LETTERS AND DISCUSSIONS
ON THE
Formation of Colored Regiments,
AND THE
DUTY OF THE COLORED PEOPLE
IN REGARD TO THE
GREAT SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION,
in the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BY ALFRED M. GREEN.

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At the beginning of the great struggle between the Government of the United States and the traitors who lifted their hands against it, I sought the oracles of history for a precedent; and, having easily found it, before uttering a single sentence as to its influence or results upon the great question of slavery in America, I carefully scanned and surveyed the whole question or ground upon which the issue rested. By the fairest rules of comparison and analogy, I found it impossible to separate slavery extension, or the nationalization of this vilest of evils, from the purpose of the arch traitors as their avowed object, and the determination on the part of slaveholders to exercise unlimited power over their dejected victims of the African race as their leading object and the mainspring of the rebellion. Then, having followed history by the same rules of comparison and analogy, it was not very difficult for me to decide as to our duty. Nor have I ever seen anything written, spoken, or performed by the government—its agents—by my abolition friends and associates—or by the conservative Democracy of our land—which has given me occasion to change my opinion.

I have not a doubt at this hour, but that my hopes on the one hand, and my fears on the other, may both yet be realized. A careful reading of the following pages will clearly develop in what those hopes and fears consist. My friends, who ask me from time to time what I think of the present aspect of affairs, may learn from these pages that I am still sanguine of the success of our cause as the result. Still, much depends upon our own exertions as to the character and quality of freedom, suffrage or the enfranchisement that we may enjoy.

Having written much upon the subject, I have been induced to throw together some scraps of arguments offered in reply to the opposition I have met in regard to my opinions.

The first two articles in this pamphlet may be justly styled the foundation of all discussion upon the questions presented. They were met and opposed by white and colored men, while many others of all parties gave my views support. After discussing the question through the columns of the *Pax and Palms* with my anti-slavery coadjutors, I met and discussed it before the Church Anti-Slavery Society of this city on the second Tuesday in September, 1861. A short report of said debate appearing in the Anglo-Africans, drew forth the vigorous discussion through the columns of that journal from which the body of this pamphlet is made up.

I have several lectures and a poem on this same subject, entering more minutely upon the details of the war and its results, which I have delivered with great success and which I now propose, at the suggestion of friends, to lay before the public for perusal at their leisure.

A. M. GREEN.
such as to create within us that burning zeal and enthusiasm for the field of battle, which inspires other men in the full enjoyment of every civil and religious encomium, yet let us endeavor to hope for the future, and improve the present auspicious moment for creating anew our claims upon the justice and honor of the Republic; and, above all, let not the honor and glory achieved by our fathers be blasted or sullied by a want of true heroism among their sons. Let us, then, take up the sword, trusting in God, who will defend the right, remembering that these are other days than those of yore—that the world to-day is on the side of freedom and universal political equality.

That the war-cry of the bowing leaders of Secession and treason is, let us drive back the advance guard of civil and religious freedom; let us have more slave territory; let us build stronger the tyrant system of slavery in the great American Republic. Remember, too, that your very presence among the troops of the North would inspire your oppressed brethren of the South with zeal for the overthrow of the tyrant system, and confidence in the armies of the living God—the God of truth, justice, and equality to all men.

With a knowledge of your zeal and patriotism, and a hope of its early development, I am yours, for God and humanity.

A. M. GREEN.

PHILADELPHIA, April 26, 1861.

NEGROES IN THE SERVICE.

From the Philadelphia Sunday Transcript, May, 1861.

The colored portion of our population are anxious to do the State some service. Already they have organized one or more regiments, and are perfecting themselves in the drill. Among the documents which have already emanated from this branch of our population, as to the propriety of their engaging in such service, is the following from the pen of "Hamilear," a negro of more than ordinary ability. Without endorsing his communication we give it place, so that all sides may be heard:

"While many persons in the North—perhaps strong friends of the Union—are not prepared to endorse the idea of admitting colored regiments into its service, it might be well for us to remember that every effort is being made by the South to make their black population efficient aids in defending their soil against the army. The State of Louisiana, for more than three months, has had colored regiments in the home guard service, under the most efficient drill and pay. Vice President Stephens recommended this course to all the States. Tennessee, in pursuance of this recommendation, has passed an act to employ all the available muscle of her free black population. There are four colored regiments now in Virginia, in the service of the rebel government. It is said, on perfectly reliable authority, that black troops shot down Union men at the late battle at Manassas Gap.

