Pittsburgh Gazette.

SATURDAY MORNING—DEC. 19, 1863.

CITY AND SUBURBAN.

OFFICIAL PAPER.

THANKSGIVING SERMON,

Delivered by Rev. M. W. Jacobus, D. D., in the Central Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Nov. 26, 1863.

The book of Exodus, XXXIVth chapter, and 23d and 24th verses, viz: "And then shalt observe the feast of weeks of the first-fruits of wheat harvest. * * * * * *

For I will cast out the nations before thee and enlarge thy borders. Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord, thy God, twice in the year.

The three Annual Festivals of the Jewish people were intended to promote, not only their piety, but their nationality. The very assembling of all the males of the land from twelve years old and upward at the nation's capital twice every year for public gratulation and joy, was calculated to strengthen this national tie which bound every Jew to his Judea and his Jerusalem. It was under such a training that the sweet singer of Israel could exclaim, "If I forget thee, O! Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Poems himself honored, in his own case, that lofty spirit of patriotism, by burning tears shed on the slope of Olivet, as he looked upon the capital city that he loved. And David sings in his song to a God who values nationality, and cherishes the sentiment that it inspires. How striking the passage: "He ruleth by his power forever. *His eyes behold the nations. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*" And God in the text gives his guaranty to the favored land, that he will drive out the nations before them and enlarge their borders, and secure them from the invasion of avaricious and grasping kingdoms—recognizing them as a reward for their recognition of Him. It is only now, for the first time, in our National history, that we seem to have entered into this original idea of the Harvest Festival, by a National Proclamation, with a view to foster the spirit of a true Nationality. We bless God to-day, first of all, for a National Thanksgiving. Enough of *State Right's Tomfoolery*, from the separate Proclamations and divers days of different Governors, with a remnant ignoring the occasion altogether, as though this were not one land and one people, and as though these commonwealths must give thanks to God apart, as the families and tribes of Israel bewailed apart. It is only another step taken in the march of National ideas and National greatness, when the Nation's head proclaims a festival of harvest for all the land, and calls upon all the people of all the States and territories to unite in the offering of thanks to God. God, we trust, will smile upon the Nation's festal day, and crown this baptized Nationality with his blessing!

The sacred Festivals of the Jewish people had both an agricultural and historical reference. As they were a religious people, as their agriculture was a religious vocation, and formed an important item in their religious history. The same God, who led them out of Egypt, clothed their fields with plenty, and accordingly they celebrated history and harvest together. The Passover which brought to public notice the ripening of the first barley ears, as a wave offering to God, was the season, too, of their first steps of Exodus from Egyptian bondage. And so the Pentecost had a double reference and a double commemoration. It was the festival of *wheat harvest*, when the great staple of bread was ingathered and the first two loaves made from the new grain were presented before God. And what was a remarkable coincidence in their history, the *Giving of the Law* at Sinai, was on the same fiftieth day, not in the wilderness; and so late day was celebrated as the Festival of the Giving of the Law as well as the Festival of the Harvest. We have need, as a nation, to-day, at this National Thanksgiving, to associate the joy of our harvest with the joy of the giving of the Law.

When you consider how impotent are all material products to elevate and bless a people, without sound and good government,—when you look out upon the nations and see the old lands of gold and silver mines—Mexico and Peru—degraded and desolated by the lack of law and order, you will see how no riches of the soil, no mountain ores, no bountious harvests can compensate for the absence of good government. Sinai, therefore, was the first grand deliverance of God to the covenant people, after their relief from Egyptian oppressors. There, in the solemn grandeur of that mount, amidst unwonted excitements, that made Moses himself cry out, "I exceedingly fear and quake"—here, amidst angelic ministries with fire and tempest, and clangor of trumpets, as if all the elements of the natural world were in deadly conflict, God gave the Law, which was to be the nation's guide and safeguard, and the basis of National Liberty. For law, instead of restricting liberty, as the lawless might allege, establishes it, guarantees it, perpetuates it. What would Israel have been, even in Canaan—even in the land flowing with milk and honey, without the national code in the statute-book of the nation—written first on tables of stone in its great elementary articles, and thence enlarged into all the details of the ritual and judicial economy? God Himself, very well knew that more than harvests, more than gold, more than the rich valleys of Pharon and Esdraelon, and the Jordan, with waving grain and blushing vine, they needed LAW as the basis of all social order, and true individual and national prosperity.

