

Voices from Connecticut for impartial suffrage.

Read this, and induce others to read it. Do not fail to vote, and to use all your influence with your Neighbors to lead them to vote, and vote aright. Your action may decide the result.

VOICES FROM CONNECTICUT FOR IMPARTIAL SUFFRAGE.

Connecticut has made repeated changes in her conditions of suffrage. By the constitution adopted by the infant colony in 1639, the elective franchise belonged to all the members of the towns who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth.^{*} In the constitution formed the same year by the sister colony of New Haven, it was established that none but church-members should vote[†] or be elected to office. The two colonies were united under the charter granted by King Charles II. in 1662. This charter, which, says the historian Bancroft, “conferred on the colonists unqualified power to govern themselves,” and made “Connecticut independent except in name,” gave the privileges of voting and holding office to all the freemen of the colony, and left to the colony itself the power of determining who should be admitted as freemen. The first General Assembly after the reception of the Charter ordered that none should be admitted as freemen except “persons of civil, peaceable, & honest conversation,” that have “attained the age of twenty-one yeares, & haue 20 *l.* estate, besides their person, in the List of estate.” In 1675, the property qualification was reduced to 10 *l.*, besides personal estate. In 1689, it was made to consist of “freehold estate to the value of forty shillings, in country pay, per annum;” and in 1702, of “freehold estate to the value of 40 *s.* per annum, or 40 *l.* personal estate.” In the revised code of 1796, these sums were reduced to Federal money, and set at \$7 and \$134. In the new Constitution adopted in 1818, the property qualification was thus stated,—“a freehold estate of the yearly value of \$7 in this State;” but, by an amendment in 1845, the property requisition, which had existed so many years, was entirely removed.

* “Which choise shall be made by all that are admitted freemen, & haue taken the Oath of Fidellity, & doe cohabitte within this Jurisdiction.”— *Constitutional Order I.*, Jan. 14, 1639.

† “That church members onely shall be free burgesses, & thatt they onely shall chuse magistrates & officers among themselves to haue the power of transacting all the publique civall affayres of this Plantation.”— *Fundamental Agreement*, June 4, 1639.

The first denial of the right of suffrage on account of color took place in 1814. Of this denial, however unjustifiable and impolitic, we hope some less dishonorable explanation is possible than that which we find given upon the floor of the Connecticut House of Representatives at the last session: “Connecticut was willing to eat her share of Southern dirt for her share of Southern trade. Hence we

had in Connecticut persons who boasted that they were Northern men with Southern principles. Thus a treaty of political alliance was formed between Northern demagogues and Southern man-stealers; and when the South-Carolina whip was cracked, and the Connecticut brethren were informed that the interests of Southern slavery demanded that no more colored persons should be admitted as voters in this State (although they had always been voters up to that time), the word 'white' was inserted in our State Constitution."

The unfortunate act of May, 1814, stated explicitly: "No person shall be admitted a freeman in any town in this State, unless, in addition to the qualifications already required by law, he be a free white male person." This exclusion of colored men, not already voters, from the privileges of freemen, 2 was confirmed by the Constitution of 1818, and has continued to the present time.

In October, 1855, an intellectual qualification was added, by the following amendment to the Constitution: "Every person shall be able to read any article of the Constitution, or any section of the Statutes of this State, before being admitted as an elector."

At length, the revival of the spirit of the fathers called for a return to the usages of the fathers, to that exemption from distinctions of color which prevailed in the government of Connecticut, and without any evil result, for nearly two centuries. The House of Representatives, June 22, 1864, passed a resolution by which the word "white" should be struck out of the article specifying the qualifications of electors. This amendment, according to the course required by the Constitution, was continued to the next General Assembly. In the House of Representatives for the present year, it was fully and ably discussed, and at length, May 25, adopted by a vote of 157 to 76. In the Senate, it was adopted, July 18, by a unanimous vote. July 20, it was approved by the excellent Governor of the State, who has so commended and endeared himself to loyal men through the country, by his fidelity and patriotism. It will be acted upon by the people on the first Monday of October. We trust that Connecticut will then redeem herself from that inconsistency which has been so long a dishonor to her, an apology for the oppressor, and an obstacle to the progress of truth and righteousness.

The article, with the proposed amendment, reads thus, showing how very carefully it still guards the elective franchise: "Every male citizen of the United States who shall have attained the age of twenty-one years, who shall have resided in this State for a term of one year next preceding, and in the town in which he may offer himself to be admitted to the privileges of an elector, at least six months next preceding the time at which he may so offer himself, and shall be able to read any article of the Constitution, or any section of the Statutes of this State, and shall sustain a good moral character, shall, on taking such oath as may be prescribed by law, become an elector." A commonwealth where only such persons are allowed to vote, is in little danger from extended suffrage.

Of the speeches in the House of Representatives, during the discussion of this subject, we find those of George Pratt, Esq., of Norwich, Phineas T. Barnum, Esq., of Bridgeport, John M. Douglas, Esq., of Middletown, and Hon. Henry B. Harrison, of New Haven, reported in the newspapers of the time. A more extended search than we have had the opportunity of making, might show us others. We also find re-printed a speech by Hon. Francis Gillette, of Hartford, addressed to the House of Representatives in May, 1838; and the returned soldiers of the State represented by Gen. Orris S. Ferry, of Norwalk, in an earnest and able plea for the amendment, first communicated in a series of articles to the Norwalk "Gazette," and afterwards re-printed in the New Haven "Palladium."

