

million stood 3½ million more. Without their labor the South would starve. With arms in their hands, Negroes would form a fighting force which could replace every single Northern white soldier fighting listlessly and against his will with a black man fighting for freedom. . . .

Meantime, with perplexed and laggard steps, the United States Government followed the footsteps of the black slave. It made no difference how much Abraham Lincoln might protest that this was not a war against slavery, or ask General McDowell "if it would not be well to allow the armies to bring back those fugitive slaves which have crossed the Potomac with our troops" (a communication which was marked "secret"). It was in vain that Lincoln rushed entreaties and then commands to Frémont in Missouri, not to emancipate the slaves of rebels, and then had to hasten similar orders to Hunter in South Carolina. The slave, despite every effort, was becoming the center of war. Lincoln, with his uncanny insight, began to see it. He began to talk about compensation for emancipated slaves, and Congress, following almost too quickly, passed the Confiscation Act in August, 1861, freeing slaves which were actually used in war by the enemy. Lincoln then suggested that provision be made for colonization of such slaves. He simply could not envisage free Negroes in the United States. What would become of them? What would they do? Meantime, the slave kept looming. New Orleans was captured and the whole black population of Louisiana began streaming toward it. When Vicksburg fell, the center of perhaps the vastest Negro population in North America was tapped. They rushed into the Union lines. Still Lincoln held off and watched symptoms. Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions" received the curt answer, less than a year before Emancipation, that the war was not to abolish slavery, and if Lincoln could hold the country together and keep slavery, he would do it.

But he could not, and he had no sooner said this than he began to realize that he could not. In June, 1862, slavery was abolished in the territories. Compensation with possible colonization was planned for the District of Columbia. Representatives and Senators from the Border States were brought together to talk about extending this plan to their states, but they hesitated.

In August, Lincoln faced the truth, front forward; and that truth