City, D. C., April 1, 1862.

Sir: I have the honor herewith to transmit, in compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of this date, a copy of the final report made by the commission on war claims at St. Louis, which commission consisted of Hon. Jos. Holt, Hon. David Davis, and Hon. Hugh Campbell, which report gives a summary of the labors of the commission, and the reasons for their action in the different classes of claims brought before them.

Their expectations from him; saying, now we have only extra constitutional government; no civil rights, so to speak; all ordinary peaceful rules were to be set aside, and all this thing of 'red tape' must give way very shortly to what the people required of him. I had previously disobeyed General Fremont, by resisting an order of his which I considered was unauthorized by law, and concerning which I gave my testimony before the congressional committee. General Fremont had never before been in my office, nor has he been there since. He had no business to transact with me that morning.

The declaration of General Fremont, as deposed to by Colonel Andrews, were of so astounding a character that we felt it to be our duty to inquire if they had been made to others, with a view of ascertaining how far the annunciation of such revolutionary sentiments might have superinduced the demoralization of the service which our investigations have satisfied us so extensively prevailed in this department. We therefore examined Major Chauncey C. P. Johnson, paymaster in the regular army, and find his statements of sufficient importance to justify us in giving them, unabridged, like those of Colonel Andrews, a place in our report.

Chauncey C. P. Johnson, called by J. R. Shepley, associate counsel, testified as follows: "I am paymaster in the United States army; I was appointed last June, and stationed in the department of the west.

"Question. Did the late commanding general in this department ever in your presence countenance any disregard of law, or the regulations governing the army?"

"Answer. General Fremont countenanced it frequently in my presence, and to me, by saying that he did not intend in the administration of his department to be governed by the rules and regulations that were laid down, and that he would be guided by the circumstances which surrounded him entirely.

"Question. The reason that this conversation occurred so frequently was that it was thrown much in his company, in my capacity as paymaster, and privately. When he first came here I went to see him, having known him before, and was invited by him to come and see him frequently, as I was well acquainted in the west and had been connected with the organization of the home guards in this city, from the beginning. In regard to the official business which I had to transact with him, several instances occurred in which orders for payments had been issued to Colonel Andrews, paymaster general, and these orders transferred to me, and not being considered by me legal, I called on him in regard to them, and he told me that he intended to do what he considered best for the service, without reference to law or regulations; that he intended to cut red tape and arrive at the end without reference to order or system, and directed me to pay these orders."

The statements of these witnesses—officers of unimpeachable integrity and intelligence—will, we are sure, be heard by the government with equal astonishment and sorrow. General Fremont proclaims, on assuming his command, that there were no longer any civil rights; that there was no government except that outside of the Constitution, which had been suspended; that it was his determination to administer his department without reference to law or regulations; that the people of the United States were in the field, and that he was at their head, and that he meant to carry out such measures as they, the people, expected him to carry out, without regard to the red tape of the Washington people—that is the President and Congress. It is singular how perfectly these sentiments harmonize with those held by the usurpers, who in this and other ages of the world have sought and established absolute power upon the ruins of public liberty. Some of these usurpers, taking yet higher ground than that assumed in the interview with Colonel Andrews, have claimed for themselves a mission to "carry out" the will of God, but none of them have sunk their pretensions below a special mission to "carry out" the will of the people. Caesar, when he stood upon the banks of the Rubicon and waved to his veterans to advance, did not take a bolder declaration against his country than this. The words so earnestly and so often spoken, announced a revolution conceived, but which, happily, most happily for the country, the parent had not the strength to bring forth. No man has lived in the tide of times with a pure enough to be entrusted with such a power as here claimed. Military chiefs who cut "red tape" always do it with their swords, and history proves that the throat of their country suffers quite as much as does the "tape" in the operation. As free institutions have their foundations in law, and in the obedience of the people and their representatives, civil and military, to it, this expression of a purpose to cast aside all political and constitutional restraints, made in the halls of legislation even, would alarm, but when made in the field by a chief, and in the patriot's heart by its parabolic spirit, it reveals an unscrupulous ambition, which awaits but the prestige and power of victory to sweep the government itself, as a cobweb, from its path.

