

The attention of Congress during the last session was engaged, to some extent, with a proposition for enlarging the water communications between the Mississippi river and the north of the Eastern Seaboard, which proposition, however, failed for the time; since then, upon a call of the greatest respectability, a convention has been called at Chicago upon the same subject, a summary of whose views is contained in a memorial addressed to the President and Congress, and which I now have the honor to lay before you. That the interest is one which, ere long, will force its own way, I do not entertain a doubt, while it is submitted entirely to your wisdom as to what can be done now. Augmented interest is given to this subject by the actual commencement of work upon the Pacific railroad, under the auspices so favorable to its rapid progress and completion. Enlarged navigation becomes a palpable need to the great road.

I transmit the second annual report of the Commissioner of the department of agriculture, asking your attention to the developments in that vital interest of the nation.

When Congress assembled a year ago, the war had already lasted nearly twenty months, and there had been many conflicts on both land and sea, with varying results. The rebellion had been pressed back into reduced limits; yet the tone of public feeling and opinion at home and abroad, was not satisfactory. With other signs, the popular elections, then just passed, indicated uneasiness among ourselves, while, amid much that was cold and menacing, the kindest words coming from Europe were uttered in accents of pity that we were too blind to surrender our commerce, which was suffering greatly by a few armed vessels built upon and furnished from foreign shore. We were threatened with such additions, from the same quarter, as would sweep our trade from the sea and raise our blockade. We had failed to elicit from European governments anything hopeful upon this subject. The emancipation proclamation was issued in September, was running its assigned period to the beginning of the New Year; a month later, the final proclamation came, including the announcement that colored men of suitable condition would be received into the service. The policy of emancipation and employing black soldiers gave to the future a new aspect, about which hope, fear and doubt, contended in uncertain conflict. According to our political system.

As a matter of civil administration, the General Government had no lawful power to effect emancipation in any State, and for a long time it had been hoped that the rebellion could be suppressed without resorting to it as a military measure; it was all the while deemed possible that the necessity for it might come, and, that if it should, the crisis of the contest would then be present. It came, and, as was intended, it was followed by dark and doubtful days; eleven months have been passed and we are permitted to take another review; the rebel borders are pressed still further back, and, by the complete opening of the Mississippi river, the country dominated over by the rebellion is divided into distant parts, with no practicable communication between them. Tennessee and Arkansas have been so substantially cleared of the insurgents, and their control and influence, that the citizens in each, and the owners of slaves, and advocates of slavery at the beginning of the rebellion, now declare openly for emancipation in their respective States. In those States not included in the emancipation proclamation, Maryland and Missouri, neither of which, years ago, would tolerate any restraint upon the extension of slavery into the new territories, the only dispute now is as to the best mode of removing it within their own limits. Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion fully one hundred thousand are now in the United States military service, about one half of which number actually bear arms in the ranks, thus giving the double advantage of taking so much labor from the insurgent cause and supplying the places which otherwise must be filled with so many men, so far as tested, it is difficult to say that they are not as good soldiers as any.

No servile insurrection or tendency to violence and cruelty has marked the measures of emancipation and arming the blacks. These measures have been much discussed in foreign countries, and, contemporaneous with such discussion, the tone of public sentiment there is much improved. At home the same measures have been fully discussed, supported, criticized and denounced, and the annual elections following, are highly encouraging to those whose special duty it is to bear the country through this great trial. Thus we have the reckoning, the crisis which threatened to divide the friends of the Union, is past. Looking now to the present and future, and with reference to a resumption of the national authority within the States wherein that authority has been suspended, I have thought fit to issue a proclamation. It will appear, as is believed, amply justified by the Constitution; true, the form of an oath is given, but no man is coerced to take it. A man is only promised a pardon in cases where he voluntarily takes the oath. The Constitution authorizes the Executive to grant pardon on such terms as are fully established by the judicial and other authorities. It also proffered that, if many of the States named assent, a government shall be, in the mode prescribed, set up. Such government shall be recognized and guaranteed by the United States, and that under it the State shall, on the Constitution, be protected against invasion and domestic violence. The Constitutional obligation of the United

States to guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government, and to protect the State in the cases stated, is explicit and full. But why tender the benefits of this provision only to a State government set up in this particular way?

This section of the constitution contemplates a case wherein the element within a State, favorable to a Republican government in the Union, may be too feeble for an opposite and hostile element within the State; and such are precisely the cases with which we are now dealing. An attempt to guarantee and protect a revised State Government, constructed in whole or preponderating part, from the very element against whose hostility and violence it is to be protected, is simply absurd. There must be a test by which to separate opposing elements so as to build only from the sound, and that test is a sufficient liberal one which accepts as sound whoever will make a sworn recantation of his former unsoundness; but if it be proper to require as a test of admission to the political body an oath of allegiance to the constitution of the United States and Union under it, why so also as to laws and proclamations in regard to slavery. These laws and proclamations were enacted and put forth for the purpose of aiding the suppression of the rebellion. To give their fullest effect there had to be a pledge for their maintenance. In my judgment they have aided and will further aid the cause for which they were enlisted.

