

**Proceedings of the National convention of colored men, held in the city of Syracuse, N.Y., October 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1864; with the bill of wrongs and rights, and the address to the American people.**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE National Convention of Colored Men, HELD IN THE CITY OF SYRACUSE, N. Y., OCTOBER 4, 5, 6, AND 7, 1864; WITH THE BILL OF WRONGS AND RIGHTS, AND THE ADDRESS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

PRINTED FOR AND BY ORDER OF THE CONVENTION.

1864.

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*To the Members of the National Convention.*

Gentlemen, —

The undersigned, Committee of Publication, would respectfully submit the result of their labors in collecting, and, so far as they could, arranging, the papers containing the proceedings of the Convention. We found the Secretary's report incomplete, and some important papers were missing. We have supplied several omissions from a private report of one of the members, and have endeavored to give them to you as correct as we could make them.

Very respectfully and truly, Your obedient servants,

JOHN S. ROCK,

GEORGE L. RUFFIN,

WM. HOWARD DAY,

*Committee on Publication.*

Boston, Nov. 1, 1864.

Press of Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 3 Cornhill, Boston.

**NATIONAL CONVENTION OF COLORED MEN, HELD IN THE CITY OF SYRACUSE, N. Y., October 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, 1864.**

The National Convention of Colored Men assembled in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, in Syracuse, N. Y., October 4, 1864, at 7 o'clock, P. M. Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, of Washington, D. C., called the Convention to order, and read the call. John M. Langston, Esq., of Oberlin, O., was chosen temporary Chairman; and Wm. Howard Day, of New Jersey, and St. George R. Taylor, of Pennsylvania, Secretaries.

The Convention then united in singing, "Blow ye the trumpet, blow;" after which, Rev. Mr. Garnet offered up a fervent and eloquent prayer.

On motion, the Chairman appointed a Committee on Credentials, consisting of—

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, *of New York;*

PETER H. CLARK, *of Ohio;*

WILLIAM W. BROWN, *of Massachusetts.*

A motion was made to appoint a committee of one from each State, to nominate permanent officers for the Convention.

Mr. Stephen Myers, of Albany, moved, as a substitute, that the Convention proceed to elect its officers *vivâ voce*.

Rev. Elisha Weaver, of Philadelphia, moved that the original motion and the substitute lie upon the table until the Committee on Credentials made their report. Carried.

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Rev. Mr. Garnet was now called upon, and addressed the Convention. He eloquently discussed the propriety and necessity for holding conventions, and the duty of this Convention to strengthen the

hands of the soldier, and to use its influence towards promoting education and temperance. The address was received with favor, and was frequently applauded.

The Committee on Credentials reported the names of delegates whose seats were not contested. The full list, as corrected, is as follows:—

**MAINE.**

SAMUEL J. MURRAY, *Portland.*

WILLIAM W. RUBY, “

JAMES F. MURRAY, *Bangor.*

**MASSACHUSETTS.**

JOHN S. ROCK, *Boston.*

GEORGE L. RUFFIN, “

JOHN B. SMITH, “

WM. W. BROWN, *Cambridgeport.*

EBENEZER HEMMENWAY, *Worcester.*

SAMUEL HARRISON, *Pittsfield.*

**RHODE ISLAND.**

GEO. T. DOWNING, *Newport.*

JAS. JEFFERSON, *Providence.*

**CONNECTICUT.**

F. L. CORDOZO, *Hartford*.

PETER H. NOTT, “

MINOR MARS, “

EDW. C. FREEMAN, “

WM. F. JOHNSON, *Bridgeport*.

ABRAM J. MORRISON, *New Millford*.

R. J. COWES, *New Haven*.

## **NEW YORK.**

ROBT. HAMILTON, *N. Y. City*.

SINGLETON T. JONES, “

J. W. C. PENNINGTON, “

P. B. RANDOLPH, “

HENRY H. GARNET, *N. Y. City*.

J. SELLA MARTIN, *Brooklyn*.

R. H. CAIN, “

LEWIS H. PUTNAM, “

PETER H. WILLIAMS (honorary), *Brooklyn*.

PETER W. RAY, *Brooklyn*.

WILLIAM H. JOHNSON, *Albany*.

GEORGE W. JOHNSON, “

STEPHEN MYERS, “

JAMES C. MATTHEWS, “

—ELKINS (honorary), “

ROBERT JACKSON, “

JOHN CUTLER, “

H. W. JOHNSON, *Canandaigua*.

ANDREW B. SLATER, “

W. W. DENIKE (honorary), *Utica*.

WILLIAM GREY, “

F. P. LAPIERRE, “

F. C. LIPPINS, “

PETER FREEMAN, “

SAMUEL DOVE, “

JAMES H. WASHINGTON, “

FRANCIS J. PECK, *Buffalo*.

GEORGE WEIR, “

GEORGE DOVER, “

SAMUEL MURRAY, “

PEYTON HARRIS (honorary), *Buffalo*.

FRED'K DOUGLASS, *Rochester*.

JAMES TAYLOR, "

THOMAS JAMES, "

WILLIAM H. BRUCE, "

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J. W. LOGUEN, *Syracuse*.

W. H. BROWN, "

T. A. KEEN, "

ISAAC DEYO, *Poughkeepsie*.

A. BOLDEN, "

WILLIAM VIRGINIA, *Rome*.

THOMAS JOHNSON, "

JAMES SCHEMEOHORN, *Binghampton*.

W. H. DECKER, *Newburg*.

WALTER K. MOWER, *Amenia*.

SAMUEL J. HOLLINSWORTH, *Owego*.

THOMAS H. THOMAS, *Ithaca*.

WILLIAM RICH, *Troy*.

JACOB THOMAS, "

C. W. ROBINSON, *Waterville*.

A. J. BARRIER, *Brockport*.

NORRIS LEE, *Watertown*.

ENOCH MOORE, *Little Falls.*

## **NEW JERSEY.**

WM. HOWARD DAY, *Newark.*

EDWIN H. FREEMAN, “

THOMAS G. GOULD, *Trenton.*

THOMAS H. COOPER, “

D. P. SEATON, *Morristown.*

## **PENNSYLVANIA.**

E. D. BASSET, *Philadelphia.*

J. C. GIBBS, “

JOHN B. REEVE, “

ELISHA WEAVER, “

THOMAS J. BOWERS, “

ALFRED M. GREEN, “

H. J. BROWN, “

GEORGE W. GOINES, “

JOHN W. PAGE, “

P. N. JUDAH, “

A. BRYAN, “

D. D. TURNER, “  
JOHN W. SIMPSON, “  
THEO. D. MILLER, “  
JOSEPH C. BUSTILL, “  
CHARLES B. COLLY, “  
OCTAVIUS V. CATTO, “  
JAMES NEEDHAM, *Philadelphia*.  
JACOB C. WHITE, “  
ST. GEO. R. TAYLOR, “  
JAMES H. WILSON, “  
JAN. M'CRUMMELL, “  
SAMUEL MORRIS, *Frankfort*.  
WILLIAM NESBIT, *Altoona*.  
DANIEL WILLIAMS, *Hollidaysburg*.  
O. C. HUGHES, *Harrisburg*.  
JOSEPH A. NELSON, “  
GEO. B. VASHON, *Pittsburg*.  
JOHN PECK, “  
B. W. ARNETT, *Brownsville*.  
P. HOUSTON MURRAY, *Reading*.



J. J. WRIGHT, *Montrose*.

WILLIAM DOUGLASS (honorary), *Corrie*.

JAMES DAVENGER, *Pittston*.

GEORGE BUTLER, "

SOLOMON COOPER, *Towanda*.

### **VIRGINIA.**

R. D. BECKLEY, *Alexandria*.

SAMPSON WHITE, "

JAS. P. MORRISON, *Portsmouth*.

E. G. CORPREW, "

WILLIAM KEELING, *Norfolk*.

### **NORTH CAROLINA.**

A. H. GALLOWAY, *Newbern*.

SAMUEL J. WILLIAMS, *Roanoke Island*.

### **FLORIDA.**

JAS. M. SCOTTRON, *Jacksonville*.

### **LOUISIANA.**

JAMES H. INGRAHAM, *New Orleans*.

SAMUEL SCOTT (honorary), *N. Orleans.*

## **OHIO.**

PETER H. CLARK, *Cincinnati.*

JOHN P. SAMPSON, “

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WM. P. NEWMAN, *Cincinnati.*

JOHN MALVIN, *Cleveland.*

J. A. DAVIS, “

JOHN M. LANGSTON, *Oberlin.*

HENRY LEE, “

J. M'C. SIMPSON, *Zanesville.*

G. W. BRYANT, *Xenia.*

B. K. SAMPSON, *Springfield.*

## **MICHIGAN.**

H. P. HARRIS, *Adrian.*

HENRY F. BUTLER, “

JOHN D. RICHARDS, *Detroit.*

GEORGE H. PARKER, “

## **ILLINOIS.**

J. HOUSTON, *Springfield.*

**MISSISSIPPI.**

CHARLES P. HEAD, *Vicksburg*

**TENNESSEE.**

PETER LOWREY, *Nashville.*

ABRAHAM SMITH, “

RANSOM HARRIS, “

MORRIS HENDERSON, *Memphis.*

HORATIO N. RANKIN, “

**MISSOURI.**

PRESTON G. WELLS, *St. Louis.*

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.**

WILLIAM WILSON, *Washington.*

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, moved that the delegates whose seats are contested be not allowed to participate in the proceedings of the Convention, until the Committee on Credentials report them as entitled to full membership.—Agreed to.

On motion, W. H. Decker, from Newburg, New York, was received as a member.

Rev. H. H. Garnet moved that Mr. William Douglass, of Pennsylvania, who had lately invented a battery, which would fire six thousand times in a minute, be made an Honorary Member.—Carried with applause.

On motion of Rev. H. H. Garnet, Mr. Peyton Harris, of Buffalo, New York, was, after discussion, made an Honorary Member.

Mr. Lewis H. Putnam moved that the report of the Committee on Credentials stand as the roll of the Convention.—Agreed to.

The Committee on Credentials were, on motion, continued.

Moved by Professor E. D. Bassett, of Pennsylvania, that the delegation from each State now proceed to select one from its number; the persons so selected to constitute a Committee to nominate permanent officers for the Convention.

Dr. Randolph, of New York, moved as an amendment, that the nomination and election of permanent officers be in open Convention.

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The amendment was sustained by Stephen Myers, and Wm. H. Johnson, of New York, and opposed by E. Weaver, of Pennsylvania.

Robert Hamilton, of New York, moved to amend the amendment, so as to elect by ballot.

Mr. Downing, of Rhode Island, opposed Mr. Hamilton's amendment. He thought that the appointment of a Nominating Committee would relieve the matter of all difficulty.

The Convention then negatived both amendments, and adopted the original motion made by Professor Bassett.

Dr. P. W. Ray, of New York, moved that the Convention take a recess of five minutes, to enable the delegations to agree upon their representatives.—Carried.

The following persons were then named members of the Committee upon Permanent Organization:

—

*Maine* SAMUEL J. MURRAY,

*Massachusetts* GEORGE L RUFFIN,  
*Rhode Island* GEORGE T. DOWNING,  
*Connecticut* PETER H. NOTT,  
*New York* ROBERT HAMILTON,  
*New Jersey* WILLIAM HOWARD DAY,  
*Pennsylvania* J. C. GIBBS,  
*Virginia* WILLIAM KEELING,  
*North Carolina* A. H. GALLOWAY,  
*Mississippi* CHARLES P. HEAD,  
*Louisiana* JAMES H. INGRAHAM,  
*Tennessee* PETER LOWREY,  
*Florida* JAMES M. SCOTTRON,  
*Missouri* P. G. WELLS,  
*Ohio* PETER H. CLARK,  
*Michigan* H. P. HARRIS.

The Committee on Permanent Organization retired, and Mr. Frederick Douglass was called upon to address the Convention. Mr. Douglass came forward and addressed the Convention at length, making one of his most able and eloquent speeches, which was frequently applauded.