No wonder then if God so ordered as that on the very Festival day of the wheat harvest, when the nation was brought to celebrate with jubilant praise, the ingathering of the staff of bread, they should have the Nation's *Law* delivered amidst the lightning and smoke and thunder of Sinai! All the demonstrations of that fiery peak in the wilderness, where God seemed to come down to mon upon His tribunal of flame, would only make the occasion more memorable, only engrave more deeply the words of the statute upon the tables of the Nation's heart. And so you will readily see, our own Nation is called to-day to associate the celebration of the *Harvests*, with the commemoration of the giving of the Law, as on the awful Sinai summit along our wilderness march. We could show you that harvests would be little without Law, for they would only furnish a resource for national luxury and public immorality. The richest fields upon which the sun ever shone, are cursed by popular disorder and vice, where there is no public law well established as the security of life and property. And so, we could show that National Law may, in certain circumstances, be impotent, and the best Government may lie at the feet of barbarous invaders, if, there be no adequate harvests to sustain the nation, struggling for their very existence against the most powerful combinations.

I, We bless God then, first of all for abundant harvests in the interest of national *law*.

As few figures lately obtained from the Department of Agriculture tell a story which the world would do well to consider. "Our total agricultural exports (exclusive of cotton,) in 1860—when we were yet at peace—were $60,649,556 of which Southern ports exported $19,736,365. In 1861, with half a million men in arms, and no Southern exports, they amounted to $137,056,505, and, in 1862, with a million of men in the field (one-half of them from the rural districts) and no Southern exports, they reached the sum of $155,132,075. The amount of wheat and flour alone exported in the year ending September 1st, 1860, exceeded that of the previous year by over seven million bushels. Estimating the force of our army (and its employees) in the field at one million of men, and the rations per diem to each man at twenty-two ounces of flour, it requires for its supply for a year 12,800,000 bushels of wheat. Was there over a country in the world one-half of which could feed such an army, largely made up from its agricultural population, and so wonderfully increase its exports of breadstuffs?"

It is easy to see what a weight is thus thrown into the scale by an invisible hand, where the destiny of a government is at stake—not only of our own government, but I may say of all governments. How powerless this nation must have been to make good its claims, and to enforce its authority against a gigantic rebellion, if God had simply blighted the great northern grain fields—if he had not given a commission to the rain and sunshine and gentle dew, to bring on the bountious crops, so as to defy all the most mighty combinations, and to falsify the most malignant prophecies. It was predicted that without cotton to ship from the seaports of the North, grass would grow in the streets of our great commercial marts. But when was industry ever more amply rewarded—or when were the chief commercial cities ever more overflowing with wealth—or giving more hope to every industrial pursuit?

It was predicted that for lack of cotton the great foreign nations would interfere in our struggle, and maintain the cause of the Cotton Rebellion. But this prophecy also has proven false. It was predicted that for lack of this item in our national wealth, our exchanges could not be regulated, and the means to carry on the war would utterly fail. But it is the rebellion which is bankrupt—while our national finances have sustained our credit and astonished the world. And all this is due, not so much to any man's financial skill, as to the vast resources of the nation developed in this fearful struggle, under the kind ordering of the nation's God. It is God that has opened new fountains and channels of wealth. It is He who in the nation's extremity has opened thousands of rivers of oil—given us our coal beds and iron fields at the North, beyond the grasp of the rebellion, has made an exhausting war minister even to the national enterprise and thrift, until we have to fear lest the temptation should be rather to protract the war for the aggrandisement of the masses, and for the greedy cormorants who fatten on the public store. And here we are bound to give special thanks to God for this overflowing plenty through all the loyal States. No famine, nor bread riots—but abundance for man and beast—while gaunt hunger stalks through the rebel districts—and this itself may achieve more than the power of our arms, to bring about subordination. And then see what a new enterprise is already going forth to develop the immense resources of our territories—to open up the routes to the Pacific—and to lay the Atlantic telegraph.

But if we interpret the National prosperity aright, the basis of which is in the manifest bounty of God's hand in the harvests of the year, we understand all this to be His decree for the maintenance of Law, as it is imperilled in this mighty struggle. If the harvests had failed, and the nation's resources had thereby been crippled so as to be inadequate for the enforcement of law and the maintenance of Government, what should we have seen but a triumph of rebellion and a riot of anarchy and oppression such as the world never saw?

II. But secondly, as with the nation of Israel, so also with our nation, it occurs that the festival of the wheat harvest is also the festival of *the delivery of the law*.

It may be said that law is always the result of conflict. Great national statutes are graven with a pen of iron and often with the point of the bayonet. *Magna Charta* the sheet-anchor of constitutional liberty, was the grant of tyrants as the price of blood. It is commonly on some Sinai peak, some Sinai of our history, where the nation is drawn up at the foot of the smoking mount, along their wilderness march, and made to tremble at God's thunders, that the law is delivered to them as by the ministry of angels and through some heroic deliverer of the people. Human life is infinitely precious, but that vast generation of 600,000 fighting men—representing two and a half millions of people—perished in that wilderness, in that fearful discipline, and for that very benefit of national law, just to establish that covenant people in their Promised Land, under the salutary training of these Free Institutions. We shudder at the heaps of slain, which immortalize the battle fields of the Republic—which make memorable and glorious the names of Shiloh, and Fort Donelson, and Fair Oaks, and Antietam, and Vicksburg, and Port Hudson, and Gettysburg, and Chickamauga. But look at posterity, and ask if the blessings of countless millions will not be pronounced upon the gallant braves who have fallen in the cause of law, and nationality and government.