To give up this principle would not only be to relinquish a lever of power, but would also be a cruel and astounding breach of faith. I may add, at this point, that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the emancipation proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of the proclamation, or by any act of Congress. For these and other reasons, it is thought best that the support of these persons shall be included in the oath, and it is believed the Executive may lawfully claim it in return for pardon and restoration of projected rights, which he has clear constitutional power to withhold altogether or grant upon the terms which he shall deem wisest for the public interest. It should be observed also that this part of the oath is subject to the modifying and abrogating power of legislation or a supreme judicial decision. The proposed acquiescence of the national Executive in any honorable temporary State arrangement for the freed people is made with the view of possibly modifying the confusion and destitution, which must at least attend all classes by a total revolution of labor throughout the whole States. It is hoped that the already deeply afflicted people in these States may be somewhat more ready to give up the cause of their affliction, and to this extent this vital matter is left to themselves, while no power of the national Executive to prevent an abuse is abridged by the proposition.

The suggestion in the proclamation as to maintaining the political frame works of the States on what is called reconstruction, is made in the hope that it may do good without the danger of harm. It will save labor and avoid great confusion. But why any proclamation now upon the subject? This question is beset with the conflicting news that the step might be delayed too long, or be taken too soon. In some the elements for resumption seem ready for action, but remain inactive apparently for want of a rallying point or plan of action. Why shall A adopt the plan of B, rather than B that of A? And if A and B should agree, how can they know but the general Government here will respect their plan? By the proclamation a plan is presented which may be accepted by them as a rallying point, and which they are assured in advance will not be rejected here. This may bring them to act sooner than they otherwise would. The objection to a premature presentation of a plan by the national Executive consists in the danger of commitments in points which could be more safely left to further developments. Care has been taken to so shape the document as to avoid embarrassment from this source.

In saying that on certain terms certain classes will be pardoned with their rights restored, it is not said other classes on other terms will ever be included. In saying a reconstruction will be accepted if presented in a specified way, it is not said it will never be accepted in any other way. The movements in State actions for emancipation in several of the States not included in the emancipation proclamation are matters of profound gratification, and while I do not repeat in detail what I have heretofore so earnestly urged upon this subject, my general views and feelings remain unchanged; and I trust that Congress will omit no fair opportunity of aiding these important steps to the great consummation. In the midst of other cares, however important, we must not lose sight of the fact that the war power is still our main reliance. To that power alone can we look, yet for a time, to give confidence to the people in contested regions, that the insurgent power will not again overrun them until that confidence shall be established. Little can be done anywhere, for what is called reconstruction, hence our chief care must still be directed to our army and navy who have thus borne their harder part so nobly and well; and it may be esteemed fortunate that in giving the greatest efficiency to their indispensable arms we also honorably encourage their gallant men, from commander to sentinel, who compose them, and to whom, more than to all others, the world stand indebted for the home of freedom dis-

thrall, regenerated, enlarged and perpetuated.

[Signed.] ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
December 8, 1863.

The following Proclamation is appended to the Message:—

PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, on and by the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the President shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment; and,

Whereas, a rebellion now exists, whereby the loyal States and governments have for a long time been subverted, and many persons committing and are now guilty of treason against the United States; and,

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion and treason, laws have been enacted by Congress calling for the forfeiture and confiscation of property and liberation of slaves, all upon terms and conditions therein stated, and also declaring that the President was thereby authorized at any time thereafter by proclamation to extend to persons who may have participated in the exciting rebellion in any State and part thereof, pardon amnesty, with such exceptions and at such terms and on such conditions as he may deem expedient for the public welfare; and,

Whereas, the Congressional declaration for limited and conditional pardon accords with well established Judicial expositions of the pardoning power; and,

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion, the President of the United States has issued several Proclamations with provisions, in regard to the liberation of slaves and,

Whereas, it is now desired, by some persons heretofore engaged in said rebellion, to resume their allegiance to the United States, and reinaugurate loyal State governments within and for their respective States;

Therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare and make known to all persons who have directly or by implication participated in the existing rebellion, except as hereinafter excepted, that a full pardon is granted to them and each of them, with restoration of all rights. If third parties shall have intervened, and upon the condition that they, such persons, shall take and subscribe an oath, and thereupon keep and maintain said oath inviolate, and which oath shall be registered for permanent preservation, and shall be of the tenor and effect following to wit:

I do solemnly swear, in presence of Almighty God, that I will thenceforth faithfully support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the union of States thereunder, and that I will in like manner abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion, with reference to slaves, so long and so far as repealed, modified or held void by Congress or by decision of the Supreme Court, and that I will in like manner abide by and faithfully support all Proclamations of the President, made during the existing rebellion, having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the Supreme Court; so help me God.

The persons excepted from the benefits of the foregoing provisions are all who are or shall have been civil or diplomatic officers or agents of the so-called confederate government, all who have left judicial stations under the United States, to aid the rebellion, all who or shall have been military or naval officers, of the rank of colonel in the army, or lieutenant in the navy, all who left seats in the United States Congress, to aid in the rebellion, all who resigned their commissions in the army and navy of the United States, and afterwards aided the rebellion, and all who have engaged in any way in trusting colored persons to white prisoners in charge of such, otherwise than lawfully, as prisoners of war, and which persons may be found in the United States service as soldiers, seamen, or in any other capacity.

I do further proclaim, declare, and make known, that whenever, in any of the States of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina, a number of persons, not less than one-tenth of the whole number of the votes cast in such State at the President election of the year of our Lord, 1860, each having taken the oath aforesaid, and not having since violated it, being a qualified voter by the election laws of the State existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall be established a State government, which shall be Republican, and in no wise contravening said oath, such shall be recognized as the true government of the State, and the State shall receive thereunder the benefits of the constitutional provision, which declares that the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion, and on application of the Legislature, or the Executive when the Legislature or the Executive cannot be convened, against domestic violence; second:

I do further proclaim, declare and make known, that any provision which may be adopted by such State government in relation to the freed people of such State which shall recognize and declare their permanent freedom and provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent as a temporary arrangement with their present condition as a laboring, landless and homeless class, will not be objected to by the national Executive; and

it is suggested as not improper that in constructing a loyal State government in any State the name of the boundary, the subdivision, the constitution and the federal code of laws, as before the rebellion, be maintained, subject only to modifications made necessary by the conditions herein before stated and such others, if any, not contravening such conditions as are deemed expedient by those framing the new State government. To avoid misunderstanding it may be proper to say that this Proclamation, so far as it relates to State governments, has no reference to States wherein loyal State governments have all the while been maintained. And for the same reason it may be proper to further say that whether members sent to Congress from any State shall be admitted to seats conventionally, rests exclusively with the respective Houses, and not to any extent with the Executive. And still further, that this Proclamation is intended to present to the people of the States where in the national authority has been suspended and loyal State governments have been subverted, a mode by which the national authority over every loyal State government may be established within said States or any of them. And while the mode presented is the best the Executive can suggest, with his present impressions, it must not be understood that another possible mode would not be accepted.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the eighth day of December, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-eighth.

[Signed.] A. LINCOLN,
By the President,
W. H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

[From the Charleston Daily Courier, Nov. 2.]
THE SIEGE OF CHARLESTON.

INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF THE BOMBARDMENT.

The Bombardment of Fort Sumter has continued fiercely since our last report. The stubborn and gallant endurance of Major Elliott and the brave, indomitable garrison now engaged in the sacred duty of holding and defending the fort has won for them a glorious name, and will furnish another illustrious page in the future history of the defense of Fort Sumter and the harbor and city of Charleston. Notwithstanding the terrible and constant fire from his monitors and land batteries, with missiles of every conceivable invention, size, and power showered like hail from Parrot, Dahlgren, rifled-guns, and mortars upon the devoted fortress and its garrison, the enemy has been foiled in his object, and is still unsuccessful in his designs. During Friday night the enemy's fire was chiefly maintained by Battery Gregg and his mortar or Cumming's Point battery. Sixty-eight shots were fired, but eight of which missed and passed over, making an aggregate of eleven hundred and twenty shots fired in twenty-four hours. At 3 o'clock on Saturday morning a deplorable disaster occurred, resulting in the instant death of thirteen of the heroic garrison, detailed and posted in the barracks, near the sea wall, in readiness for immediately mounting to the crest in case of an attack from the outside. The melancholy occurrence was caused by a 300-pound Parrot shell striking an iron girder in the sea wall of the barracks, caving in the roof, crushing and burying the men beneath the ruins. The position was considered comparatively safe, the roof having previously resisted the continual shock of the falling debris.

On Saturday the bombardment again raged furiously. A steady fire was kept up by two monitors, two heavy and two light rifled guns at Gregg, three heavy rifled guns and four ten inch mortars at the middle battery, and four rifled guns at Wagner. Four hundred and forty-three rifled shots were fired from the land batteries, of which sixty-one missed; eighty-six from the monitors, all of which struck; and three hundred and seventy-three from the mortars, of which one hundred and twenty missed. The mortar fuses, we learn, are so cut as to explode the shells a second or two after the report. During Saturday night, seventy rifled shots were fired, mostly with time fuses, of which ten passed over, and thirty-three mortar shells, of which twelve failed to strike. The fire of the land batteries, was directed chiefly at the southwest angle of the fort. The flagstaff was shot away twice on Saturday, and replaced by Sergeant Graham, Corporal Hill and Private E. Swan, all of Company F, Twelfth Georgia Battalion. The flagstaff was so cut up that it was found necessary to raise the battle flag of the Twelfth Georgia in its place. On Sunday the firing was still kept up by the monitors and land batteries, and in the afternoon at intervals. The shots were estimated by some to be discharged at the rate of four a minute. The firing is still going on, hot and heavy, at the closing of our report—ten o'clock Sunday night.

The Richmond Whig, 3, calls for the reconstruction of the rebel Cabinet; it says we have a Department of State that has not been able, for nearly three years, to establish any relations in any other country; a Treasury Department that has failed to keep its finances from ruin; a War Department in the hands of a chief whose studious course of life has been purely and peculiarly civil; a Navy Department without a navy; a Post Office Department with a very shocking system of mails.