The Nominating Committee, through their Chairman, Mr. Robert Hamilton, unanimously reported the following: 8

**For President:**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, *of New York.*

**Vice-Presidents:**

W. W. RUBY, *Maine.*

JOHN B. SMITH, *Massachusetts.*

JAMES JEFFERSON, *Rhode Island.*

ABRAHAM J. MORRISON, *Connecticut.*

WILLIAM RICH, *New York.*

S. G. GOULD, *New Jersey.*

JOHN B. REEVE, *Pennsylvania.*

WILLIAM KEELING, *Virginia.*

ABRAM H. GALLOWAY, *North Carolina.*

CHARLES P. HEAD, *Mississippi.*

JAMES H. INGRAHAM, *Louisiana.*

PETER LOWREY, *Tennessee.*

JAMES M. SCOTTRON, *Florida.*

PRESTON G. WELLS, *Missouri.*

JOHN MALVIN, *Ohio.*

H. P. HARRIS, *Michigan.*

**Secretaries:**

EBENEZER D. BASSETT, *Pennsylvania*.

ABRAM SMITH, *Tennessee*.

JOHN P. SAMPSON, *Ohio*.

ROBERT HAMILTON, *New York*.

EDWIN C. FREEMAN, *Conn*.

The report of the Committee was received, the name of Frederick Douglass being greeted with great applause.

The report of the Committee was then adopted as a whole.

The temporary Chairman then conducted the President elect to the chair, and introduced him to the Convention. Mr. Douglass, upon taking the chair, said:—

“ Gentlemen, —I thank you very sincerely for the honor you have conferred upon me, by selecting me from among your number to preside over the deliberations of this Convention. While I am grateful for the position you have been pleased to assign me,—I say it without the least affectation, —I accept it with the utmost diffidence, and distrust of my ability. There are, at least, a score of gentlemen present who could preside better than I can. If you have chosen me because of any belief in my ability to conduct the proceedings of this Convention with special decorum and dignity, I fear you have made a mistake, which will become more and more apparent during the progress of the Convention; but if, as I suppose is the case, you have called me to this position as a mark of your consideration for my labors in our common cause, I am vain enough to admit that the compliment is not wholly undeserved; and, as such, I am grateful for it. For the order and decorum which may prevail here, gentlemen, I look to you. With your assistance and support we shall have harmony, which is essential to our deliberations. The cause which we come here to promote is sacred. Nowhere, in the ‘wide, wide world,’ can men be found coupled with a cause of greater dignity and importance than that which brings us here. We are here to promote the freedom, progress, elevation, and perfect enfranchisement, of the entire colored people of the United States; to show that, though slaves, we are not contented slaves, but that, like all other progressive races of men, we are resolved to advance in the scale of knowledge, worth, and civilization, and claim our rights as men among men. In doing this, we shall give offence to none but the mean and sordid haters of

our race; while we shall command the sympathy and encouragement of all men who love impartial freedom, and the welfare of the human race.”

It was moved by Mr. Johnson, of Albany, N. Y., that the thanks of this Convention be hereby tendered to J. Mercer Langston, of Ohio, temporary Chairman; to Wm. Howard Day, of New Jersey; and St. George R. Taylor, of Pennsylvania, Secretaries,—for the acceptable services they have rendered the Convention.

The motion was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Hamilton, of New York, moved that the thanks of this Convention be hereby tendered the officers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, for their kindness in permitting the use of the Church for the deliberations of the Convention. Adopted, with applause.

The Convention, on motion, adjourned to meet in Wieting Hall, Wednesday morning, Oct. 5, at 9 o'clock.

## **SECOND DAY.**

### **Morning Session.**

Wednesday Morning, 9 o'clock.

The Convention met in Wieting Hall, pursuant to adjournment; the President in the chair. 2

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Prayer was offered by Rev. William P. Newman, of Cincinnati, O.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

On motion of Mr. Stephen Myers, of Albany, Mr. James F. Murray, of Bangor, Maine, and Mr. Samuel Scott, of New Orleans, La., were elected honorary members.

On motion of Rev. Mr. James, Mr. Bruce, of Rochester, N. Y., was elected to fill the vacancy in the Committee upon Credentials, caused by the election of Mr. Douglass as President of the Convention.



Mr. Davenger, of Pennsylvania, moved that the President appoint one from each delegation, to constitute a Business Committee.

Mr. Basset, of Philadelphia, moved, as an amendment, that the President appoint one or more from each delegation; and that said Committee be allowed to choose from its members its own chairman.

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, moved that this motion be laid upon the table; which, after discussion, was rejected.

Mr. Lee, of Ohio, moved, as an amendment, that each delegation appoint its member of that Committee. Lost.

After considerable discussion, the original amendment prevailed; and the motion, as amended, was adopted.

Mr. Clark, of Ohio, moved that a Committee of five be appointed by the chair, to report a schedule of rules for the government of the Convention. Carried.

Mr. Clark, of Ohio, moved that the chair appoint a Committee upon Finance. Carried.

Mr. Brown, of Massachusetts, moved that all business must come before the Convention through the Business Committee. Carried.

The President appointed the following-named gentlemen as a Business Committee:—

H. H. GARNET, *District of Columbia*.

EBENEZER V. BASSETT, *Pennsylvania*.

J. C. GIBBS, *Pennsylvania*.

PETER H. CLARK, *Ohio*.

J. M. LANGSTON, "

JOHN S. ROCK, *Massachusetts*.

GEORGE L. RUFFIN, *Massachusetts*.

GEORGE T. DOWNING, *Rhode Island.*

WM. H. JOHNSON, *New York.*

P. B. RANDOLPH, “

J. SELLA MARTIN, “

W. H. DECKER, “

J. H. INGRAHAM, *Louisiana.*

D. P. SEATON, *New Jersey.*

RANSOM HARRIS, *Tennessee.*

MORRIS HENDERSON, *Tennessee.*

CHARLES P. HEAD, *Mississippi.*

SAMUEL M. SCOTTRON, *Florida.*

E. G. CORPREW, *Virginia.*

P. G. WELLS, *Missouri.*

A. H. GALLOWAY, *North Carolina.*

J. D. RICHARDS, *Michigan.*

F. L. CORDOZA, *Connecticut.*

J. HOUSTON, *Illinois.*

S. J. MURRAY, *Maine.*

**Committee on Rules:**

PETER W. RAY, M. D.

W. H. JOHNSON.

ALFRED M. GREEN.

Prof. G. B. VASHON,

WILLIAM NESBITT.

**Committee on Finance:**

ROBERT HAMILTON.

J. W. LOGUEN.

EBENEZER HEMMENWAY.

GEORGE B. VASHON.

H. H. BRUCE.

Mr. J. M. Langston, of Ohio, moved that we set aside the evenings of the Convention for public speaking. Carried.

The Chair appointed, as Committee upon Public Speaking, Messrs. J. M. Langston, James Jefferson, and John Malvin. Mr. Langston declined; and P. B. Randolph, of New York, was substituted.

Mr. Langston, of Ohio, moved that Rev. Mr. Bryant, of Ohio, act as Chaplain of the Convention. Carried.

Mr. Bassett asked to be excused from acting as Secretary. The Convention at first refused, but finally excused him; and O. C. Hughes was elected to fill the vacancy.

Mr. Frederick Douglass was requested to entertain the Convention during the absence of the Business Committee. He declined; and introduced Mr. William Wells Brown, of Massachusetts, who addressed the Convention at length.

After which, Messrs. B. K. Sampson, of Ohio, Mr. Wright, of New York, and others, addressed the Convention

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The Committee on Public Speaking reported F. Douglass, J. M. Langston, and J. C. Gibbs, as speakers for Wednesday evening.

The Committee on Rules reported a set of rules for the government of the Convention; which were adopted.

Messrs. J. W. Loguen, W. W. Brown, and James Jefferson, were appointed a Committee to investigate the case of three destitute children brought before the Convention.

On motion of Mr. Stephen Myers, of New York, Mr. S. J. Murray was elected an honorary member of the Convention.

Mr. Murray asked the Convention to replace, by contribution, the cane taken from Rev. Mr. Garnet by some rowdies in Syracuse. The motion was agreed to; and over forty dollars were collected for this purpose.

The Convention then adjourned.

### **Afternoon Session.**

At two o'clock, the Convention was called to order by the President; Rev. G. W. Bryant addressing the Throne of Grace.

A motion was made by Mr. Myers, of New York, to admit W. W. De Nike, of Utica, N. Y.; Dr. Elkins, of Albany, N. Y.; and Henry Moore,—to honorary membership in this Convention. Adopted.

On motion, H. H. Garnet and Enoch Moore were appointed a Committee to borrow the battle-flag of the First Louisiana Colored Troops, to suspend across the platform.

The Business Committee reported Resolution No. 1 (see Appendix, page 33), relating to the petition to the President of the United States in reference to colored soldiers.

This resolution was ably discussed by Mr. Richards, of Michigan; Mr. Garnet, of New York; Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania; and Mr. Newman, of Ohio.

At this juncture, the Committee which was appointed to borrow the flag came in, and desired to report.

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Dr. J. B. Smith, of Massachusetts, made a motion to lay the pending resolution upon the table until the Committee made its report. Carried.

The beautiful flag was then presented by Rev. Mr. Garnet. He alluded to Capt. Ingraham, who led the attack at Port Hudson when the brave Cailloux fell. Capt. Ingraham then gave a feeling narrative of the events connected with the flag. His remarks were greeted with great applause. The whole audience rose, and united in giving three hearty cheers for Capt. Ingraham, the brave men who were with him, and the battle-flag which they bore.

The Finance Committee then proceeded to collect two dollars, being the amount which had been levied upon each delegate by the Convention, to enable it to defray its expenses.

The Convention adjourned.

Wednesday Evening, 7 O'clock.

The Convention assembled, the President in the chair. The audience joined in singing "The John Brown Song."

The Business Committee, through their chairman, reported a Declaration of Wrongs and Rights, for which see Appendix, page 41.

### SPEECHES.

As the evening, by the vote of the Convention, was to be devoted to speeches, a large assemblage was present. The President, Frederick Douglass, said that his name had been mentioned as one of the speakers of the evening; but he did not intend to detain the audience long. He said that there were younger men behind him upon the platform, who had come up in this time of whirlwind and storm, and who would very naturally give them thunder.

Mr. Douglass first answered the question, Why need we meet in a National Convention? He showed its necessity from the state of feeling in the country toward the colored man; to answer the question,

as we pass to and from this hall, by the men on the streets of Syracuse, "Where are the d—d niggers going?"

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He recapitulated the acts passed by the Congress of the nation favorable to the colored people of the country, and rendered a tribute of praise to the parties instrumental in securing them; but he wanted, at the same time, to have the colored people of the country look the facts of the case in the face, and to consider the dangers which threaten them even now. The tardiness of justice awarded was then forcibly dwelt upon, and the late speech of Mr. Secretary Seward submitted to a pointed review in brief, so far as it intimates that if peace-by any means be secured the status of the colored people should remain as it is to-day. Mr. Douglass was not unmindful of the hopeful side of the question, but felt that we were safest when we knew our danger.

The President then introduced Rev. J. Sella Martin, of New York. Mr. Martin began by referring to the principles which could be seen underlying the present contest in this land, and especially to the hand of Providence in behalf of the colored man. God had interfered mercifully for the oppressed, and had offset the nation's acts against the black man by meeting them at every point. When the war began, the colored man was employed only to dig ditches. The colored man wrought there, and wrought worthily; but the nation was not prepared to advance him to any point beyond that, until, in the order of Providence, there was removed from command the great ditch-digger of the nineteenth century. So from one point to another had the colored people, in the order of Providence, passed on and up to their proud position today.

Mr. Martin was hopeful in God and in the nation, and looked forward to see liberty and enfranchisement blessing the whole people. The speech was compact, earnest, eloquent; and, like Mr. Douglass's, well received.

The President said, as the audience were now in such good humor, he proposed that they keep so until they should be visited by the Finance Committee, after which they would be addressed by a young colored lady. He said, "You have your Anna Dickinsons; and we have ours. We wish to meet you at every point."

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While the financial visit was pending, a song was called for, and sung finely by Mr. Robert Hamilton. The President then introduced Miss Edmonia Highgate, an accomplished young lady of Syracuse. Miss Highgate urged the Convention to trust in God and press on, and not abate one jot or tittle until the glorious day of jubilee shall come.