This sad page in the history of the late commander of this department gathers a deep shadow from the circumstances under which these declarations were made. General Fremont had, a few weeks before, taken and subscribed the following military oath: "I, John C. Fremont, do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers over me, according to the rules and articles of war." He thus, in sight of God

and his country, had pledged faith with his government that he would bear to it "true allegiance," and he stood pledged by the most solemn of human sanctions to support that Constitution which, when "the people of the field," places at "their head" the President of the United States, and not any general holding a commission under him. With a confiding fondness he had been summoned from the obscurity of private life, and preferred above the veterans and a whole army of patriots, he was made a major general. Scarcely has he grided on his sword, to whose honor the best interests of the nation had been committed, when he says to his subordinates and followers that he draws it, not in the name of law or of the government, but in defiance of both, to enforce such measures as, in his judgment, "the people expected him to carry out." These words were spoken, as it were, in the very sick chamber of the public, and had the tone of the undertaker while the patient was yet struggling for life. They were uttered against the government of a country, not then tranquil and strong and able to battle with all assailants, but of a country distracted and humbled, and bleeding under the stab of traitors. They came from no flush of excitement springing from a triumph of arms, but were the solemn and oft-repeated enunciations of a general just entering the field for his future operations, and serving for the first time the strength of his gathering army. They were addressed to officers of high rank in the service, and were intended to impress them with obedience to his revolutionary program: General Fremont already held the sword, and it was most important for his purpose that Colonel Andrews, the head of the pay department here, and Major Johnston, a paymaster under him, should not interfere with his free use of the national purse. In respecting his own official oath and the law, by resisting unwarrantable transfers of public money, the colonel had already given offence, and he was therefore visited and thus startlingly warned, that he might not offend again.

His noble and patriotic reply, though subdued by the presence of his superior officer, proved him to be worthy of the sword he wore, and that his courage and loyalty had nothing to fear from the menaces by which he was assailed.

The line of policy thus resolved on was openly pursued as his apparent consciousness that he was "the State" grew more and more vigorous. He created a large number of offices and filled them with friends and favorites, to whom he assigned full salaries, a power which he had no more right to exercise than had any soldier in his ranks. About two hundred of these appointments were made, and of which some forty-two were allotted to a body of but three hundred men, which he had recruited and organized under the somewhat royal designation of "the Fremont Body Guard." Imitating yet further imperial rule, he sought to bestow upon many—possibly all his appointees—whatever their duties, a military prestige. Thus Castle, his superintendent of railroad transportation, was honored, by his letter of appointment, with "the grade of a colonel" and the title of "chief of engineers," while the office of "musical director," a creation of his own, was filled by a musician from one of the theatres, to whom was given the rank and pay of a captain of engineers in the regular army.

When the Secretary of War visited this department in person and inspected the forts which Gen. Fremont was then building for the defence of St. Louis, under the auspices of Beard, he at once decided that they were useless, and ordered that they should be discontinued, and that the funds of the government in the hands of the paymasters and quartermasters here should be applied exclusively to meet the current expenses of the army. Yet, in defiance of the Secretary's authority, the work upon the forts went on to their completion, while \$20,000 of the funds thus sought to be protected by the Secretary was paid to Beard on the 16th October; and on the 19th of the same month an imperative order was given by the general for the payment of \$30,000 more. In his administration he virtually ignored the existence of a quartermaster's and the commissary's departments, and of the Ordnance Bureau, and necessarily that of the government at Washington. The most stupendous contracts, involving an almost unprecedented waste of public money, were given out by him in person to favorites, over the heads of the competent and honest officers appointed by law. It seemed to be his purpose to present himself as the embodiment of political and military power, and to show alike by his words and his conduct how little he depended upon the government of his country, and how utterly he disregarded its laws, its regulations and its policy. Of course, such an example could not be otherwise than contagious. The whole framework of the political and military systems, as organized by law, was unbraided, and disorder and criminal insubordination everywhere prevailed. There could be no obedience when the general of the department openly taught and practiced resistance to the laws as a right, if not a duty. There could be no economy where the general exposed himself continually to imputations of laboring in his great office to feed the greed of his followers for gain. He occupied with his family and several members of his staff a marble palace, and lived amid its luxurious furniture and glittering wares at a stipulated expense of \$5,000 per annum to the government, at a time when the homes of millions of our people were darkened by the horrors of civil war. Could it be expected that the subordinates would display any special sympathy with our national sufferings, or any marked solicitude to guard the public treasury from plunder? Instead of going to Cario, as he could have done for a few dollars, on one of the ves-