As the question is one, not merely of local, but of intense national interest, it has seemed to us that these arguments and appeals, the more valuable because called forth by a direct practical issue, ought to have a wider circulation than that which they have had already within the State in which they originated. Yet our limits forbid full re-prints, and we must content ourselves with portions bearing most directly upon important points.

VOICES FROM CONNECTICUT.

I. The denial of the right of suffrage to men on account of color is in direct opposition to that Declaration of Independence which lies at the foundation of our national existence, and to the Bill of Rights on which the Constitution of the State is based.

The restriction in question is anti-republican. We have adopted as our motto, "Liberty and Equality." We have proclaimed it to the world. We declare in our constitution, "that all men are equal in rights." This principle forms the basis of our government, and is its high distinction. But how shall we reconcile with this Republican doctrine the policy which we have adopted toward the colored man? I cannot do it: *no man can do it*. Notwithstanding our boasted liberty and equality, notwithstanding all our high professions of regard for human rights, we strip the colored man of his rights, we proscribe him, we make him an alien and an outcast. However respectable in character, or aspiring in aims, we crush him, we tread him to the earth, we deny him the fruits of liberty while we tantalize him with their fragrance.— Hon. F. Gillette.

The moment that participation in the election of magistrates and legislators is subjected to any limitation narrower than that of individual manhood, we begin to move backward in the direction of those old-world systems which it has cost us the effort of two centuries to shake off: suffrage loses its recognition as a right, and assumes the character of a mere privilege. To show how wide a departure from fundamental principles is thus accomplished, we quote a few pregnant sentences from the Declaration of Rights, prefixed to the Constitution of Connecticut. "That the great and

essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established, we declare that all men, when they form a social compact, are *equal in rights*, and that no set of men is entitled to exclusive privileges from the community.”

We quote again from a still older charter, one, out of which have flowed all the inestimable benefits of modern civilization. “God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.” If the Declaration of Independence is true, if our Bill of Rights is true, if our Bible is true, it follows irresistibly, that the exercise of suffrage is a right of man because he is a man, and needs no other support. Like other rights, it is capable of forfeiture; but the exception only proves the rule.—
Gen. O. S. Ferry.

After all, we have not yet reached the root of this question. Let us go deeper. We are touching the great political problem, which from age to age, through revolution after revolution, ever since the dawn of civilization, has agitated nations, and agitates them still. Let us look for a principle to guide us in the solution of it.

Here, more than two hundred years ago, the free inhabitants of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield, organized a free commonwealth under the first formal written constitution of government that the world ever saw. That constitution was the embodiment of an idea. It recognized—imperfectly to be sure, but still it recognized—a principle. Upon that principle, bampereed indeed, at first, by restrictions, most of which have disappeared, the political institutions of this commonwealth have always rested. The same principle has found its way, more or less perfectly developed, into all our American constitutions. It cropped out clearly in the Declaration of Independence. It is the same principle which lies at the foundation of our holy religion. So simple is it, that the statement of it seems almost to express nothing. “All men are brethren:” that is Christianity. “All men are created equal:” that is the Republic.

“All men are created equal,”—not in strength, not in intelligence, not in beauty—but equal in the sight of God, and equal in the presence of the law. I care not how brilliant the sophist who pronounces this dogma “a glittering generality.” I care not how atheistical the political philosopher who denies its truth. It is the central principle of Christianity. It is the only living principle of political institutions. It is identically the same principle in religion and in political philosophy. It is the power of civilization. It is the grand and simple idea of the Republic. It advances. It has advanced for eighteen hundred years. Nothing can withstand it. Kingdoms, principalities, and powers cannot hinder its triumphant march.

“All men are brethren.” “All men are created equal.” That is the truth of God. That is the solid rock. That is the primal granite. That is the sure foundation on which this great Republic rests, and on which, at last, all the nations of the earth shall stand.— Hon. H. B. Harrison.

II. This denial is at variance with the Great Law of American Progress and Development.

The entire life of the colonies, prior to the Revolution, was a training for the establishment of a nation whose government should rest upon the political equality of individuals and the consent of the governed.

The first true Democracy of history was born in these shadowy forests, and grew strong in the contests of individual man with primitive nature. It uttered itself in language that has shaken the world, in the Declaration of Independence. From that moment, its progress and development have been sure. Primogeniture fell before it. Property restrictions upon suffrage survived a little longer, only to perish in their turn. *4 Slavery closed in a death-grapple with it, and perished in blood and fire.* One barrier to its final triumph remains; viz., *the denial of rights by reason of diversity of race.*

We have alluded to the Declaration of Independence, not by way of authority, but because its political doctrines underlie the whole growth and development of American society. They are the key-note of American progress. So long as we move in the direction which they indicate, we shall grow better, wiser, purer; shall approximate more nearly to the pattern of a perfect state. And this, not because the Declaration recites these maxims, but because *they are true*. They are, in no respect, original in that instrument: unconsciously, probably, to the statesman who penned the words, he was only incorporating for the first time, in the charter of a nation, those great truths whose seminal principles were exhibited, centuries ago, in the divine teachings of the Author of Christianity.— Gen. Ferry.

