

### 1859. An editorial from the Anglo-African edited by Thomas Hamilton of New York

Source: Aptheker, 413-416

The wealth, the intellect, the Legislation, (State and Federal,) the pulpit, and the science of America, have concentrated on no point so heartily as in the endeavor to write down the Negro as something less than a man: yet at the very moment of the triumph of this effort, there runs through the marrow of those who make it, an unaccountable consciousness, an aching dread, that this noir faineant, this great black sluggard, is somehow endowed with forces which are felt rather than seen, and which may in "some grim revel," "Shake the pillars of the commonweal!"

And there is indeed reason for this "aching dread." The Negro is something more than mere endurance; he is a force. And when the energies which now imbrute him exhaust themselves-as they inevitably must-the force which he now expends in resistance will cause him to rise: his force can hardly be measured to-day; the opinions regarding him are excessive; his foes estimate him too low-his friends, perhaps, too high: besides, there is not a-wanting among these latter, in spite of their own good feelings, that "tribe idolatry" which regards him as "not quite us." Twenty-five years ago, in the heat of the conflict which terminated in the Emancipation Act of Great Britain, there was held an anti-slavery meeting in the City of Glasgow, at which a young black made a speech of such fashion that it "brought down the house." He was followed by the eccentric but earnest and eloquent William Anderson, a minister of the Relief denomination: Dr. Wardlaw, with silver tongue had spoken, and George Thompson had revelled in his impetuous eloquence. Rev. Mr. Anderson's subject was a minor one in the programme, a sort of side dish; yet he began, continued, and ended in one of the most extraordinary bursts of eloquence, wit and sarcasm ever heard in Dr. Wardlaw's chavel; people were carried away: at the end of the meeting a friend congratulated Mr. Anderson, and casually asked how it was that he had got off such a grand speech? "Hoch mon! " said Mr. Anderson, "d'ye think I was gaen to be beaten by a black?"

But although we cannot fairly estimate the forces of the Negro, we may approximate them. A handful of English subdued Ireland, and English rule rather than English arms have so impenetrated the Celtic mind with oppression, that the only resistance to this oppression in the middle of the

19th century culminates in Smith O'Brien, Thomas F. Meagher, and John Mitchel! Compare these with Sam Ward, Frederick Douglass, or those who fought at Christiana, or the man who suffered himself to be scourged to death in Tennessee rather than betray his associate insurrectionists.\*

The Negro under the yoke of slavery has increased, without additions made by immigration, as rapidly during the last forty years, as have the whites in the whole country, aided by an immense immigration and the increase of the immigrants; and this increase of the Negro in America, unlike that of the Irish in Ireland, is of a strong, healthy, durable stock. Now, let the European immigration diminish, and the African slave trade revive-both which events are in esse-and the next forty years will present us with the slave States containing ten millions of whites, and nearly fifteen millions of slaves; and the proportion of the blacks to the whites in the United States, which is now one-seventh, will be nearly one-half. In that event, it requires no prophet to foresee that the Underground Railroad, and the Christian Religion-the two great safety-valves for the restless and energetic among the slaves-will be utterly incompetent to put off that event which was brought about by bloodshed in Hayti, and by timely legislation in the British West Indies. ...

In addition to an expose of the condition of the blacks, this Magazine will have the aim to uphold and encourage the now depressed hopes of thinking black men, in the United States-the men who, for twenty years and more have been active in conventions, in public meetings, in societies, in the pulpit, and through the press, cheering on and laboring on to promote emancipation, enfranchisement and education; some of them in, and some of them past the prime of life, yet see, as the apparent result of their work and their sacrifices, only Fugitive Slave laws and Compromise bills, and the denial of citizenship on the part of the Federal and State Governments, and, saddest of all, such men as Seward and Preston King insulting the rights of their black constituents by voting to admit Oregon as a state with a constitution denying to black men even an entrance within its borders.