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AN IMPORTANT PAPER!

Protest of Leading Republicans AGAINST Dictatorial Usurpations. A CAUSTIC REMOKE!

Senator Wade, of Ohio, and Representative Davis, of Maryland, hold up Lincoln's Usurpation of Power to the Reprobation and scorn of the Freemen of the United States.

TO THE SUPPORTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

We have read without surprise but not without indignation, the proclamation of the President of the 8th of July, 1864.

The supporters of the administration are responsible to the country for its conduct; and it is their right and duty to check the encroachments of the Executive on the authority of Congress, and to require it to confine itself to its proper sphere.

It is impossible to pass in silence this proclamation without neglecting that duty; and, having taken as much responsibility as any others in supporting the administration, we are not disposed to fail in the other duty of asserting the rights of Congress.

The President did not sign the bill "to guarantee to certain States whose governments have been usurped a republican form of government," passed by the supporters of his administration in both Houses of Congress after mature deliberation.

The bill did not, therefore, become a law, and it is, therefore, nothing. The proclamation is neither an approval nor a veto of the bill; it is, therefore, a document unknown to the laws and Constitution of the United States.

So far as it contains an apology for not signing the bill, it is a political manifesto against the friends of the government.

So far as it proposes to execute the bill which is not a law, it is a grave Executive usurpation.

It is fitting that the facts necessary to enable the friends of the administration to appreciate the apology and the usurpation be spread before them.

The proclamation says:

And whereas the said bill was presented to the President of the United States for his approval less than one hour before the said adjournment of said session, and was not signed by him—

If that be accurate, still this bill was presented with other bills which were signed.

Within that hour, the time for the *sine die* adjournment was three times postponed by the votes of both Houses; and the least intimation of a desire for more time by the President to consider this bill would have secured a further postponement.

Yet the Committee sent to ascertain if the President had any further communication for the House of Representatives reported that he had none; and the friends of the bill who had anxiously waited on him to ascertain its fate, had already been informed that the President had resolved not to sign it.

The time of presentation, therefore, had nothing to do with his failure to approve it.

The bill had been discussed for more than a month in the House of Representatives, which it passed on the 4th of May; it was reported to the Senate on the 27th of May without material amendment, and passed the Senate absolutely as it came from the House on the 2d of July.

Ignorance of its contents is out of the question.

Indeed, at his request a draft of a bill substantially the same in all material points, and identical in points objected to by the proclamation, had been laid before him for his consideration in the winter of 1862—1863.

There is, therefore, no reason to suppose the provisions of the bill took the President by surprise.

But it goes further. The President says:

And whereas, the said bill contains, among other things, a plan for restoring the States in rebellion to their proper practical relations in the Union, which plan expresses the sense of Congress upon that subject, and which plan it is now thought fit to lay before the people for their consideration—

By what authority of the Constitution? In what forms? The result to be declared by whom? With what effect when ascertained?

Is it to be a law by the approval of the people without the approval of Congress as the will of the President?

Will the President, on his opinion of the popular approval, execute it as law? Or is this merely a device to avoid the serious responsibility of defeating a law on which so many hearts reposed for security?

But the reasons now assigned for not approving the bill are full of ominous significance.

The President next proceeds:

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare, and make known, that, while I am (as I was in December last, when by proclamation I proposed a plan for restoration) unprepared, by a formal approval of this bill, to be indefinitely committed to any single plan of restoration—

That is to say, the President is resolved that the people shall not by law take any securities from the rebel States against a renewal of the rebellion before restoring their power to govern us.

His wisdom and prudence are to be our sufficient guarantees!

He further says:

And, while I am unprepared to declare that the Free State Constitutions and Governments already adopted and installed in Arkansas and Louisiana shall be set aside and held for naught, thereby repelling and discouraging the loyal citizens who have set up the same as to further effect—

That is to say, the President persists in recognizing those shadows of Governments in Arkansas and Louisiana, which Congress formally declared should not be recognized—whose Representatives and Senators were repelled by formal votes of both Houses of Congress—which it was declared formally should have no electoral vote for President and Vice President.

They are the mere creatures of his will. They cannot live a day without his support. They are mere oligarchies, imposed on the people by military orders under the forms of election, at which generals, provost-marshal, soldiers and camp followers were the chief actors, assisted by a handful of resident citizens, and urged on to premature action by private letters from the President.

In neither Louisiana nor Arkansas, before Bank's defeat, did the United States control half the territory or half the population. In Louisiana, General Banks' proclamation candidly declared: "The fundamental law of the State is martial law."

On that foundation of freedom, he erected what the President calls "the free Constitution and Government of Louisiana."

But of this State, whose fundamental law was martial law, only sixteen parishes out of forty-eight parishes were held by the United States; and in five of the sixteen we held only our camps.

The eleven parishes we substantially held had 233,185 inhabitants; the residue of the State not held by us, 575,617.

At the farce called an election, the officers of General Banks returned that 11,346 ballots were cast; but whether any or by whom the people of the United States have no legal assurance; but it is probable that 4,000 were cast by soldiers or employees of the United States, military or municipal, but none according to any law, State or National, and 7,000 ballots represent the State of Louisiana.

Such is the free Constitution and Government of Louisiana; and like it is that of Arkansas. Nothing but the failure of a military expedition deprived us of a like one in the swamps of Florida; and before the Presidential election, like ones may be organized in every rebel State where the United States have a camp.

his government in Louisiana and Arkansas.

The judgment of Congress which the President defies was the exercise of an authority exclusively vested in Congress by the Constitution to determine what is the established government in a State, and in its own nature and by the highest judicial authority binding on all other departments of the government.

The Supreme Court has formally declared that under the fourth section of the fifth article of the Constitution, requiring the United States to guarantee to every State a republican form of government, "it rests with Congress to decide what form of government is the established one in a State," and "when Senators and Representatives of a State are admitted into the councils of the Union, the authority of the government under which they are appointed, as well as its republican character, is recognized by the proper Constitutional authority, and its decision is binding on every other department of the government, and could not be questioned in a judicial tribunal. It is true that the contest in this case did not last long enough to bring the matter to this issue; and as no Senators or Representatives were elected under the authority of the government of which Mr. Dorr was the head, Congress was not called upon to decide the controversy. Yet the right to decide it is placed there."

Even the President's proclamation of the 8th of December, formally declares 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 that is not the less true because wholly inconsistent with the President's assumption in that proclamation of a right to institute and recognize State governments in the rebel States, nor because the President is unable to perceive that his recognition is a nullity if it be not conclusive on Congress.

Under the Constitution, the right to Senators and Representatives is inseparable from a State government.

If there be a State government, the right is absolute.

If there be no State government, there can be no Senators or Representatives chosen.

The two Houses of Congress are expressly declared to be the sole judges of their own members.

When, therefore, Senators and Representatives are admitted, the State government, under whose authority they were chosen, is conclusively established; when they are rejected, its existence is as conclusively rejected and denied; and to this judgment the President is bound to submit.

The President proceeds to express his unwillingness "to declare a constitutional competency in Congress to abolish slavery in States" as another reason for not signing the bill.

But the bill nowhere proposed to abolish slavery in the States.

The bill did provide that all slaves in the rebel States should be manumitted.

But as the President had already signed three bills manumitting several classes of slaves in States, it is not conceived possible that he entertained any scruples touching that provision of the bill respecting which he is silent.

He had already assumed a right by proclamation to free much the larger number of slaves in the rebel States, under the authority given him by Congress to use military power to suppress the rebellion; and it is quite inconceivable that the President should think that Congress could vest in him a discretion it could not exercise itself.

It is the more unintelligible from the fact that, except in respect to a small part of Virginia and Louisiana, the bill covered only what the proclamation covered—added a Congressional title and judicial remedies by law to the disputed title under the proclamation, and perfected the work the President professed to be so anxious to accomplish.

Slavery as an institution can be abolished only by a change of the Constitution of the United States or of the law of the State; and this is the principle of the bill.

It required the new Constitution of the State to provide for that prohibition, and the President, in the face of his own proclamation, does not venture to object to insisting on that condition—yet he defeated the only provision imposing it!

But when he describes himself, in spite of this great blow at emancipation, as "sincerely hoping and expecting that a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery throughout the nation may be adopted," we curiously inquire on what his expectations rest, after the vote of the House of Representatives at the recent session, and in the face of the political complexion of more than enough of the States to prevent the possibility of its adoption within any reasonable time; and why he did not indulge his sincere hopes with so large an installment of the blessing as his approval of the bill would have secured.

After this assignment of his reason for preventing the bill from becoming a law, the President proceeds to declare his purpose to execute it as a law by his plenary dictatorial power.