I have stood on the solemn mound at Waterloo, crowned by the statue of the Belgian Lion, keeping watch over the promiscuous dead that sleep there. And I read on the verdict of history that God set there a barrier against the reckless and rapacious ambition of a military chief who would found a universal empire on the corner stone of human liberty. I have looked out from the heights of Pentotecus upon the mountain of dead at Marathon, where Asia and Europe came into deadly collision for the mastery, and I read only the mighty wrestle of brute force for territorial sway. But stand now in the sacred, newly consecrated cemetery at Gettysburg, and ask in whose cause these myriads of dead in the loyal States perished, and if I understand the history and the principle, there is no answer so brief and at once so comprehensive as the monosyllable—LAW. There must be law in Heaven! It is wholesome and just law that establishes Liberty on earth, and secures the blessings of Peace and of Prosperity. And far back in the ages when there was war in Heaven—when Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon and his angels, it was about the body of Moses—it was a mighty wrestle of angelic principalities about the Mosaic body of laws—about the true import of that Theocratic Constitution—whose true end and aim was to set men free from the bondage of sin and death. And this contest of ours is a battle for the *elects*. We storm the "*Lookout*" of the Dragon and his angels, and it is in effect the old dispute revived about the body of Moses. And I see, in all this, God's retributive hand in history, when I saw the Dragon of the Bloody Ridge, taken its name from the early missions among the *Cherokees* in Georgia, where the holy missionary *Worcester* and his co-laborers were imprisoned by the State authorities for the Christian work of giving the Gospel to the Red Man. Now that Ridge is reddened with the blood of her citizens and stands a monument of the crime.

I know there are other views of this contest. I know it is regarded by some, as a political Partisan war, in the interest of a fanatical theory, and to sustain a purely fanatical and radical cause. I know some regard it even as lawless. But far above and beyond all party questions, looms up the majestic form of the Nation—assaulted by some of her chiefest children, and a deadly blow aimed at her life. And this becomes at once the all-absorbing question, Nation or no Nation? Government or no Government? Law or no law? And it would seem that there could be but one response from all parties and all classes and all complexions, just because all interests are vitally involved in this one interest of the Nation's life.

We bless God to-day, then, that the LAW has been delivered around his burning mountain, along our wilderness march, on the way from our family estate, to our full privileges as a Nation. And to-day, we hang out this festival of harvest, as a festival also of the LAW.

And 2d, The law of Nationality has been laid down.

The baneful heresy of State Rights, as against the national supremacy, has, more than any other falsity, poisoned our body politics, and brought on this fearful rebellion against national authority—and everywhere the perversion has been manifest—everywhere the true doctrine must need be announced and enforced—that this no group of Confederate States without a nationality, but a nation composed of States, having a Government for the whole, and over the whole—while there are several and separate governments, subordinate to the national authority. Who ever believed that this was only a family of small Republics instead of one Republic out of the whole? The *E Pluribus-Unum* expresses it, *one out of many*. And if this be not so, then there can be no supreme law in the land. Then the people of the United States must be without law, as such.

The right of a State to secede when it pleases, is simply the right to revolt and defy the government when it pleases.

The doctrine has been fairly broached and fiercely fought for. It can never again be propounded as the monstrous anomaly of our Constitution, if it now be settled as it must be, in *blood*. It had been darkly hinted, threatened, proclaimed, boasted. But now that it is thrown into the terrible crucible of war, it must be tested for all futurity. And the test already brings forth the shining truth in the face of all nations, that a nation without nationality is only a headless trunk.

And it is not so much the promulgation of this law of nationality by the national head, as it the striking and solemn utterance of God himself in this crisis of our history. All these events have brought forward this vital question. The times have been such as to test the truth or falsity of the principles as in a last analysis. The haters of Republican Government, have exulted beforehand in the imagined rottenness of our political system. And until we had heard the truth of God out of this whirlwind, we knew not whether we had a government or not. But now we know that a hidden strength, which others, and even ourselves had not imagined, lies in this very doctrine of our Republican Nationality. God plainly designs that we shall be a nation, and that we shall be a great nation, and a free nation, and a christian nation; and that with all our social and political and material resources, we shall do Him a special service among the nations of the earth. And this development of the national sentiment, and the national strength in the direction of mighty armies and navies, as well as in the power of the national will, and the National Union, he has ordained to operate for the good of mankind.