III. This denial is inconsistent with the Essential Principles of Natural Right.

The radical difference between the ancient and modern forms of civilization consists in the recognition, by the latter, of certain rights appertaining to each and every man, for the sole reason that *he is a man*. The Greek or the Roman knew nothing of these; but his fundamental law was force: the strongest was always the most righteous. The Englishman or the American, on the other hand, professes to determine the relations of men to each other in the social state, according to certain laws of moral rectitude, whose origin is clearly traceable in the divine command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

In the American theory of society, personal liberty,—in other words, individual freedom,—occupies the foremost position among these fundamental rights. While I may forfeit this liberty by crime, no man or authority, so long as I am innocent, may justly deprive me of it; and all limitations upon it are only so far lawful as they are made with my consent, express or fairly implied. It follows, that, in the association of individuals which is called the State, the men who exercise the functions of government, which is a limitation of individual freedom, derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed. All men possessing, by virtue of their manhood, equal rights to the exercise of political functions, a government based upon natural right would necessarily be a pure Democracy; that is, so much of law, as should be needful for the well-being of the community, would be enacted by the unanimous consent of all the individuals composing that community. But here, from the imperfection of human capacity, two limitations necessarily arise, viz.,—

1. All the individuals of a State will be unable to agree in the enactment of laws. But as law is necessary, and the opinion of either the greater or lesser number must prevail in its creation, the nearest approximation to natural right will be to devolve the law-making power for the whole upon the majority of the whole. The right of the majority, therefore, is based upon the two-fold foundation of the natural rights and the natural necessities of man.

2. Another limitation, springing from the physical incapacities of the race, will be found in the impossibility, in a country of any considerable territorial extent, of gathering together the whole people in a single assembly. But, as we have seen that the essence of rightful government consists in the consent of the governed fairly expressed through the majority, and as this consent may as readily be indicated through the agency of others as by personal declaration, the representative system is naturally evolved by this latter limitation, and, equally with a pure Democracy, finds its ultimate basis in natural right, and, when exercised strictly upon that basis, may, with sufficient propriety be designated a Democracy.— Gen. Ferry.

IV. This denial is essentially a maintenance of Slavery.

As one of the people, I would vote for the amendment, because I am in favor of abolishing slavery in Connecticut. Whether we can reach it elsewhere or not, we can reach it here; and I am in favor of cutting it up here, root and branch. You say that slavery has been abolished in this State. I deny it. The negro in Connecticut is tolerated: *he is not free*. Reluctantly you have yielded to the slave, one after another, some of the attributes of a free man: the most precious of them all you still refuse him. You no longer whip him; you no longer sell him; you no longer refuse to let him eat his own bread in the sweat of his own brow; but that great right which is the essence of citizenship in a free commonwealth; that right which is the defence and guaranty of all others; the right to be, as a man,

absolutely equal to every other man before the law; the right to exert the influence of a free man in the choice of his own rulers, and in moulding the laws by which he is governed,—this right you still refuse to deliver to the black man. Therefore, I say, he is not yet free.— Mr. Harrison.

If Connecticut fails to strike this blow for equality, if she fails to do justice to the men she called upon to fight her battles, it will be a more decisive blow in favor of despotism, ingratitude, and aristocracy than her whole history shows her to have given in favor of partial freedom. So long as we fail to elevate the black men to a citizen, so long we are perpetuating slavery; and our boasted talk of free institutions is *a mockery and a cheat*. It has ever been the desire of certain men to have a partition between the men who earn bread by the sweat of their brow and those who are born to luxury and ease.— J. M. Douglas, Esq.

Certainly, in the light of the great American spirit of liberty and equal rights which is sweeping over this country, and making the thrones of tyrants totter in the Old World, no party can afford to carry slavery either of body or mind. Knock off your manacles, and let the man go free. Take down the blinds from his intellect, and let in the light of education and Christian culture. When this is done you have developed man. Give him the responsibility of a man and the self-respect of a man by granting him the right of suffrage. *Let universal education and the universal franchise be the motto of free America*; and the toiling millions of Europe, who are watching us with such intense interest, will hail us as saviors.— P. T. Barnum, Esq.

V. This denial is absurd in its own nature.

The restriction is absurd, because it makes color, instead of character, the standard of the man. Sir, we are shocked and disgusted by the custom of the Chinese, which compresses the human foot to a painful deformity, and makes the degree of its smallness the measure of female gentility. We marvel at the barbarous custom, which prevails with a certain tribe of Indians, of depressing the skulls of their children, and thus making them appear inhuman; and we wonder how the Flat-heads can call that beauty. But these customs compare well with that which exists in *enlightened* Connecticut, of making color, not character, the standard of the man. * Why not, sir, restrict the right of suffrage to the length of a man's nose, or to the stature of his body? Yet color has no more in reality to do with the matter than the one or the other. Moreover, one would think there must be no little impracticability in discriminating between colors in this case. The white and the black, from some cause, have become wonderfully blended: shade passes into shade, and hue deepens into hue, so as to require the keen discerning eye of a practised physiognomist to distinguish them. Notwithstanding the horror the white race express of amalgamation, it has gone on, and is now going on alarmingly. I know it is horrible to think about and talk about; but, after all, its horrors do

not prove frightful enough to stay its progress. But I do think, sir, if the Constitution makes color the qualification inseparable from the right of suffrage, it should be made to settle the question clearly, and inform us by rule, how much of the *black* a man may have, and still be a constitutional white man, and, on the contrary, how much of the *white* a man may have and still be an unconstitutional black man.— Mr. Gillette.

* The following anecdote is just ridiculous enough to be cited in this connection:—

Some thirty years ago the President of the Island of Antigua, Sir Ed. Byam, issued an order forbidding the great bell in the cathedral in St. John's being tolled at the funeral of a colored person, and directing a smaller bell to be hung in the same belfry, and used on such occasions. For twenty years this distinction was strictly maintained. When a white person, however vile, was buried, the Great Bell tolled! When a colored person, whatever his moral worth, intelligence, or station was carried to his grave [??]the little bell tinkled[??];— *Thome & Kimball*.

VI. It is always safe for nations, as for individuals, to BE JUST; and there is safety in no other course.

This great revolution has taught the world one lesson worth all it has cost,—that it is safe to trust, and trust utterly, the grand principle of which I have been speaking. *God has so made nations that it is safe for them to be just; safe for them to rely for their preservation and defence upon the average intelligence, the average morality, the average patriotism, of their peoples.* Admit, then, to the privileges of citizenship, all men who by birth or naturalization are identified with the nation. To this doctrine we are committed by our history, and upon it we can safely stand.— Mr. Harrison.

We urge, then, the removal of the restriction of color in this Commonwealth, as an imperative duty demanded by the law of right conduct. So long as it is retained, the State is inflicting a wrong upon those who suffer the deprivation; and *every one who votes for its retention is guilty of oppression.* To conscientious men, this consideration is conclusive, and it requires but a slight knowledge of American history for all men to perceive its weighty import. When the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States was discussing a proposed clause of that instrument whose practical operation was expected to result in the immediate suppression of the slave-trade, South Carolina and Georgia objected to its adoption, and enforced their objection with threats of withdrawing from the Convention. The Middle States, led by Virginia, insisted upon its passage. New England, acknowledging the iniquity of the traffic in human beings, but anxious to secure the general commercial advantages which would result from the Constitution, united with the extreme South in the proposal of a compromise, which should leave the slave trade unrestricted for twenty years. George Mason of Virginia, in opposing this measure, said, "As nations cannot be punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and

effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities." His remonstrance was unheeded. The compromise was adopted; for twenty years, the slave-ship, sailing under the American flag, deposited its freight of misery upon our shores. Slavery, as the result, spread from the Atlantic States into the far interior, sapping the foundations of free government wherever it went, till it acquired sufficient strength to assail the very life of the Republic; and now, half a million of bloody graves, north and south, attest the fulfilment of Mason's prophecy. Yet God has not suffered the nation to be destroyed. A few weeks ago, as the Rebellion went crashing down into annihilation, how ready were we, as hand clasped hand, and eye flashed greeting back to eye, to acknowledge his hand in our wonderful deliverance! Have these terrible four years taught us nothing? Can we not see, that, in his providence, this question is still left open to us as a touchstone of principle? Issues of mere expediency, such as relate to revenue or currency and the like, may be decided either way, without violating the obligations of moral duty; but the denial to our fellow-men of rights which our fundamental charters prove to be inherent in humanity does violate those obligations; and the Nation or State which is deliberately guilty of such violation is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind. We, surely, of all people, should have learned, that, in a question of this character, there is but one safe course for society or the individual; and that course is TO DO RIGHT.— Gen. Ferry.

VII. It is especially impolitic and dangerous for a community to keep a portion of the people degraded and wronged, and hence alienated in feeling, and indifferent, if not positively hostile, to the general welfare.

The restriction is impolitic, because, contrary to the policy of all wise governments, it is calculated to depress, and not to elevate, one class of citizens. This certainly is unwise in a popular government, which should be so administered as to conduce to the common improvement and welfare of the whole community. Its aim should be, not to bind down, but to raise up; not to discourage, but to cheer; not to degrade, but to improve, all its citizens, and make them intelligent, virtuous, and happy. *The government failing to do this is a curse;* its light is not that of the sun; it does not warm and animate, but chills and deadens.

It is impolitic, because it is calculated to make enemies of those who should be our friends. By thus disfranchising the colored man, and denying him his rights, the white man becomes in his regards his oppressor and foe. He turns from him with a heart full of anguish and repinings. Has it not been the constant policy of all wise governments to make friends of their subjects? to conciliate the goodwill and favor of all within their sphere, and thus enshrine themselves in the affections, and fortify themselves with the hearts, of all their citizens? It was the saying of a wise man, "that he would make no man his enemy; for he knew not how soon he should want him for a friend." States should profit by this maxim, and beware of alienating any portion of their citizens; for they know not how soon they may need their united attachment and support.— Mr. Gillette.

Years ago I was afraid of foreign voters. I feared, that, when Europe poured her teeming millions of working-people on our shores, our extended laws of franchise would enable them to swamp our free institutions, and reduce us to anarchy. But much reflection has satisfied me, that we have only to educate these millions, and their descendants, to the standard of American citizens, and we shall find sufficient of the leaven of liberty in our system of government to embrace all foreign elements, and assimilate them to a democratic form of government.