He says:

Nevertheless, I am fully satisfied with the system for the loyal people of any State desiring to adopt it; and that I am, and all officers shall be, prepared to give the Executive aid and assistance to any such people as soon as the military resistance to the United States shall have been suppressed in any such State, and the people thereof shall have solemnly returned to their obedience to the Constitution and the laws of the United States; in which cases Military Governors will be appointed, with directions to proceed according to the bill.

A more studied outrage on the legislative authority of the people has never been perpetrated.

Congress passed a bill; the President refused to approve it, and then by proclamation puts as much of it in force as he sees fit, and proposes to execute those parts by officers unknown to the laws of the United States and not subject to the confirmation of the Senate!

The bill directed the appointment of Provisional Governors by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The President, after defeating the law, proposes to appoint without law, and without the advice and consent of the Senate, Military Governors for the rebel States!

He has already exercised this dictatorial usurpation in Louisiana, and he defeated the bill to prevent its limitation.

Henceforth we must regard the following precedent as the Presidential law of the rebel States.

EXECUTIVE MANNING.
WASHINGTON, March 15, 1864.
His Excellency, Michael Hahn, Governor of Louisiana.
Until further orders, you are hereby invested with the powers exercised hitherto by the Military Governor of Louisiana.

This Michael Hahn is no officer of the United States, the President, without law, without the advice and consent of the Senate, by a private note not even countersigned by the Sec'y of State, makes him dictator of Louisiana!

The bill provided for the civil administration of the laws of the State—till it should be in a fit temper to govern itself, repealing all laws recognizing slavery, and making all men equal before the law.

These beneficent provisions the President has annulled. People will die, and marry and transfer property, and buy and sell—and to these acts of civil life courts and officers of the law are necessary—Congress legislated for these necessary things, and the President deprives them of the protection of the law!

The President's purpose to instruct his Military Governors "to proceed according to the bill"—a makeshift to calm the disappointment its defeat has occasioned, is not merely a grave usurpation but a transparent delusion.

He cannot "proceed according to the bill" after preventing it from becoming a law.

Whatever is done will be at his will and pleasure, by persons responsible to no law, and more interested to secure the interests and execute the will of the President than of the people; and the will of Congress is to be "held for naught," "unless the loyal people of the rebel States choose to adopt it."

If they should graciously prefer the stringent bill to the easy proclamation, still the registration will be made under no legal sanction; it will give no assurance that a majority of the people of the States have taken the oath; if administered, it will be without legal authority, and void; no indictment will lie for false swearing at the election, or for admitting bad or rejecting good votes; it will be the force of Louisiana and Arkansas acted over again, under the forms of this bill, but not by authority of law.

But when we come to the guarantees of future peace which Congress meant to enact, the forms, as well as the substance of the bill, must yield to the President's will that none should be imposed.

It was the solemn resolve of Congress to protect the loyal men of the nation against three great dangers, (1) the return to power of the guilty leaders to the rebellion, (2) the continuance of slavery, and (3) the burden of the rebel debt.

Congress required assent to those provisions by the Convention of the States; and if refused, it was to be dissolved.

The President "holds for naught" that resolve of Congress, because he is unwilling "to be inflexibly committed to any one plan of restoration," and the people of the United States are not to be allowed to protect themselves unless their enemies agree to it.

over, so that the suppression of the rebellion will double our resources, to bear or pay the national debt, free the masses from the old domination to the rebel leaders, and eradicate the cause of the war; the proclamation secures neither of these guaranties.

It is silent respecting the rebel debt and the political exclusion of rebel leaders; leaving slavery exactly where it was by law at the outbreak of the rebellion, and adds no guaranty even of the freedom of the slaves he undertook to manumit.

It is summed up in an illegal oath, without a sanction and therefore void.

The oath is to support all proclamations of the President during the rebellion having reference to slaves.

Any Government is to be accepted at the hands of one-tenth of the people not contravening that oath.

Now that oath neither secures the abolition of slavery nor adds security to the freedom of the slaves the President declared free.

It does not secure abolition of slavery; for the proclamation of freedom merely professed to free certain slaves while it recognized the institution.

Every Constitution of the rebel States at the outbreak of the rebellion may be adopted without the change of a letter; for none of them contravenes that proclamation; none of them establish slavery.

It adds no security to the freedom of the slaves.

For their title is the proclamation of freedom.

If it be unconstitutional, an oath to support it is void. Whether constitutional or not, the oath is without authority of law, and therefore void.

If it be valid and observed, it exacts no enactment by the State, either in law or Constitution, to add a State guaranty to the proclamation title; and the right of a slave to freedom is an open question before the State courts on the relative authority of the State law and the proclamation.