And so with that kindred form of their States Rights heresy—that though Secession is unauthorized by the Constitution, and wicked in itself, yet that there is no power granted to the Government to put it down! But this is a case in which the Government can ask no grants. Of whom should it be asked? Of the Rebellion? It *assumes* to this! Does a man who is assaulted by an assassin ask of him the right to strike him down in self-defence? Does he even ask it of the State, in the form of a civil process? *Must* he not rather strike and strike at once by the very instinct of self-preservation?

And so another phase of the same heresy, is the monstrous pretence that the general Government has no power to draft the soldiers it requires for the suppression of rebellion. You had as well say it has no power to take the arms from its arsenals, nor to commission the ships at its navy yards. But it has. And it must equally have power to wield the strong arms of its citizens, whether they be State militia or not, in the terrible exigency of insurrection and rebellion. Shame that men of the law, should apply their legal acumen to make void the law and to make out a case against law, so as to rob the law of its inherent idea of sovereignty and self-defence.

See, for a moment, in what a predicament this nation must have been placed, under such a theory, if the General Government must wait on the State Governments for soldiers, and these Governors were found in sympathy with the rebellion, or arraying themselves against the Executive, or against the war. This would be most effectually to override and defy all national legislation, and national sovereignty by refusing the men and denying the supplies. This would have presented to the world the fatal spectacle of a rebellion at home, and of virtual secession in the North, on the same principle of State rights as at the South. We may bless God to-day, that this fearful complication has not occurred. Difference of opinion must always exist among us, enough to furnish salutary checks and restraints to party politics. Men may exercise their right to vote *for* opposing candidates, in a conscientious belief that a policy which seems to others to be disloyal, may be most loyal and desirable. And so we rejoice at the ample proof that the heart of the nation is true, and intent on self-defense, and not on self-destruction.

And 2d. The Law of LOYALTY has been laid down.

It is not that a man must approve every measure of a given Administration, nor even in such a crisis as this, must hold everything which is done by the Executive or the National Government to be right, much less the best possible. We all complain—and we all feel it to be our privilege to complain—when we see, or think we see, manifest wrongs in the heads of Departments. In other times, when, for example, it was the question of the Mexican War, some of us opposed it, and opposed the policy which prompted it, because we believed it was damaging and wrong. No one would have called that opposition to a Government measure *disloyalty*.

But now, when the question is of sustaining or opposing the Government, in this great struggle for its very existence, there can be no neutrality. It must be *Aye* or *Nay*—For or Against—War with the rebellion or peace with the rebellion. Then it comes to be the question of subjection to the *higher* powers, or subjection to the *lower* powers. And whether the higher powers be my candidates or not "if they be the powers that be," not the powers that falsely claim to be, that is all for the present. The adorable *God-man* honored this sentiment in His case on earth. Though He held that Kings should not claim tribute of Him, because he was a Son and not a stranger, yet, He says, lest we should offend them, let the tribute be paid and the majesty of the Law and of Loyalty be honored.

So we say, let the Government be sustained until it shall establish itself and give us a conquered peace, and then let us elect whom we will if we can by the peaceful operation of our free suffrage. But till then the tangled thread of politics must be let alone.

And 3d. The law of American Liberty has been laid down.

Our symbol has been the empty Cap of Liberty borne high, for a token of our doctrine and principle, as enunciated before the nations. Now henceforth the Cap must be worn upon the nation's head.

This is the utterance that peals out from amidst the lightnings and thunders, and tempests of this wilderness summit, amidst the terrors of lawgiven and the quakings of the people. It is not the Presidential Proclamation so much as the Providential Proclamation. The former without the latter were indeed, a *brute thunder*. It has as well have echoed on the shore of the Atlantic and cried "Emancipation" to the deafening surf, for all that the mere Presidential proclamation would accomplish, if it contain the mere letter. If this word "Emancipation" is law, *who made it so?* Not the Constitution—not merely the Executive Proclamation—not any more all the groans of the slaves and all the clamors of the people—not anything if God gives it not the force of law by virtue of His Divine decree. And if this be the will of God, then all the powers of oppression in the universe, if they were leagued together, it would be impotent! And if we rightly read God's will, in Scripture and in history, this is the mandate which has gone forth from the top of the old Sinai, and from the summit of our fiery mount, and no governments on earth, nor all together, are strong enough to prevent it. No matter whether this be our plan or not—no matter who have favored it, or who have opposed it—no matter how much there has been unworthy in the human conception, or the human measure, at the outset—when God is seen to be riding upon the whirlwind, and directing the storm, we adore His counsels, and rejoice in His wonder-working plan. Is not the flag consecrated by the fact that now freedom follows the flag as it never did before. If, in an honest, patriotic effort to strike away the corner stone of the rebellion, four millions of human beings are set free, who shall say NAY, but that in this country? If we care not for the freedom of the slave, we care for the freedom of the flag, and of law and government, and for our own freedom and that of our family and posterity. Why? This is it. That God makes us achieve the deliverance of a race of bondmen among us, in the act of achieving our own deliverance. This is the condition of things in the Providence of God—that we cannot say longer "a free people without being *all free*, and *free altogether! This is God's Law of Emancipation!*