"Where, then, is the consistency, or expediency, of fruitlessly wasting so much time at the North, in discussing the propriety of adopting such a measure, with reference to preparing our colored population for an emergency, such as may be thrust upon us by the introduction of 50,000 or 100,000 Indians and negroes brought into the field against us, and they having all the advantage of the most efficient drill and endurance, by long months of preparation and practice, that we have hopelessly wasted in discussing questions of propriety, &c., &c.

"Are we to be duped and forestalled in this last hope, so much relied upon as a means of bringing rebels to terms, as we have been in almost every other available means of speedy and honorable settlement? Should the South generally adopt the idea of their dictators, Davis and Stephens, to place in the field 50,000 free blacks, at $12 per month, (term of enlistment for three years,) will they not soon discover that the same amount of money would emancipate and place in the field 125,000 men, paying their masters liberally—settling also the question of servile rebellion among themselves, the question of contraband emancipation, and the general insecurity of that species of property during the rebellion?

"Would any offer of our government induce those people to desert or fight against their former masters and emancipators
most liberal government the sun ever shone upon. It is the right, therefore, of all white men who love government and the blessings guaranteed to them by the government of the United States, and who believe that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," to defend it even with the shedding of their own kindred blood, to put down treason and rebellion, and maintain the Constitution and the laws. With us it is different—it is different with the slaves and free people of the South—and it is equally so with us. There can be no comparison of the patriotism required to produce such a feeling in us, and that which actuates white men in the same direction. Finding myself greatly deficient in this respect, and learning that this was the one by which white men measured for us, I have chosen to make known my devotion to the government, and my willingness to serve it in any just and honorable way. But to set myself boldly in the way of any principle or theory, originating from whence it may, that might serve to decry the brethren, and lead them indiscriminately into the field, with no other motive or purpose than to serve the doubly rapacious desire of unworthy and unjust, hatefully prejudiced men against ourselves, as well as those poor, friendless men they would have us fight, and who, by a proper appreciation of the government paid to their defenceless and unhappy condition, would settle half the bill with their masters, and leave them an easy prey to the popular government, instead of being compelled by the menacing attitude of both North and South, to take sides against the former, even though they should have to settle with masters whom they well understand afterwards—in such an event, I will never, nor will a single man of the hundreds of my acquaintances, take sides with the milk-and-water policy now manifested by the leaders of the United States forces, though it is evident that they neither reflect the popular sentiment of the people, or the policy of the Administration, only so far as that policy is modulated by circumstances brought about by the long reign of Hunker Democracy, whose demagogues early sought for place and position in the army, since they could not get them by the voice of the people at the last election; but who now for a time are allowed to put in their last pleading, in behalf of their miserably deluded and tyrannical brethren of the South, the

slaveholders, whose days of glory and profit, like their own, "are dwindled to the shortest span."

In my last, I left off by introducing an analogy between our condition and that of four persons living as neighbors in the same vicinity. A, who hates me always, is a slaveholder. B, who is influenced so much by A, is the government. C, who I represented as our friend, is the liberal, true-hearted anti-slavery man of the country, who seeks by every means, to emancipate the slaves and enfranchise the already freed man. D, is the colored people, North and South; of course, we've all but one interest in this matter, at least. A and B are already in deadly combat. C has a manifest disposition to lend B a hand, for he has often expostulated with B about his allowing A so much influence and power in controlling his affairs, especially on this very subject which has created the quarrel. Of course, if they are not enough for A, D can do nothing less than come in for his share of the responsibility. In a word, if the government and the straight-out anti-slavery men of the North cannot settle satisfactorily with the slaveholders, we are ready to give them such a helping hand as will be felt by Southern chivalry to their heart's content. If the government is not willing to endorse our project till it is reduced to an extremity, it may by such a course advance our interests the more. At all events, hundreds of the noble sons of the old Keystone State are coming into the ranks of our regiments now being organized, and going through with the regular drill and school of the soldier, knowing that the day is not far distant when duty will demand efficient service at their hands, in behalf of the slave. Whether government sanctions it or not, God will.

Respectfully yours,

A. M. GREEN.