

The Rev. SELLA MARTIN (a mulatto gentleman, seven years ago a slave, now pastor of a church at Bromley-by-Bow, London), said that pro-slavery arguments were the same the world over; so people are found in England, as in America and Dahomey, to contend that the slaves are contented. If the slaves are contented, their very contentment is the strongest argument against slavery, since it reveals a dehumanization which accepts the degradation of woman from the first hours of virgin purity to the last fruitless effort of conjugal fidelity. But if they are contented, they have no right to remain in their contentment at the expense of others. As much as I admire the negro, because of his lofty, religious patience, which, groping blindly in the darkness of superstition, has nevertheless touched God's right hand of sympathy in that darkness, and been lifted up and strengthened,—as much as I love the negro, because of a fellowship of suffering with him, yet, as I occupy the position between the two races that the fly-leaf in the Bible does,—not belonging to either dispensation,—I have a right to speak for the whites too. If the slaves' contentment makes the poor whites lazy and vicious,—makes them hate labour, and hate the victim of unpaid toil;—if it makes the master cruel to his slave, overbearing to his equals, aggressive in his politics, and unjust even in religion, then he has no *right* to be contented. But who do these objectors get their testimony of the slave's contentment from? From the master. And as the master has proved himself unjust, cruel, overbearing, and impure, we have no right to receive his testimony. It is to his interest to say that the slave is contented, and under threats of cruel treatment to make the slave say to the visitor from free countries that he is contented; but as an ex-slave, I crave permission to give my testimony that the slave is not contented: 250,000 in the United States and the Canadas, before the war, and at least 200,000 escaped slaves since the war began, prove that they are not contented: this meeting proves that

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they are not contented. Compelled to choose between going with their masters in their retreat from the encroaching lines of the Union army, and coming North to the various centres where they are now congregated, they have proven their discontent in slavery by privations and daring which would have made any but a black man a hero. And there, in great numbers, he stands, amid the gigantic proportions of a war which has paralyzed labour, borne down the people with the burdens of taxation, flooded the country with a depreciated currency, and which has tasked the benevolent energies of the civilians to relieve their kindred in the army, with uplifted hands and wishful gaze appealing to England for help; appealing to the England who, by the efforts of Wilberforce, Clarkson, Buxton, Lushington, and Macaulay, built a bridge of gold for the retreating fiend of slavery, and over which the ransomed children of Africa walked into the liberty wherewith England maketh her people free. I have not time to answer a kindred argument, that the negro is inferior, nor does it matter about an argument in the presence of a crowd of witnesses like Frederick Douglass, H. H. Garnet, J. McCune Smith, C. L. Reason, J. T. Holly, and Toussaint L'Ouverture. I might ask, with Douglass, how many snakes a white man can eat?—how much virtue can he gain without example and without instruction?—how much knowledge without the power of the alphabet? A black man can be found to equal him in all these respects. But, after all, is this the result of eighteen centuries of civilization? If these negroes are inferior, according to the Divine doctrines of the Divine Spirit of our Saviour, their inferiority constitutes their strongest claim to sympathy and help. Christianity does not come to keep men down, but to lift them up. This doctrine seems to me very suspicious, for men first committed the sin of stealing the negro,

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and then invented the theory of his inferiority. To claim consideration, the process should have been reversed. But the doctrine would be as injurious to those who use it as it is to the slave, if it was carried to its logical consequence. Michael, the archangel, being superior, could enslave the other angels, Newton might be slave to one of the lesser angels, and the objector might be slave to Newton. It is said, too, by these same objectors, that the slave is lazy—will not work. Very well, let him starve. If the slave is a brute, must the white man become a fiend? But does not our secretary's statement set that matter at rest, by informing us that the escaped slaves at Hilton Head, to the number of 10,000, are at this moment supporting themselves? There is a nation of civilized coloured people in Liberia, do we hear any complaints about their idleness? and another in Hayti, who are so industrious that they are the seventh on the commercial list of America. But all these objections about the slave's contentment, inferiority, and laziness, find their root in the pride of a people who have become proud because they have been unjust. God has placed four millions of slaves in America. He made them with black faces, and His providence has allowed them to be placed on that continent. Now I leave you to decide whether the pride of a debauched people is to stand, or the creation and the providence of the Almighty.—Mr. Martin closed by paying a warm tribute to Garrison, Phillips, Douglass, and Senator Sumner.

[The resolution, on being put, was carried unanimously.]

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