Articles on any of the subjects usually discussed in this journal will be received from any quarter. If used, they will be liberally paid for; if rejected, they will be returned to the writers on the receipt of the requisite amount of postage stamps.

All Communications which pertain to the literary management of THE NATION *should be addressed to the Editor.*

WHAT THE SOUTH NEEDS FIRST.

It is now eight months since the South laid down its arms and the North entered on the work of reconstruction. During the interval which preceded the meeting of Congress, the whole country devoted itself, without stint, to the discussion of the "reconstruction problem." The newspapers have, ever since Lee surrendered, teemed with it; little else has been heard from the platform; the pulpit even has sought to shed what light it could upon it, and it has formed the prevailing topic of conversation in every social circle. And yet it may be safely said that, down to the present moment, no plan of reconstruction yet propounded has found favor with a majority, or anything like a majority, of either Congress or the people. Mr. Johnson was at the outset supposed to have a plan, and it seemed for awhile as if he had; but he soon found reason to modify it to such a degree that there is now little left of it, and that little appears to meet with but a very small measure of approval from the country. There is hardly a senator or member of Congress now who does not think that he has hit upon a sovereign remedy for the great Southern ill, if he can only secure its adoption; but there is no general agreement upon anything. The Republican party, while concurring very fully as to the objects in view, is divided into a dozen sections as to the means of effecting those objects; and in the meantime, as long as it remains undecided, the grand Democratic plan of doing nothing whatever gains more or less strength from the mere lapse of time, the subsidence of popular excitement, and the distraction of the public mind.

There have been nearly a dozen ways suggested since last May of pacifying and regenerating the South. First of all, there was the plan of giving the suffrage to the blacks by a general order of the President. But he refused to issue any such order, and the Connecticut and Wisconsin votes justified, or at least seemed to justify, him in his refusal. Then there was the plan of holding military possession of the South, and governing it by martial law, until it gave signs of being clothed and in its right mind; but this never met with much popular favor, and is still surrounded with difficulties. Then came the plan of giving the negroes the suffrage by procuring a decision of the Supreme Court in a case raised under the "republican form of government" clause in the Constitution; but this was dropped almost as soon as propounded, and its advocates now never allude to it. Then came Mr. Stevens's plan of confiscating the whole soil of the South, or nearly the whole, and dividing it amongst the blacks; but, so far as we know, Mr. Stevens himself is the only supporter of this scheme. Mr. Sumner's proposed amendment to the Constitution, basing representation on the number of legal voters, and not as now on population, so as either to diminish the number of Southern representatives or force the whites into admitting the blacks to political equality, is that which perhaps now finds most favor, and on which the attention of the North shows most tendency to concentrate itself.

There are, in our opinion, several objections to this expedient arising out of its possible effects upon the Northern, as well as on the Southern, States which we will not here stop to discuss. But there is still another and a stronger one, which must be met now *in limine*, and that is, that, though brought forward as a radical remedy, it is anything but radical; it draws all its value from the assumption that a state of things exists which does not exist. It is, in short, much the same sort of boon to the South that the present of a carriage would be to a man unable to leave his bed, or bonbons to a man who found great difficulty in securing a daily allowance of common domestic bread. At present, there is no quarter of the South, outside the reach of Northern garrisons, in which there is any safety for either the life or property of a man who presumes to think or speak differently from his neighbors on any of the great questions by which the South is agitated. No Northern man dare go there and hold and utter the sentiments on political and social topics which the majority of us hold and utter here. We profess to place great reliance on the influence of Northern emigration in reorganizing Southern society and modifying Southern opinions. But, at present, no emigrants can show their faces there with safety, or go to their beds with the certainty of rising in the morning, unless they take special pains either not to exercise any influence whatever, or consent, both by speech and example, to strengthen Southern prejudices. Emigration that will be of any use to us politically is, under these circumstances, not to be thought of.

Moreover, we look for a great change in Southern feeling and habits through the spread of education, and the diffusion of books and periodicals amongst the poorer and more ignorant classes. We look for the elevation of the negroes through the opening and maintenance of schools for them, and the growth amongst them, as the result of Northern teaching, of self-respect and of mutual respect. But the fact—the hard, stern, repulsive fact—is that, according to the testimony of all those who have recently visited the South, there is no probability that any Northern man will be allowed either to teach, write, speak, or print in any part of the South doctrines conflicting with those commonly held in Southern society on social or political topics. Where is the district, we should like to know, in which a Northern man or woman will be able to open and conduct a school, or print a newspaper, or make a speech, with freedom and security, one month after the federal troops are withdrawn? What probability is there, in short, that any of the influences which we most value and which we consider most conducive to progress and civilization can be brought anywhere into play at the South under the protection of State laws?

