The Potter Journal.

Devoted to the Principles of True Democracy, and the Dissemination of Morality, Literature and News.

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***Devoted to the cause of Republicanism, the interests of Agriculture, the advancement of Education, and the best good of Potter county. Owning no guide except that of Principle, it will endeaver to aid in the work of more fully Freedomizing our Country.

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Feb. 18th, 1863.

The Rochester Straw-Cutter.
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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

The following is the letter addressed by Mr. Lincoln to the Union State Convention in Illinois, a copy of which was also sent to the Republican Union Convention at Syracuse, N. Y.

EXEC. MANSION, Washington, Aug. 26.

Hon James C. Conklin:—MY DEAR SIR:—Your letter inviting me to attend a mass meeting of unconditional Union men, to be held at the capital of Illinois on the 3d day of September, has been received. It would be very agreeable for me thus to meet my old friends at my own home; but I cannot just now be absent from here so long as a visit there would require.

The meeting is to be of those who maintain unconditional devotion to the Union; and I am sure that my old political friends will thank me for tendering, as I do, the nation's gratitude to those other noble men whom no partisan malice or partisan hope can make false to the nation's life.

There are those who are dissatisfied with me. To such I would say: You desire peace and you blame me that you do not have it. But how can we attain it? There are but three conceivable ways. First—to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. This I am trying to do. Are you for it? If you are, so far we are agreed. If you are not for it, a *second* way is to give up the Union. I am against this. Are you for it? If you are you should say so plainly. If you are not for force, nor yet for *dissolution*, there only remains some imaginable compromise.

I do not believe that any compromise embracing the maintence of the Union is now possible. All that I learn leads to a directly opposite belief. The strength of the Rebellion is in its military, its army. That army dominates all the country and all the people within its range. Any offer of terms made by any man or men, within that range, in opposition to that army, is simply nothing for the present; because such man or men have no power whatever to enforce their side of a compromise, if one were made with them.

To illustrate: Suppose refugees from the South and peace men from the North get together in convention, and frame and proclaim a compromise embracing a restoration of the Union. In what way can that compromise be used to keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania? Meade's army can keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania, and, I think, can ultimately drive it out of existence. But no paper compromise to which the controllers of Lee's army are not agreed can at all effect that army. In an effort at such a compromise we would waste time which the enemy would improve to our disadvantage, and that would be all.

A compromise, to be effective, must be made either with those who control the Rebel army, or with the people, first liberated from the dominion of that army by the success of our own army. Now, allow me to assure you that no word or intimation from that Rebel army, or from any of the men controlling it, in relation to any peace compromise, has ever come to my knowledge or belief. All charges and insinuations to the contrary are deceptive and groundless. And I promise you that if any such proposition shall hereafter come, it shall not be rejected and kept a secret from you. I freely acknowledge myself to be the servant of the people, according to the bond of service, the United States Constitution; and that, as such, I am responsible to them.

But, to be plain. You are dissatisfied with me about the negro. Quite likely there is a difference of opinion between you and myself upon that subject. I certainly wish that all men could be free, while you, I suppose, do not. Yet, I have not adopted, or proposed any measure which is not consistent with even your view provided that you are for the Union. I suggested compensated emancipation; to which you replied you wished not to be taxed to buy negroes. But I had not asked you to be taxed to buy negroes, except in such way as to save you from greater taxation to save the Union exclusively by other means.

You dislike the Emancipation Proclamation, and perhaps would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional. I think differently. I think the Constitution invests its Commander in Chief with the law of war in time of war. The most that can be said, if so much, is that slaves are property. Is there, has there ever been any question that, by the law of war, property, both of friends and enemies, may be taken when needed? And is it not needed whenever it helps us and hurts the enemy? Armies, the world over, destroy enemies' property when they cannot use it; and even destroy their own to keep it from the enemy.—Civilized belligerants do all in their power to help themselves and to hurt the enemy, except a few things rewarded as barbarous or cruel. Among the exceptions are the massacre of vanquished foes and noncombatants, male and female.

But the Proclamation, as law, either is valid or is not valid. If it is not valid it needs no retraction. If it is valid it cannot be retracted, any more than the dead can be brought to life. Some of you profess to think its retraction would operate favorably for the Union. Why better after the retraction than before the issue? There was more than a year and a half of trial to suppress the Rebellion before the Proclamation was issued, the last one hundred days of which passed under an explicit notice that it was coming unless averted by those in revolt returning to their allegiance. The war has certainly progressed as favorably for us since the issue of the Proclamation as before.

