

Sir John Tenniel. "The Federal Phoenix". (1864). Wood engraving. Plate dimensions, $9\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{16}$ ". Collection The General Library, University of California, Berkeley. Appeared in *Punch*, December 3, 1864.

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In 1864, John Tenniel drew "The Federal Phoenix" for *Punch*, depicting a brutal Lincoln rising to glory from the fire that consumes the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence. Bitter as it was, the cartoon echoed a legitimate "Copperhead" or anti-war Democratic complaint: in order to defend the Constitution, and the nation's laws, the President had transgressed on both. Lincoln did, in fact, order two newspapers suppressed for false information, and his generals destroyed several more. The military arrested men without warrants, held them without charges, and sentenced them without a jury trial. Troops arrested one enemy of the administration at his home and banished him to the Confederacy. Critics questioned the Constitutionality of the President calling for volunteers without Congressional approval, or drafting men into the army without Constitutional provision. Even staunch Unionist Democrats like Horatio Seymour of New York wondered aloud if love of liberty justified repression.

Sir John Tenniel (he was knighted in 1893) worked for *Punch* magazine for most of his life, and this cartoon is a good example of the graphic style he brought to that publication. Dry, linear, and immediate, he never sought the complex detail or somber half-tones of Thomas Nast. Tenniel's work has the quality of illustration, for he was as much an illustrator as a cartoonist. Indeed, some have said he never achieved the extreme exaggeration of features that defines

the true caricature. Tenniel's characters can always be easily identified: they have a certain portrait-like quality which a true caricaturist would avoid. In "The Federal Phoenix," however, Tenniel comes perhaps closer than anything he ever did to transforming his character into something entirely different from what he actually was. Tenniel assumed that his audience would understand the symbol of the phoenix, the ancient legendary bird said to consume itself in fire and then rise again from the ashes, refreshed and youthful; and he therefore gave no caption to his illustration. The reelected Lincoln soars upward, beard and hair drawn into bird-like beak and topknot, a look of malevolent determination on his face. In transforming Lincoln into something strange and inhuman, Tenniel has drawn one of his most vicious anti-Lincoln cartoons. M.S.

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—DECEMBER 3, 1864.



THE FEDERAL PHOENIX.