

The Charleston Mercury.

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Negroes.

How shall we deal with negroes in the army of our enemies?

As we understand President DAVIS' proclamation, all slaves in the Confederate States taken in arms against the Confederate States, were to be turned over to the civil authorities of the States, to be dealt with according to the laws of the States. Governor BONHAM has demanded, we understand, all such captures lately taken in South Carolina. Why have they not been surrendered up to him, to undergo the penalties of our laws?

The negroes from Massachusetts, which have come here in the Yankee army, are doubtless brought to South Carolina to excite our slaves to insurrection. Ought they not also to be surrendered to the authorities of South Carolina, to be dealt with according to State laws? If not surrendered, they certainly should not be taken.

We suppose the matter has stuck in that serboonian bog of indecision—Richmond.

Two officers recruiting soldiers, in a State composing one of the Confederate States, are taken and hung by the Yankee military authorities. President DAVIS details, by lot, two officers of the Yankee army, to be hung in retaliation. That was done two months ago, and they are not executed.

Seeing the wretched indecision and vacillation which prevails at Richmond, President LINCOLN put forth a proclamation declaring that our slaves in the army of the United States are like all its other soldiers, and that if executed by us, he will retaliate by executing soldiers of the Confederate States taken prisoners. Here is the consummation of our weak policy of timid imbecility. Our slaves are to be made our equals in our own country, fighting against us. If President DAVIS submits to this, it will argue that he determines we shall not carry on the war, and adopts the Yankee policy of ending it.

It was perfectly plain, from the commencement of the war, that there was but one way to make it a civilized war—and that was, by the sternest retaliation for every breach of the usages of civilized war by our enemies. To forbear with such an enemy was only to invite further outrages and aggressions, and, finally, to make it really and unequivocally a war of extermination. Under the false and feeble policy of our Executive, we have been steadily drifting to this consummation. Instead of saving blood, it will only add ten-fold to its shedding.

He sends an army into Pennsylvania—at this late and critical period—and then our soldiers are made to pay for all they take or need. In South Carolina, about the same time, negro troops—in whose behalf President LINCOLN threatens retaliation on the citizens of the South—make a raid on Combahee. Hear the New York Tribune's account of the sort of war they carried on:

"The soldiers scattered in every direction, and burned and destroyed everything of value they came across. Thirty-four large mansions, known to belong to notorious rebels, with all their rich furniture and rare works of art, were burned to the ground. Nothing but smouldering ruins, and parched, crisp skeletons of once magnificent old oak and palmetto groves, now remain of those delightful country seats. Sluices were opened, plantations flooded, and broad ponds and lakes were made, where, but a few hours before, luxuriant crops of rice and corn were putting forth their leaves. We brought within our lines nearly 800 valuable slaves; having destroyed property to the amount of two millions, most of which belonged to notorious leaders in this rebellion."

One of the effects of the President's policy of timidity is, that in the Western States we see the proposition openly made of arming our slaves and making them portions of the Confederate army. It is fortunate for us that this crazy expedient is beyond the power of the Government and Congress of the Confederate States. Weakness and desperation are always nearly allied.