

heard by telegram in November, 1860, that Abraham Lincoln had secured a majority of votes in the Presidential electorate and was therefore certain to become President of the United States in the following March, they summoned



*Your Friend
John Brown*

307. JOHN BROWN'S PORTRAIT AND AUTOGRAPH

a State Convention. This body on December 20th passed an Ordinance seceding from the rest of the United States of America.

Lincoln had never advocated abolition of slavery throughout the Union. He merely stood for a bargain being kept. He hated slavery and wished to restrict the area in which this institution was to exist to the narrowest limits consistent with the pre-existing inter-state agreements or understandings. But a bargain being a bargain, he resented the attempts of the South to with-

draw from the agreements of 1820 and 1850; and most of all he drew the local free-idea of secession.

As early as 1849 he had proposed to Congress to emancipate the District of Columbia (against compensation); and in 1854 he came given front as an opponent of the extension of Slave Territories or States. In his protestations of wishing to uphold the Union above all and every other matter plainly said in 1858 that there could be no protracted compromise with this Government cannot endure permanently, half-slave and half-free. I will become all one thing or all the other.

As it was incredible that the overwhelming voting power of the North should favour of slavery everywhere, this utterance from the favourite candidate of the North, and his subsequent election as the nominated new President by the Republican National Convention on a "No Extension of Slavery" ticket (May 16th, 1860), made the breach with South Carolina inevitable.

War was begun by the South in January, 1861, and the gage of battle taken up by Lincoln on April 15th, 1861. Half Virginia, and the other Slave States of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri stood by the Union; the rest, from Texas to Eastern Virginia, confederated with South Carolina.

In the great struggle which ensued the Negroes and Negroes of all the former Slave States signalled themselves in history for two things: their considerate behaviour towards their defeated masters and their bravery in battle. They remained quiescent throughout the South, where active fighting

was not going on; and although every white man may have been absent at the war, they respected strictly the property of their owners and the chastity of their owners' wives. Not even in the prejudiced history of the South can it be maintained that the negroes revenged themselves for their servitude and ill-treatment while those who had held them in bondage were away from their homes. Of course if a Northern army was near, many slaves would run away to obtain liberty or to enlist under its colours. Frequently they were turned back and ordered to return on their employers' plantations till the issue was decided. In some cases they were enlisted (if there was a justification) in the armies of the Federal Government (though its negro soldiers were usually obtained from Washington, Maryland, West Virginia, and the free negroes of the Northern States): in all such cases the negro troops fought under the Unionist banner with such bravery, and—if one may say so—such Christianity, that they won admiration from their white comrades and materially



308. ABRAHAM LINCOLN
From a print published just before the signing of the
Emancipation Edict