

The Crisis, and its requirements

On the last day of August 1861, Maj. Gen. Fremont, commanding the department of the West, issued his celebrated proclamation declaring the State of Missouri under martial law, and the property of all persons who had taken up arms against the Federal government, or who should thereafter do so, confiscated, and their slaves-if they had any-were declared freemen. This was afterwards modified by President Lincoln to suit the law passed by Congress about that time, but now public opinion, seeing the wisdom of the proclamation, is clamoring that

the same measures, in substance, shall be adopted; and we see it stated that Senator Davis of Kentucky is preparing a bill similar to Fremont's proclamation. We are at last slowly but surely awakening from ^{the} ~~our~~ deadly lethargy in which we have been sleeping.

Emancipation of the slaves is a measure only to be resorted to under the most desperate circumstances. We recognize, from our position, slaves as a sort of property which the Southerners from their peculiar circumstances have a legal right to hold as they would any other species of property. We feel (as a nation) a greater reluctance to disturb them in this legal right than we would to confiscate their cattle or their landed estates. We have had the taunt of "Abolitionists" flung in our faces so

often that we would willingly suffer
slavery to remain as it is, and save
the Union by other means if we could.
But can we afford to do so? Casting
justice out of the question, will not
expediency force us to emancipate
our slaves? Look at our present con-
dition: our beloved country is one vast
camp; nearly one million of able bodied
men are carrying the stars and stripes
into the heart of Secession, or are in atten-
dance upon them; green fields and
romantic bluffs have become awful
chapel houses; the Senate has lost one
of its most brilliant ^{Senators}; and many a heart-
broken parent mourns the loss of a dar-
ling son. Our banks have suspended;
business and commerce (excepting to those
engaged in administering to the wants of
the mighty army which has been created
almost in a day) are lifeless; foreign

nations, casting contemptuously aside their assumed robes of justice and right, are attempting to stab us secretly under the guise of friendship. Rebellion in its most frightful proportions at home, wars with foreign powers threatening us from abroad, deprived of foreign aid or sympathy in our hour of peril, we dare not hesitate about paltry considerations and delicate legal distinctions, but must trample under foot whatever stands between us and our salvation. If slavery stands in the way, and says "You must not touch me; I am sacred; touch me not, even though I should be the only obstacle to the restoration of the Union," strike her down; heed not her cries; but rush forward to the goal for which we are contending, and straining every nerve, and taxing every resource. How can the surgeons hesitate to amputate the

mortifying limb when death to the patient is the only alternative?

"This war is for the Union; let Slavery take care of itself," were the words of Gen. Jim Lane of Kansas notoriety, and they should be those of the whole, united North. When the music of the bleak North wind is whistling through the creaking cordage; when the masts are bending before the gale; when the waves sweep madly over the deck, and the ship is rolling violently in the trough of the sea, what man is there who would hesitate for a moment to throw overboard the cargo, no matter how valuable it is, or to whom it may belong? When a man is ill, what doctor is there who will not administer the most effective medicines and potions? Desperate cases demand severe remedies or the patient must perish.

"But it is not conservative!" ^{say} some; "we must not touch slavery, although the source of all our woes." Not conservative!; my talk of conservation, now? and who are the benefactors of mankind? Are the names which history delights to cherish those of conservative men? Was Luther conservative? Were Millerforce, Lucull Buxton, Samuel Adams, Jas Otis, Jefferson, Hancock, and hosts of others, were they conservative? He who stands in the foremost ranks of the battle binds the laurels around his brow, while his conservative brother remains in the rear and instead of leading, prefers to be led - instead of acting the part of a man, is led like "dumb, driven cattle." There can be no conservatism in a question of life and death.

"It is not strictly constitu-

tional" objects the timid, conservative, Northerner. The safety of the Union is supreme, and cannot be bound to the exact letter of the constitution. All things must be subservient to the national safety, excepting always the laws of Divine justice. Remember, my conservative friends, that it is necessary to the very existence of this government that the slaves should be emancipated; if this is done, the Union may be saved, but if it is not done what can preserve us? And if we fall, of what use are a million constitutions?