Now the very basis of civil society is security for life and property. Freedom of speech and of locomotion, of trade, of following all lawful callings, from selling needles to making stump speeches, without let or hindrance, is at the very foundation of free society, and, above all, of American society. Without these things there is no freedom, and there can be no progress in civilization, and to talk of the authority of the United States Government being really restored over any State or territory or district in which it cannot guarantee these things to all classes of the population, is an abuse of language. All reconstruction, though it gave every black at the South two votes, which did not secure these things to both white men and blacks, would be a delusion and a snare; and all arrangements for bestowing the suffrage on the negro, or for coercing his late masters into giving it him, which do not provide also for protecting him in the exercise of it, and in preparing his mind for the right exercise of it, will prove futile. The South will never be really in this Union until Henry Ward Beecher can read an article from the New York *Tribune* on the steps of the principal hotel in Jackson, Mississippi, and can "peddle" the paper afterwards, should he feel so disposed, through the town, without fear of other harm than what may come from a "scathing editorial" in the local *World* or *Daily News*, whatever their names may be. That is no part of the American Union in truth and in deed, no matter who votes in it, or how many members it may send to Congress, in which any man may not speak the thing he wills, or in which he has to fear a power behind the law which the law cannot control.

For many years before the war the South was in the Union only in name. Its connection with the North was hardly recognized by local legislation or local opinion. The dominion of law, as we understand it, and as every civilized country must understand it if it means to retain its civilization, was unknown to the mass of the Southern people. The necessities of their social system made respect for legal forms, or processes, or individual rights, impossible. The quick, sharp, peremptory mandate of a mob of citizens collected from the neighboring plantations is at this moment the highest sanction known to most Southern men, something far higher than acts of the legislature or decrees of courts. The idea of deliberate resistance to a local vigilance committee is what never enters into the head of a Southern boy.

If we want peace at the South, and permanent peace, we must in some way or other first of all familiarize the mass of the people with the idea of law as an irresistible power to which all must bow, and which throws just the same amount of protection over the meanest as well as the proudest black or white. If this can only be done by force,

force we must have to do it, and, until this is done, the first step has still to be made in the re-organization of Southern society. Whatever military force may be necessary to afford to every freeman, of whatever color, the protection which the Constitution guarantees him, in person and property, we must maintain, and in doing so we shall be carrying out the true democratic theory of government. The absolute dominion of a few men over any spot of our soil is the vilest kind of oligarchy—no very great improvement on feudalism.

Even if Mr. Sumner's amendment were passed, and legal voters made the basis of representation, the negro who found himself robbed or flogged for being "sassy," or the white man who found himself tarred and feathered or driven from his house for publishing or circulating a disagreeable newspaper, or for opposition to local opinion on any subject, and, on seeking redress, found the courts closed to him and governors and sheriffs deaf and blind, would, on carrying the story of his woes to Washington, receive the consolatory assurance that he might return to his home in peace; that the Southern delegation in Congress was greatly reduced; and that the South could look for no increase of it until she bestowed the franchise on the black man.

BAYONETS AND SCHOOL-HOUSES.

Senator Wilson's bill for the peace establishment of the United States army increases the present number of troops in the regular service from twenty to upwards of seventy thousand men. This much exceeds the estimate of the Secretary of War at the opening of Congress; and if it is fair to ask the reason why, it is also fair to respond that a month has elapsed since the Secretary's report, and that in these times the lessons of a month may be as important as those of an ordinary year or period of years. There are, incontestably, very grave objections to the proposed increase, but so there are to Mr. Stanton's; and if it were merely a matter of taste, we might and probably should content ourselves with the moderate standing army of yore. No sober-minded citizen, however, differ as he may from Senator and Secretary, will conclude that this would meet the requirements of the country in its present emergency. Our foreign and domestic complications, to take the best view of them, dissuade us from a hasty disarming. And it is evident that in the next contest, whether within the Union or across her borders, our reliance must be on those whose business it is to fight, and not to any considerable extent upon volunteers.

