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A Just Decision.

One by one the barriers which have sustained the slave system give way. In an abstract, which we this morning publish, of a late case before a court martial in this District, Gen. Brown disapproved of the proceedings, because the testimony of a witness was refused on account of her complexion—she being of African descent. He holds that the testimony of black folks, as well as white, must be taken for what it is worth. This decision has been approved by the commander of the Department, Gen. Rosecrans. We believe this is the first case of the kind that has occurred during the war; at least, we have no recollection of any other, where the question of the competency of black persons to give evidence has been raised and settled in the affirmative. If we are correct, Gen. Brown is entitled to the credit of making the first decision which affirms that, in military courts of the United States, no complexional distinctions can be recognized.

As most of our readers may be aware, in all the Slave States, it has been a settled rule that the testimony of a black person could not be received against a white man, although it might against the blacks. Thus, if a hundred black people should witness the perpetration of a robbery or a murder, they could not testify against the criminal if he were a white man, even though, by the rejection of their testimony, he should escape unpunished.

What a barbarous and insensate rule is this? A bloody stick of wood, a gun, a torn garment, a bullet—any, or all of these may be brought into court and furnish evidence in a case of murder, but an intelligent human being, who has witnessed the whole affair, must be refused because he or she is not of the proper color.

Gen. Brown lays down the correct rule. The testimony of all persons who understand the nature, and recognize the responsibilities of an oath must be received. The credibility of the testimony is a question to be determined by the court or jury in view of the circumstances of the case and time. We congratulate General Brown upon a wise and just decision.

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