Mr. J. Mercer Langston, Esq., of Ohio, was the next speaker. He began by saying that he was a believer in the Declaration of American Independence; and proceeded to show that all people in the land, white and colored, were slaves to the oligarchy which inaugurated the present rebellion; and that the effort we are making to secure rights for the colored men was also one to secure the recognition of the rights of the white men of the country. Mr. Langston referred at length to Attorney-General Bates's opinion as to the citizenship of colored men, and claimed that that was a complete answer to the arguments and cavils against us.

As a voter in Ohio, under the law as construed, which enables men to vote who are more white than black, he had supported the Republican party, and he expected to do it again.

He ascribed the good done, however forced, to that party; and he meant to vote with and for them.

Mr. Langston's speech had many good points, all worthy of consideration. The argument to our opponents was full and convincing, and the speech was frequently interrupted with hearty applause.

Rev. J. C. Gibbs, of Pennsylvania, was called for by the President as one of the appointees for the evening; but he declined to speak.

The President then called upon Rev. Henry Highland Garnet; but, at that late hour, he also declined.

A motion was then made that Rev. Mr. Garnet be appointed the first speaker for the following (Thursday) evening, which motion was unanimously adopted.

The President then referred briefly to the position taken by the preceding speakers, and closed by calling attention to the sessions of the Convention. After the singing of the "Battlecry of Freedom," in which all joined, the Convention adjourned.

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### **THIRD DAY.**

#### **Morning Session.**

Thursday morning, Oct. 6.

The Convention met pursuant to adjournment; the President in the chair.

The minutes of the morning, afternoon, and evening sessions of Wednesday were read, corrected, and approved.

Mr. A. M. Green, of Pennsylvania, offered the following:—

*Resolved*, That there be a committee appointed on the general state of the country, and on military affairs, consisting of one member from each State; and that so much of the report of the Business Committee as relates to military affairs, together with the Declaration of Sentiments, read at a previous session, be referred to said committee.

Dr. J. B. Smith, of Massachusetts, moved to proceed with the consideration of the resolution reported by the Business Committee in the afternoon session of Wednesday. The President then ruled, that, as the Convention adjourned while the resolution of the Business Committee was under discussion, it would necessarily come up as unfinished business.

Mr. Green stated that it was his intention to include that resolution, and refer all such matters to a special committee.

The President then ruled Mr. Green's motion in order.

Mr. Harrison, of Massachusetts, and Mr. Garnet, of New York, opposed the resolution; and Mr. Cain, of New York, supported it. After considerable discussion, on motion of Dr. Randolph, of New York, it was laid on the table. The previous question was ordered, and the resolution presented by the Business Committee was adopted.

Mr. Garnet moved to reconsider this vote; which, after some discussion, was carried.

Mr. Garnet then moved to amend the resolution by directing it to Congress rather than to the President of the United States; which amendment was adopted.

The resolution, as amended, was then adopted.

The Bill of Wrongs and Rights was then unanimously adopted.

The Business Committee, through their chairman, reported 17 an Address to the People of the United States; which was read and received. [See Appendix, page 45.]

Mr. A. M. Green offered the following:—



*Resolved*, That the Address just read be received with the unanimous indorsement of the Convention, and published separately.

Rev. H. H. Garnet moved to amend, by ordering it to be published in the minutes.

Mr. D. D. Turner, of Pennsylvania, moved to adopt the Address; and to have printed, for general circulation, ten thousand copies. Carried.

The chairman of the Business Committee reported a plan of organization for an Equal-Rights League. [See Appendix, page 36.]

Mr. Putnam, of New York, moved to receive the report, and make it the special order for the afternoon session. Agreed to.

The Business Committee reported Resolutions 5, 6, and 7; which were read and adopted. The Convention then adjourned.

### **Afternoon Session.**

The Convention met at half-past 2 o'clock, the President in the chair. Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Thomas.

The minutes of the previous session were read and approved.

Mr. Peter H. Clark, of Ohio, moved that the Finance Committee now make a report. The motion was adopted, and the committee proceeded to report by calling the roll of more than one hundred and sixty names; most of whom had responded to the call to pay their assessment towards defraying the expenses of the Convention.

On motion of Mr. Hamilton, of New York, Mr. P. H. Williams, of Brooklyn, N. Y., was received as an honorary member.

A motion was made that the Plan in regard to the Equal-Rights League be considered section by section; which motion was adopted. 8

The plan was then taken up, and fully discussed by Messrs. P. H. Clark, H. H. Garnet, L. H. Putnam, W. H. Johnson, William F. Murray, and D. D. Turner,—amended, and adopted as it stands.

It was moved by Mr. Johnson, of Albany, N. Y., that the first blank in the constitution of the National Equal-Rights League be filled by inserting "Philadelphia."

Rev. William P. Newman proposed the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, and argued that the meeting should be held more towards the South and South-west.

Cincinnati was also urged by Mr. J. P. Sampson, of Ohio.

Mr. Stephen Myers, of Albany, N. Y., suggested that Cleveland, O., had the best claim as a central place, and earnestly urged that it be the location for the bureau.

That proposition was seconded by Mr. J. M. Langston, of Ohio; who advocated it on the ground that Cleveland would be central, and that the association would there have the full sympathy of the white as well as the colored portion of the population.

Mr. D. D. Turner, of Pennsylvania, proposed Philadelphia as the proper place for the bureau. Mr. Turner contended that Philadelphia has a larger number of people of color than any other city, and thought that the thrift and noted moral worth of its people ought to have earned for them some consideration.

Prof. Bassett, of Pennsylvania, supported the proposition to establish the bureau in Philadelphia.

The hour of adjournment, according to the rules, having arrived, the time was, on motion, extended twenty minutes; and Rev. J. Sella Martin obtained the floor. Mr. Martin contended that we needed to establish the bureau near the freedmen, and urged Philadelphia as the best place for it.

After a separate vote on each place named for the permanent bureau of the League, Cleveland, O., was declared to be the location.

On motion of Mr. J. M. Langston, the time of the annual meeting proposed and adopted was the third Tuesday of September, at 10 o'clock. A. M.

The Convention then adjourned to meet at half-past 6 o'clock, P. M.

## Evening Session.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment; the President in the chair. Prayer was offered by the Rev. W. P. Newman, of Ohio.

A motion was made, that the case of the destitute children be referred to the Finance Committee, with instructions to make arrangements for relieving their present wants.

Rev. Elisha Weaver, of Pennsylvania, moved to reconsider the vote locating the Bureau of the League at Cleveland, and that Philadelphia be substituted.

After some discussion, Mr. Weaver's motion prevailed.

Resolution 8th, returning thanks to the President, Cabinet, and others, was then unanimously adopted.

Resolution 9th, appointing a Committee upon Publication, consisting of John S. Rock and George L. Ruffin, of Boston, and William Howard Day, of New Jersey, was adopted.

A motion was made by Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, that Mr. J. M. Langston, of Ohio, be made President of the National Equal-Rights League.

Mr. Robert Hamilton, of New York, offered the name of Rev. Henry Highland Garnet.

A spirited discussion ensued. When the vote was about to be taken, Mr. P. H. Clark, of Ohio, offered an amendment, that the election of officers for the National League be referred to a committee, and that said committee be appointed by the Chair. Adopted.

A motion was then made, that, when the Convention adjourn, it adjourn to meet Friday morning, at 9 o'clock.

A call was then made for the speakers of the evening.

Mr. Douglass introduced Rev. H. H. Garnet as the first speaker.

Mr. Garnet said he had been asked that night to define his position; but he felt that such a request of him, at this late day in his career, was exceedingly humiliating. There had been a strong disposition to throw him on the shelf, on account of his connection with the African Civilization Society. He had

acted in accordance with his convictions. He believed in a "Negro nationality," and referred to the brave deeds of 20 the colored soldiers, and the effect their brave conduct had produced upon the public mind. The Convention had a right to do as it pleased; but, if taken to the stake, he would utter his honest convictions.

Mr. Garnet drew a picture of the shadows which fell upon New-York city in July, 1863, where demoniac hate culminated in that memorable mob. He told us how one man was hung upon a tree; and that then a demon in human form, taking a sharp knife, cut out pieces of the quivering flesh, and offered it to the greedy, blood-thirsty mob, saying, "Who wants some nigger meat?" and then the reply, "I!" "I!" "I!" as if they were scrambling for pieces of gold.

Mr. Garnet referred to the nationality of those composing that mob, and said he could not tell how it was that men crossing the ocean only should change as much as they. He had travelled from Belfast to Cork, and from Dublin to the Giant's Causeway, and the treatment he received was uniformly that of kindness. He had stood in public beside the great O'Connell; and we know what his hatred of oppression was. He attributed the change in the Irish people to the debasing influence of unprincipled American politicians. The name of O'Connell was received with great applause. Mr. Garnet was heartily cheered during his speech.

The Finance Committee then took up a collection for the purposes of the Convention.

During this visit of the Finance Committee, Mr. Robert Hamilton was detailed, at the call of the audience, to sing a stirring song.

The President then introduced Dr. P. B. Randolph, of New York, as the next speaker.

Dr. Randolph opened by saying that history constantly repeated itself; that an All-Wise Providence dictated the paths which men and nations must pursue; and, whenever they wilfully forsook those paths, they were certain to be brought back, sooner or later, by the resistless right hand of the Eternal God. The overruling Father brought out the sons of Abraham from Egyptian bondage three thousand years ago, and to-day he leads us—the negro race—with a strong arm from out of the swamps of slavery. He led the Israelite's 21 through the Red Sea, over sandy wastes, into the land of promise and plenty,—glorious Canaan; and so now he is leading us, and with us this nation, through the Red Sea of human blood, towards the glorious highlands of Justice and Freedom. [Applause.] In the olden time, God passed in wrath over Egypt's hoary strand, and smote the first-born of the oppressor with quick and sudden death; and lo! where is the house in this land, whether of the black man or the white, whose lintels and door-posts bear not the red sign? which have not been smitten with the splash of human gore?

And yet his paths are plain. Let the nations take warning! God never sleeps! Wherefore let us all take heart. He fights our battles; and, where he fights, he wins. Wagner, Hudson, Petersburg, and all the other battles of this war, have not been fought in vain; for the dead heroes of those and other bloody fields are the seeds of mighty harvests of human goodness and greatness, yet to be reaped by the nations and the world, and by Afric's sable descendants on the soil of this, our native land. Be of good cheer! Behold the starry flag above our heads! What is it? It is the pledge of Heaven, that we are coming up from the long dark night of sorrow towards the morning's dawn: it is the rainbow of eternal hope, set in our heaven, telling us that we shall never again be drowned in our own salt tears, forced up from our very souls' great depths by the worshippers of Moloch,—bloody-handed Mammon: it is a guaranty, by and from the God of heaven, that we, the mourners, may and shall be happy yet. My very soul leaps onward a full century; and its vision falls on fertile fields, with no slave-driver there, no hearts crushed by fierce oppression, no more heads bowed down. Ay! my soul listens already to the glad prelude of a song of triumph welling up from myriad hearts, and swelling into a pæan that fills the vast concave of heaven itself with the deep-toned melodies of an universal jubilee. [Great applause.]