Mr. Speaker,—We cannot afford to carry *passengers*, and have them live under our government with no real living interests in its perpetuity. Every man must be a joint owner. The best inhabitants of any town are the householders. When a man owns his own house, be it ever so humble, he feels an interest in the prosperity of his town. The only safe inhabitants of a free country are educated citizens who vote. The gentleman from Milford lives near the old Washington toll bridge, which spans the Housatonic River; and he doubtless remembers, as I do, when the Boston and New-York stages crossed that bridge, and the coachman would always swear at and denounce the “infernal bridge monopoly,” which compelled him to pay a dollar every time the stage crossed. The passengers would generally laugh, and say, “Let him pay, it's nothing to us: we are only passengers.” Some twenty years ago, one of the gentlemen accustomed to travel in that stage was crossing the Atlantic in a steamship. At the hour of midnight, when nearly all were wrapt in sleep, the fearful cry of fire rang through the ship. There were the poor passengers, threatened by the devouring element,—but a plank between them and death. Our passenger, not half awake, rubbed his eyes, and, probably fancying he was in the old stage-coach, cried out, “Fire away, I am only a passenger!” (Laughter.) Fortunately it was a false alarm; but, when the gentleman got wide awake, he discovered that there could be no disinterested passengers on board a burning ship. So it is with a free government: we cannot afford to employ journeymen. They may be apprentices until they learn to read and study our institutions: then let them become joint proprietors, and feel a commensurate responsibility.—Mr. Barnum.

Our progress is forward in one general direction. Every white man practically claims, as his right, absolute liberty of conscience in religious matters, an equal share in his father's estate, a capacity to vote at the legal age, and freedom to call the President plain Mr. Johnson. Men may desire to alter this condition of things, in any or all of these particulars; but reflecting men know that such alteration has become impossible. But, while all white men practically assert these rights for themselves, it is proposed to deny the most important of all of them, because that by which all the rest are secured, to one-sixth of the nation, American born and bred, and, by recent events, constituted an integral portion of the people of the United States. None but fools now talk of exporting this mass of laborers to other lands; and, judging by the past, the five millions of to-day will, in twenty-five years, increase to ten millions. As a portion of the American people, they are

to possess the following among other Constitutional rights; viz., freedom of speech, of writing, of printing; the right peaceably to assemble, and petition for redress of grievances; the right to keep and bear arms; and to be secure in their houses, persons, and effects against unreasonable arrests, searches, and seizures. It cannot be expected that they will remain ignorant of these rights.

Now we confidently put the question to any reflecting man: Which is safer for the Republic,—to give this increasing mass of our laboring population the same political capacities which we, in all our Federal and State charters, claim for ourselves on the sole ground of our manhood, and thereby make the Republic to them, as it is to us, an object of abiding affection, as the conservator of rights and the guaranty of liberties; or, on the other hand, by arbitrarily refusing to them by an ineradicable distinction of race all such capabilities, to hold up to them the State as an imperious master, whose law for them is the Pagan law of force, and whose denial to them of what it at the same time asserts to be the inalienable right of humanity, must necessarily choke up in their hearts the very fountains of patriotic affection? Do we wish to have ten millions of our countrymen a quarter of a century hence regard our government with the same feeling with which the Irish peasant now regards England?— Gen. Ferry.

The suggestions which we have just made ought to dispel the too prevalent idea that the advocates of impartial suffrage are controlled only or mainly by an anxiety for the welfare of the colored race. It is not merely because the destinies of that race are involved in the issue, but because it affects the stability of our newly restored peace, the permanence of free institutions, and the lasting continuance of the Republic. For there is no lesson taught by history with more clearness than this; viz., that *the legalized degradation of a part of a people tends irresistibly to the demoralization of the remainder, and results either in the general subversion of popular freedom, or violent conflict for its preservation.* We are just at the end of such a conflict. The seeds of a similar convulsion are already sown broadcast over one-half the Republic. Shall we leave them to germinate, and spring up into a harvest of blood to be reaped by our children, or eradicate them by the simple expedient of extending to all American citizens the civil capacities which are now enjoyed only by a part?

We insist upon the *imperative necessity of impartial suffrage for the salvation of the Republic.* — Gen. Ferry.

VIII. This denial finds no justification in any alleged inferiority of the colored man in intellectual capacity. Some admit, others deny, this inferiority. If it exists, it does not exist in any such degree as to disqualify him for citizenship. Let him simply be brought to the same test with white men, among whom great intellectual differences exist.

Why not make him free? No man in this house has ventured to say, and no man here will say, that the negro should be forbidden to exercise the right of suffrage because of his *color*. The argument is placed on other grounds. It is said that the negro is inferior to the white man in intellectual capacity. I admit it. I wish to treat this question frankly; and I admit that the negro race is intellectually inferior to the white race, because I believe it. Others on this floor do not. They may be right. The war has dispelled many delusions about the negro. We were told that he would not fight; but he does fight. We were told, that, at the sound of the word "liberty," he would seize the torch and the knife, and spring upon his master with the ferocity of the tiger. The word came to him, and he was as gentle as a lamb. I know not how far wrong I may go in conceding his intellectual inferiority to the white man. Yet I admit it. What then? Is he so inferior that he cannot safely be trusted with the right of suffrage? That is the question. What is your standard? By what standard do you measure the white man's intellect in order to decide whether he is fit to vote or not? You require him to be able to read. Well, this amendment makes the same requirement of the negro. You do not object to his color. Your test of fitness is intelligence. Apply the test, then, equally to all men, white and black. If the white man comes up to your standard, you admit him; if not, you reject him. Treat the negro in the same way. We ask no more. "Equal and exact justice,"—that is all.— Mr. Harrison.

