By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas there appears in the public prints, what purport to be a proclamation, of Major General Hunter, in the words and figures following, to wit:

[Proclamation text]

And whereas the same is producing some excitement, and misunderstanding; therefore

I, Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States, proclaim and declare, that the government of the United States, had no knowledge, information, or belief, of an intention on the part of General Hunter to issue such a proclamation; nor has it yet any authentic information that the document is genuine. And further, that neither General Hunter, nor any other commander or person, has been expressly,
implicitly authorized by the Government of the United States, to make proclamations declaring the slaves of any State free; and that the purpose of proclamation, now in question, whether genuine or false, is altogether void, so far as perfect, such declare. Now,

I further make known that whether it be competent for me, as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time, in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the government, to exercise such supposable power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I can not freely justify in leaving to the decision of the people to be determined by their Commander in Chief. These are totally different questions, not all of my military authority, from those of public regulation in armes and camps.

On the sixth day of March last, by a special message, I recommended to Congress the adoption of a joint resolution to be substantially as follows:
The resolution, in the language above quoted, was adopted by large majorities in both branches of Congress, and now stands as an authentic, definite, and solemn proposal of the nation to the state, and people most immediately interested in the subject matter. To the people of those states, I now earnestly appeal. I do not argue. I beseech you to make the arguments for

You can not if you would, be blind to the signs of the times. I beg of you a calm and enlarged consideration of them, ranging, if it may be, far above personal and partisan politics.

This proposal makes common cause for a common object, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not the pharisees. The change it contemplates would come gently as the dews of heaven, not rending or wrecking anything.

Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done, by one effort, in all past time, or, in the providence of God, it is now your high privilege to see. May the next future
The resolution, in the language above quoted, was adopted by large majorities in both branches of Congress, and now stands an authentic, definite, and solemn proposal of the nation to the state, and people most immediately interested in the subject matter. To the people of those states I now earnestly appeal. I do not argue. I beseech you to make the argument for yourselves. The strong tendency to a total disruption of peace in the South is apparent. You can stay or without your possession I can not. You can stay at home knowing a hair of white or black. This proposal makes common cause for a common object, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not the phrases. The change it contemplates would come gently as the eves of heaven, not rending or wrecking anything. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done by one effort, in all past time, as in the providence of God, it is now your high privilege to do. May the next future
not have to lament that you have neglected it.

Abraham Lincoln

May 17, 1862.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington this nineteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-sixth.

Abraham Lincoln.

By the President:

William H. Seward,
Secretary of State.