

for the service, but many others who were entirely unfit, and who when brought to the Rendezvous in another part of the State were turned adrift and in most cases lost both to the Government and their owners.

I complained of these proceedings to the President of the United States, and was informed that no orders upon the subject had then been given, and that it was under consideration. After the lapse of a month, the practice still continuing, no order relating to it yet appearing, and continued complaints from loyal owners still reaching me, I addressed a written communication to the President remonstrating against the practice and invoking his interposition.

This led to another conference with him and the Secretary of War, the result of which, as I thought, was the suspension of the practice, until an opportunity could be offered to the owners to voluntarily offer their slaves to the Government at a certain rate of compensation, and to meet by that means its supposed necessities. But the suspension did not take place and the practice still continued with as little system as ever on the part of the recruiting officers.

You will readily perceive the gist of the objection which our loyal citizens made to these proceedings. It is not so much that they object to colored troops, for they are ready and willing to see every one, be his color what it may, who is subject to military duty, arrayed against this Rebellion. It is not that they object to the surrender of their property to any extent that may be necessary to strengthen the arm of the Government in the conflict in which it is engaged. They admit, that when a proper emergency exists, if it cannot be otherwise met their property may be impressed for that purpose; but if such an emergency does exist they claim not only that they shall be paid for property so seized without unreasonable delay, but that its impressment shall be so guarded as to embrace all alike, and to avoid the wanton or useless removal of it, and that such proceedings shall not be conducted according to the arbitrary whim of every subaltern who, by carrying off those evidently unfit for service, proves that the augmentation of the Army is frequently the least of his considerations.

If slaves are persons subject, within the provision of the Acts of Congress, to military duty, these Acts have prescribed the mode of enforcing that duty; they should be then enrolled and drafted as others are, but they have not been so enrolled simply because they have not been made subject to that duty, as reference to the conscript law will show. If then they are subject to seizure, it is only as property, and to meet an