So the question resolves itself into this: The only objection to admitting a black man to the privilege of an elector is that he is naturally inferior. Now I challenge the proof of such inferiority. I believe, that, with equal advantages, they will maintain prominent position. Look at the names of men of African birth who have figured conspicuously in the world's history. Remember Toussaint L'Ouverture, how, he strove to accomplish the freedom of his race, displaying military powers able to cope with any of the captains of his age,—he, the victim of that prejudice which we are trying to expunge to-day. Did Franco call him inferior, when she accepted his assistance against the armies of England and Spain, but failed to do him justice, and added shame to ingratitude by placing him to die in the dungeon of Joux? That country displayed an ingratitude which can never be forgotten: and we, who are making to-day the greatest page of human history, must not be unmindful of the teachings of the past.— Mr. Douglas.

And, sir, what is the amendment proposed? Is not every qualification of a good citizen contained therein? Must he not be of adult age, of good moral character, able to read the constitution of the State? But, say the minority, he must also be "white;" for, says the report, "the negroes have shown as yet no capacity to compete with the white race in the march of civilization. No inventive faculties, no genius for the arts, or for any of those occupations requiring intellect and wisdom, have been developed." And again: "This race is inferior to the Caucasian race, which has hitherto controlled the political affairs of the State." Inferior, sir! let me ask the gentleman of the opposition, how and when they were made so. Can it be claimed for a moment that God, who made of one blood all nations

upon the face of the earth, created the negro, gave him a soul to be lost or saved, affections to be developed, a mind to reason, speech, and all the attributes of manhood, and yet placed him so low in the scale of humanity, that he never could be trusted with the power to govern or care for himself? To attribute such a design to the Creator seems to me but little short of blasphemy. But the negro, say they, has shown no capacity of improvement, no skill or genius in any occupation requiring either intellect or wisdom. I am astonished at the coolness with which this statement is made and reiterated in the minority report; and I wonder in what climate or place the gentlemen must have lived, in order that they have never seen a successful and intelligent negro farmer or mechanic. [Mr. Pratt went on at length to cite numerous instances of success achieved by colored men in every walk of life, in manufactures, art, literature, and arms, and showed conclusively that the propositions assumed in the minority report, in this respect, were not true.]— G. Pratt. Esq.

IX. The more tardy development of the African race has resulted, in great measure, from their less favorable geographical position, and from the cruelty with which they have been treated by other races.

Another assertion, which often takes the place of argument, is, that the negro race is by nature incapable of self-government; and we are triumphantly asked, why, if this be not so, the African race have never succeeded in establishing a civilized State? Let us bring the light of history to bear upon this matter, and see if it will afford an explanation. To the world of Plato and of Seneca, and tribes of the north and of the south were alike barbarians, equally believed to be incapable of becoming the founders of civilized States. What has made the difference in their subsequent career? We shall not attempt to interpret the mysteries of Providence; but the historic record may afford us a partial answer.

The irruption of the northern barbarians into the Roman Empire brought them into immediate contact with the civilization which they overthrew. They stood wonder-stricken in the midst of the ruin which they had made; and out of that ruin emerged an influence which conquered even their rude hearts,—the influence of Christianity. It came, revealing God, breathing purity and love, and bringing life and immortality to light; and it gradually transformed the savage Angle and Saxon, the fierce Vandal and Goth and Frank, into the polished and enlightened European of the modern centuries.

The negro tribes, on the other hand, remained separated by vast and almost impassable deserts, from the ancient civilized world. The Christian missionary failed to reach them. Centuries rolled away, leaving them in their utter isolation, till, shortly before the discovery of America, the voyages of the Portuguese navigators drew upon them the attention of Europe. Then, for the first time, a representative of Christianity visited them, but in far other guise than when, a thousand years before, the hearts of the northern barbarians were won to the new religion. It came to the wild

African nations, bringing no loving message of light and redemption, but made its revelation from the deck of the slave-ship. It tore its victims from their burning homes, and dragged them to inhospitable ocean shores: it loaded them with fetters, branded them with hot irons, lashed them with knotted whips, thrust them between the accursed decks of the slaver, and bore them away into the fiery torment of the Middle Passage. It landed them in a strange land, amid a strange race, and left them with such admonitions as these: "From henceforth, you are to cease to be men, and to become brutes. Your domestic relations are to be those of the beasts of the field. Every avenue of knowledge is to be closed against you. Develop your muscles, strengthen your sinews, but forget that you have an intellectual nature. Civilization requires that you should be a laboring animal, and the more you approach the submissiveness and stupidity of the ox, the better will you be adapted to its purposes." And lest in the heart of the negro there should be some aspiration, some struggle after light and liberty, the rock of the slave-code was placed upon his head to crush him down into hopeless animalism forever. For three hundred years, this process has been going on, upon the American Continent and its adjacent islands, and now we taunt the negro because he has never established a civilized State! Has civilization, has Christianity, dealt fairly with him?— Gen. Ferry.

But, sir, the next section of the Report would seem to me to contain the keenest irony and sarcasm, did I not suppose the gentlemen intended it for a simple statement of fact. Let me read it:—

"Living as they have, in the same States with many citizens who claimed to take the deepest interest in their welfare, to regard their capacities as equal to those of the whites, and to devote themselves to their elevation, the labors of these enthusiastic philanthropists have not been effective in developing those marks of intellectual and moral powers that everywhere distinguish the Caucasian."

