

—As we go to press, the following telegraphic dispatch reaches us:

NEW COLORED REGIMENTS FROM MASSACHUSETTS.

Boston, Monday, May 25.

The 54th Massachusetts (colored) leave Boston Thursday for Port Royal, in the steamer De Meloy.

The 55th (colored) now forming, has about 300 men, and is rapidly increasing. The Governor of Ohio has made application to Gov. Andrew to have Ohio men appointed officers in the colored regiments in proportion to the number of men furnished by that state. Advices from various sections of Ohio show that recruiting for these regiments is more successful than was anticipated.

THE 54th MASSACHUSETTS.

The little state of Massachusetts has the reputation of having a high opinion of her own services and merits, and of not being backward in letting them be known. We are not sure that she is very different from the rest of us in this particular. The American people are not of those that love to hide their light under a bushel. And, indeed, as Falstaff says, "Is this a world to hide 'virtues in?' We will not discuss the question whether or not she thinks more highly of herself than she ought to think. Only we must allow that she is the best hated state in the Union by all Rebels and Copperheads, and that she has done some things that justify her in the complacency she must feel in view of so honorable a distinction. She was the first state that was ready with men armed and equipped at the breaking out of the rebellion; and was thus the means of saving Washington from seizure at the outset, and thus disconcerted the plans of the rebel leaders, and hindered their being masters of the situation. And it was the blood of her sons that baptized anew the Nineteenth of April, 1861, at Baltimore, as one of the Red-Letter days in the Calendar of Freedom, as it did eighty-six years before at Lexington.

What she did last Monday week, the 18th instant, was perhaps not more calculated to conciliate the affection of our misguided brethren of the South and their Northern parasites, than anything in her former behavior. On that day her Governor, attended by a brilliant staff, and in the presence of a vast assemblage, presented a superb stand of colors to the regiment which we have made the subject of this article. This was nothing new in itself, as fifty-three regiments had already received their banners before going forth to battle. But it was a novel and a significant spectacle, making the ceremony and the day historical in an emphatic manner, from the strange material of which it was made up. It was an era in the history of two races—the oppressed and the oppressor—when the long-despised and down-trodden children of Africa were permitted, for the first time, to stand on the soil of a free state, in equal companionship of arms with white soldiers. It was not unfit that Massachusetts should have the honor of organizing the first black regiment raised by a state. She first abolished slavery, and has, through long efforts, placed her black citizens in every respect on a political equality with the white. Every invidious distinction, we believe, has been expunged from her statute-book, unless it be from the Militia law. And it was expunged from that, too, three or four years ago, but the repeal was vetoed by Governor Banks on the ground of its contradicting the militia law of the United States. And since then Senator Wilson has succeeded in blotting out the word "white" from that law, we will hope for ever.

It is not the less significant a fact from the circumstance that this regiment was recruited from a wide extent of country, including this state and those of the Northern states where there is the largest colored population. It shows the change that has taken place in the public mind on the subject of black soldiery, when such men as Governor Tod of Ohio authorize and encourage negro recruiting within their jurisdictions. It is not a year since the Copperhead journals spit venom at the suggestion that white men should call in the blacks to help them put down the rebellion. A very few months, we are confident, will have heard the last hiss of those reptiles, and will find the North unanimous in their admiration of the working of the new policy. When the 6th Connecticut was ordered to support the 1st Carolina (Higginson's,) they are said to have been almost ready to mutiny against the duty, and to have sworn they would kill more *diggers* than rebels before they came back. When they arrived on the ground they found the negro regiment engaged, and fighting so gallantly as to win their admiration and "conquer their prejudices," in a way Daniel Webster never dreamed of, and they marched back together, after repulsing the enemy, friends as well as fellow-soldiers. It is within the power of the new regiments to fight their way to a place in the esteem and respect of the army and the country, and from the testimony of officers, not originally friendly to the experiment, we are satisfied that they will not fail to win this great battle for their race.

On the authority of the same competent witnesses, we are assured that the 54th Massachusetts show a proficiency in drill not merely creditable, considering the shortness of the time they have been subjected to it, but absolutely excellent in itself. And, though it cannot be that in so large a body of men there should not be a proportion of bad subjects, we are informed that it is materially less than in average white regiments. In neatness, in docility, in respectful demeanor toward their superiors, they are undeniably in advance of the generality of white recruits. It is highly satisfactory to have these good accounts of these interesting troops, as from them and the regiments yet to be formed at the North must come most of the non-commissioned officers of the sable legions raising, and to be raised, among the slaves. The Northern men of color, from their better education, most of them knowing how to read and write, are obviously the stuff out of which that important portion of the service must be drawn, and thus the usefulness of these bodies of men will be infinitely greater than that of their mere numerical force. It will not be long, we are convinced, before the 54th and 55th Massachusetts will be spread through many new regiments, while their thinned ranks will be filled up from the plantations. But to secure these happy results the Government has most important duties to perform toward them. In the first place, they must be placed under the command of no general officer who does not believe in the experiment and wish its success. What would be easier than for an officer like Brigadier-General Stevenson to put a black regiment in a position in which it would be cut up or routed, and be just ten minutes too late in supporting it. He and his like everywhere would accept such a result as conclusive of the impossibility of making soldiers out of negroes. Then again, the nation will not deserve to have success, and as certainly cannot have it, without securing the lives and liberties of black prisoners as fully and absolutely as those of the whites, by the sternest threats and most rigorous enforcement of the *lex talionis*. We are happy to see it stated that the President and Secretary Stanton are alive to their responsibilities in this regard, and will not shrink from the action they demand. And we can well believe it, for the infamy of Arnold or of Judas might be envied by them if they fail in this duty. But, like parricide among the Romans, such a crime is not to be supposed a possibility. With proper treatment, we have no doubt the black troops will do us good service—much better than we deserve at their hands.