While not engaging to defend Mr. Wilson's proposition as the least that could be made in the face of our national contingencies, we are not troubled by the thought of the money it will cost to carry it out, and the dangers and corruption inseparable from the establishment at which it aims. The expense is a part of the grand burthen imposed upon us by the rebellion, to crush which it was considered good economy to spend three thousand millions; and if seventy thousand soldiers will secure protection to black and white at the South, and by their moral prestige restore the fortunes of Juarez and the autonomy of Mexico, and do this sooner and more effectually than fifty thousand, then they are cheaper than fifty thousand. The peril which this same host will offer to our liberties and our morals is not, of course, contemptible, but it is not so formidable as the anti-republican and anti-American spirit which threatens us on the other hand. We have reason to fear not so much that we shall suffer in pocket and in personal franchise because of the army, as that we shall depend upon it too much for results which can as well and even better be attained by other instrumentalities.

One of these was brought to the attention of the House of Representatives last month, and was referred to the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. It was a national bureau of education, whose function should be "to enforce education without regard to race or color upon the population of all such States as shall fall below a certain standard, to be established by Congress." Many will object to such compulsion as an infringement of private right and individual freedom; but the practice of several States is already conformed to this principle, and the feeling in favor of intelligent suffrage, which is rapidly strengthening, is justified only by the opportunities for education which it presupposes to be available to every citizen. Where this happens to be the case, it is still desirable that the State should, in laying disabilities on ignorance, demonstrate that it is punishing wilful neglect and not misfortune. This it cannot do unless, besides opening wide the door of its school-house, it resolutely compels the attendance of those who are kept away by unwholesome restraint.

We are far from saying that the proposed bureau deserves to be erected. Its value for the originally free States may be doubted. With them emulation may promise more for the thorough enlightenment of their citizens than dependence upon the yard-stick of a branch of the national Government. In the long run we may trust that Connecticut will discover that her school fund, derived from the Western Reserve, is not so elastic in meeting the requirements of her growing population as the general tax by which Massachusetts has kept abreast with the learning of the age. At the South, where, if we do not mistake, no Constitutional Convention has provided any system of free instruction for the people, the bureau would have a value proportionate to its efficiency. Yet even here interference would be beset with difficulties, not least of which would be the acquiescence of the States themselves.

Indeed, the policy which has thus far prevailed in our dealings with the reconstructed communities has been remarkable for exacting precisely those conditions which they could not possibly have avoided, and for omitting those which would have been the test and seal of their social metamorphosis. The "accomplished facts" of the Government might have passed without recognition: of what concern was it whether the South confessed the rising and setting of the sun? It was indispensable that she should point to facts accomplished not over her, and beyond her control, but by her, in evidence of a genuine devotion to democracy and the Union. Hence we hold that the foundation of a common-school system should have been among the prerequisites of reconciliation and forgiveness. True, this might have involved the enforcement of the confiscation act, in order so to distribute population as to bring the school-districts within practicable limits. But if so, was it not best that this act should be enforced?

It is our hope that Congress, remembering what part of the stability of our national edifice is due to public intelligence, and the innate hostility of the South to the light of letters, will repair the omission of the President in this regard, and refuse to believe that loyal men are safe, or the professions of the South to be trusted, so long as the minds of the people are controlled and their ears filled by the late champions of secession and treason. We should be well pleased if, among the numerous amendments offered, out of which might almost be made a bran-new Constitution, one should appear supplementary to the clause concerning the admission of fresh States into the Union, and requiring, besides numbers and the usual organization, a plan of education akin to those of the States already admitted. Nay, if we are to have inserted a definition of what is meant by "a republican form of government," we have no objections to seeing it include free schools. And if, in guaranteeing this form to the lately oligarchical States, there arise on Southern soil in time seventy thousand school-houses, we shall repose much greater confidence in them than in the seventy thousand bayonets of Mr. Wilson. Finally, we are prepared to assert that, concerning this whole subject, there is greater unanimity among the people of the North than can be predicated of any other single phase of the problem of reconstruction; that there is a very general solicitude for comprehensive and decided action on the part of Congress, and corresponding chagrin at the indifference or short-sightedness of that body. We would not condemn the pains which they have taken to put the leaders of the South in limbo; but we submit that some thought should be bestowed on the millions who are led. These will continue to be led, and be led astray, however long the Capitol may be closed on Southern delegations, unless they are rescued from their blind and servile following by a sight of the nobler destiny within their grasp. The bills for the continuance and enlargement of the Freedmen's Bureau, introduced into the Senate by Mr. Trumbull and the House by Mr. Eliot, which empower the Commissioner, under the direction of the President, to purchase sites and buildings for schools, do not go to the root of the difficulty. The need is to reach and educate not only dependent refugees and freedmen, but the entire population of the South; and no scheme that shall be adequate to this need, can be contained in an incidental clause or section of a bill, or be left to any man's discretion or "direction."