And if this be the work of God, then all the world's potentates cannot prevent it. I shudder at the awful processes by which this is effected. But if all the rebel dead, who have fought under their bloody banner, were gathered in one great mound, what a vistaph must history write there—what inscription must be graven over that mound of the slain? Simply this—They died in an unholy attempt to found an empire on the corner stone of human bond age. They died to perpetuate a system, whose noble, loyal braves sleep on a hundred battlefields of the Republic, and their *Abel* blood cries to God for Liberty and law. And what shall be the response? Shall it be that all—that these helpless creatures shall be *set free!* Women and children free to be turned out to die, while the men fight the battles of their oppressors? Is it now to be the shame of our Republic—blacker, fouler than the shame of slavery, to care nothing for these helpless creatures to loose them from their bondage? Nay, my brethren! We may not have thought it. "We may have secured the question *what we should do with them*—as only *temporizing*, in the light of the greater question of *freedom*. But let us see to it, that the *word "freedom"* be not spoken too long, and we be not led astray by sounding terms; and let us go on in the good work of caring for these poor, helpless millions till they be free indeed.

Yes, my brethren, after all this, (4th,) the law of *Christian Patriotism* has been laid down. The Latin poet could say "*sweet and decorous it is to die for one's country*"—

"For on the scaffold high,
To die is no disgrace,
The noblest place for man to die
Is where he dies for man."

And this is no mere heathen sentiment. Christian parents have given up their sons, and then have gone themselves to the battle: Christian men have done and children, and life itself to them, has been their country! Ministers of our religion have died on the battlefield, baring their bosoms to the enemy's blow, while caring for the wounded and comforting the expiring soldier. Alas! how many of them have contracted the fever of the camp and died. And the law of our Christianity has been laid down as a law of holy patriotism in old and young that will give up property, kindred, children and life itself, for country. Was there ever a war in which the Christian membership was so largely represented? And then, in manifold agencies of providing for the sick and wounded in hospitals, and for the hungry troops on their passage through our cities, and for the Christian instruction of soldiers in camp, and for the starving prisoners in the dungeons of the enemy—Oh! what a flame of Christian patriotism has glowed as in a furnace, has hallowed this war, and has made it seem to combine and concentrate in itself every sacred and holy cause. How female patriotism has shone in examples that rival the fair name of Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. How the children' offerings have poured forth in a consecrated stream! How the prayers of closets and families and churches have gone up as in a cloud of incense to the throne for the bodies and souls of our soldiers. And the effects have been witnessed in revivals of religion in the army tents, which have made the tent a holy tabernacle for God, on many a bloody battle-field.

And those are only a few items belonging to our Psalm of National Thanksgiving. We bless God also that amidst unwonted perils we have maintained peace with foreign nations. When rupture has seemed so imminent—when England and France have eagerly watched any occasion to interfere; when we were harassed with new complications, and our enemies were jubilant at the thought of Foreign Intervention, it was plainly in accordance with the guaranty of God in the text, that even the most grasping and avaricious nations should not desire our land, in the time of its most perilous exposure, because in it was heard the voice of Thanksgiving to God for His mercy. The impression made upon those nations by our resources and prosperity in the midst of this most calamitous war, appears from the amazing immigration to our shores. Since January 1 the total of immigrants is 1,140,566, against 63,294 for the same period in the previous years! These figures, which I am not able to otherwise verify, are found in the Brooklyn *Union*, editorials.

We bless God too that the loyal States have been at peace with so much inflammable material, and so much at home and abroad to fan the flame of riot among our population. We recognize this marvellous chain of Providence by which the bold invasion of our State resulted in a crushing defeat to the invaders. And does not every one see how the domain of the rebellion is immensely narrowed? From 100,000 square miles of territory, it is reduced to 20,000. A thousand miles of the Mississippi from Columbus to Kaloomy, to the Gulf, was in rebel hands and held by rebel armies at the outset. Now, all its length, including Vicksburg, Memphis, Port Hudson, and Baton Rouge, and New Orleans is ours. They hold the sea-coast from Norfolk to the Rio Grande. But now we have retaken all the ports of entry, excepting *Mobile and Wilmington*. Now they cannot claim a solitary State where we have not a powerful foothold for speedy occupation. And it would seem that one sweep of our great armies must speedily finish this mighty work. As we enter the sanctuary this morning, the tidings come to us of signal victory, "*above the clouds.*" Who can toll us God has chosen our Nation's sacred anniversary, for giving us such such splendid success at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, as turned the tide of the war, so he may choose to make this great National Thanksgiving ever memorable by the grand triumphs whose joyous shout just now greets our ears. "No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the righteous gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless, remembered mercy."

