

Third. To make recruiting successful here an armed force of one regiment or more is necessary. When Major Stearns came here his agents could recruit at the posts where troops were stationed. That source of supply has been exhausted, and the garrisons of the majority of the posts are too small to warrant them in making scouts for recruits. Wherever we have been able to send a force of, say, 80 or 100 men for a few days into the country, we have always got men, and the good conduct of the men upon such scouts has left a favorable impression on the people.

Fourth. Recruits should have some assurance that their families will not suffer from the abuse of disloyal owners whom they have left to enlist. I respectfully invite attention to the point here suggested.

MILITARY EFFICIENCY OF THE TROOPS.

Of the efficiency of these troops in action we have had but few opportunities to judge.

The Fourteenth Infantry charged Wheeler's line at Dalton, Ga., handsomely upon his last raid and marched after him well.

During the present raid of Forrest the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Infantry have been in one fight to my knowledge where they behaved well, and at Lebanon during Wheeler's raid a detachment of the Fortieth U. S. Colored Infantry showed pluck.

For the appearance, drill, discipline, &c., of these regiments reference is respectfully made to the inspection reports of General Chetlain. The general sentiments of the people and those of the army with whom these regiments have been brought in contact is favorable to them. The material has been found plastic to a degree, the men all appear eager to learn and willing to do their duty, and, as a rule, the officers have been good; many have been weeded out, however, and there is still room for change for the better.

My experience in this work convinces me that these regiments can be made for many duties superior to white regiments. As guards they are remarkably faithful.

A regiment of colored troops did interior duty as guards in this town. When they were relieved by white troops the change was regretted by the officers in charge of the public stores where these men had stood sentries. For raiders in the enemy's country these colored troops will prove superior. They are good riders, have quicker eyes at night than white, and know all the byways.

CONTRABAND CAMP.

When Major Stearns came into this department there was no organized provision for contrabands. Some were collected at Decherd, some at Stevenson, and about every army depot a crowd of blacks were congregated. The policy of the Governor and of army officers was to repress their coming into our lines. As we enlisted the able-bodied men, the women and children required care, and contrabands came upon our hands. Major Stearns procured a deserted chapel a mile from the city, into which he put a few women and children, soldiers' families, for whom no other provisions could be made. Rations were drawn for them, and as fast as possible they were hired out. This was a mere makeshift.

Telegraphic orders from the Secretary of the War Department upon the 19th of December, 1863, directed Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas to