

"What Gov. Wise Thinks of the Loyalty of Slaves," Washington (DC) *National Era*,
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WHAT GOV. WISE THINKS OF THE
LOYALTY OF THE SLAVES.

There is no consistency in the advocates of Slavery upon this point. At one time they will sing of the halcyon peace and good will which reigns between master and slave, and almost defy the Abolitionists to seduce the negroes from their happy homes. Gov. Wise and the whole Southern press have dwelt with much unction upon the facts that the slaves refused to join John Brown, and that the first Virginia martyr was a free negro fleeing from the Abolitionists. But immediately they turn about and speak of the imminent danger of insurrection, with all its train of horrors. In his recent message to the Legislature, Gov. Wise says:

"But why do our slaves on the border not take up arms against their masters? We must look firmly at this fact before we take it as a solace. In the answer to that question lies the root of our danger. *Masters in the border counties now hold their slaves by sufferance.* The slave could fly to John Brown much easier than he could come and take him. The slaves at will can liberate themselves by running away. The underground railroad is at their very doors, and they may take passage when they please.

They prefer to remain. *John Brown's invasion startled us; but we have been tamely submitting to a greater danger, without confessing it.* The plan which silently corrupts and steals our slaves, which sends secret emissaries among us to 'stampede' our slaves, which refuses to execute fugitive slave laws, which forms secret societies for mischief, with the motto, 'alarm to their sleep, fire to their dwellings, and poison to their food and water,' and which establishes underground railroads, and depots and rendezvous for invasion, is more dangerous than the invasion by John Brown. Yet the latter excites us, and in the former we have been sleepily acquiescing. It is no solace to me, then, that our border slaves are so liberated already by this exterior asylum, and by this still, silent, stealing system, that *they have no need to take up arms for their own liberation.* Confederate States, as well as individuals, have denounced our laws, and set them at defiance; they have by their laws encouraged and facilitated the escape of our slaves, and have made Abolition a cancer eating into our very vitals.

"We must, then, acknowledge and act on the fact that present relations between the States cannot be permitted longer to exist without abolishing Slavery throughout the United States, or compelling us to defend it by force of arms."

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands

National Park Service Network to Freedom / House Divided Project at Dickinson College