

## CHAPTER XIX.

Aspect of the Country at Termination of the War—The Returned Confederate Soldier—Carpetbaggers—Lincoln's Vow—His Proclamation Concerning Confiscation of Slaves—How the Slaves Were Legally Liberated—Lincoln Murdered—Johnson President—His Thirst for Vengeance—"Treason" to Be Made Odious—Grant Declared That the Paroles Must Not Be Violated—Cost of a Bill of Dry Goods in Confederate Money in 1864—Leave Columbus for Greenville, Miss.—Desolate Home—The Good Israelite—Return to Columbus—I Go with Mrs. French to Mississippi—Traveling Incognito a Failure—Journey to New York in 1865—Incidents of My Mother and Child When They Went North—Home Confiscated—Edward Cooper's Kind Act—No One Would Touch Mother's Trunks—Copy of a Contract in 1865, Whereby I Obtained Funds—People under Espionage at the North—Return to the Plantation—Northern Plan to Terminate the War.

IF a man had ascended one of the lofty peaks of the Southern Appalachian chain of mountains at the termination of the war, and been endowed with telescopic powers of vision extending for hundreds of miles in every direction, he would have beheld the wreck of "the storm-cradled nation" that fell in defense of the rights that they possessed under the constitution of 1787-88, which was shaped, and established, and agreed to, by the States forming the convention. As far as such vision could extend, that once beautiful country was almost desolate and silent; the busy hum of industry had ceased, the daily smoke of burning buildings, the marching of armies, and the dull sound of distant cannon terminated; railroads had been destroyed, bridges were burned, many wagon roads were impassable; agriculture had nearly ceased, draft animals had been taken for war purposes; the flower of the South, with its pride of ancestors, had "fallen foremost in the fight;" the noble women were almost paralyzed in mind, ready to doubt the existence of a just God who seemingly had been deaf to their prayers, and made fatherless their little children; four million slaves sat idle around their decaying cabins, impressed with the prevailing idea that freedom meant to do as they pleased, and not work any more; provisions were scarce, and the whole scene was a picture of war's desolation and misery.

I can call to mind the delight I experienced when reading that wonderful description by Burke of the desolation of the Carnatic, in India, by the butcher Hyder Ali, in years long passed; or with sorrowful heart the desolation of the Palatinate by the French troops by order of Louvois, but I am not aware of any Northern pen having told the story of the destruction of the beautiful Valley of the Shenandoah\* in Virginia by Gen. P. H. Sheridan, though it be a theme as sad as the one immortalized by the genius of Burke.

Hyder Ali left nothing in the Carnatic that drew the breath of life; Sheridan left nothing in the Valley for a crow to feed on—as stated in his official report, wherein he writes that "a crow could not cross the Valley without carrying his provisions with him."

It is true, however, that you can find in some of the Northern schoolbooks a beautiful poem entitled "Sheridan's Ride," as mythical as Barbara Frietchie; still there are in the true story some incidents not unlike those in Burns's "Tam O'Shanter" that kept "Sheridan far away."

And now the surviving Confederate soldier returned to what was once his happy home. He had faith in the terms of his *parole*, that he was "not to be molested by the United States authorities as long as he obeyed the laws of 1861." Inured to hardships incident to a soldier's life, he was well equipped to become an industrious, peaceful citizen; he had stormed fortifications, captured batteries, marched up to the cannon's deadly mouth without tremor, passed days without rest and nights without sleep, subsisted on parched corn, been frost-bitten by cold, and burned by the torrid sun. His bare feet had left their prints in blood on the rocks, and crimsoned the snow on many a wintry march; he had stopped the marauder in his path, and turned the enemy from his course; he had tempted the ocean in its wrath, and driven off its waters the enemy's commercial sails. All that man dares he had done. And now in adversity, almost naked, with unending toil before him, he commenced life anew, and went manfully to work with hope for the joy of peace, little thinking of the degradation, insults, humiliations, oppressions, robbery, extortions he and his family would be

\*Shen-an-do-ah means the "Bright Daughter of the Stars."

subjected to during the coming years, caused by revengeful legislation. And now behold him even greater in peace than in war!