"But even if we do not liberate the slaves of the loyal slaveholders, we injure their value as marketable property by confiscating those of the traitorous slaveholders around them." What of that: if the masters are as loyal and patriotic as they claim to be, they surely

would be willing to sacrifice their moral interests for their country. At any rate they who are found in evil company must sometimes suffer the fate of their wicked companions.

Something must be done. We are in a sea of trouble, but we dare not go back; we intended to save the Union, and save it we must. National honor, national safety, and national prosperity all demand that we should burn the Lazarus house of slavery at any cost. Our hand has been placed on the plow and we must go on. "Remember Lot's wife," and turn not back, for it is danger to advance but death to retreat now.

Said Maj Gen Butler in response to a serenade on the 16th of May last, "If this unholy, this fratricidal war is forced upon us, I say, 'Woe, woe to them who have made the necessity. Our hands

are clean, our hearts are pure; but the Union must be preserved" That should ^{be} our motto ⁱⁿ the present crisis.

And this we should bear in mind in our treatment of the rebel Southrons. We must lay the death of Lyon and Baker, Ellsworth and Gheble, Ward and Winthrop, at the feet of slavery, and blame not its poor deluded tools. We must say to them "

"Ye are brothers! ye are men!
And we conquer but to save";

So peace instead of death, let us bring; we come to rescue you from the clutches of the tyrannical despot that governs you; you are not to blame, but Slavery must perish. Come back to us ~~but~~ not as lepers but as free men, and we will receive you gladly, but we dare not receive the put riper again in our bosom."

Let our generals proclaim emancipation to the slaves, and the back bone of the rebellion is broken "at one fell stroke."

Our fathers did not dare to look the danger in the face, and compromise again and again their honor and safety, but we cannot leave the question unsettled to our posterity. Our fathers saw the eggs of the Puckatrice lying snugly in the nest, and dared not crush them, and now we are forced to contend in unequal combat with the full-grown and venomous reptiles. Every year the reptiles become more and more dangerous; we cannot leave it to posterity to ^{strangle} ~~crush~~ them, but must meet them like men.

The age needs men, giants, who can see farther ahead than some of the pygmies who ^{now} control our politics.

Years ago, the river of civilization was flowing onward peacefully and quietly in its appointed channel; the adjoining banks were robed with verdure; the fragrant breezes floated calmly above it; all was fair and beautiful as the vessel of the American Republic was slowly gliding down the rippling tide to the harbor of national perfection. Evil disposed statesmen desiring to destroy the noble ship, cast first one stone into the river, and then another and another and another until its course was slightly changed. Emboldened by their success, they now began openly to build a dam which should cross the river from side to side. "Let them alone," cried the short sighted politicians, "they can do no harm. They will never be able to build a dam that can seriously ^{impede} ~~obstruct~~ this mighty river. Let them alone."

But the demons persevered, and the work is done. "What can we do? what can we do?" cried the politicians of a later day, weeping and wringing their hands; "our beautiful ship will be wrecked! what can we do? Oh! we'll compromise, we'll seem to be destroying this fatal dam, and leave ~~to~~ the job to posterity." So they compromised again and again. The dam of slavery is perfectly water-proof; there is not a crack or crevice to allow the ^{raging} agitated waters exit to penetrate the solid masonry; the course of the river is changed; the banks are submerged; and the swelling waves are rolling back to the river's source. But hark! the waters are now pouring over the breast rock in cataracts. All seems lost. The stately ship is rapidly whirled onward to the leaping waters, every cord creaking, every

timber straining and quivering, every sail ~~confurled~~ furled, anchors dragging in the eddying water, but all in vain. Hope still lingers in the hearts of a few devoted men; some one may yet break the dam ere it is too late. A sailor, more daring than the rest, leaves the vessel; hurries to the dam; and begins to undermine the fatal breast work. It is done: with a mild sudden plunge the accumulated waters dash madly carrying destruction in their train, but soon the river returns to its original channel; the banks are green once more; the waters flow on as of yore; and the ship is saved.

Who will save our ship?
Which of our statesmen is equal to the emergency? The disease is fearful, and the remedy must be severe.

In a future number the

^{important}
^ consideration "What shall we do with
the negro?" will be taken up and dis-
cussed, and until then adieu from

"Philoctetes."