

Transcription

Reception of the 54th Massachusetts

From *The Liberator* – June 26, 1863

MEMORIES OF THE 54TH PASSING THROUGH BOSTON

When the Fifty-fourth Regiment (colored) passed through Boston, recently, we noticed a touching scene “in their midst,” as the phrase is. On the way from the Common, the Regiment halted a few minutes on account of the crowd in the streets.

The men grounded arms, and were receiving the parting salutes of their kindred and friends. Suddenly three yellow women brushed by us, and pressed a farewell shake of the hand and kiss upon a sable volunteer close to us. Perhaps they were his mother, wife, and sister. Ah! He was leaving these dear friends and the ties of home, perhaps never to return. One presented to him a neat cambric handkerchief, to wipe the sweat from his brow. He turned from them as they withdrew, leaned his head upon his musket, and wept like a child. “Poor fellow!” said an Irish woman near by: “they have their feelings as well as white people!—my own husband has come home to me with the loss of an arm,—and I know how to sympathize with them!” Thus it is that a “fellow-feeling” marks the chain of sympathy through all mankind. The Negro has not only the force of the brute, when aroused, but has heart, soul and affections, just like common people! That Negro will fight none the less bravely, because of his tenderness. For always,

“The tenderest are the bravest,
The loving are most daring!”

— *Harwich Republican*.

THEN AND NOW

The Boston *Transcript* has this comment upon the reception and departure of the 54th colored regiment:—

“Since Massachusetts first began to send her brave troops into the field, no single regiment has attracted larger crowds into the streets than the 54th. The contrast between the present and a few years since could not fail to be noticed. It requires only a small effort of memory to revert to the time when the power of a city, State and country, united to force back a forlorn and almost friendless bondman to the fetters he had broken. Now a thousand men of the same race march proudly through our avenues, to fight under the protection of the State and nation, against the defenders of the

institution which has imbruted so many of their own blood, and now threatens the very existence of the government.

In view of the splendid reception of this regiment, today, in Boston, and the different treatment it would have met a few brief months ago, who shall aver that the community has not made sufficient progress, in a short time, to allow the confident belief that the full consummation of the most ardent hopes of the philanthropist will speedily be attained, in regard to a formerly despised and oppressed people?"