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the service of the Confederate government. But a majority of the southerners were still at liberty to avail themselves of the privilege of accepting the new order of things; and it was to their interest to do so, in order that the new arrangements might be shaped as nearly as possible to their own liking. What was to their liking, however, proved as distasteful to Congress as had been expected. The use they made of their restored power brought absolute shipwreck upon the President's plans, and radically altered the whole process of reconstruction.

An extraordinary and very perilous state of affairs had been created in the South by the sudden and absolute emancipation of the negroes, and it was not strange that the southern legislatures should deem it necessary to take extraordinary steps to guard against the manifest and pressing dangers which it entailed. Here was a vast "laboring, landless, homeless class," once slaves, now free; unpracticed in liberty, unschooled in self-control; never sobered by the discipline of self-support, never established in any habit of prudence; excited by a freedom they did not understand, exalted by false hopes; bewildered and without leaders, and yet insolent and aggressive; sick of work, covetous of pleasure, — a host of dusky children untimely put out of school. In some of the states they outnumbered the whites, — notably in Mississippi and South Carolina. They were a danger to themselves as well as to those whom they had once served, and now feared and suspected; and the very legislatures which had ac-

ber and variety of petty offenses, such as the new freemen were most likely to commit; and it was provided that, in the (extremely probable) event of the non-payment of these fines, the culprits should be hired out to labor by judicial process. In some instances an elaborate system of compulsory apprenticeship was established for negroes under age, providing that they should be bound out to labor. In certain states the negroes were required to sign written contracts of labor, and were forbidden to do job work without first obtaining licenses from the police authorities of their places of residence. Those who failed to obtain licenses were liable to the charge of vagrancy, and upon that charge could be arrested, fined, and put to compulsory labor. There was not everywhere the same rigor; but there was everywhere the same determination to hold the negroes very watchfully, and, if need were, very sternly, within bounds in the exercise of their unaccustomed freedom; and in many cases the restraints imposed went the length of a veritable "involuntary servitude."

Congress had not waited to see these things done before attempting to help the negroes to make use of their freedom, — and self-defensive use of it, at that. By an act of March 3, 1865, it established, as a branch of the War Department, a Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, which was authorized and empowered to assist the one-time slaves in finding means of subsistence, and in making good their new privileges and immunities as citizens. The officials of this bureau, with the

cepted the Thirteenth Amendment hastened to pass laws which should put them under new restraints. Stringent regulations were adopted with regard to contracts for labor, and with regard to the prevention of vagrancy. Penalties were denounced against those who refused to work at the current rates of wages. Fines were imposed upon a great num-

War Department behind them, had gone the whole length of their extensive authority; putting away from the outset all ideas of accommodation, and preferring the interests of their wards to the interests of peaceable, wholesome, and healing progress. No doubt that was inevitable. What they did was but the final and direct application of the rigorous,