Let me ask the members of this House, where and in what place has the colored man had an opportunity to develop his abilities? He has been the victim of blind, besotted prejudice, the mark and butt of those who claimed to be his superiors. Who have devoted themselves to his elevation? How many in number have been those enthusiastic philanthropists who have striven to develop his capabilities? Every member of this house knows that the black man has not had, in this or any other State in this Union, equal opportunities with the white. His friends were 10 few, his enemies many. There are those who would use the negro as an element of political power, who yet have scorned to call him their equal. No: it will not do to tread down the black man beneath our feet, to spurn him with every mark of obloquy and contempt, and coolly to turn to him, and say, "My friend, you don't seem to be getting up in the world very fast." Shall we throw about him every clog and hinderance of prejudice, shall we put upon him every burden of class and mark of prejudice, and then taunt him with his incapacity "to compete with the white race in the march of civilization?"— Mr. Pratt.

X. *This tardiness gives no proof of deficiency in the future development of the colored race, any more than the slower development of our Saxon ancestors gave proof of the permanent inferiority of the race to which we ourselves especially belong.*

And, yet, in spite of these adverse influences, the colored population of the United States has attained to a degree of civilization equal to that of the agricultural peasantry of Europe. The light which shines from our American charters, still more, the splendors which emanate from the sacred word, have pierced even the darkness which enveloped the cabins of the slaves, and, to some extent, the spiritual nature of man has asserted itself in their development. They afford, to-day, as fair a promise of future progress, as did the rude Saxon serf when the bonds of Norman villenage were falling from his limbs. Consider the lesson infolded in the following extract from Macaulay. (Hist. of Eng., vol. i. p. 13.) One of the early Norman kings, he says, "attempted to win the hearts of his English subjects by espousing an English princess; but, by many of his barons, *this marriage was regarded as a marriage between a white planter and a quadroon girl would now be regarded in Virginia.* In history he is known by the honorable name of Beaulere; but in his own time, his own countrymen called him by a Saxon nickname, in contemptuous allusion to his Saxon connection." Such was the estimate of the Saxon, a few centuries ago; to-day he is foremost among the people of the earth.— Gen. Ferry.

Suppose an inhabitant of another planet should drop down upon this portion of our earth at mid-winter. He would find the earth covered with snow and ice, congealed almost to the consistency of granite. The trees are leafless, every thing is cold and barren; no green thing is to be seen; the inhabitants are chilled, and stalk about shivering, from place to place. He would exclaim, "Surely this is not life; this means annihilation. No flesh and blood can long endure this; this frozen, rock-like earth is bound in the everlasting embraces of adamantine frost, and can never develop vegetation for the sustenance of any living thing." He little dreams of the priceless myriads of *germs* which bountiful nature has safely garnered in the warm bosom of our mother earth; he sees no evidence of that vitality which the warm and beneficent sun will revivify to grace and beautify the earth. But let him remain until March or April, and, as the snow begins to melt away, he discovers the beautiful crocus struggling through the half-frozen ground; the white snow-drop appears in all its chaste grace and beauty; the blossoms of the swamp-maple shoot forth; the magnificent magnolia opens her splendid blossoms; the sassafras adds its evidence of life; the pearl-white blossoms of the dogwood are interspersed through every forest; and, while our stranger is rubbing his eyes in astonishment, the earth is covered with her emerald velvet carpet. Rich foliage and brilliant-colored blossoms adorn the trees; beautiful flowers are enwreathing every wayside; the swift-winged birds float through the air, and send forth joyful notes from every tree-top; the merry lambs skip joyfully

around their verdant pasture grounds; and everywhere is our stranger surrounded with life and joy and gladness.

So it is with the poor African. You may take a dozen specimens of both sexes from the lowest type of man to be found in Africa; their race has been buried for ages in ignorance and barbarism, and you can scarcely perceive that they have any more of manhood or womanhood than many orang-outangs or gorillas. You look at their low foreheads, their thick skulls, their woolly heads, their thick lips, their broad, flat noses, their dull, lazy eyes; and you may be tempted to adopt the language of this minority committee, and exclaim, Surely, these people have “no inventive faculties, no genius for the arts, or for any of those occupations requiring intellect and wisdom.” But bring them out into the light of civilization; let them and their children come into the genial sunshine of Christianity; teach them industry, self-reliance and self-respect; and the human soul will begin to develop itself. Each generation, blessed with churches and common schools, will gradually exhibit the results of such culture; the low forehead will be raised and widened by an active and expanded brain; the eye of barbarism, ignorance, and idleness will light up with the fire of intellect, education, and Christian civilization; and you will find the immortal soul asserting her dignity by the development of a *man* who would startle, by his intelligence, the gentleman who has presumed to compare a being made in God's image with oxen and asses.— Mr. Barnum.

XI. Notwithstanding all their disadvantages, many colored men are now superior in intelligence to many of their white neighbors, who have the privilege of voting; and, while there is ample security against the voting of the very ignorant, the admission of others to this right would eminently promote their further elevation in intellect and character.

I have repeatedly travelled through every state in the South; and I assert, what every intelligent officer and soldier who has resided there will corroborate, that the slaves, as a body, are more intelligent than the poor whites. No man who has not been there can conceive to what a low depth of ignorance the poor snuff-chewing, clay-eating whites of some portions of the South have descended. [Mr. B. here gave a laughable anecdote illustrating the ignorance of this class.] I have known slave mechanics sell for \$3000 and even \$5000 each, and others could not be bought at all; and I have known intelligent slaves acting as stewards for their masters, travelling every year to New Orleans, Nashville, and even to Cincinnati, to dispose of their master's crops. The free colored citizens of Opelousas, St. Martinsville, and all the Attakapas region in Louisiana are as respectable and intelligent as an ordinary community of whites. They speak the French and English languages, educate their children in music, and they pay taxes on more than fifteen millions of dollars.— Mr. Barnum.