The body I now address is to be not only an historical one; but if we do our duty, as we will, the most important in its results and effects, not only upon us here banded together in the firm concord of brotherhood, but to the nations of the 22 world and the ages yet to come. [Cheers.] Here we are met, not to hear each other talk, not to mourn over the terrible shadows of the past; but we are here to prove our right to manhood and justice, and to maintain these rights, not by force of mere appeal, not by loud threats, not by battle-axe and sabre, but by the divine right of brains, of will, of true patriotism, of manhood, of womanhood, of all that is great and noble and worth striving for in human character. We are here to ring the bells at the door of the world; proclaiming to the nations, to the white man in his palace, the slave in his hut, kings on their thrones, and to the whole broad universe, that WE ARE COMING UP! [Applause.] Yes: we are, at last; and going up to *stay*. He loveth and chasteneth: but he also saves; but saves those first who help themselves. Sheer folly to expect to be raised to a coveted position without self-endeavor. There are two great principles in operation in this world. One is that of progression; the other, that of development: one is the body of success; the other is its soul: the one makes us scholars merely; and the other makes us MEN,—and *that*, and that only, is the pearl for which we are seeking. Progress means acquisition of knowledge; and it is very good, if well applied: and yet a man may have a hundred libraries by heart; he may be master of a hundred sciences; a walking encyclopædia,—and yet be a worthless drone in the world. It is not the thought-gatherer who makes his mark in the world; but it is the thought-producer who is the man of mark and value. Development means persistent culture of our latent powers; and we need it. Slavery and ignorance, liberty and light! It is the mind, not the dollars, that makes the man. Here the orator turned toward the blood-stained flag of the Louisiana regiment, apostrophized it, spoke of Cailloux

and Ingraham who fought and bled upon the field where it waved, and with all his power besought his hearers never to disgrace it by word, act, or thought. [Applause.]

Rev. Jonathan C. Gibbs, of Pennsylvania, was then introduced, and spoke in a highly interesting manner. We regret we have no report of Mr. Gibbs's speech.

John S. Rock, Esq., of Boston, was the next speaker. He said, "I come from Massachusetts, where we are jealous of every right. I received information a few days ago that a sergeant in the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, who is a splendid penman, had been detailed by his captain as a clerk in his department; and that, when the officer in command learned this, he immediately ordered the sergeant back to his regiment, saying in his order, that 'no negro will be allowed to hold any position in this department except that of a cook or a laborer.' A copy of this order was forwarded to me; and I immediately presented the case to our most excellent Governor, who was going to Washington that evening. The result is, the sergeant is restored back to his position as clerk, and the officer who made the order has suddenly left for the North. [Applause.] This result was at once forwarded to me; and I immediately communicated it to his Excellency the Governor, when he sent me this noble reply:—

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Department, Boston, Oct. 4, 1864.

John S. Rock, Esq.

Dear Sir, —I am glad to hear of the favorable result in the case referred to. I had no doubt what the result would be; but it is through you that I first learn it definitely. I thank you for your kind expressions of acknowledgment to me personally; and with a constant willingness to do my part, always, to insure equal opportunities for usefulness and success in all the occupations and duties of life, to men of equal intelligence, industry, and integrity, whether they be white or black,

I am, very truly, yours, JOHN A. ANDREW.

[Great applause.]

"All we ask is equal opportunities and equal rights. This is what our brave men are fighting for. They have not gone to the battle-field for the sake of killing and being killed; but they are fighting for liberty and equality. [Applause.] We ask the same for the black man that is asked for the white man; nothing more, and nothing less. When our men fight bravely, as they always do, they don't like to be cheated out of the glory and the positions they so dearly earn. Many of our grandfathers fought in the Revolution, and they thought they were fighting for liberty; but they made a sad mistake, and we are now obliged to fight those battles over again, and I hope, this time, to a better purpose. We

are all loyal. Why are we not treated as friends? This nation spurned our offers to rally around it, for two long years, and then, without any guaranties, called upon us at a time when the loyal white men of the North hesitated. We buried the terrible outrages of the past, and came magnanimously and gallantly forward. In the heroism displayed at Milliken's Bend, Port Hudson, Fort Wagner, Olustee, in the battles now going on before Richmond, and everywhere where our men have faced the foe, they have covered themselves all over with glory. [Applause.] They have nobly written with their blood the declaration of their right to have their names recorded on the pages of history among the true patriots of this American Revolution for Liberty. [Applause.] Witness, if you please, the moral heroism of the Massachusetts soldiers, spurning the offers of seven dollars a month, which the Government insultingly tempted them with for eighteen months, when it was known that they were without means, and that many of them had wives at home and children crying to them for bread when there was none to give them. But they bore it manfully, and have lived to see the right triumph. [Applause.] My friends, we owe much to the colored soldiers; not only to the Massachusetts men, but to every brave man who has taken up the musket in defence of liberty. [Applause.] They have done wonders for the race. Let us stand by them and their families, and be ready at any and at all times to assist them, and to give them a word of cheer.

"Though we are unfortunately situated, I am not discouraged. Our cause is flying onward with the swiftness of Mercury. Every day seems almost to be an era in the history of our country. We have at last reached the dividing-line. There are but two parties in the country to-day. The one headed by Lincoln is for Freedom and the Republic; and the other, by McClellan, is for Despotism and Slavery. There can be no 25 middle ground in war. The friends and the enemies of the country are defined, and the one or the other must triumph. We are to have but one government throughout the broad territory of the United States. Two systems of government so innately hostile to each other as that of the North is to that of the South could not exist on the same soil. We should be like the Romans and Carthaginians; among whom, says Patercules, 'there always existed either a war, preparations for a war, or a deceitful peace.' The fate of this Republic will be settled in this contest; and its enemies must either be subdued or annihilated, and it is of but little consequence which." [Applause.]

Rev. J. Sella Martin was called for, and delivered an able and eloquent speech.

Mrs. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was then introduced, and spoke feelingly and eloquently of our hopes and prospects in this country.

The Chairman then appointed the following-named committee to nominate officers for the National League: John M. Langston, of Ohio; William Wilson, of Washington, D. C.; and P. N. Judah, of Pennsylvania,

The Convention then adjourned to meet Friday morning at 9 o'clock.

#### **FOURTH DAY.**

Friday Morning, Oct. 7.

The Convention met in Wieting Hall, pursuant to adjournment; the President in the chair.

Prayer was offered by Rev. William Wilson, of Washington City.

On motion of Mr. Johnson, of Albany, the minutes of the Convention were adopted.

The chairman of the Business Committee presented the resolution in relation to the associations for freedmen, naming the "National Freedmen's Relief" and "American Missionary Association." [As passed, see Appendix,—“Resolutions.”]

Rev. Mr. Cain, of New York, moved to amend by inserting 4 26 the name of the "African Civilization Society," and defended the motion in an earnest, pertinent speech; giving in that speech the history of the success attending the establishment of schools in Washington City. Mr. Cain at the same time labored to show that the object of the African Civilization Society is not to colonize the colored people.

He then read the instructions given by his constituents, especially that part relating to the freedmen, and suggested respectfully that the interest of the freedmen had not been sufficiently considered by this Convention; that the African Civilization Society was now doing a noble part in caring for them and their children, and ought, as a society of colored men, to have the support of this Convention and the people generally.

The Rev. W. P. Newman, of Ohio, rose to enforce the idea, that the work of elevating our brethren must be committed to the colored men of the country. Mr. Newman was very pointed in reference to the present action of the Baptist Home-Mission Society; which society was now holding sacredly, for the rebels who should be left, the church property in the South, just as far as they were able so to do. Mr. Newman referred to the Ex-Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase; who, he said, was far ahead, on this subject, of the religious organizations of the land. Mr. Chase said, in a letter urging him to return from the West Indies to the United States, that the great work of lifting up the freedmen must be committed to the colored people of the country.



Mr. George T. Downing, of Rhode Island, said, "I regret the introduction of this subject at so late a period in the Convention, when so many delegates have already left for home; but when that Society, through its representatives, asks this Convention for what may be used as an indorsement of that Society, it seems to me there is deception involved in it! I think it well to thank all who have aided the freedmen; but we must be careful not to be made tools of. The exertions of this Society have been where friends have been numerous and where schools are springing up daily: where the Society was needed, it did not go. I do not charge all with the motives of its founders. It is the child of prejudice; and its 27 originators assert that the colored man cannot be elevated in the United States; that black men must be 'massed to themselves,' and have a grand fight for a 'Negro nationality,' before they can be respected! Look at the history of this Society: a colonizationist was its founder, and it invites no abolitionist to its platform; and they have declared from their platform, that we are out of our place here, and that 'it would be well if every colored man was out of the country.' A gentleman here, who defended that Society, presided at the meeting when these remarks were made; and, though one of the speakers on that occasion, he had no word of censure, and did not even disapprove of these insulting remarks made in his presence. This Society is in perfect harmony with our old enemy, the Colonization Society. The agents of both societies act in concert, and both use the same rooms. It must publicly atone for its disgraceful past conduct, before it can have an indorsement at my hands."

Rev. J. Sella Martin rose to deny that he and others are being used by white men. He said, if the Society in the beginning, and under other auspices, looked mainly Africa-ward, and upon that account it had acquired a taint, he, for one meant, with others, to redeem it from that odium.

Rev. H. H. Garnet rose to thank Mr. Cain for his remarks in reference to the work of the Society at Washington. He (Mr. Garnet) resided there, and he well knew the benefits resulting from those schools. As to the personal matters referred to by Mr. Downing, he would say he might appeal to all present whether they believed, that now, so late in his public life, he had begun to falsify himself by putting himself under the direction, and being made the tool, of white men. He had during all that life been unpopular, for the very reason that he was too independent, to be used as a tool. For that independence he had sacrificed something, and to-day was poor because of it. Mr. Downing made the objection, that the African Civilization Society takes money from white men. "I think," said Mr. Garnet, "that when this hall was filled,—the major portion white people,—the Finance Committee of this Convention passed among them, and I was not aware that they refused any means because a white man gave it. If Jeff. 28 Davis would send an amount to educate the colored children, I would gladly receive it; and I would say to him, 'That is one good act you have done, if you have done no other.' Mr. Downing, even, takes money from white men. As regards the other personal remarks of Mr. Downing, I pass them by. Those who know me, know well that I could retort if I chose. But I

will not retort. Mr. Downing and I have in days gone by had many hard intellectual battles. He has hurled against me all the force of his vigorous logic, and I struck him back again with all my power. If I smarted from his blows, I think I may say he went away a little lame; and he has never forgotten it. If Mr. Downing has intended to cripple my influence in this Convention, to keep me out of office and off of committees, he has successfully accomplished that purpose. But we will work in our humble way, as we are laboring now, to lift up the race with which we are identified, but especially to give to the children of the people the education of which for so long they have been deprived."

Prof. Vashon, of Pennsylvania, deprecated the turn which the discussion had taken. He did not consider the Convention the place for gentlemen to come to settle their old difficulties, but felt that we ought to unite for one great end, harmonizing as much as possible. He intended to make a proposition which he thought would harmonize all parties, and he would move it as a supplementary resolution, by way of amendment.

*Resolved*, That, while we have no sympathy with any feature of the African Civilization Society looking to colonizing Africa with colored Americans, we still readily accord that Organization all praise for their important labors in behalf of freedom.

Rev. H. H. Garnet remarked that he would prefer no resolution rather than the one proposed by Prof. Vashon.

Mr. Johnson, of Albany, N. Y., sustained the amendment proposed by Mr. Cain. He was as much opposed to the *name* of the African Civilization Society as any one; but he believed that that Society was just what Mr. Cain said it was.

The previous question was called for, and ordered; when the amendment of Prof. Vashon was lost.

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The amendment proposed was then voted upon, and carried; and the resolution was adopted as amended.

The Chairman of the Business Committee then reported Resolutions 12 and 13. [See Appendix, pp. 35, 36.]

Mr. Martin moved to amend by striking out all that part of the Report referring to private enterprises.

The amendment was opposed by Mr. Langston; who concluded his remarks by asking Mr. Martin to explain what he meant by private enterprises.

Mr. Martin replied that he regarded all newspapers as private enterprises.

Mr. Martin's motion was lost.

The chairman of the Nominating Committee for the League appeared, and asked leave to make a report. The Report was read, and a motion made to accept it, when—

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, offered the following resolution as an amendment:—

*Resolved*, That so much of the plan organizing a National Equal-Rights League as refers to Vice-Presidents and Secretaries be reconsidered; and that the Board of Vice-Presidents shall consist of one from each State represented in the Convention; and that there be one additional Secretary elected by the Convention.

This amendment was discussed at some length by several gentlemen, and was finally agreed to.

The vote was then taken upon the main question, and carried unanimously. The Report was, on motion, adopted as follows:—

#### **For President.**

J. MERCER LANGSTON.

#### **Vice-Presidents.**

J. S. ROCK.

P. G. WELLS.

J. H. INGRAHAM.

F. L. CORDOZA.

W. P. NEWMAN.

S. J. MURRAY.

J. HOUSTON.

A. H. GALLOWAY.

WILLIAM WILSON.