I know as fully as one can know the opinions of others, that some of the commanders of our armies in the field who have given us our most important victories, believe the emancipation policy and the use of colored troops constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt at the Rebellion, and that at least one of those important successes could not have been achieved when it was, but for the aid of black soldiers.

Among the commanders who hold these views are some who have never had any affinity with what is called, "Abolitionism" or with "Republican party politics," but who hold them purely as a military opinion. I submit their opinions as being entitled to some weight against the objections often urged that emancipation and arming the blacks are unwise as military measures, and were not adopted as such in good faith.

You say that you will not fight for negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you—but no matter. Fight you then, exclusively to save the Union. I issued the Proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge you to continue fighting, it will be an apt time then for you to declare that you will not fight to free negroes. I thought that in your struggle for the Union to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to that extent it weakened the enemy, in his resistance to you. Do you think differently? I thought that whatever negroes could be got to do duty as soldiers leaves just so much less for white soldiers to do in saving the Union. Does it appear otherwise to you? But negroes, like other people, act upon motives.—Why should they do anything for us if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise, being made, must be kept.

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

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

Still, let us not be over sanguine of a speedy, final triumph. Let us be quite sober. Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in His own good time, will give us the rightful result. Yours, very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

A person, says the Paris *Sport*, who looks at the world in somewhat gloomy colors, recently complained in M. Auber's presence how hard it was that people should grow old. "Hard as it is," replied the veteran composer, "it seems to be the only means yet discovered of enjoying long life."

DANCING ADVOCATED.

A gentlem writes thus sensibly to the Examiner and Baptist Register:—

"I have been young, and am now older, and have discovered great need of finding *home* entertainment for the youth about me. Dancing is a natural expression of joy of any kind, either animal or spiritual. It is also the generator of joy, in the glow and excitemen which pleasant exercises of any description afford.

"Now, if asked the meaning of the passage, 'A time to dance,' I should say it stood there, because there *is* 'a time to dance,' as well as 'a time to die,' and 'a time to weep.' I should say the time to dance is on the evening of a rainy day, when all the family have the blues for want of exercise. An hour or two of dancing, after tea, would send them to their rooms cheerful, happy, and if Christians, grateful and devout, instead of doleful, and discontented with home and home friends.

"I should say 'a time to dance' was any time in the day, or before ten o'clock at night, for all young women engaged in sewing, drawing, designing, or other sedentary employments, that may have vitality enough in their blood to bless God, and rejoice with, instead of groaning over doubts and fears, begotten often by a wretched state of health. 'A time to dance' is when you take fifty or a hundred children to the woods on a picnic excursion; or when you are shut up on board of a ship for weeks together; or for the patients of a hospital when they are convalescent; or when a son, husband, brother, or friend comes home safe, and with honor, from the war. When peace is established, and slavery is abolished, shall be 'a time to dance,' and it will be religious dancing, according to the feelings and emotions of the hearts of those engaged.

"Now, no one can look on such dancing as here described, and at the eleven commandments, including the Saviour's own 'new commandment,' and make it out a breach of either of them. The real and only difficulty is the great *fascination* of this amusement, which renders it so difficult of control. Yet Scotch Presbyterians have danced for centuries; Swiss Calvinists before their own cottage doors; French peasants dance, and sleep with quiet conscience; and cannot we Americans learn an equal amount of self-control in such matters?

"There are one or two items worthy of note in the Bible view of the question. First, that the historic dancing named is not condemned, but the idolatry or licentiousness connected with it. Now, that dancing and sin have gone hand-in-glove from the beginning of the world, needs no proof; but so has music and sin, eating and sin. What we want is an eye clear enough to discover *what* and *which* is the *sin*, and strength of will or grace enough to leave the one alone while taking the other.

"In the glorious lists of graces and virtues named by the various Apostles as the fruits of the Spirit, dancing is not one of them, therefore I have no faith in 'religious dancing;' but neither is it named in any list of the fruits of the *carnal mind*. The just inference, then, seems that it has in itself *no moral character* whatever, and that its *right* or *wrong* is dependent altogether upon circumstances.