And when we turn to the manifold social, spiritual and personal mercies of God's hand, much less the best possible. We all complain—and we all feel it to be our privilege to complain—when we see, or think we see, manifest wrongs in the heads of Departments. In other times, when, for example, it was the question of the Mexican War, some of us opposed it, and opposed the policy which prompted it, because we believed it was damaging and wrong. No one would have called that opposition to a Government measure disloyalty.

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Our symbol has been the empty Cap of Liberty borne high, for a token of our doctrine and principle, as enunciated before the nations. Now henceforth the Cap must be worn upon the nation's head.

This is the utterance that peals out from amidst the lightnings and thunders, and tempests of this wilderness summit, amidst the terrors of lawgiven and the quakings of the people. It is not the Presidential Proclamation so much as the Providential Proclamation. The former without the latter were indeed, a *brute thunder*. It has as well have echoed on the shore of the Atlantic and cried "Emancipation" to the deafening surf, for all that the mere Presidential proclamation would accomplish, if it contain the mere letter. If this word "Emancipation" is law, *who made it so?* Not the Constitution—not merely the Executive Proclamation—not any more all the groans of the slaves and all the clamors of the people—not anything if God gives it not the force of law by virtue of His Divine decree. And if this be the will of God, then all the powers of oppression in the universe, if they were leagued together, it would be impotent! And if we rightly read God's will, in Scripture and in history, this is the mandate which has gone forth from the top of the old Sinai, and from the summit of our fiery mount, and no governments on earth, nor all together, are strong enough to prevent it. No matter whether this be our plan or not—no matter who have favored it, or who have opposed it—no matter how much there has been unworthy in the human conception, or the human measure, at the outset—when God is seen to be riding upon the whirlwind, and directing the storm, we adore His counsels, and rejoice in His wonder-working plan. Is not the flag consecrated by the fact that now freedom follows the flag as it never did before. If, in an honest, patriotic effort to strike away the corner stone of the rebellion, four millions of human beings are set free, who shall say NAY, but that in this country? If we care not for the freedom of the slave, we care for the freedom of the flag, and of law and government, and for our own freedom and that of our family and posterity. Why? This is it. That God makes us achieve the deliverance of a race of bondmen among us, in the act of achieving our own deliverance. This is the condition of things in the Providence of God—that we cannot say longer "a free people without being *all free*, and *free altogether! This is God's Law of Emancipation!*

And if this be the work of God, then all the world's potentates cannot prevent it. I shudder at the awful processes by which this is effected. But if all the rebel dead, who have fought under their bloody banner, were gathered in one great mound, what a vistaph must history write there—what inscription must be graven over that mound of the slain? Simply this—They died in an unholy attempt to found an empire on the corner stone of human bond age. They died to perpetuate a system, whose noble, loyal braves sleep on a hundred battlefields of the Republic, and their *Abel* blood cries to God for Liberty and law. And what shall be the response? Shall it be that all—that these helpless creatures shall be *set free!* Women and children free to be turned out to die, while the men fight the battles of their oppressors? Is it now to be the shame of our Republic—blacker, fouler than the shame of slavery, to care nothing for these helpless creatures to loose them from their bondage? Nay, my brethren! We may not have thought it. "We may have secured the question *what we should do with them*—as only *temporizing*, in the light of the greater question of *freedom*. But let us see to it, that the *word "freedom"* be not spoken too long, and we be not led astray by sounding terms; and let us go on in the good work of caring for these poor, helpless millions till they be free indeed.

Yes, my brethren, after all this, (4th,) the law of *Christian Patriotism* has been laid down. The Latin poet could say "*sweet and decorous it is to die for one's country*"—

"For on the scaffold high,
To die is no disgrace,
The noblest place for man to die
Is where he dies for man."

And this is no mere heathen sentiment. Christian parents have given up their sons, and then have gone themselves to the battle: Christian men have done and children, and life itself to them, has been their country! Ministers of our religion have died on the battlefield, baring their bosoms to the enemy's blow, while caring for the wounded and comforting the expiring soldier. Alas! how many of them have contracted the fever of the camp and died. And the law of our Christianity has been laid down as a law of holy patriotism in old and young that will give up property, kindred, children and life itself, for country. Was there ever a war in which the Christian membership was so largely represented? And then, in manifold agencies of providing for the sick and wounded in hospitals, and for the hungry troops on their passage through our cities, and for the Christian instruction of soldiers in camp, and for the starving prisoners in the dungeons of the enemy—Oh! what a flame of Christian patriotism has glowed as in a furnace, has hallowed this war, and has made it seem to combine and concentrate in itself every sacred and holy cause. How female patriotism has shone in examples that rival the fair name of Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. How the children' offerings have poured forth in a consecrated stream! How the prayers of closets and families and churches have gone up as in a cloud of incense to the throne for the bodies and souls of our soldiers. And the effects have been witnessed in revivals of religion in the army tents, which have made the tent a holy tabernacle for God, on many a bloody battle-field.

And those are only a few items belonging to our Psalm of National Thanksgiving. We bless God also that amidst unwonted perils we have maintained peace with foreign nations. When rupture has seemed so imminent—when England and France have eagerly watched any occasion to interfere; when we were harassed with new complications, and our enemies were jubilant at the thought of Foreign Intervention, it was plainly in accordance with the guaranty of God in the text, that even the most grasping and avaricious nations should not desire our land, in the time of its most perilous exposure, because in it was heard the voice of Thanksgiving to God for His mercy. The impression made upon those nations by our resources and prosperity in the midst of this most calamitous war, appears from the amazing immigration to our shores. Since January 1 the total of immigrants is 1,140,566, against 63,294 for the same period in the previous years! These figures, which I am not able to otherwise verify, are found in the Brooklyn *Union*, editorials.

We bless God too that the loyal States have been at peace with so much inflammable material, and so much at home and abroad to fan the flame of riot among our population. We recognize this marvellous chain of Providence by which the bold invasion of our State resulted in a crushing defeat to the invaders. And does not every one see how the domain of the rebellion is immensely narrowed? From 100,000 square miles of territory, it is reduced to 20,000. A thousand miles of the Mississippi from Columbus to Kaloomy, to the Gulf, was in rebel hands and held by rebel armies at the

THE LATEST NEWS

BY TELEGRAPH.

FROM PHILADELPHIA.

Great Fire in Philadelphia—The Negro Pilot Robert Small—The Gale in Charleston Harber—Deep Snow.

Special Dispatch to the Pittsburgh Gazette.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 18, 1863.

The wires are now working again. Shober's store houses, in Almond street, were burned down this afternoon. Fifteen hundred barrels of coal oil were in the building, and were owned by Forsyth, Brothers & Co., Pittsburgh, and other parties. Total loss, $50,000. It was the most frightful fire of its dimensions ever seen here. The burning oil ran into the river, covering its surface for acres.

The report that the negro pilot, Robert Small, and his vessel were captured, is not true. Dispatches received to-night contradict the statement.

The gale that sank the Weehawken monitor has cleared out the Charleston harbor of all the obstructions, and an early advance is expected. Hundreds of torpedoes and cheveaunde frisis of net work came ashore. The work of Beauregard required months of labor, was destroyed in a single night.

Snow has fallen in Kansas fourteen inches deep. In the mountains it has fallen to an incredible depth. Cattle are dying in numbers. Great fears are felt for the overland trains, they not having been heard from.

W. J. J.

The Conscription Act—The $300 Clause Repealed—The two Classes put into One.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The Senate Military Committee had a long session to-day on the Amendment to the Conscription Act. After an animated debate the $300 exemption clause was stricken out, and the two classes put into one. These are the principal amendments to the bill, which will be reported to-morrow, and an effort made to pass them at once, so that the House may have the bill on Monday to go to work on, and complete it before the adjournment for the holidays. The object is to prevent the postponement of the draft on the 5th of January.

Charleston Harbor Clear of Obstructions—Reported Re-capture of Pueblo by Juarez's Forces—Comonford Advancing Against the French—The French Besieged in Tampico—600 Deaths by Yellow Fever.

NEW YORK, Dec. 18.—By the steamer Arago it is stated that the recent heavy gale swept away nearly all the rebel obstructions in Carleston Harbor, and their remnants line the shores. The entrance to the harbor is now believed to be clear, and it is supposed that our navy will take due advantage of the fact.

The new Orleans *Picayune*, of the 9th, has news of the recapture of Puebla by Juarez's forces, and that Comonford was advancing against the French.

The French in Tampico are in a state of siege, and have lost 600 men by yellow fever.

The Rebel Raid on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The *Republican* extra has the details of the affair:

Lieut. Peck, of the 22d Regiment of the District of Columbia Volunteers, has given us the particulars of a bold raid made by Stuart's cavalry last night, on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, about a mile and a half beyond Fairfax Station, by the rebels about 500 strong, accompanied by the notorious Mosby. About six the rebels attacked the guard on there at that point, which consisted of Co. I, of the 150th New York regiment. The company made a brave resistance, only being captured by the cavalry forming a hollow square around them.

The rebels had previously cut the telegraph wires, but word was conveyed as quickly as possible to Col. Drew in command of a battalion of four companies of the Second District of Columbia regiment, at Fairfax Station, and he started with his command to relieve the attacked party. The progress of the train was stopped at Hop Run, where the rebels had burned the bridge and torn up the track for about two miles. When Col. Drew arrived at Hop Run it was extremely dark, and the rain poured down furiously. He fired several volleys at the rebels, which they returned. None of our men were wounded.