J. SELLA MARTIN.

JAMES JEFFERSON.

GEORGE H. PARKER.

JOHN PECK.

JAMES COCHRAN.

ABRAM SMITH.

D. P. SEATON.

30

**Recording Secretaries.**

ST. GEORGE R. TAYLOR.

DAVIS D. TURNER.

**Corresponding Secretary.**

GEORGE B. VASHON.

**Treasurer.**

WILLIAM RICH.

## Members of Executive Board.

J. D. RICHARDS.

RANSOM HARRIS.

A. H. GALLOWAY.

W. KEELING.

The following was submitted by the Rev. Singleton T. Jones, of New York, and adopted:—

*Resolved*, That we regard with deep interest and solicitude the recent movement on the part of the two great colored Methodist denominations in the United States, through a Convention held in Philadelphia in June last, looking to their union and consolidation into one organization, having for its object the religious, moral, social, and intellectual advancement and improvement of our people; and that, regarding a more intimate union of interest as an essential element to our strength and success, we earnestly recommend the speedy consummation of that contemplated union; and we as earnestly urge the recognition and cultivation of the great principle of union among our people everywhere.

The Finance Committee then made their final Report. [See Appendix, pp. 32, 33.]

Moved by J. M. Langston, that all money in the hands of the Finance Committee be placed in the hands of the Treasurer of the League, William Rich, to pay for the printing of the Minutes, and the other expenses connected therewith. Carried.

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Pending a motion for adjournment, the President briefly addressed the Convention; and, on suggestion, all joined in singing,—

“From all that dwell below the skies.”

The Convention, at twelve o'clock, adjourned *sine die*.

O. C. HUGHES, *Secretary*.

## APPENDIX.

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON RULES.

1st, There shall be two regular sessions of the Convention daily.

*Morning Session.*—The Convention shall meet at 9 o'clock, A. M., and adjourn at 12 o'clock.

*Afternoon Session.*—The Convention shall meet at 2 o'clock, and adjourn at 5 o'clock, P. M.

2d, The majority of the members of the Convention shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at either of its sessions.

3d, The rules of order as laid down in "Mathias's Manual" shall be the standing rules of order of this Convention, in all points not herein provided for.

4th, No member shall be allowed to speak more than twice upon the same subject, without special leave of the Convention; and not longer than ten minutes the first time, and five minutes the second.

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

Received from regular members of the Convention \$277 00

Received from collections and honorary members 102 00

Whole amount collected \$379 00

*Amount carried forward*, \$379 00

**33**

*Amount brought forward*, \$379 00

Paid to Mr. James Jefferson to assist the destitute children \$24 50

Stationery 2 25

Hire of Hall 60 00

Mr. Robert Hamilton's bill for printing the call of the Convention 70 00

Amount paid out 156 75

Balance on hand \$222 25

## RESOLUTIONS.

1. *Resolved*, That a petition be sent to the Congress of the United States, in the name of this Convention, asking them respectfully, but most earnestly, to use every honorable endeavor that they may, to have the rights of the country's colored patriots now in the field respected, without regard to their complexion; and that our Government cease to set an example to rebels, in arms against it, by making invidious distinctions, based upon color, as to pay, labor, and promotion.

2. *Resolved*, That the unquestioned patriotism and loyalty of the colored men of the United States—as shown in the alacrity with which, shutting their eyes to the past, and looking steadfastly to the future, at the call of the country, without pay, without bounty, without prospect of promotion, without the protection of the Government, they have rallied to the defence of “Liberty and Union”—vindicate our manhood, command our respect, and claim the attention and admiration of the civilized world.

3. *Resolved*, That we hereby assert our full confidence in the fundamental principles of this Government, the force of acknowledged American ideas, the Christian spirit of the age, and the justice of our cause; and we believe that the generosity and sense of honor inherent in the great heart of this 5 34 nation will ultimately concede us our just claims, accord us our rights, and grant us our full measure of citizenship, under the broad shield of the Constitution.

4. *Resolved*, That, should an attempt be made to reconstruct the Union with slavery, we should regard such a course as a flagrant violation of good faith on the part of the Government, false to the brave colored men who have fallen in its defence, unjust to the living who are perilling their lives for its protection, and to be resisted by the whole moral power of the civilized world.

5. *Resolved*, That we extend the right hand of fellowship to the freedmen of the South, and express to them our warmest sympathy, and our deep concern for their welfare, prosperity, and happiness; and desire to exhort them to shape their course toward frugality, the accumulation of property, and,

above all, to leave untried no amount of effort and self-denial to acquire knowledge, and to secure a vigorous moral and religious growth. We desire, further, to assure them of our co-operation and assistance; and that our efforts in their behalf shall be given without measure, and be limited only by our capacity to give, work, and act.

6. *Resolved*, That we recommend to colored men from all sections of the country to settle, as far as they can, on the public lands.

7. *Resolved*, That, as Congress has exclusive control over the elective franchise in the District of Columbia, we earnestly pray that body to extend the right of suffrage to the colored citizens of said District.

8. *Resolved*, That the President of the United States, his Cabinet, and the Thirty-seventh Congress, are hereby tendered our warmest and most grateful thanks,—

For revoking the prohibitory law in regard to colored people carrying the mails;

For abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia;

For recognizing the National Independence of Liberia and Hayti; For Military Order 252, retaliating for the unmilitary and barbarous treatment of the colored soldiers of the Union army by the rebels.

3

The Convention further tenders its thanks to Senator Sumner, for his noble efforts to cleanse the statute-books of the nation from every stain of inequality against colored men.

And also to Gen. Butler, for the course he has taken in suggesting a way for lifting the slaves first to the condition of contrabands, and then to the position of freedmen.

And to all other noble workers, both in our legislative halls and elsewhere, who have contributed to bring about the improved state in which, as colored men, we find ourselves to-day.

9. *Resolved*, That we witness, with the most grateful emotions, the generous and very successful efforts that have been made, and are still in operation, by the "National Freedmen's Relief Association," the "American Missionary Society," the "African Civilization Society," and their auxiliary and kin dred bodies, for the mental and moral instruction, and the domestic improvement, of the colored people in our Southern States, who have hitherto been the victims of that impious slaveholding oligarchy, that is now in open rebellion against our American Republic.



10. *Resolved*, That we view with pride, and heartily indorse, the efforts of the gentlemen composing the faculties and executive boards of the "Institute for Colored Youth" at Philadelphia; the "Avery College" at Alleghany City, Penn.; the "Wilberforce University" at Zenia, O.; and the "Albany Enterprise Academy" at Albany, O., to develop the intellectual powers of our youth, and for opening a field for the honorable employment of those powers.

11. *Resolved*, That we are indebted to the publishers of the "Anglo-African," "Christian Recorder," and "Colored Citizen," for the manifestation of intellectual energy and business tact which they have shown to the American people by the publication of those journals; the contents of which are complimentary to the heads and hearts of their conductors, and the people whom they represent.

12. *Resolved*, that a committee of three—consisting of John S. Rock and George L. Ruffin of Boston, and William H. Day of New Jersey—be appointed to revise, correct, and publish the proceedings of this National Convention for general distribution.

13. *Resolved*, That this Convention returns its sincere thanks to its officers for the manner in which they have conducted its business; to the Rev. J. W. Loguen, and those citizens of Syracuse who have composed and co-operated with the Reception Committee; also to such of the newspapers as have made a just report of our proceedings.

## **PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL EQUAL-RIGHTS LEAGUE.**

*Whereas*, The purposes entertained by the callers of this Convention, and those who have responded to that call, can be best promoted by a close union of all interested in the principles of justice and right sought to be established; therefore, be it—

*Resolved*, That we proceed to organize an association, to be called the National Equal-Rights League, with auxiliaries and subordinate associations in the different States.

*Resolved*, That, in the establishment of the Colored Men's National League, we do not seek to disorganize or in any way interfere with any existing society or institution of a benevolent or other character; but, believing that the interests of colored men generally will be best subserved and advanced by a union of all our energies and the use of all our means in a given direction, we therefore invite the co-operation of such societies in the advancement of the objects of the League.

Section 1. The objects of this League are to encourage sound morality, education, temperance, frugality, industry, and promote every thing that pertains to a well-ordered and dignified life; to

obtain by appeals to the minds and conscience of the American people, or by legal process when possible, a recognition of the rights of the colored people of the nation as American citizens.

Sec. 2. The members of this Convention shall be constituted 37 the members of the National Equal-Rights League for the first year. Hereafter such persons as shall be duly accredited representatives of the auxiliary associations herein provided for shall constitute its members; provided that no auxiliary society shall be entitled to more than one representative for each fifty dollars contributed by such society, with an additional member for any amount over thirty dollars thus contributed.

Sec. 3. The officers shall be a President, one Vice-President from each State represented in this Convention, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee consisting of the President, First Vice-President, Recording Secretaries, and four other persons to be elected by the League at the same time with the other officers.

Sec. 4. The President shall preside at all regular meetings of the League and of the Executive Committee, see that all decrees of the League are duly executed, and perform such other duties as may be imposed by the League.

The Vice-Presidents in the order of their election shall in the absence of the President perform his duties.

The Recording Secretary shall duly record the proceedings of the League and of the Executive Committee; draw all orders on the Treasurer when directed by the proper authority; receive all money paid to the League, pay the same to the Treasurer, and take his receipt therefor.

The Corresponding Secretaries shall, under the guidance of the League and the Executive Committee, conduct the correspondence of the League; receive from the agents of the League or other persons all documents of historical, statistical, or general interest; and shall carefully preserve, arrange, and tabulate such documents for the use of the League.

The Treasurer shall keep all money collected by the agents, or contributed by the auxiliary Leagues. He shall report to the League annually, and to the Executive Committee whenever required, the condition of the treasury. He shall pay out money only upon order of the Executive Committee, and when properly signed by the President and Recording Secretary.

Sec. 5. The Executive Committee shall establish an office 38 in the city of Philadelphia, Penn.; in which place they shall hold such sessions as may be necessary to promote the purposes of the League. They shall hire an agent or agents, who shall visit the different States of the nation

accessible to them, and shall call the people of those States together in convention or otherwise, and urge them to take the steps necessary to secure the rights and improvements for the attainment, of which this League is formed. They shall encourage the publication of such documents as may be of advantage to our cause; and may, at their discretion, publish brief appeals, arguments or statements of fact, which may have a tendency to promote the ends of the Association, provided that such documents shall be furnished to the public at such rates as shall admit of their general distribution. They shall apportion among the auxiliary leagues, according to the number of members reported, the amounts which the League shall determine to raise, and shall urge upon the officers of such auxiliary societies a prompt response to such demands. They shall cause orders to be drawn on the Treasurer for the payment of such expenses as may be incurred in the carrying-out the purposes of the Association.

They shall make an annual report to the Association of their labors, and shall recommend such improvements as may be suggested by their official experience.

Sec. 6. The officers shall hold their offices for one year, or until their successors are elected. The officers of the League may receive such compensation as may be determined by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 7. Persons in the different States friendly to the purposes of this League may form State Leagues auxiliary to this, with such subordinate organizations as they may deem proper, provided that no distinction on account of color or sex shall be permitted in such auxiliary or subordinate association. Such Leagues may, at their discretion, employ agents, and issue such documents as they may deem conducive to the ends for which this League is formed. They shall collect and pay into the treasury of the National Equal-Rights League such sums as may be assessed upon them by vote of the majority at the annual meeting, and shall co-operate with 39 that Association in all movements which it shall inaugurate for the accomplishment of the purposes for which it was formed.

Sec. 8. The sessions of the National Equal-Rights League shall be held annually, on the third Tuesday of September, at at ten o'clock, A. M., for the election of officers, and the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

Sec. 9. At any annual meeting of the National Equal-Rights League, this Constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of the majority of the members present.

On motion of Mr. Downing, of Rhode Island, the Executive Board of the League were authorized to fill any vacancies occurring during the year in the official direction of the League.

## LIST OF THE COMMITTEES IN THE CONVENTION.

### **Committee on Credentials.**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

PETER H. CLARK.