The plunder obtained by the soldiers of the Union army had so whetted the avaricious spirit of those who had furnished substitutes for themselves, that they were bent on having their share of the spoils; and the politicians, anxious to ride into place and power, to that end resorted to more machinations than Machiavelli ever dreamed of in his advice to the prince.

By the daily trains came men, generally from the Eastern States, in every garb, and they walked along the streets in single file in quest of cheap hotels and boarding houses, and the *insignia* of their *order* was a carpetbag, and their interests and tastes—not their sympathy—prompted them to associate with the freedmen, considering themselves just as good and honorable as the “Wards of the Nation.”

You must not deem it out of place if I here make mention of some incidents that occurred pretty early in the war.

In the Bible we read how Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord that if he would deliver the children of Ammon into his hands he would do certain things. So Lincoln made a solemn vow before God that if Gen. Lee were driven back from Maryland he would set the *slaves free*. After “Antietam” he announced his *intention* of issuing, and on September 22, 1862, he did issue, a proclamation setting free, by *his military authority*, all the slaves in the rebel States. He still founded his action on “policy and the Constitution.”\* As the Confederate States did not return to the Union as required in his September proclamation, on January 1, 1863, he issued his emancipation proclamation, the slaves having been confiscated by Act of Congress in 1862.

The act of confiscation and the President’s proclamation emancipating the slaves in the Confederacy could not abolish slavery, because it existed under the *laws of the States*. It could alter no State law, still it did affect slavery in this way: it caused slaves to leave their owners, and to this extent diminished their property and their wealth, but under the laws they could purchase others.

The great undefined latent power of the Constitution is em-

\*Goldwin Smith.

bodied in Article I., Section 8: “To provide for the common defense and general welfare.” Under this section almost all the outrages of the war were committed, restrained only by international rules of war; but these were ignored under the plea that the war was only a rebellion—quite a family affair, and would soon be settled. Under this article also is found the power to tax to any amount “for the common defense and public welfare.”

The confiscation act of Congress was unconstitutional. Ed Burke, in the Warren Hastings trial, said: “I do not know the method of drawing up the indictment against a whole people.” The Constitution *declares* that the “trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury.” But this confiscation act punished a “whole people” without indictment, trial by jury, or conviction.

As the slave owners were called the only *privileged class* in the United States, it is pertinent to inquire if this class of people did not exist in all the States when the Union was formed, and if they of the North did not sell their claim to a privileged class for a “mess of pottage” and then howled at the purchasers for being a privileged class! Who demanded the enlargement of slavery by making it legal to steal or purchase negroes from Africa until the year 1808, to give employment to the six hundred slave ships owned in the North—in New York and New England. We know the town of Newport, R. I.—now the abode of wealth—in the year 1750 had one hundred and seventy ships engaged in the slave trade for “the love of money.”

A question presents itself here—and it is a pertinent one, for it commences at the beginning of this whole matter of modern slavery in this country: Who *first owned* these slaves, how did they obtain them, how did they treat them, and to whom did they sell these human beings for money, and then with the price of blood in their pockets soon began to howl against the sin of slavery, and thank the God they served that they were not slaveholders any longer?\*

It has been said by a Northern writer that “indirectly, and

\*I commend to you an article published in the September (year 1900) number of *Scribner’s Magazine*, page 303, giving an account of the treatment of slaves by their owners North; also an account of the last slave ship captured by the United States navy (*Century Magazine* for May, 1894).

for the purpose of a more equal distribution of direct taxes, the framers of the Constitution *tolerated*, while they condemned, slavery, but they tolerated it because they believed it would soon disappear. They even refused to allow the charter of their own liberties to be polluted by the mention of the word 'slave.'" But take heed: did not this convention give ear to the clamor of the owners of slave ships and slaves thereon to continue for twenty years longer to increase slavery and increase their wealth by enslaving free people in Africa?