It was evidently the object of the raiders to capture a railroad train from Alexandria loaded with a large quantity of provisions and forage for the army, which was due at the time. The train happened to be an hour and a half late, and consequently escaped capture. It is quite likely the rebels have committed further outrages on the railroad, beyond Hop Run, of which we have not been informed. This raid revives very forcibly, the memory of the former exploits of Stuart's cavalry.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—We learn through dispatches received at the Headquarters of the Department from Gen. Corcoran, that last night Co. I, 155th New York regiment, at Sangster's Station, on the point of a terrible storm then raging, were attacked by a body of Stuart's rebel cavalry, about 1,800 strong, under the command of the rebel Gen. Rosser, which left Fredericksburg on Wednesday night last. Contrary to their expectation, the company on railroad guard duty there made a gallant, and as it turned out, a successful resistance, having beaten them off four times before being flanked and having their tents burned by the enemy, who got in the rear of the company. The company was then forced to retire, with the loss of two men wounded and one prisoner. The rebels attempted to burn the bridge over Hop Run, but took a stampede before doing it any damage to speak of, as it was repaired in two hours this forenoon. Four trains are now running again. On moving off again the rebels sent back to Fredericksburg three ambulances of their wounded, and left one prisoner in our hands. They then left in the direction of Centreville. At noon as daylight, Gen. Corcoran in command, sent cavalry in pursuit of the foe, and has since reported that its advance came up with the rebel's rear.

Late Southern News—Terrible Explosion and Loss of Life near Richmond.

FORTRESS MONROE, Dec. 17.—The flag-of-truce steamer arrived last evening, and brought down from City Point a free negro who was captured at Gettysburg and recently liberated by the rebel authorities, and two surgeons who had been some time in prison at Atanta, Ga. While the latter were in Richmond, the rebel officers showed them there all the prisons in and about the city. They report they found our prisoners quite comfortable and well fed, though they were partly furnished from provisions sent from loyal States.

The Richmond *Whig*, of the 15th, says on Thursday last an explosion took place at the Chesterfield Coal Pits, from the admission of gas in Raccoon Pit, near Cloro Hill, twenty-nine miles from Richmond. Sixteen men were killed and three injured. The accident occasioned a tremendous explosion. The flames from the hissing gas ascended some hundreds of feet above the orifice in the pit.

From Charleston.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The following is from the correspondent of the Baltimore *American*:

Charleston S. C., Dec. 13.—Gen. Gillmore again shelled Charleston on Thursday night, and throwing a number of shells into different parts of the city, and it is believed that there was considerable damage done in different parts of the city. All the rebel batteries opened, and a heavy bombardment ensued for several hours.

The storm is washing away the rebel obstructions, and yesterday a large number of heavy timbers, bolted together with iron, came down with the tide. They were secured and towed ashore by our tugs. The amount of timber that came down, is so large that it is believed the obstructions must be seriously damaged. There is no other news of importance.

Two of Morgan's Officers and Thirty Men Captured—General Howard's Cavalry in Pursuit of Morgan.

CHATTANOOGA, Dec. 18.—Gen. John H. Morgan escaped across the Tennessee at Gillespies' Landing, sixty miles above here on Sunday afternoon. Captain William Cummings and Robert Cummings, who escaped from Columbus with him, were captured, together with an escort of thirty men. On reaching the neighborhood of the river, they pressed every citizen to prevent pursuit. An attempt was made to cross on rafts at the mouth of Mile's Creek, and while doing so, a citizen who eluded their picket, gave the alarm, and the attempt was nearly frustrated. Morgan escaped on a valuable race horse presented him in Kentucky.

Gen. Howard has cavalry scouring the country, and possibly Morgan may yet be taken.

LXXVIII CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION.

WASHINGTON, December 18, 1863.

SENATE—Mr. Grimes asked to be excused from further service on the Committee of Naval Affairs. After a brief conversation against granting the request, the chairman of the Naval Committee saying the services of the gentleman were very important, at this time when reform in the Naval Department was so necessary; a further consideration upon the subject was postponed until Monday.

Mr. Howe presented a memorial from the citizens of Wisconsin, asking action to be taken, with a view to an amendment to the Constitution, to prohibit Slavery in all the States and Territories.

Mr. Wilson, from the Committee on Military affairs, reported back with amendments, the bounty law. Also, a bill amending the enrolling act with amendments; one of them repealing the $300 commutation, and as to that he had very serious doubts.

Mr. Dixon offered an amendment, exempting clergymen from the draft. The amendment was ordered to be printed.

Mr. Sumner's resolution for a new role, requiring Senators to take the oath of allegiance, provided by act of Congress, before entering