WILLIAM WELLS BROWN.

Mr. Bruce was afterwards added, to supply the place made vacant by electing Mr. Douglass as President of the Convention.

### **Committee on Permanent Organization.**

SAMUEL F. MURRAY Maine.

GEORGE L. RUFFIN Massachusetts.

GEORGE T. DOWNING Rhode Island.

PETER H. NOTT Connecticut.

ROBERT HAMILTON New York.

WILLIAM HOWARD DAY New Jersey.

JONATHAN C. GIBBS Pennsylvania.

WILLIAM KEELING Virginia.

A. H. GALLOWAY North Carolina.

CHARLES P. HEAD Mississippi.

J. H. INGRAHAM Louisiana.

PETER LOWERY Tennessee.

JAMES M. SCOTTRON Florida.

P. G. WELLS Missouri.

PETER H. CLARK Ohio.

H. P. HARRIS Michigan.

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Robert Hamilton, Chairman; Peter H. Clark, Secretary.

**Business Committee.**

HENRY H. GARNET.

EBENEZER D. BASSETT.

JONATHAN C. GIBBS.

PETER H. CLARK.

JOHN M. LANGSTON.

JOHN S. ROCK.

GEORGE L. RUFFIN.

GEORGE T. DOWNING.

WILLIAM H. JOHNSON.

PASCHAL B. RANDOLPH.

J. SELLA MARTIN.

J. H. INGRAHAM.

D. P. SEATON.

RANSOM HARRIS.

MORRIS HENDERSON.

CHARLES P. HEAD.

JAMES M. SCOTTRON.

WILLIAM KEELING.

P. G. WELLS.

A. H. GALLOWAY.

J. D. RICHARDS.

W. H. DECKER.

The Committee elected John M. Langston, Chairman; and John S. Rock, Secretary. Mr. Garnet declined to serve.

### **Finance Committee.**

EBENEZER HEMMENWAY.

ROBERT HAMILTON.

J. W. LOGUEN.

GEORGE B. VASHON.

W. H. BRUCE.

### **Committee on Rules.**

PETER W. RAY, M.D.

Sergt. ALFRED M. GREEN.

GEORGE B. VASHON.

WILLIAM H. JOHNSON.

WILLIAM NESBIT.

P. W. RAY, *Chairman*.

**Publishing Committee.**

JOHN S. ROCK.

GEORGE L. RUFFIN.

WILLIAM HOWARD DAY.

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**DECLARATION OF WRONGS AND RIGHTS, MADE BY THE COLORED MEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED, IN SYRACUSE, N. Y. Oct. 4, 1864.**

1st. As a branch of the human family, we have for long ages been deeply and cruelly wronged by people whose might constituted their right; we have been subdued, not by the power of ideas, but by brute force, and have been unjustly deprived not only of many of our natural rights, but debarred the privileges and advantages freely accorded to other men.

2d. We have been made to suffer well-nigh every cruelty and indignity possible to be heaped upon human beings; and for no fault of our own.

3d. We have been taunted with our inferiority by people whose statute-books contained laws inflicting the severest penalties on whomsoever dared teach us the art of reading God's word; we have been denounced as incurably ignorant, and, at the same time, have been, by stern enactments, debarred from taking even the first step toward self-enlightenment and personal and national elevation; we have been declared incapable of self-government by those who refused us the right of

experiment in that direction, and we have been denounced as cowards by men who refused at first to trust us with a musket on the battle-field.

4th. As a people, we have been denied the ownership of our bodies, our wives, homes, children, and the products of our own labor; we have been compelled, under pain of death, to submit to wrongs deeper and darker than the earth ever witnessed in the case of any other people; we have been forced to silence and inaction in full presence of the infernal spectacle of our sons groaning under the lash, our daughters ravished, our wives violated, and our firesides desolated, while we ourselves have been led to the shambles and sold like beasts of the field.

5th. When the nation in her trial hour called her sable sons to arms, we gladly went to fight her battles: but were denied the pay accorded to others, until public opinion demanded it; and then it was tardily granted. We have fought and conquered, but have been denied the laurels of victory. We have fought where victory gave us no glory, and where captivity meant cool murder on the field, by fire, sword, and halter; and yet no black man ever flinched.

6th. We are taxed, but denied the right of representation. We are practically debarred the right of trial by jury; and institutions of learning which we help to support are closed against us.

We submit to the American people and world the following Declaration of our Rights, asking a calm consideration thereof:

1st. We declare that all men are born free and equal; that no man or government has a right to annul, repeal, abrogate, contravene, or render inoperative, this fundamental principle, except it be for crime; therefore we demand the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery.

2d. That, as natives of American soil, we claim the right to remain upon it: and that any attempt to deport, remove, expatriate, or colonize us to any other land, or to mass us here against our will, is unjust; for here were we born, for this country our fathers and our brothers have fought, and here we hope to remain in the full enjoyment of enfranchised manhood, and its dignities.

3d. That, as citizens of the Republic, we claim the rights of other citizens. We claim that we are, by right, entitled to respect; that due attention should be given to our needs; that proper rewards should be given for our services, and that the immunities and privileges of all other citizens and defenders of the nation's honor should be conceded to us. We claim the right to be heard in the halls of Congress; and we claim our fair share of the public domain, whether acquired by purchase, treaty, confiscation, or military conquest.



4th. That, emerging as we are from the long night of gloom and sorrow, we are entitled to, and claim, the sympathy and aid of the entire Christian world; and we invoke the considerate aid of mankind in this crisis of our history, and in this hour of sacrifice, suffering, and trial.

Those are our wrongs; these a portion of what we deem to be our rights as men, as patriots, as citizens, and as children of the common Father. To realize and attain these rights, and their practical recognition, is our purpose. We confide our cause to the just God, whose benign aid we solemnly invoke. To him we appeal.

### **ADDRESS OF THE COLORED NATIONAL CONVENTION TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.**

Fellow-Citizens, —

The members of the Colored National Convention, assembled in Syracuse, State of New York, October the 4th, 1864, to confer with each other as to the complete emancipation, enfranchisement, and elevation of our race, in essaying to address you on these subjects, warmly embrace the occasion to congratulate you upon the success of your arms, and upon the prospect of the speedy suppression of the slaveholders' rebellion. Baptized in the best blood of your noblest sons, torn and rent by a strife full of horrors,—a strife undertaken and prosecuted for aims and objects the guiltiest that can enter the wicked hearts of men long in the practice of crime,—we ardently hope with you that our country will come out of this tremendous conflict, purer, stronger, nobler, and happier than ever before. Having shared with you, in some measure, the hardships, perils, and sacrifices of this war for the maintenance of the Union and Government, we rejoice with you also in every sign which gives promise of its approaching termination, and of the return of our common country again to those peaceful, progressive, and humanizing activities of true national life, from which she has been so wantonly diverted by the insurrection of slaveholders.

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In view of the general cheerfulness of the national situation, growing brighter every day; the rapid dispersement of the heavy clouds of dismal terror, which only a few weeks ago mantled our land with the gloomiest forebodings of national disaster and ruin,—we venture to hope that the present is a favorable moment to commend to your consideration the subject of our wrongs, and to obtain your earnest and hearty co-operation in all wise and just measures for their full redress.

When great and terrible calamities are abroad in the land, men are said to learn righteousness. It would be a mark of unspeakable national depravity, if neither the horrors of this war, nor the

dawning prospect of peace, should soften the heart, and dispose the American people to renounce and forsake their evil policy towards the colored race. Assuming the contrary, we deem this a happily chosen hour for calling your attention to our cause. We know that the human mind is so constituted, that all postponement of duty, all refusal to go forward when the right path is once made plain, is dangerous.

After such neglect of, and disobedience to, the voice of reason and conscience, a nation becomes harder and less alive than before to high moral considerations. If won to the path of rectitude at all, thereafter, it must be by means of a purer light than that which first brought right convictions and inclinations to the national mind and heart. We speak, then, fellow-citizens, at an auspicious moment. Conviction has already seized the public mind. Little argument is needed. We shall appeal rather than argue; and we may well implore an attentive hearing for our appeal. The nation is still in tears. The warm blood of your brave and patriotic sons is still fresh upon the green fields of the Shenandoah. Mourning mingles everywhere with the national shout of victory; and though the smoke and noise of battle are rolling away behind the southern horizon, our brave armies are still confronted in Georgia and Virginia by a stern foe, whose haughtiness and cruelty have sprung naturally from his long and undisputed mastery over men. The point attained in the progress of this war is one from which you can if you will view to advantage the calamities which inevitably follow upon long and persistent violation of manifest duty; and on the other hand, the signs of final triumph enable you to anticipate the happy results which must always flow from just and honorable conduct. The fear of continued war, and the hope of speedy peace, alike mark this as the time for America to choose her destiny. Another such opportunity as is now furnished in the state of the country, and in the state of the national heart, may not come again in a century. Come, then, and let us reason together.

We shall speak, it is true, for our race,—a race long oppressed, enslaved, ignored, despised, slandered, and degraded; but we speak not the less for our country, whose welfare and permanent peace can only result from the adoption of wise and just measures towards our whole race, North and South.

Considering the number and the grievous character of the wrongs and disabilities endured by our race in this country, you will bear witness that we have borne with patience our lot, and have seldom troubled the national ear with the burden of complaint. It is true that individuals among us have constantly testified their abhorrence of this injustice; but as a people, we have seldom uttered, as we do this day, our protest and remonstrance against the manifold and needless injustice with which we are upon all sides afflicted. We have suffered in silence, trusting that, though long delayed, and perhaps through terrible commotions, the hour would come when justice, honor, and magnanimity

would assert their power over the mind and heart of the American people, and restore us to the full exercise and enjoyment of the rights inseparable from human nature. Never having despaired of this consummation so devoutly wished, even in the darkest hours of our history, we are farther than ever from despairing now. Nowhere in the annals of mankind is there recorded an instance of an oppressed people rising more rapidly than ourselves in the favorable estimation of their oppressors. The change is great, and increasing, and is viewed with astonishment and dread by all those who had hoped to stand forever with their heels upon our necks.

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Nevertheless, while joyfully recognizing the vast advances made by our people in popular consideration, and the apparent tendency of events in our favor, we cannot conceal from ourselves, and would not conceal from you, the fact that there are many and powerful influences, constantly operating, intended and calculated to defeat our just hopes, prolong the existence of the source of all our ills,—the system of slavery,—strengthen the slave power, darken the conscience of the North, intensify popular prejudice against color, multiply unequal and discriminating laws, augment the burdens long borne by our race, consign to oblivion the deeds of heroism which have distinguished the colored soldier, deny and despise his claims to the gratitude of his country, scout his pretensions to American citizenship, establish the selfish idea that this is exclusively the white man's country, pass unheeded all the lessons taught by these four years of fire and sword, undo all that has been done towards our freedom and elevation, take the musket from the shoulders of our brave black soldiers, deny them the constitutional right to keep and bear arms, exclude them from the ballot-box where they now possess that right, prohibit the extension of it to those who do not possess it, overawe free speech in and out of Congress, obstruct the right of peaceably assembling, reenact the Fugitive-slave Bill, revive the internal slave-trade, break up all diplomatic relations with Hayti and Liberia, reopen our broad territories to the introduction of slavery, reverse the entire order and tendency of the events of the last three years, and postpone indefinitely that glorious deliverance from bondage, Which for our sake, and for the sake of the future unity, permanent peace, and highest welfare of all concerned, we had fondly hoped and believed was even now at the door.

In surveying our possible future, so full of interest at this moment, since it may bring to us all the blessings of equal liberty, or all the woes of slavery and continued social degradation, you will not blame us if we manifest anxiety in regard to the position of our recognized friends, as well as that of our open and declared enemies; for our cause may suffer even more from the injudicious concessions and weakness 48 of our friends, than from the machinations and power of our enemies. The weakness of our friends is strength to our foes. When the "Anti-slavery Standard," representing the American Anti-slavery Society, denies that that society asks for the enfranchisement of colored

men, and the "Liberator" apologizes for excluding the colored men of Louisiana from the ballot-box, they injure us more vitally than all the ribald jests of the whole proslavery press.

