

Lincoln's Slave Colonization Plan

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

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THE PRESIDENT AND SLAVERY.

THE President has taken advantage of a rather impertinent and very injudicious letter addressed to him by Mr. [Horace Greeley](#), to state to the public his position on the [slavery question](#). We publish his letter in another column. While distinctly avowing his personal wish that "all men every where could be free," the President declares that his sole exclusive aim is to restore the Union, without reference to slavery; and that while he would not hesitate to [proclaim emancipation](#) if he were satisfied that that would restore the Union, neither would he scruple to save the Union with slavery. He thus takes issue on the one hand with the pro-slavery half-and-half Union men of the Border States who object to the restoration of the Union at the cost of their peculiar institution, and, on the other, with the fanatical ultraists of the North who object to the restoration of the Union unless slavery be destroyed.

In this position [Mr. Lincoln](#) will undoubtedly find himself supported by the bulk of the people of the country. What we all want, first, is to put down the rebellion. When that is done, we can deal with slavery and its antecedents as our necessities may dictate.

Nothing can be falser than to assume, as some of the followers of Mr. Wendell Phillips do, that if we restore the Union without destroying slavery, our work will be only half accomplished, and it will be left to another generation to complete it. Whatever be the issue of the war, slavery has already received a death-blow from which it can never recover. There is no State in the Union in which it can ever be again a thriving or even a safe institution. That iron despotism of the master class, and that rigid system of municipal law, which alone could render it safe for white men and women to inhabit vast plantations surrounded by negro [slaves](#), have been utterly shattered by the events of the war. Even where the black has not had courage, or sense, or opportunity to escape to the Union lines, and claim the privilege of freedom offered him by our laws, he has been utterly demoralized, and rendered forever unfit to resume the patient toil of past years.

It is known, probably, to nine out of ten slaves in the South that every Slave State now contains a safe refuge whither fugitives can fly for emancipation, and where no overseer or blood-hound can follow them. That these fugitives thus far have come into our lines by hundreds instead of tens of thousands is mainly due to the fact that the entire white population of the South is armed, and all general movements of the negroes are at once repressed by wholesale massacres. But neither the rifle nor the stake can expel from the mind of the slave the knowledge that freedom is near him, and that he can obtain it when he chooses to make the effort; and with this thought in his brain, he is worse than valueless as property.

This great fact is ever present to Mr. Lincoln's mind. In conversation with a leading banker of this city, who is also a prominent member of the Republican Party, he lately observed that, in his opinion, it was "much wiser to do a thing than to talk about it." [Fremont](#) and Hunter talked—in proclamations. The President, or rather the war—for he is merely the instrument of events—is "doing the thing:" sapping the foundation of slavery; rendering it unprofitable and unsafe; exploding one by one all the delusions which induced the people of the South to cling to it; and slowly but surely, without noisy proclamations or windy words, clearing the way for a general emancipation of all the slaves on this continent.

How and when these systematic and regular approaches may be succeeded by the final assault it is yet impossible to say. But the President has by his acts won an indisputable claim to confidence in his honesty, and all those among us who have no other aim in view than the good of the country will be content to leave the subject in his hands.

GOING TO CHIRIQUI.

SENATOR POMEROY, on behalf of the President, has issued an appeal to the colored population, inviting 500 of them to accompany him to Chiriqui, in New Granada, with a view to a permanent settlement there. The Senator assures them of the good-will and protection of the Government of New Granada, in which country Chiriqui is situate. He, like Mr. Lincoln, draws pleasing pictures of the prosperity which the exiles may enjoy in their new home, and earnestly urges them to give one more proof of their regard for the white man by getting out of his way.

With regard to the prospects of a settlement of negroes at Chiriqui, persons who know the place are not so sanguine as Mr. Pomeroy or the President. The climate is decidedly unhealthy, and the products of the country, with the exception of caoutchouc, not particularly

varied or valuable. There is coal there, certainly; but it is tertiary coal, not of the least use for marine purposes, and only serviceable for the manufacture of gas. There are harbors, good ones, at Bocas del Toro on the Atlantic side, and David on the Pacific; but there is no road between them: it will cost a large sum to build or cut one; and

when it is made, there will be no use for it. There are a few people in the Province of Chiriqui; a few dozen whites, and the rest mongrel negroes and Indians, vulgarly called "greasers." They do nothing but lie in the sun and sleep. Wild fruits, fish, and turtles supply them with food: a popular style of clothing is an old Panama hat with a cock's feather stuck in it. Whether Mr. Pomeroy's five hundred intelligent and virtuous colored exiles are more likely to civilize these greasers than the greasers are to degrade their new neighbors to their own level, is an open question. Persons who have lived in the tropics are prepared to take odds on the greasers.

These are exciting times, and we are all learning something every day. On the face of it, getting rid of valuable labor, and making it a present to tropical regions, because there are serious difficulties in the reorganization of the labor-system of the South, reminds one of the man who burned down his barn to get rid of the rats. But we are all, like the President, ready to accept new ideas as soon as we are satisfied they are true ones. And the only way to ascertain which new ideas are true and which are false, is to test them practically. So let Senator Pomeroy try his plan.

THE DRAFT.

WITHIN a couple of days after this paper shall be published drafting will begin throughout the Northern States, unless they have previously raised 600,000 men by volunteering. Each day now effects a change in the prospect, and it is impossible at present to say how many men may be drafted. It appears that Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Maine, and Rhode Island will raise their entire quotas of the two calls without drafting a man: and it appears on the other hand that a draft will be necessary in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Within the remaining week, however, the vigorous efforts which are being made by recruiting officers in these States may swell their volunteer ranks to the prescribed quota.

It would be desirable, in several points of view, that the entire army of the Union should consist of volunteers. At first, at all events, volunteers enter into the business with more spirit than drafted men. And it would be satisfactory hereafter to recall the fact that we had put down the rebellion without the aid of a single impressed man.

But, on the other hand, drafting has its advantages. It will have a fine moral effect both abroad and at home. If we can draft 600,000 men, or even 100,000, we can draft 2,000,000. Europe will take the hint. A resort to drafting will furthermore indicate to the rebels that the North is thoroughly in earnest, and that all its resources are to be employed to suppress the rebellion. It will at once and forever dispel the delusion from which they have derived so much comfort, to the effect that the North would tire of the war, and yield the victory to the superior earnestness of the South. They will learn that we are not behind them in determination, and far ahead of them in men, money, and resources. These are decided advantages to be gained by drafting.

If we succeed in raising the 600,000 men required without drafting, we shall have done what no other nation ever did before. The great armies of the world—those of France, Russia, and Austria—are filled wholly by conscription. Volunteering is unknown in those countries. A man who has a fancy for being a soldier sells himself as a substitute when conscription day comes round. England is the only country besides our own in which the ranks of the National army have always been filled by volunteers; and when England, in the Crimean war, called for volunteers to fill the shattered ranks of her army, her utmost efforts, backed by substantial bounties, only succeeded in raising some 60,000 men, very few of whom were considered effectives. She would doubtless have done better had the war menaced her national existence, as the rebellion menaces ours. But there is a long stride from 60,000 men to a million.

In the matter of volunteering the West is doing better than the East, the country than the towns. This can be explained without imputing lack of patriotism to the citizens of the East or the people of the large cities. In the first place, it is notorious that of the first levies the large cities — New York, Philadelphia, and Boston—furnished more than their share. In the general account there is a substantial balance in their favor and against the country. Next, it must be borne in mind that an offer of nine months' steady work, at good wages, from September to May, is more tempting to farm-laborers than to city artisans or mechanics. It bridges over the long winter during which work is scarce and wages low in the agricultural

districts. It enables the farm-laborer to finish the business of getting in this year's crop, and sets him free for the summer work on the next. With the city mechanic, who knows nothing of seasons, and whose employment is sometimes brisker in winter than in summer, these considerations have no weight. Again, it must be borne in mind that in the West the proportion of males to females is larger than in the East, and the fighting population much greater. A Western State, with a population of two millions, contains more material for soldiers than an older State in the East with one-third more people. Hence we see the Adjutant-General of Illinois positively overwhelmed by the rush of volunteers, while the Adjutants-General of New York and Ohio are calmly preparing for the draft.

The levy of an army of a million men, and their steady employment in military service, will make a serious inroad upon the ranks of peaceful labor, and will cause a large advance in all classes of wages. This will naturally lead to a copious immigration from Europe. We are glad to learn that the Government has discovered the prospect, and that steps have already been taken to encourage immigrants. This country, it has been estimated, gains \$1000 by every able-bodied immigrant who comes here from Europe. We presume that the high prices which all kinds of labor will shortly command will suffice to start an unprecedented hejira from Germany and the British Isles, especially as the new tariff offers remarkable inducements to foreign manufacturers to come here and set up their factories on American soil. But if any thing further were needed,

the United States could well afford to pay the passage of every able-bodied man who chose to come here with the intention of settling among us.

A CORRECTION.

IT gives us pleasure to learn that we were entirely mistaken in supposing that CAPTAIN RODMAN, United States Ordnance Corps, the inventor of the Rodman Gun, had proved a traitor and gone over to the rebels. Captain Rodman has, ever since the outbreak of the war, devoted his entire energies to the service of the United States Government, and is now, as he has been for three years, in command of the [United States Arsenal at Watertown](#), Massachusetts. He has never harbored a disloyal thought. Captain Rodman is second to no officer in the army in scientific attainments, zeal, and industry; and we extremely regret to have been betrayed into doing him a temporary injustice.

THE LOUNGER.

THE REAL CONTEST.

THE rebellion is the effort of the only aristocratic class in the country to destroy popular institutions, because they had learned by experience that under those institutions the people became too wise to submit to an aristocracy. The aristocratic class, whose principle is that capital ought to own labor, and that a laboring man has no more rights than a horse or an ox, had governed the country for their own interest for many a long year. Seeing at length that the natural increase of population was filling up the Territories of the United States with men who lived by their own labor, and fearful lest they should be deprived of extending the system of slavery, upon which their political power depended, they tried to occupy the Territories with slaves under the protection of the Government.

