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## FROM NEW-ORLEANS

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### THE SLAVE-CATCHING BUSINESS LIVELY.

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### Secession Jailers and Union Prisoners.

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## RECRUITING EASY.

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### LYDIA THE SLAVE.

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Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

NEW-ORLEANS, July 27, 1862.

The abominations of the slave system are constantly presented to our observation. Every day fugitives arrive from far and near, and seek admission within our lines. Most of these are, of course, rejected. We have neither food nor employment for them. Without exception, they all bear testimony to one fact, that the slaves are on very short allowance of food, and that they are over-worked and otherwise cruelly treated. Many of them bear the marks of brutal whippings, their backs and limbs lacerated and scarred, or still bleeding. Some of them have heavy iron collars, with long prongs, on their necks. Others have handcuffs on. One old man came in, a few Sabbaths since, with a heavy iron weight and chain on his leg. A boy of about 16 arrived a few evenings since, with an iron chain connecting his neck and ankle. This morning I got a blacksmith to strike off two iron fetters from the ankles of a slave who had just come in. The ugly shackles now hang up over my writing desk, with the iron handcuffs which he had succeeded in getting off from his wrists.

Few, however, of these runaways are so fortunate as to be retained within our lines. In fact, very few of them reach us at all. Policemen, appointed, or confirmed in previous appointments, by the United States Military authorities, swarm in the streets, and pounce upon the black victim before he has an opportunity to tell his tale of distress. Our daily papers abound with advertisements of rewards offered for the apprehension of runaways, and the police drive a very flourishing business as slave catchers. Is not this a shame, that the agents and employees of the Great Republic should be engaged constantly in the business of slave-hounds? But this is not all.

The jails are filled with runaway negroes, whose only crime is that they have tried to get their freedom by coming to the Yankees. Keepers of these jails, are, some of them, bitter Secessionists, as those Union soldiers are made to feel, who are so unfortunate as to get committed to prison. The same prison-keepers, as when our captive Union soldiers were months ago incarcerated here, retain their office by permission of the Union authorities. One of the most prominent jailers advertises in one of our dailies—the only Union paper here—that he will whip slaves as heretofore in accordance with the law of Louisiana, and by permission of proper authorities! So if any master or mistress wants a slave whipped, yonder is the licensed flogger, and it is only necessary to take the slave there, or send him or her with a note specifying the number of lashes to be laid on! No questions are asked, but the public whipper applies the slave-whip to the naked body, and all according to law!

I said we were obliged to reject the negroes that come here. It often seems cruel and costs bitter pangs to turn over to the mercies of the New-Orleans police and the brutal jailer, the scarred worn, hungry fugitive, who has made his way for scores of miles to our quarters in hope of liberty, and who is able and anxious to do manful service in fighting for the Union. Usually within a few hours after the arrival of the black Union fugitive, comes the white Rebel overseer or master. He pays the official, badge-wearing Iscariot, who performs the blood-hound's task, and the slave is hurried back to the tender mercies of the plantation slave-pen, the stocks, the savage raw-hide, the pistol of the traitor master, where *no law* now prevails or is executed but the Rebel owner's despotic and irresponsible will! The old man who came here some three or four Sundays since with the iron weight and chain attached to his leg, is reported on pretty good authority to have been killed by his master, soon after having been turned out of our quarters.

Does the United States want recruits? It can have them by the thousand in this city at twenty-four hours' notice. Let the word go out that every able-bodied man of any color will be received as a soldier, and I verily believe a regiment of excellent recruits could be raised in three hours. Tough, strong, acclimated, accustomed to scanty clothing and fare, they would also possess a stimulus to exer-

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tion which the white soldier does not. I mean the hope of liberty, which in all ages! been the chief inspiration of the brave in their most heroic struggles. Add to this still another motive, which the white soldier has not, the knowledge that if defeated and captured horrible scourging and barbarities will be inflicted on them by their masters. I believe that under such impulses the black soldiers, half of whom have white blood in them, would fight desperately. Many of them are of gigantic size. Many years of oppression and wrong rankle in their memories and goad them on. Try them.

Louisiana would furnish ten regiments of hardy recruits in as many weeks if Gen. Butler would call for them. Why, the Rebels had regiments of blacks partly drilled in this city. One regiment was armed, and pikes of three or four different kinds and rough "negro swords" were being manufactured for the others. There need be no decree of emancipation of the slaves of Rebels; but let the commanding general invite all able-bodied men, of whatever complexion, to enlist with a promise of protection, pay, food, and clothing. From the innumerable applicants there could be selected a body of soldiers that could be made by drilling, superior, physically, to any corps in the world. As a Union slaveholder, who stands all alone nearly, in this city, remarked to a lieutenant here last evening: "They say the slaves won't fight; but you give them a chance and you'll find they'll make splendid soldiers."