Again: had, for instance, the present Administration, at the beginning of the war, boldly planted itself upon the doctrine of human equality as taught in the Declaration of Independence; proclaimed liberty to all the slaves in all the Slave States; armed every colored man, previously a slave or a freeman, who would or could fight under the loyal flag; recognized black men as soldiers of the Republic; avenged the first act of violence upon colored prisoners, in contravention of the laws of war; sided with the radical emancipation party in Maryland and Missouri; stood by its antislavery generals, instead of casting them aside,—history would never have had to record the scandalous platform adopted at Chicago, nor the immeasurable horrors of Fort Pillow. The weakness and hesitation of our friends, where promptness and vigor were required, have invited the contempt and rigor of our enemies. Seeing that, while perilling every thing for the protection and security of our country, our country did not think itself bound to protect and secure us, the rebels felt a license to treat us as outlaws. Seeing that our Government did not treat us as men, they did not feel bound to treat us as soldiers. It is, therefore, not the malignity of enemies alone we have to fear, but the deflection from the straight line of principle by those who are known throughout the world as our special friends. We may survive the arrows of the known negro-haters of our country; but woe to the colored race when their champions fail to demand, from any reason, equal liberty in every respect!

We have spoken of the existence of powerful re-actionary forces arrayed against us, and of the objects to which they tend. What are these mighty forces? and through what agencies do, they operate and reach us? They are many; but we shall detain by no tedious enumeration. The first and most 49 powerful is slavery; and the second, which may be said to be the shadow of slavery, is prejudice against men on account of their color. The one controls the South, and the other controls the North. Both are original sources of power, and generate peculiar sentiments, ideas, and laws concerning us. The agents of these two evil influences are various: but the chief are, first, the Democratic party; and, second, the Republican party. The Democratic party belongs to slavery; and the Republican party is largely under the power of prejudice against color. While gratefully recognizing a vast difference in our favor in the character and composition of the Republican party, and regarding the accession to power of the Democratic party as the heaviest calamity that could befall us in the present juncture of affairs, it cannot, be disguised, that, while that party is our bitterest enemy, and is positively and actively re-actionary, the Republican party is negatively and passively so in its tendency. What we, have to fear from these two parties,—looking to the future, and especially to the settlement of our present national troubles,—is, alas! only too obvious. The intentions, principles, and policy of both organizations, through their platforms, and the antecedents and the recorded utterances of the men who stand upon their respective platforms, teach us what

to expect at their hands, and what kind of a future they are carving out for us, and for the country which they propose to govern. Without using the word "*slavery*," or "*slaves*," or "*slaveholders*," the Democratic party has none the less declared, in its platform, its purpose to be the endless perpetuation of slavery. Under the apparently harmless verbiage, "*private rights*," "*basis of the Federal Union*," and under the language employed in denouncing the Federal Administration for "*disregarding the Constitution in every part*," "*pretence of military necessity*," we see the purpose of the Democratic party to restore slavery to all its ancient power, and to make this Government just what it was before the rebellion,—simply an instrument of the slave-power. "The basis of the Federal Union" only means the alleged compromises and stipulations, as interpreted by Judge Taney, by which black men are supposed to have no rights which white men are bound to respect; and 7 50 by which the whole Northern people are bound to protect the cruel masters against the justly deserved violence of the slave, and to do the fiendish work of hell-hounds when slaves make their escape from thralldom. The candidates of that party take their stand upon its platform; and will, if elected,—which Heaven forbid!—carry it out to the letter. From this party we must look only for fierce, malignant, and unmitigated hostility. Our continued oppression and degradation is the law of its life, and its sure passport to power. In the ranks of the Democratic party, all the worst elements of American society fraternize; and we need not expect a single voice from that quarter for justice, mercy, or even decency. To it we are nothing; the slave-holders every thing. We have but to consult its press to know that it would willingly enslave the free colored people in the South; and also that it would gladly stir up against us mob-violence at the North,—re-enacting the sanguinary scenes of one year ago in New York and other large cities. We therefore pray, that whatever wrath, curse, or calamity, the future may have in store for us, the accession of the Democratic party to the reins of power may not be one of them; for this to us would comprise the sum of all social woes.

How stands the case with the great Republican party in question? We have already alluded to it as being largely under the influence of the prevailing contempt for the character and rights of the colored race. This is seen by the slowness of our Government to employ the strong arm of the black man in the work of putting down the rebellion: and in its unwillingness, after thus employing him, to invest him with the same incitements to deeds of daring, as white soldiers; neither giving him the same pay, rations, and protection, nor any hope of rising in the service by meritorious conduct. It is also seen in the fact, that in neither of the plans emanating from this party for reconstructing the institutions of the Southern States, are colored men, not even those who had *fought* for the country, recognized as having any political existence or rights whatever.

Even in the matter of the abolition of slavery,—to which, by its platform, the Republican party is strongly committed, as 51 well by President Lincoln's celebrated Proclamation of the first of January, 1863, and by his recent letter "To whom it may concern,"—there is still room for painful doubt

and apprehension. It is very evident, that the Republican party, though a party composed of the best men of the country, is not prepared to make the abolition of slavery, in all the Rebel States, a consideration precedent to the re-establishment of the Union. However antislavery in sentiment the President may be, and however disposed he may be to continue the war till slavery is abolished, it is plain that in this he would not be sustained by his party. A single reverse to our arms, in such a war, would raise the hands of the party in opposition to their chief. The hope of the speedy and complete abolition of slavery, hangs, therefore, not upon the disposition of the Republican party, not upon the disposition of President Lincoln; but upon the slender thread of Rebel power, pride, and persistence. In returning to the Union, slavery has a fair chance to live; out of the Union, it has a still better chance to live: but, fighting against the Union, it has no chance for any thing but destruction. Thus the freedom of our race and the welfare of our country tremble together in the balance of events.

This somewhat gloomy view of the condition of affairs—which to the enthusiastic, who have already convinced themselves that slavery is dead, may not only seem gloomy, but untruthful—is nevertheless amply supported, not only by the well-known sentiment of the country, the controlling pressure of which is seriously felt by the Administration; but it is sustained by the many attempts lately made by the Republican press to explain away the natural import of the President's recent address "To whom it may concern," in which he makes the abolition of Slavery a primary condition to the restoration of the Union; and especially is this gloomy view supported by the remarkable speech delivered only a few weeks ago at Auburn, by Hon. William H. Seward, Secretary of State. Standing next to the President in the administration of the government, and fully in the confidence of the Chief Magistrate, no member of the National Cabinet is better qualified than Mr. Seward to utter the mind and policy of the Administration 52 upon this momentous subject, when it shall come up at the close of the war. Just what it will do in the matter of slavery, Mr. Seward says,—

"When the insurgents shall have disbanded their armies, and laid down their arms, the war will instantly cease; and all the war measures then existing, including those which affect slavery, will cease also; and all the moral, economical, and political questions, as well affecting slavery as others, which shall then be existing between individuals and States and the Federal Government, whether they arose before the civil war began, or whether they grew out of it, will, by force of the Constitution, pass over to the arbitrament of courts of law, and the counsels of legislation."

These, fellow-citizens, are studied words, full of solemn and fearful import. They mean that our Republican Administration is not only ready to make peace with the Rebels, but to make peace with slavery also; that all executive and legislative action launched against the slave-system, whether of proclamation or confiscation, will cease the instant the Rebels shall disband their armies, and lay



down their arms. The hope that the war will put an end to slavery, has, according to this exposition, only one foundation; and that is, that the courts and Congress will so decree. But what ground have we here? Congress has already spoken, and has refused to alter the Constitution so as to abolish Slavery. The Supreme Court has yet to speak; but what it will say, if this question shall come before it, is very easily divined. We will not assert positively what it will say; but indications of its judgment are clearly against us. What then have we? Only this, as our surest and best ground of hope; namely, that the Rebels, in their madness, will continue to make war upon the Government, until they shall not only become destitute of men, money, and the munitions of war, but utterly divested of their slaves also.

But, fellow-citizens, the object of this Address is not merely to state facts, and point out sources of danger. We would distinctly place our whole cause before you, and earnestly appeal to you to make that cause practically your cause; as we believe it is the cause of justice and of our whole country. 53 We come before you altogether in new relations. Hitherto we have addressed you in the generic character of a common humanity; only as men: but to-day, owing to the events of the last three years, we bring with us an additional claim to consideration. By the qualities displayed, by the hardships endured, and by the services rendered the country, during these years of war and peril, we can now speak with the confidence of men who have deserved well of their country. While conscious of your power and of our comparative weakness, we may still claim for our race those rights which are not less ours by our services to the country than by the laws of human nature. All, therefore, that justice can demand, and honor grant, we can now ask, without presumption and without arrogance, of the American people.

Do you, then, ask us to state, in plain terms, just what we want of you, and just what we think we ought to receive at your hands? We answer: First of all, the complete abolition of the slavery of our race in the United States. We shall not stop to argue. We feel the terrible sting of this stupendous wrong, and that we cannot be free while our brothers are slaves. The enslavement of a vast majority of our people extends its baleful influence over every member of our race; and makes freedom, even to the free, a mockery and a delusion: we therefore, in our own name, and in the name of the whipped and branded millions, whose silent suffering has pleaded to the humane sentiment of mankind, but in vain, during more than two hundred years for deliverance, we implore you to abolish slavery. In the name of your country, torn, distracted, bleeding, and while you are weeping over the bloody graves of more than two hundred thousand of your noblest sons, many of whom have been cut down, in the midst of youthful vigor and beauty, we implore you to abolish slavery. In the name of peace, which experience has shown cannot be other than false and delusive while the rebellious spirit of Slavery has an existence in the land, we implore you to abolish slavery. In the name of universal justice, to whose laws great States not less than individuals are bound to conform,

and the terrible consequences of whose violation are as fixed and certain as 54 the universe itself, we implore you to abolish slavery; and thus place your peace and national welfare upon immutable and everlasting foundations.

Why would you let slavery continue? What good thing has it done, what evil thing has it left undone, that you should allow it to survive this dreadful war, the natural fruit of its existence? Can you want a second war from the same cause? Are you so rich in men, money, and material, that you must provide for future depletion? Or do you hope to escape the consequences of wrong-doing? Can you expect any better results from compromises in the future, than from compromises with slavery in the past? If the South fights desperately and savagely to-day for the possession of four millions of slaves, will she fight less savagely and desperately when the prize for which she fights shall become eight instead of four millions? and when her ability to war upon freedom and free institutions shall have increased twofold?

Do you answer, that you have no longer any thing to fear? that slavery has already received its death-blow? that it can only have a transient existence, even if permitted to live after the termination of the war? We answer, So thought your Revolutionary fathers when they framed the Federal Constitution; and to-day, the bloody fruits of their mistake are all around us. Shall we avoid or shall we repeat their stupendous error? Be not deceived. Slavery is still the vital and animating breath of Southern society. The men who have fought for it on the battle-field will not love it less for having shed their blood in its defence. Once let them get Slavery safely under the protection of the Federal Government, and ally themselves, as they will be sure to do, to the Democratic party of the North; let Jefferson Davis and his Confederate associates, either in person or by their representatives, return once more to their seats in the halls of Congress,—and you will then see your dead slavery the most living and powerful thing in the country. To make peace, therefore, on such a basis as shall admit slavery back again into the Union, would only be sowing the seeds of war; sure to bring at last a bitter harvest of blood! The sun in the heavens at noonday is not more manifest, than the fact that 55 slavery is the prolific source of war and division among you; and that its abolition is essential to your national peace and unity. Once more, then, we entreat you—for you have the power—to put away this monstrous abomination. You have repeatedly during this wanton slaveholding and wicked Rebellion, in the darkest hours of the struggle, appealed to the Supreme Ruler of the universe to smile upon your armies, and give them victory: surely you will not now stain your souls with the crime of ingratitude by making a wicked compact and a deceitful peace with your enemies. You have called mankind to witness that the struggle on your part was not for empire merely; that the charge that it was such was a gross slander: will you now make a peace which will justify what you have repeatedly denounced as a calumny? Your antislavery professions have drawn to you the sympathy of liberal and generous minded men throughout the world, and have restrained all Europe from



recognizing the Southern Confederacy, and breaking up your blockade of Southern ports. Will you now proclaim your own baseness and hypocrisy by making a peace which shall give the lie to all such professions? You have over and over again, and very justly, branded slavery as the inciting cause of this Rebellion; denounced it as the fruitful source of pride and selfishness and mad ambition; you have blushed before all Europe for its existence among you; and have shielded yourselves from the execrations of mankind, by denying your constitutional ability to interfere with it. Will you now, when the evil in question has placed itself within your constitutional grasp, and invited its own destruction by its persistent attempts to destroy the Government, relax your grasp, release your hold, and to the disappointment of the slaves deceived by your proclamations, to the sacrifice of the Union white men of the South who have sided with you in this contest with slavery, and to the dishonor of yourselves and the amazement of mankind, give new and stronger lease of life to slavery? We will not and cannot believe it.