"Note, also, that Solomon makes no mention of 'a time to lie,' or 'a time to blaspheme,' or 'a time to be drunk'—real immoralities. The fact is, the subject of *what* is sin, and *what* is not, is still greatly mystified—hundreds of men whose consciences are quite easy while those who reap down their fields receive naught for their work, would be horror-stricken to see a son or daughter skipping about the parlor to the music of the piano. Hundreds of women will keep girls working in their kitchens cooking heavy dinners on the Sabbath, who would be shocked not to be seen in their own seats in the church themselves, and yet have never pointed one soul to Christ during all their life, and do not feel condemned.

"When shall we cease tithing mint and cummin, and attend to the weightier matters of the law?

"Let all young persons take especial notice that I make no plea or excuse for balls, masked balls, expensive dressing, and always planning about dress, late hours, and being so fatigued by 'recreation' as to require, perhaps, more than all the next day to recover from it. Living *in* and *for* pleasure in any form or shape, is often enough condemned by both Moses and Christ; but learn, young friends, to use the 'world' as your own and Christ's *servant*, resisting all its attempts to overcome."

Says Jones, "We have had the age of iron, the age of gold, and the age of bronze; but what shall we call the present age?" "Why," says Smith, licking the back of a postage stamp which he was about to apply to the envelope of a letter, "I think we had better call the *mucil age*."

Richardson the Spy.

An officer of the Seventh regiment of this city sends us the following particulars of the operations of Richardson the Rebel spy, who was captured and hung some time since in Frederick City, Md. We give the story in the officer's language:—

I knew this Richardson from the very beginning of the war. When we were first ordered on to Baltimore he came into camp just as he has done ever since, singing songs and selling them. He was a man about fifty years of age, with a light colored beard, very intellectual looking, and with a soft, pleasant voice in speaking. He was known in every camp in the Army of the Potomac, and having an excellent voice, he used to delight the soldiers with his songs.

On Sundays he distributed tracts, and I recollect one day talking to him about them. He was an excellent draughtsman, and got up an engraving of our fort on Federal Hill, of which I have some copies. He was in and out of all the camps constantly, and was rather fond of asking questions. The reason he gave for this was that he was getting up a history of the war.

He was arrested while we were at Frederick City. His questions appeared to be rather too systematic and pointed. He was arrested on this account by different parties, but gave such plausible excuses to the first two that they let him go. Gen Slocum was in command at Frederick City, and so strong was the suspicion excited against him, both by his questions on this occasion and by the circumstances reported by many soldiers who had for some time suspected him and had previously called the attention of their officers to him, that it was determined to try to force some confession out of him.

He was put upon a horse with his arms pinioned behind him and a rope around his neck. The horse was led under a tree, and the end of the rope thrown over a branch. The rope was pulled tight and the horse driven from under him. He was allowed to hang thirty seconds and then let down. When brought to, he refused to answer any questions. He was hung up again, and when revived a second time, he answered some questions asked. The third time hanging brought out a full confession. He had in his breast pocket a small brandy flask. He told his captors to unscrew the metal bottom of this. On doing so they found a considerable hollow. In this hollow and in part of the lining of his boots they found plans of all our works, very carefully and beautifuly executed, also the exact position and numbers of each regiment, and even the particular companies detailed for picket and other service. Ten thousand five hundred dollars in "greenbacks" were found upon him, besides a quantity of Confederate money. This was all handed over to the five men who arrested him.

He also told them that they would find in a certain place a mulatto, who was his nephew, (he himself was a white man.) His other accomplice was his son. He told them that this negro could guide them to a place where they could capture some two thousand of Stuart's men.—Richardson was, it seems, in constant communication with Stewart, and he confessed that he had been furnishing the Rebels information all through the war.

Men were sent after the mulatto. He was found, placed securely on a horse, and a rope put around his neck, to suggest to him the consequences of playing false. The expedition was so far successful as to capture some of Stewart's men. The negro was retained by Gen. Slocum, and is considered by him a most valuable servant. We are told that the son would hang as soon as he was tried. Richardson himself was hung. The body remained hanging for five days, when it was cut down and buried.—*Eve. Post.*

QUESTION FOR MEDICAL MEN.—It has been repeatedly stated, and the fact verified by the independent observation of many witnesses, that the bodies of the rebel dead on our battle-fields, turn blacker and burst sooner, than the corpses of the National soldiers. An officer in Tennessee, writing to a friend in Pittsburg, on the subject, says:

"I told you that I would keep in mind the matter when I returned to the field, and endeavor to see for myself a confirmation of so curious a statement, for I could not believe that such was the *rule*, though why the *exception* I could not imagine. Your son, and your friend, the undertaker, tell you this from the East, and I, nearly a thousand miles west of them, corroborate their statements. While conversing with some officers, the other evening, I introduced the Subject. *All* bore witness to the curious fact."