What was the consequence of this movement of theirs? It was to make every great capitalist slaveholder the immediate rival of every free laborer in the land. You, for instance, were a blacksmith, a carpenter, a farmer. You or your children went to the West. What did you find? You found a great proprietor, who owned a dozen carpenters and blacksmiths and farmers, occupying an immense domain, and trying to forestall you in your trade, whatever it may be. You had your wife and family to maintain by your labor, but the rival workman had none, and was run by his owner at starvation wages—at rates with which you could not compete and live. You had your children to educate, the dignity and decency of a man and a citizen to maintain. But your rival was treated as a brute, was kept ignorant and degraded, and was sold like a hog. Every wretched slave there occupied the ground which a free laborer might occupy; and the men who brought him brought not only a rival to your trade, but disgrace to it, poverty and a hard fight to you, and ignorance and destitution to your children.

The people of the land saw the trick and scorned it. They utterly routed the party that supported this policy. They did not all vote for Mr. Lincoln, but the friends of Mr. Douglas refused the Governmental protection of slavery in the Territories. So the aristocracy, beaten at the polls, began war upon the United States at [Sumter](#). What for? To maintain their power over the free laboring interest of the country. They despise the laboring class. They hold that it is not fit to enjoy political power. They declare that they are the rightful masters, and that the mud-sills shall be whipped in. It is a contest of human rights against class privilege—of all the people against a few men—of the democracy against an aristocracy.

THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN.

THE President's remarks to the committee of colored men have now been carefully considered by all who understand the importance of the subject.

That his scheme of colonization is impracticable and undesirable does not detract in the least from the honest good-will with which he urges it; and that a President of the United States should say to colored men that the treatment of their race in the country had been most unjust and iniquitous is something that three or four years ago was the most hopeless of all possibilities.

With the President the question, as with all sensible men, is a practical one. What is the best thing to do under the circumstances? is what he asks. His reply is that, in view of the strong distaste of the dominant race in this country to the other, it is better that the latter should withdraw and settle elsewhere.

That they are as much native here as most of us whites, whose fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors came from Europe—that they are an essential and immense part of the laboring force of the country—that they are a singularly inoffensive, mild, and amiable people—that they are fondly attached to the region in which they are born and leave it only because of the brutal slavery in which they are held—that they form a very insignificant proportional minority of all the criminal offenders in the land—that they are a cheerful, affectionate, flexible race—that their only offense is that we have injured them—that the prejudice against them is an idle, wanton, and wicked hatred, cherished among the most brutal and ignorant of our foreign population—by the most dangerous and unprincipled of political demagogues and newspapers—that the emigration of four millions of people in their condition is a practical impossibility, and if it were feasible, that it would be the most disastrous blow at the prosperity of the country at a time when it is least able to bear it—are all considerations of no weight in the President's mind, in view of the fact that a great many white people in the country don't like the colored people.

But such dislikes are a very common spectacle in history. The Jews were universally hated in the Christendom of the Middle Ages, and they were abominably treated. They are tolerated now, but they are still viewed with a peculiar prejudice, and in the

European cities they occupy certain quarters which are half regarded as lazarettos. Until very recently Jews could not sit in the British Parliament. But is a grave recognition and fortification of this prejudice a sound state policy?

In old Britain the Normans, Danes, and Saxons did not love each other. But they did not go asunder and colonize. They remained and formed the English nation. The English to-day do not like the Scotch, and they hate the Irish. Is there any valid reason why black men should be enslaved or exiled by white men that would not equally justify enslaving and exiling the Celts by the Saxons? If we are to talk of troublesome and dangerous and impracticable races, what will our Celtic brethren say for themselves?

There is a bitter prejudice against the colored race in this country. That they should emigrate is out of the question. That they should be enslaved is henceforth impossible. They must remain. They must be elevated as fast as possible into good citizens. And how fast ignorance, degradation, and stupidity can be raised to what we call the level of citizenship the history of every year shows. The most brutal, besotted, wretched, superstitious European, who can neither read nor write, whose body and mind have hitherto starved in abject want, lands upon our shores, and in a very, very, very short time, he is found voting for Mayor of New York, and is held to be quite good citizen enough to help oppress the unfortunate colored natives of the country.

The prejudice against the colored race is one that we must overcome. To indulge it is to stab our fundamental doctrine to the heart. But if ignorance, brutality, and degradation in high places or low are to be held to condemn men to servility, let it be understood, and let it work equally. Let every man who falls within the category—American, Englishman, Irishman, Scotchman, Frenchman, German, Spaniard, Italian, Swede, Norwegian, Greek, Syrian, Asian, African, or Polynesian—take his chance.

The President's convictions and hopes are humane, and just, and noble. But his method is impracticable. It is simply a shirk, not a solution. The "Conservatives" who praise it do not share his feeling of the deep injustice of slavery, nor do they wish to remedy the wrong. They praise him because they think his policy separates him from his friends. They do not love him more: they only hate him less.