sels transporting his troops which accompanied him, he chartered a magnificent steamer at a cost of \$1,500 to the government, to convey himself and cortege alone. The steamer was anchored out in the stream, instead of lying at the wharf, as all others did do, and when the general drove in his carriage and four to the water's edge yet another steamer, at still further cost to the government, as we learn from claim presented for it, was employed to put himself and suite on board. A foreign prince or potentate, in a season of national mourning, might thus live, and thus enter his pleasure yacht or his barge of state of insensibility amid the calamities of civil war and wastefulness when the public debt is being increased at the rate of from one to two millions daily, when exhibited by a general of the American army, in spectacle from which the patriot may well turn away in grief and humiliation.

As was to have been expected, the influence of such an exhibition was every where felt. High officers did not, it was true, dare charter steamers for their own convenience, but they did, it was true, charter steamers for their trains for the convenience of themselves and attendants, while yet humbler officers, dwarfing their pseudo pomp to the narrow sphere of their authority hired at the lively stables for months luggies and horses at the cost of the government, and this although the law only recognized them on foot, or as mounted at their own expense. Thus, in every way, and almost everywhere, under the malign influence of the declaration that neither laws nor regulations longer prevailed, there was manifested a disposition to convert the national tragedy through which we were passing into a saturnalia of personal and official self-indulgence and extravagance.

Having, in the fulfillment of the trust committed to us, lifted the veil from a field of profligality, insubordination, and demoralization, in the midst of which we have been toiling for the last four months, we have felt it incumbent upon us to point the department to the true causes of these disorders. We have presented the testimony of Colonel Andrews and Major Johnston, not for the purposes of an advertisement, but simply to explain the scene which we have had to view. In the light of this explanation, we are happy to believe that the disease, in the virulence with which it has prevailed here, was not national, but local, and was the result of local and personal causes.

So soon as we had been sufficiently familiar with the facts presented, and with the principles applicable to them to enable us to feel entire confidence in the conclusions arrived at, we began to deliberate upon the course to be pursued, in accordance with the instructions of the Secretary of War. The first delivery occurred on the 29th day of January, 1862, and has been since regularly continued, as our decisions have been pronounced. In giving out the claims presented, with the allowances upon them, it was necessary that some receipt should be executed by the claimants. In deciding what should be the character of the receipt, it seemed to us that as a protracted and patient examination had been given to these claims, and the parties had been heard either in person or by attorney, and the cases had been continued from day to day, so long as those interested desired to produce testimony, and the government, by our action, was committed to pay the amount allowed, it was no more than proper that the claimants should be required to accept the allowance in full for the amount demanded. This course was adopted, and was generally acquiesced in. Prominent among those who remonstrated was Leonidas Haskell, whose transactions figure in this report, and who gave to us formal notice of his intention to appeal to Congress from our decision on his claims.

The department is aware how constantly we have in our correspondence urged the payment of these liabilities. Those for money seized and borrowed from the banks, with the exception probably of some \$200,000, have been satisfied, and the number of the holders of the smaller class of vouchers have been so fortunate as to have their claims settled by the disbursing officers; but probably fully three-fourths of the amount allowed by the commissioners still remains unpaid. When it was borne in mind how long many of these debts have been due, and how much have been deposited in the hands of the holders, many of whom have been obliged to cash them in the market at heavy discount, it is not a matter of surprise that an irritating sense of injustice on the part of the government is beginning to be felt here. This feeling is increased by a prevailing impression that the same tardiness of payment has not distinguished the service in the east. We earnestly recommend, as a measure of common justice, due alike to the highest pecuniary interest of the government as to its honor, that the claims which we have certified shall be at once paid.

While we have necessarily devoted the principal part of our report to an exposure of the abuses which characterized the late administration of this department, we cannot close it without bearing testimony to the integrity which has generally been displayed by merchants, mechanics, and manufacturers when permitted to deal directly with the government. Wide spread as has been the demoralization in official circles and among their dependents and favorites, and startling as are the frauds which have been attempted and consummated, a large majority of the claimants have presented themselves before us unimpaired by imputations either upon their loyalty or honor.