Nothing would so paralyze the Rebellion as the sudden withdrawal of the able-bodied slaves from every Rebel plantation and family. Everywhere within a score of miles of any body of our troops there would be this stampede. Everywhere terror and insecurity would paralyze the operations of Southern men and Southern armies. They would require at least one able-bodied white man to watch every two or three blacks. The labor that feeds, clothes, supports and makes comfortable the Southern armies, would be withdrawn from them, and be given to our Union armies. Let us have these stout, enduring sons of toil, to dig, wash, carry, serve, and fight. Why not?

We need not fear that the enfranchised slaves would commit excesses. They would be subject to military discipline. Any guerrilla warfare, any "fighting on their own hook," would be sternly suppressed by our commanders. San Domingo insurrections and massacres are indeed to be feared, but not from the policy which is here proposed. In our armies, under our officers, the blacks would be completely subject to our control. But if the contrary policy is to continue, it needs are to be feared, and to be met with unflinching severity, and to be met with the full force of the power of Northern arms

and the rigors of an ever-tightening blockade, we may well look for savage insurrection and slaughter.

God grant that President Lincoln, before it is too late, may strike this monster of Secession in this vital part, and save the effusion of rivers of blood; at once preventing slave insurrections and crushing Rebellion.

NEW CARRON-HOUSE, July 23, 1862.

P. S.—At about 7½ o'clock this a. m., I was requested by several persons, among others Capt. H. L. Bidwell, to go to the door of the Custom-House, on Canal street, and see a black woman whose master was trying to get her away from our lines. I was told her master was a Rebel, and the builder of the famous iron gunboat "Manassas," and that the woman had been ordered by her mistress, in the following language: "You put out and go to Old Butler. I can get white servants enough." Coming to the woman, who was seated near the front entrance, surrounded by a crowd of persons, white and black, I heard one of the white men asking her whether she had rather go to prison or back to her master. She was sitting with a child of a few months' age in her arms, and crying. She made no reply. I asked which the master was. He was pointed out to me. His name is John Stephenson, and he lives in Carondelet street. I asked him if he was the builder of the "boat." He said "Yes." The following conversation, substantially, ensued:

"Have you taken the oath of allegiance?"

"No."

"You had better take it before you undertake to get this woman back."

"Perhaps I shall take it, and perhaps not."

"You have no right to take this woman by force."

"I don't propose to take her by force."

"If she wants to go, she of course can go; but you have no right to use force or violence, or to disturb the peace."

"I am not going to use force. I wish to take her peaceably home, or to jail."

"She is a Unionist. You are an avowed Rebel. She has fully as much right to use force on you as you on her. She has just as much right to take you to jail as you to take her, for all I can see."

"That's new law."

"That's military law. You must not break the peace, nor make any disturbance within the United States lines. Be very careful, Sir, how you conduct yourself within our lines."

"I have not come within your lines."

"This city is within our lines. You had better take the oath of allegiance. What right have you, a Rebel, to seize a Union woman and carry her off?"

"I have a right according to law to take my slave."

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"You are the builder of a Rebel gunboat, and you have not yet taken the oath of allegiance. You had better 'shedaddle.'"

"It was not a Rebel boat. It was a private boat."

"A private boat! What did you build your private boat for?"

"I built it to defend this river and city."

"To defend this river and city against whom? Against the United States?"

"Yes, Sir, against the United States."

"This city and river—property which the United States bought and paid for. You are what I call a Rebel, and your boat was a Rebel boat."

"I don't wish to enter into that question. I only want my slave according to law."

"You must not use the slightest force or violence. No one has a right to use force or violence to remove her, but the United States authorities. She has just as much right here as you. It's rather cool in you, the builder of a Rebel gunboat to keep the United States forces out of this city, to come here after her, refusing to take the oath of allegiance. It's not according to our law to deliver her up to you."

"Your law! I should like to know if you made that law."

"Yes, Sir; we made that law. This city is under martial law. You must not molest this woman here without permission from the United States authorities. She has a right to stay here until they remove her."

Quite a large crowd of blacks and whites having collected, I ordered them to disperse, which they did.

The woman told me her name was Lydia; that her mistress had repeatedly ordered her to "put off and go to Old Butler," and she at last took her at her word; that her mistress was accustomed to "damn" Gen. Butler, using a good deal of profane language, and to say, "I should like to *smack* his damned old face" (meaning not to *liss*. but strike him.) &c.; that she has been called a first-rate housekeeper, washer, and ironer, and is ready to do anything, and "work her fingers off," if she can only be saved from going back to her mistress; that her master treats her much better than her mistress, who frequently beats her with her fists and hands, &c.

The woman remains now (8 o'clock a. m.) in front of the Custom-House. Says she wants to see Gen. Butler.

*P. S. 2, July 23, 3 p. m.*—The contraband "Lydia" has just been turned away from the Custom-House, and will probably be lodged in jail and whipped as a runaway before night. Pray how long shall these odious State laws be allowed to override justice, and that too in the very presence of martial law, and in the midst of our New-England armies?

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