There is still one other subject, fellow-citizens,—one other want,—looking to the peace and welfare of our common country, as well as to the interests of our race; and that is, political equality. We want the elective franchise in all the 56 States now in the Union, and the same in all such States as may come into the Union hereafter. We believe that the highest welfare of this great country will be found in erasing from its statute-books all enactments discriminating in favor or against any class of its people, and by establishing one law for the white and colored people alike. Whatever prejudice and taste may be innocently allowed to do or to dictate in social and domestic relations, it is plain, that in the matter of government, the object of which is the protection and security of human rights, prejudice should be allowed no voice whatever. In this department of human relations, no notice should be taken of the color of men; but justice, wisdom, and humanity should weigh alone, and be all-controlling.

Formerly our petitions for the elective franchise were met and denied upon the ground, that, while colored men were protected in person and property, they were not required to perform military duty. Of course this was only a plausible excuse; for we were subject to any call the Government was pleased to make upon us, and we could not properly be made to suffer because the Government did not see fit to impose military duty upon us. The fault was with the Government, not with us.

But now even this frivolous though somewhat decent apology for excluding us from the ballot-box is entirely swept away. Two hundred thousand colored men, according to a recent statement of President Lincoln, are now in the service, upon field and flood, in the army and the navy of the United States; and every day adds to their number. They are there as volunteers, coming forward with other patriotic men at the call of their imperilled country; they are there also as substitutes filling up the quotas which would otherwise have to be filled up by white men who now remain

at home; they are also there as drafted men, by a certain law of Congress, which, for once, makes no difference on account of color: and whether they are there as volunteers, as substitutes, or as drafted men, neither ourselves, our cause, nor our country, need be ashamed of their appearance or their action upon the battle-field. Friends and enemies, rebels and loyal men,—each, after their 57 kind,—have borne conscious and unconscious testimony to the gallantry and other noble qualities of the colored troops.

Your fathers laid down the principle, long ago, that universal suffrage is the best foundation of Government. We believe as your fathers believed, and as they practised; for, in eleven States out of the original thirteen, colored men exercised the right to vote at the time of the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The Divine-right Governments of Europe, with their aristocratic and privileged classes of *priests* and *nobles*, are little better than cunningly devised conspiracies against the natural rights of the people to govern themselves.

Whether the right to vote is a natural right or not, we are not here to determine. Natural or conventional, in either case we are amply supported in our appeal for its extension to us. If it is, as all the teachings of your Declaration of Independence imply, a *natural right*, to deny to us its exercise is a wrong done to our human nature. If, on the other hand, the right to vote is simply a conventional right, having no other foundation or significance than a mere conventional arrangement, which may be extended or contracted, given or taken away, upon reasonable grounds, we insist, that, even basing the right upon this uncertain foundation, we may reasonably claim a right to a voice in the election of the men who are to have at their command our time, our services, our property, our persons, and our lives. This command of our persons and lives is no longer theory, but now the positive practice of our Government. We say, therefore, that having required, demanded, and in some instances compelled, us to serve with our time, our property, and our lives, coupling us in all the obligations and duties imposed upon the more highly favored of our fellow-citizens in this war to protect and defend your country from threatened destruction, and having fully established the precedent by which, in all similar and dissimilar cases of need, we may be compelled to respond to a like requisition,—we claim to have fully earned the elective franchise; and that you, the American people, have virtually contracted an obligation to grant it, which has all the sanctions of justice, honor, and magnanimity, in favor of its prompt fulfilment. 8 58 Are we good enough to use bullets, and not good enough to use ballots? May we defend rights in time of war, and yet be denied the exercise of those rights in time of peace? Are we citizens when the nation is in peril, and aliens when the nation is in safety? May we shed our blood under the star-spangled banner on the battle-field, and yet be debarred from marching under it to the ballot-box? Will the brave white soldiers, bronzed by the hardships and exposures of repeated campaigns, men who have fought by the side of black men, be ashamed to cast their ballots by the side of their companions-in-arms? May we give our

lives, but not our votes, for the good of the republic? Shall we toil with you to win the prize of free government, while you alone shall monopolize all its valued privileges? Against such a conclusion, every sentiment of honor and manly fraternity utters an indignant protest.

It is quite true, that some part of the American people may, with a show of plausibility, evade the force of this appeal and deny this claim. There are men in all countries who can evade any duty or obligation which is not enforced by the strong arm of the law. Our country is no exception to the rule. They can say in this case, "Colored men, we have done you no wrong. We have purchased nothing at your hands, and owe you nothing. From first to last, we have objected to the measure of employing you to help put down this rebellion; foreseeing the very claim you now set up. Were we to-day invested with the power and authority of this Government, we would instantly disband every colored regiment now in front of Richmond, and everywhere else in the Southern States. We do not believe in making soldiers of black men." To all that, we reply, There need be no doubt whatever. No doubt they would disband the black troops if they had the power; and equally plain is it that they would disband the white troops also if they had the power.

They do not believe in making black men soldiers; but they equally do not believe in making white men soldiers to fight slaveholding rebels. But we do not address ourselves here to particular parties and classes of our countrymen: we would appeal directly to the moral sense, honor, and magnanimity of the whole nation; and, with a cause so good, cannot believe that we shall appeal in vain. Parties and classes rise and fall, combine and dissolve: but the national conscience remains forever; and it is that to which our cause is addressed. It may, however, be said that the colored people enlisted in the service of the country without any promise or stipulation that they would be rewarded with political equality at the end of the war; but all the more, on this very account, do we hold the American people bound in honor thus to reward them. By the measure of confidence reposed in the national honor and generosity, we have the right to measure the obligation of fulfilment. The fact, that, when called into the service of the country, we went forward without exacting terms or conditions, to the mind of the generous man enhances our claims.

But, again, why are we so urgent for the possession of this particular right? We are asked, even by some Abolitionists, why we cannot be satisfied, for the present at least, with personal freedom; the right to testify in courts of law; the right to own, buy, and sell real estate; the right to sue and be sued. We answer, Because in a republican country, where general suffrage is the rule, personal liberty, the right to testify in courts of law, the right to hold, buy, and sell property, and all other rights, become mere privileges, held at the option of others, where we are excepted from the general political liberty. What gives to the newly arrived emigrants, fresh from lands governed by kingcraft and priestcraft, special consequence in the eyes of the American people? It is not their virtue, for

they are often deprived; it is not their knowledge, for they are often ignorant; it is not their wealth, for they are often very poor: why, then, are they courted by the leaders of all parties? The answer is, that our institutions clothe them with the elective franchise, and they have a voice in making the laws of the country. Give the colored men of this country the elective franchise, and you will see no violent mobs driving the black laborer from the wharves of large cities, and from the toil elsewhere by which he honestly gains his bread. You will see no influential priest, like the late Bishop Hughes, addressing mobocrats and murderers as “gentlemen;” 60 and no influential politician, like Governor Seymour, addressing the “misguided” rowdies of New York as his “friends.” The possession of that right is the keystone to the arch of human liberty: and, without that, the whole may at any moment fall to the ground; while, with it, that liberty may stand forever,—a blessing to us, and no possible injury to you. If you still ask why we want to vote, we answer, Because we don't want to be mobbed from our work, or insulted with impunity at every corner. We are men, and want to be as free in our native country as other men.

Fellow-citizens, let us entreat you, have faith in your own principles. If freedom is good for any, it is good for all. If you need the elective franchise, we need it even more. You are strong, we are weak; you are many, we are few; you are protected, we are exposed. Clothe us with this safeguard of our liberty, and give us an interest in the country to which, in common with you, we have given our lives and poured out our best blood. You cannot need special protection. Our degradation is not essential to your elevation, nor our peril essential to your safety. You are not likely to be outstripped in the race of improvement by persons of African descent; and hence you have no need of superior advantages, nor to burden them with disabilities of any kind. Let your Government be what all governments should be,—a copy of the eternal laws of the universe; before which all men stand equal as to rewards and punishments, life and death, without regard to country, kindred, tongue, or people.

But what we have now said, in appeal for the elective franchise, applies to our people generally. A special reason may be urged in favor of granting colored men the right in all the rebellious States.

Whatever may be the case with monarchical governments; however they may despise the crowd, and rely upon their *prestige*, armaments, and standing armies, to support them,—a republican government like ours depends largely upon the friendship of the people over whom it is established, for its harmonious and happy operation. This kind of government must have its foundation in the affections of the people: otherwise the people will hinder, circumvent, and destroy it. Up 61 to a few years of the rebellion, our government lived in the friendship of the masses of the Southern people. Its enemies were, however, numerous and active; and these at last prevailed, poisoned the minds of the masses, broke up the government, brought on the war. Now, whoever lives to see this rebellion

suppressed at the South, as we believe we all shall, will also see the South characterized by a sullen hatred towards the National Government. It will be transmitted from father to son, and will be held by them "as sacred animosity." The treason, mowed down by the armies of Grant and Sherman, will be followed by a strong undergrowth of treason which will go far to disturb the peaceful operation of the hated Government.

Every United-States mail-carrier, every custom-house officer, every Northern man, and every representative of the United-States Government, in the Southern States, will be held in abhorrence; and for a long time that country is to be governed with difficulty. We may conquer Southern armies by the sword; but it is another thing to conquer Southern hate. Now what is the natural counterpoise against this Southern malign hostility? This it is: give the elective franchise to every colored man of the South who is of sane mind, and has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and you have at once four millions of friends who will guard with their vigilance, and, if need be, defend with their arms, the ark of Federal Liberty from the treason and pollution of her enemies. You are sure of the enmity of the masters,—make sure of the friendship of the slaves; for, depend upon it, your Government cannot afford to encounter the enmity of both.

If the arguments addressed to your sense of honor, in these pages, in favor of extending the elective franchise to the colored people of the whole country, be strong, that which we are prepared to present to you in behalf of the colored people of rebellious States can be made tenfold stronger. By calling them to take part with you in the war to subdue their rebellious masters, and the fact that thousands of them have done so, and thousands more would gladly do so, you have exposed them to special resentment and wrath; which, without the elective franchise, will descend upon them in unmitigated fury. To break with your friends, and make peace with your 62 enemies; to weaken your friends, and strengthen your enemies; to abase your friends, and exalt your enemies; to disarm your friends, and arm your enemies; to disfranchise your loyal friends, and enfranchise your disloyal enemies,—is not the policy of honor, but of infamy.

But we will not weary you. Our cause is in some measure before you. The power to redress our wrongs, and to grant us our just rights, is in your hands. You can determine our destiny,—blast us by continued degradation, or bless us with the means of gradual elevation. We are among you, and must remain among you; and it is for you to say, whether our presence shall conduce to the general peace and welfare of the country, or be a constant cause of discussion and of irritation,—troubles in the State, troubles in the Church, troubles everywhere.

To avert these troubles, and to place your great country in safety from them, only one word from you, the American people, is needed, and that is JUSTICE: let that magic word once be sounded, and become all-controlling in all your courts of law, subordinate and supreme; let the halls of legislation,



state and national, spurn all statesmanship as mischievous and ruinous that has not justice for its foundation; let justice without compromise, without curtailment, and without partiality, be observed with respect to all men, no class of men claiming for themselves any right which they will not grant to another,—then strife and discord will cease; peace will be placed upon enduring foundations; and the American people, now divided and hostile, will dwell together in power and unity.