We have examined some 1,200 witnesses, whose testimony has been taken by an accomplished stenographer. (Mr. R. R. Pitt, of Chicago,) and has been in part

written out. The illness from which he is at this moment suffering may delay the completion of the work, but we presume that in some three months the whole evidence, which will consist of from six to seven thousand manuscript pages, will be ready, and will then be filed in the department as part and in support of this report. As several weeks will be required to close entirely the business of the commission, the secretary and a few of the clerks now in its service will be necessarily retained during that time. The entire record of our proceedings, with the accompanying papers, will then be transmitted.

DAVID DAVIS, J. HOLT, HUGH CAMPBELL.

Incidents of the late Battle at Pittsburg Landing.

During the fight on Monday a cannon ball took off the heads of five men. The men were out of the line and stood in direct range of the artillery and all were killed at the same instant.

Every man connected with one of the guns of Torrell's battery, except one, was killed and also the horses.

A rebel caisson was struck by a shell and exploded. It was shattered all to pieces and seven mangled bodies were found lying around it.

One company in an Illinois regiment had every officer, commissioned and non-commissioned, shot down.

A national and rebel soldier were found dead, side by side, with hands clasped. It is supposed that they fell near each other, mortally wounded, and making friends, died in peace.

One young Ohio volunteer who had been recently wounded, and died before picked up, was found with the miniature of a young lady friend to his lips. His comrades state that he had an idea that he would be killed, and was several times seen looking at the daguerrotype while the regiment was in reserve.

Among the Confederates taken prisoners is Capt. W. H. Polk, nephew of ex-President Polk, who participated in the battle, and was severely wounded in the leg. He had to submit to amputation.

The wounded in the hospital at Savannah are dying at the rate of eight or ten daily.

W. J. Slidell, a nephew of the Hon. John Slidell, was among the captured wounded at Pittsburg.

Among the rebel prisoners taken was Lt. Col. Walter Scott, a son of Col. Scott, now in the Federal service.

CORRUPTION AND PROFLIGACY.—The Republican Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. Hale), in a speech delivered in the Senate of the United States, on the 7th inst., said:—"I believe, and I declare upon my responsibility as a Senator of the United States, that the liberties of this country are in greater danger, to-day, from the corruptions and from the profligacy practiced in the various Departments of this Government, than it is from the open enemy in the field."

Mr. Hale is one of the men who has labored for years, with all his powers, mental and physical, to elect and organize an Administration upon the principles that brought Mr. Lincoln into power. If truth now compels him, within the first year of this administration, to make the above declaration, our Country and Government are surely in a most deplorable condition, and it is high time the people were looking to their true condition, and preparing a proper remedy for our maladies.

Beet, as Mr. Hale says we are, by "corruption and profligacy" at the Capitol of the nation, squandering millions upon millions of the hard-earned money of the people on corrupt partisans, engaged at the same time in one of the most stupendous and expensive civil wars the world has ever witnessed, what will be left for us but penury and rage? But penury brought on a people by the "corruption and profligacy" of their rulers sometimes in the world's history, has begotten wrath—public wrath—and then woe to him on whom it falls. Better that a mill-stone were about his neck and he be cast into the sea, than to encounter the fierce indignation of an outraged people.

The administration should learn wisdom from the lessons of history, and remember the fate that always attend the "corrupt and profligate."—St. Clairsville Gazette.

LAUGHING.—The man that laughs is a doctor without a diploma. His face does more good in a sick room than a bushel of powders or a gallon of bitter draughts.—People are always glad to see him. Their hands instinctively go half way to meet his grasp, while they turn involuntarily from the clammy touch of the dyspeptic, who speaks in the grating key. He laughs you out of your faults, while you never know what a pleasant world you are living in until he points out the sunny streaks on its pathway.

Two Irishmen were going to fire off a cannon, just for fun but being of an economical turn of mind, they did not wish to lose the ball, so one took an iron kettle in his hand to catch it in, and stationing himself in front of the loaded cannon, he exclaimed to the other who stood behind holding a lighted torch—"Touch it aisy, Pat!"

How high do they come?" "Greeny stammered and blushed, but replied, "I don't know exactly but think they will come about to the knees!" The young lady went up.

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INNOCENCE.—Innocence and ignorance are sisters. But there are noble and vulgar sisters. Noble innocence and ignorance are mortal, they have pretty faces, but wholly without expression, and of a transient beauty; the noble sisters are immortal, their lofty forms are unchangeable, and their countenances are still radiant with the light of paradise.—They dwell in heaven, and visit only the noblest and most severely tried of mankind.—Novels.

SPIRITUAL BLESSING.—God generally gives spiritual blessings and deliverances, as he does temporal; that is, by the mediation of an active and virtuous piety. The fruits of the earth are the gift of God, and we pray for them as such; but yet we plant, and we sow, and we plough, for all that; and the harvest which are sometimes left up in prayer must at other times be put in the plough, or the husbandman must expect no crop. Everything must be expected in the way proper to its nature, with the concurrent influence of the divine grace, not to supersede the means, but to prosper and make them effectual.—Dr. Scott's Sermons.

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH.—Sure enough, of all paths a man could strike into there is at any given moment a bar path for every man, a thing which, here and now, it were of all things wiser for him to do; which could be led or driven to do, he were then doing "like a man," as we phrase it, all men and gods agreeing with him; the whole universe virtually exclaiming well done to him! His success, in such cases were complete; his felicity a maximum. This path, to find this path and walk in it, is the one thing needful for him. Whatsoever forwards him in that, let it come to him even in the shape of blows and spurrings, is liberty; whatsoever hinders him, were it ward-motes, open vestries, poll-booths, tremendous cheers, rivers of heavy-wet, is slavery.—Carlyle.

LOVE FOR THE DEAD.—The love which survives the tomb, says Irving, is one of the noblest attributes of the soul. If it has its uses, it has likewise its delights; and when the overwhelming burst of grief is calmed into the gentle tear of recollection, when the sudden anguish and the convulsed agony over the present ruins of all that we most loved, is softened away, into pensive meditation on all that it was in the days of its loveliness—who would root out such sorrow from the heart? Though it may sometimes throw a passing cloud over the bright hour of gaiety, or spread a deep sadness over the hour of gloom; who would exchange it even for the song of pleasure, or the lust of revelry? No; there is a voice from the tomb sweeter than song; there is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn even from the charms of the living.

SERVITUDE.—No condition passes for servitude that is accompanied with great riches, with honors, and with the service of many inferiors. This is but a deception of the sight through a false medium; for if a groom serve a gentleman in his chamber, that gentleman a lord, and that lord a prince; the groom, the gentleman, and the lord are as much servants one to the other; the circumstantial difference of one's getting only his bread and wages, the second a plentiful, and the third a superfluous estate, is no more intrinsic to this matter, than the difference between a plain, a rich, and a gaudy livery. I do not say, that he who sells his own time and his own will for one hundred thousand, is not a wiser merchant than he who does for one hundred pounds; but I will swear they are both merchants; and that he is happier than both who can live without selling that estate to which he was born.—Cowley.

MINISTERING ANGELS.—The beautiful have gone with their bloom from the gaze of human eyes. Soft eyes that made it spring-time in our hearts are seen no more. We have loved the light of many a smile that has faded from us now, and in our hearts have lingered sweet voices that now are hushed in the silence of death. Seats are left vacant in our earthly homes which none again can fill. Kindred and friends, loved ones, have passed away one by one; our hearts are left desolate; we are lonely without them. They have passed with their love to "that land, from whose bourne no traveller returns." Still we never see them again? Memory turns with lingering regret to call those smiles and the loved tones of those dear familiar voices. In fancy they are often by our side, but their homes on a brighter shore. Our visit is in our dreams, floating over our memory like shadows over moonlight waters. When the heart is weary with anguish and the soul is bowed with grief, do they not come and whisper thoughts of comfort and hope? Yes, sweet memory brings them to us, and the love we bore them lifts the heart from earthly aspirations, and we long to join them in that better land. They hover round us, the ethereal, dear, departed ones, loving and the loved, they watch with eyes that slumber not. When gentle dreams are wandering to the angel land, in whispers wake the hymning strains of that bright and happy choir, revealing sunny a tale of hope, and bliss, and tenderness, and love. They tell of sunny realms, no, or rived by mortal eye—of forms arrayed in feeble beauty—and lofty anthems to their great Creator's praise are sounded forth in sweet seraphic numbers. And this bright vision of the best resolves the tumult of life's jarring scenes; they fade in air, and then we glory in the thought that we are heirs of immortality. And why is it that we regard with such deep reverence and love, those bright celestial beings of another sphere? Ah, it is because they take an interest in our welfare, and joy over our success in the great battle of life. They are not selfish in their happiness, but fair-voiced; I have us share it with them.