If the oath binds the one-tenth who take it, it is not exacted of the other nine-tenths who succeed to the control of the State Government, so that it is annulled instantly by the act of recognition.

What the State courts would say of the proclamation, who can doubt.

But the master would not go into court he would seize his slave.

What the Supreme Court would say, who can tell?

When and how is the question to get there.

No *habeas corpus* lies for him in a United States court, and the President defeated with this bill its extension of that writ to this case.

Such are the fruits of this rash and fatal act of the President—a blow at the friends of his Administration, at the rights of humanity, and at the principles of republican government.

The President has greatly presumed on the forbearance which the supporters of his Administration have so long practiced, in view of the arduous conflict in which we are engaged, and the reckless ferocity of our political opponents.

The Revolution.

In the Polar Seas the great icebergs often break up in a single night. The day before they may have seemed firm and solid, but when morning comes nothing is seen save jostling and crumbling fragments. The Republican party is falling to pieces in very much the same way. There is no great breach in its ranks; no sundering into two or more hostile, yet compact factions; but there is a process of disorganization and decomposition at work, like that seen in the ice-berg, which suddenly loses its coherence, and floating under warmer skies soon melts away and disappears forever. Every one has an experience of his own to relate, and can tell how his old friends, who have been the most thorough-going in their support of Mr. Lincoln, have at last yielded to the "logic of events," and are ready to renounce the President and all his works. These changes are not made at the beck of any leader. They are in no sense factions. They are not produced by sympathy with any popular excitement or passion. The simple explanation is that the people—each man for himself—find that no dependence can be placed in the assurances of those in office, and that having had all and more than they asked for, they have done and can do nothing to restore the Union. The long-suffering patience which has endured one disappointment after another is at last worn out, and the most hopeful are giving away to despair. The war is apparently no nearer its end than it was three years ago; the people of the South are more defiant and desperate than ever; our fictitious prosperity is rapidly collapsing, while bankruptcy, anarchy and ruin stare us in the face. It is no wonder, then, that men are everywhere emancipating themselves from their prejudices, and anxiously searching for the truth. Those who have been the most credulous, and have blindly believed just what they were told to believe, are becoming skeptical, and the most thoughtful are beginning to think. These indications of mental activity are, it seems to us, of vastly more importance than any dissensions among the leaders of the Republican party. Commanding such a patronage as this war puts into his hands, Mr. Lincoln need not feel very much discouraged, although Mr. Sumner berates him in private, or Senator Harris dies from his obscene jests, or even though Messrs. Wade and Davis rend him with their protest; but when the people begin to abandon him of their own accord, his fate is sealed. The same causes which began the movement will continue it; and he will soon be left with no supporters but office-holders and shoddy-contractors. Such a spontaneous popular movement is one of the revolutions that never go backward; and it has already advanced far enough to ensure his defeat. Whatever other evils the future may have in store for us, the re-election of A. Lincoln is not one of them.

The Starke County Democrat published at Clinton, Ohio, says:

"A preacher in this city, last Sabbath, took for his text the 12th verse of the 14th chapter of Hebrews. It reads as follows:

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The reverend gentleman read this verse as follows:

"Follow holiness, without which no man can see the Lord!"

The words, "peace with all men," were not acceptable, and hence were omitted.

So it seems that the abolition-preachers are going to take the same liberty with the Word of God that Old Abe does with the Constitution.

Dismissed from Service.

Captain Charles E. Robinson, for some time past acting in the capacity of Commissary of Subsistence of volunteers in this city, was recently tried by court-martial, found guilty of dishonest practices and conduct unbecoming an officer, and dismissed from the service of the United States with forfeiture of pay. (Had he any due?) The dishonest practice charged against the captain was the secret transfer to a "loyal" firm in this city, of 100 barrels of flour belonging to the government. Whether innocent or guilty, we have reason to believe that parties much better known in this community should share the penalty. "Time at last sets all things even," and justice may yet demand a further investigation in this case.—Harrisburg Patriot.

Whilist fiddling was going on at Washington, and Chambersburg was on fire, the following false and insulting dispatch was, after due inspection at the war department, sent out from Washington to quiet and deceive the public:

"No uneasiness whatever is felt by the government in relation to affairs in Pennsylvania. The preparations made, together with the militia of that State, are ample to give the invaders a severe punishment."

There were no "preparations," and the few militia raised had been taken away; so the rebels escaped unharmed.

How "the government" will lie!