

**THE ADVANCING ARMY AND THE SLAVES.**

It has been decided by our government that no fugitives shall be allowed to follow our army columns as they advance upon Richmond. This is a needful and timely regulation. The march of our troops will be through a region densely populated with slaves. There are about half a million of this population in the state, and probably, before James river is reached, at least two-fifths of them may, if they choose, get to our lines by a simple three hours' run. Making all allowance for that considerable class whom no hope of liberty would tempt away from their masters, and giving all due effect, too, to the frightful notions of northern character studiously infused into the minds of the blacks, there can yet be no doubt that multitudes would pour in upon our advancing columns, were they to have a favorable reception. Hitherto, while our camps in Virginia have been stationary, fugitives who entered them have in no case been turned off; they have been fed and put to work, with the mutual understanding, we suppose, that the claims of their rebel masters upon them thereby ceased to exist. But now that our forces are in motion this practice ceases for two excellent reasons.

*First*, it would be impracticable. But comparatively few of the thousands and tens of thousands that would seek refuge could be put to useful service, and the hanging of such a body of idlers upon an army would be a fatal incumbrance. Saying nothing of the difficulty of subsisting them, they would be a constant hindrance to the freedom of movement indispensable to troops on the march. You might as well attach a chain and ball to the ankle of every soldier as to have this black dead-weight dragging at the heels of the army collectively. Even though political and moral considerations favored it, military necessities would most positively forbid; and, in all that relates to the campaign, these are of course paramount. In a military point of view, the idea of making our army a slave asylum is simply an absurdity.

But, *second*, even if allowable in a military way, it would bring confusion and disaster upon every true object of the war. Our army would assume the character of a slave liberating army, the very hour the black following

began. The South would at once take its errand to be pure and simple abolitionism. All the moral force that now attaches to it as the vindicator of constitutional law would disappear, and the struggle would change its ground entirely—no longer resting on the right of a government to enforce its authority, but on the yet higher right of a society to save itself from destruction. The war would at once become to the South a social necessity, and would be fought out with a desperation not otherwise possible. The pretext used by the conspirators to "fire the southern heart" was that the government designed to destroy southern institutions. There never was a falsier imputation. But it is all the more necessary that no color should be given it. If we have any desire to undeceive the dupes of this falsehood, any expectation of restoring the loyalty of the betrayed majority of the southern people, the government by its practical action must show that it has no such ends as were imputed to it. It must in no form, whether legislative judicial or military, lend its power to any abolitionizing work. And therefore all who value the Union and the Constitution will commend the wisdom and fidelity of the government in prescribing that our advancing armies shall have nothing to do with the slave population.

**Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands**

It is possible that a great number of slaves may take advantage of the condition of the country around them, and of the absence of their masters—great numbers of whom are in the rebel ranks—to make their escape, even though the federal soldiers give them no protection. Perhaps whole neighborhoods may swarm with such flying fugitives. For that, however, our soldiers cannot be responsible, and it will be no part of their business to prevent it. If actual servile insurrection should break out with all its unutterable horrors, they would unquestionably suppress it at the first call of Gov. Pierrepont and the President. The laws of humanity would require this. But if it were only a peaceful secession of slaves, even though it took the form of an actual stampede, it would not be for them to arrest it. Our soldiers were never made to be slave overseers; and no man at the South, whether he be rebellious or loyal, must for a moment expect it. Whatever losses Virginia shall meet in this way, she must patiently take as one of the necessary consequences of her infatuation. It would not, we think, be hard to show that this wicked rebellion has put causes into operation which will, in the end, make Virginia a free state—and that, too, without the slightest interference on the part of the federal government. The slave power of the state, in attempting to sell the state to JEFF. DAVIS, has sealed its own doom. It will never more be trusted by the people of the state, will lose all political influence, will sink into dishonor, and the principles of Western Virginia will become the ruling policy. This rebellion will tell terribly upon slavery, but not because of any action of the federal government repugnant to the spirit of the Constitution.

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