No, "they could not, consistently with honor or self-respect, transmit to future ages the evidence that some of them had trampled on the inalienable rights of others."

"Though slavery was tolerated by being ignored, we should not dishonor the memory of those who organized that government to suppose that they did not intend to bestow upon it the power to maintain its own authority—the right to overthrow or remove slavery or *whatever* might prove fatal to its permanence or destroy its usefulness."

To this the answer is yes. But the proper mode of removing it is the real question. It should not be by making war, laying waste the country, burning all public buildings and dwelling houses, sinking ships, blockading ports, killing, wounding, and capturing soldiers, creating debts, levying taxes, exposing our soldiers to deadly battle and all the horrors of war—but by removing the evil by compensation "for the term of service" of the slaves to their owners.

This government is under obligation to compensate, and does compensate, parents, masters of apprentices, masters of slaves, for service and labor of those subjects who are enlisted in the army and navy, for the Constitution recognizes slaves as "persons held to labor or service." Removal by compensation might have prevented the war.

England compelled the abolition of slavery in her colonies, and she paid in compensation for services, to the slave owners, the sum of one hundred million dollars. Out of this, for instance, Cape Colony obtained fifteen million dollars, which was about four hundred dollars per slave.

If slavery was believed to be fatal to the permanence of the Union, it could have been removed by compensation, as in the case of England, and not by hatred and fanaticism.

View it as we may, the fact exists that the confiscation act, although unconstitutional, did, in effect, rob the Southern people of about two thousand million dollars (\$2,000,000,000), computing four million slaves at five hundred dollars each, which is only about half their value; and this was done as a punishment for secession. In law it was void; but the property was of such a character that it became useless to the owners, because it was enticed away. So this act and Lincoln's proclamation caused the slaves to leave their owners. And so without a crime, without an indictment, without a trial by jury or conviction, this property was taken from the owners. It was the largest steal ever committed by a nation; and, furthermore, they stole from the South slaves that they had sold the South. Call it by what name you will, it was robbery. It exceeds in magnitude, in money value, any of the invasions of India, from Genghis Khan down to the English East India Company; or the robbery of the proconsuls of Rome; or the wealth Spain derived from Mexico and Peru by the infamous acts of Cortez and Pizarro. And, after all, the loss from confiscating the "labor" of the slaves, great as it is, becomes but one item of loss to which the Southern people were subjected.

It would perhaps be unjust for me to assign the inducements that moved Mr. Lincoln to issue this proclamation, considering Congress had already confiscated them. I do not know if possession of property is, or is not, necessary before it can be *sold* by confiscation.\* If a slave not in possession of the United

\*The question of confiscating property, especially slaves, and setting them free will be found in the War Records, Series 2, Vol. I., Serial No. 114, from page 749 to page 822. This correspondence, and orders, show that in 1861 and part of 1862 "*confiscation by act of Congress limited the penalty to property actually employed in the service of the rebellion with the knowledge and consent of its owners, and instead of emancipating slaves thus employed left their status to be determined either by the courts of the United States or by subsequent legislation.*" (See Holt's opinion to President Lincoln, page 768, etc.) This was legitimate war. However, the want of success changed all this, and the proclamation of May 19, 1862, not being complied with, the war ceased to be confined to the troops in the field, and degenerated into one of robbery, plunder, destruction of private property to reduce the South to subjugation. To this end slaves were told they were free, and 178,975 were mustered into the United States army, armed, and, thus encouraged, employed to fight their owners. The