There are some theories respecting the cause of this phenomenon. One is, that the rebels drink more whiskey than our troops; and the other is that they eat less salt.

Important Letter from a Rebel.

From the Toledo Blade.

Below we give a letter picked up in the streets of Brandon, Miss., by Capt. Dennis, of the 72d O. V. I. We have the original in our possession. It is written in unusually fair penmanship, and, as the reader will see, in a good style of composition. Its writer is evidently an intelligent man, and in position to speak correctly of that whereof he writes. The letter is as follows:

"BRANDON, July 16.—I wrote to you very hurriedly yesterday, and this morning learn that General Johnston has ordered this army to be marched across to Enterprise, one hundred miles farther. It will take a week longer. No provision has been made along the route, and the men are already much dissatisfied with the vacillating policy, and hollow promises by which they have been duped so long. Of the 30,000 paroled at Vicksburg, only one-half are now together, and ere we reach Enterprise this number will be reduced to 5,000—they of the Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee troops, who also will leave, with or without furloughs, so soon as they learn the alternative of going into camp of parole. The army of the Mississippi is completely lost.

"Meanwhile, General Johnson holds Jackson—we hear the guns constantly. The enemy are making gradual approaches, and after a week longer will have the place. With it falls Mobile. This entire section is fleeing eastward. Georgia will have a population of 5,000,000 to feed this year. Ruin, utter and entire ruin, has swept over this State. *The negro emancipation policy, at which we so long hooted, is the most potent lever of our overthrow. It steals upon us unawares, and ere we can do anything the plantations are deserted, families without servants, camps without necessary attendants, women and children in want and misery. In short, the disadvantages to us now, arising from the negroes, are tenfold greater than have been all the advantages derived from them earlier in the war.*

"It is useless to discuss the errors of the past—possibly there are none that could have been avoided—but certainly *we are a defeated and ruined people*—shorn of our strength—powerless for a successful solution of the problem undertaken; or, rather, ours was erroneous. The solution has been shown us by a more favored people.

"I have been staying with my friend Manloye, who bought a residence here some time ago, and moved his family from Vicksburg. Mrs. M. is to start with her children, and the only two servants left her, for Mobile to-day; thence she goes farther East, with a party from Jackson, none know where. Everything save articles of absolute necessity, is sacrificed, and Manloye, from great wealth, has sunk to poverty. His case is a type of all.

"Provisions cannot be bought here at *any price*. The enemy fed our army for ten days—gave them five day's rations of everything (including coffee and tea), to make this march upon. Now the men are going about with empty haversacks—living on green corn and fruit. No commissary stores have been provided for them by Gen. Johnston. The fact is, that the greatest mismanagement and most ruinous neglect have been the reward, so far, of this army. Such confusion and dissatisfaction as is now presented here was never before witnessed, and unless the troops are moved out of town to-day, the citizens of Brandon will have more cause to rue the advent of 'The Glorious Army of Vicksburg,' than they have had to fear the approach of 'the vandal hordes of Northern barbarians.'

"If leave of absence is refused us, or limited to thirty days I may not be able to get to you until ordered into Georgia. Thirty days is no leave at all.

"Affectionately, E."

"We want you to make for the church," said a vestryman to a carpenter, "two new commandment boards. We want them of free, sound timber, with no knots in it." "You'd better take some of the 'nuts' out of the commandments, then," replied the carpenter.

Oh blessed sympathy of sisterhood with brotherhood—surpassing all other friendship—leavening with angelic solicitude the purest love of earth. No lovership like that of the brother and sister, however passionate their spirits, when they truly love.

An injury unanswered in time grows weary of itself, and dies away in an involuntary remorse. In bad dispositions, capable of no restraint but fear, it has a different effect—the silent digestion of one wrong provokes a second.

He has a big devil in him who prays to God and bites his neighbor.