States marshal, being in the interior of the Confederacy, can be confiscated, then also could all property be confiscated by a paper bulletin posted on the wall. But in that proclamation there was a sinister object in view, and that was to array against the Confederate States the sympathies of the Christian world, by trying to make it appear that we made the war in defense of, and to perpetuate, slavery. Others there are who think that the "loyal governors" who met at Altoona, Pa., obtained it by insidious threats. But, be this as it may, the proclamation, as a legal paper, was worthless. The slaves were afterwards legally emancipated by the several States, by the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, and by taking the oath prescribed in the President's proclamation, dated May 29, 1865; and all the owners of slaves who were worth twenty thousand dollars, being disfranchised, had to make oath "not hereafter, at any time, to acquire any property whatever in slaves, or make use of slave labor, or make claim for slaves liberated." The numerous oaths and various proceedings required to set the negro legally free, and make it binding, remind me of many loyal friends in the North going before some judicial officer and renewing their oaths of allegiance every new moon, to make it sure and clear by accumulated recorded evidence.

When Jephthah made his vow there was no power to restrain him from fulfilling it. Lincoln could not perform his; he was not an abolitionist from principle, and there is very much evidence that he was not in favor of emancipation; his proclamation set free (on paper) only the slaves in a part of the *Confederate States*, leaving slavery untouched in the *United States*. That is, the Yankees retained slavery in Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, and part of Louisiana and the *North*, and tried to abolish it where they could not, and maintained it where they *could have abolished it*. At this malignant confiscation of the slaves *only in the Confederacy*, Fanueil Hall went wild with delight, and Exeter Hall, England, was jubilant.

I have no desire to discuss annexation (reconstruction) here, and hasten on, only to relate some of my experiences under it, so that you may know the patience, forbearance, and charity of

South did not arm a slave to kill white men. There was a marked parallel between the treatment of the noncombatants of the *South* and that of the noncombatants of *Cuba* by the Spaniards.

the Southern people under persecution. No one possessing knowledge has a right to withhold it from his fellow-men, if it will be valuable to them; and so I write.

And now came reconstruction (annexation), with all its evils. President Abraham Lincoln had been foully murdered, and Vice President "Andy" Johnson reigned in his stead.

It is stated that he disliked the refined and best class of people in the South; and now, in authority, he thirsted for vengeance against them. He declared that "treason should be made odious," and would have arrested Gen. R. E. Lee and other Confederate army officers and punished them if possible, had not Gen. Grant declared that they could not be molested without violating the paroles he had given them, and so prosecution was abandoned and persecution substituted, as will be shown after a while.

Having surrendered and signed a written agreement, and made oath to the same, I desired to go to my home in Mississippi, as stipulated in the parole.

Gen. Grant's declaration that his paroles could not be violated seems to have been, with him, an after thought, as the following telegram will show:

WASHINGTON CITY, April 15, 1865, 4 P.M.

Maj. Gen. Ord, Richmond, Va.

Arrest J. A. Campbell, Mayor Mayo, and the members of the old council of Richmond who have not yet taken the oath of allegiance, and put them in Libby prison. Hold them guarded beyond the possibility of escape until further orders. Also arrest all *paroled officers* and surgeons until they can be sent beyond our lines, unless they take the oath of allegiance. The oath need not be received from any one who you have not good reasons to believe will observe it, and from none who are excluded by the President's proclamation, without authority to do so. Extreme vigor will have to be observed while assassination remains the order of the day with the Rebels.

U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant General.

Here is Ord's manly answer:

RICHMOND, VA., April 15, 1865.

Gen. U. S. Grant.

Cipher dispatch directing certain parties to be arrested is received. The two citizens I have seen. They are old, nearly helpless, and I think incapable of harm. Lee and staff are in town among the paroled prisoners. Should I arrest them under the circumstances, I think the rebellion here would be opened.

*I will risk my life* that the present paroles will be kept, and, if you will allow me to do so, trust the people here, who, I believe, are ignorant of the assassination done by some insane Brutus with but few accomplices.