If the restriction of color be removed from our Constitution, the grossly ignorant will still be excluded from the suffrage by the clause which requires a capacity to read as a qualification of an elector.— Gen. Ferry

“But,” it is urged, “although the negro may possess a capacity which may be developed into fitness for exercising the right of suffrage, at present he is too ignorant to be intrusted with a power which may become dangerous in his hands. Let him first be educated into an understanding of the duties of citizenship, before you admit him into a participation of its privileges.” It is the old argument used by the privileged classes the world over, and in all time. Its only novelty is in its utterance by American lips. In these summer months, a general election has occurred in England, and, foremost among the questions canvassed there, has been this very one of the extension of the suffrage. Class interest, there as here, denies to the laboring man the right to vote, and the argument of the British Tory for the perpetuation of the injustice is identical with that of the American advocate of oppression. As if any man, white or black, could ever be taught to swim by being kept sprawling upon the shore! In such a system as ours, there is no education in political duties so swift and thorough as the possession of the right to participate in those duties. There is no sure way to perpetuate ignorance of them, like exclusion from such participation. In a country where universal suffrage is the rule, if you maintain an exception marked by an ineradicable distinction, you doom the excepted class to hopeless dishonor; you take away from them all the strongest motives which stimulate masses of men to exertion; and you foster every ignoble passion which can render them useless or dangerous to society.— Gen. Ferry.

Let the educated free negro feel that he is a MAN; let him be trained in New-England churches, schools, and workshops; let him support himself, pay his taxes, and cast his vote, like other men; and he will put to everlasting shame the champions of modern democracy, by the overwhelming evidence that he will give in his own person of the great Scripture truth, that “God has made of ONE BLOOD all the nations of the earth.” A human soul, that God has created and Christ died for, is not to be trifled with. It may tenant the body of a Chinaman, a Turk, an Arab, or a Hottentot,—it is still an immortal soul, and it will vindicate the great fact, that, without regard to color or condition, “All men are equally children of the common Father.”— Mr. Barnum.

XII. The adoption of Impartial Suffrage will not expose us to any social dangers or embarrassments.

In reply to all that we have hitherto urged, it is often said, “This is a republic of white men. The broad language used in our charters of government is always to be understood as applicable only to white men. It was never meant for negroes. If you extend it to them, by parity of reasoning, you must also extend to them all those social courtesies which exist among the members of the now dominant

race; you must invite them to your table; you sons and daughters must associate with their sons and daughters. If a negro asks your kinswoman in marriage, you must give her to him; if your son desires the 12 hand of a negress, you must consent." It is difficult for an intelligent man to believe that any one can be sincere in fallacy so transparent. The statement regarding the scope of our charters of government is historically untrue. Originally, the emancipated slave became a voter, in the majority of the old States, by the mere act of emancipation. As slavery grew to be the predominant influence in the land, the right was gradually withdrawn from him, until now it only remains in five of the New-England States and in New York. He was a voter in Connecticut, on the same basis as the white man, till 1814. Yet the distinction between political rights and social preferences was as well understood before that year as now. The colored man, in our system of government, has a right to the suffrage, because that system affirms that all civil authority is derived from the consent of the governed; but association and marital connections are matters of taste and choice. The right to "the pursuit of happiness," asserted in the Declaration of Independence, secures to every individual perfect liberty of choice in these relations; and this is a liberty which is incapable of restriction by human laws. The moment we apply such language as we have quoted above to any others than negroes, we perceive its fallacy. Every one will admit that there are thousands of white men whom he would not choose as companions: to whom he would be sorry to give a daughter in marriage; yet every one will see that this fact is no reason for excluding such persons from the exercise of political rights. Social tastes are no criterion for these rights: if they were, nobody could vote; for, we presume, there is no man whom some other man would not decline to associate with, or whom some lady would not refuse to accept as a husband.

There is no mystery, non difficulty in deciding how to do with the negro in these matters, if we are only disposed to do right. Strike out the word "white" from the Constitution, and no further legislation is needful. For all the rest, let the negro alone. Let him alone to vote as he pleases. Let him alone to seek and find his appropriate place in society. Let him alone to labor, and to improve. If he violates law, visit him with the penalties of the law. Treat him just as you do any one else coming into your community; *i. e.*, according to his qualities and character. In this way, and in this way only, will you settle the "negro question" forever.— Gen. Ferry.

XIII. The amendment proposed is imperatively demanded by the "Logic of Events."

The gentleman from Litchfield, in his manly speech upon the resolutions relating to President Lincoln, used an expression which has been repeatedly referred to in this debate. He spoke of the "logic of events." He, and those who act with him on this floor, have already yielded to that logic on one memorable occasion during this session. They consented that an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, abolishing slavery throughout the land, should receive the

unanimous assent of this House. I thank them for it. By that act they did not necessarily admit that their previous action in regard to slavery was wrong: they did admit that the “logic of events” had settled the question of slavery against them. Now let them help us remove that carcass and bury it; let them help us *abolish this last relic of slavery* in Connecticut, so that, if possible, the memory of it shall disappear forever.

If the “logic of events” has settled any thing, it has settled this fact, that slavery must utterly perish here and everywhere. A great party at the North has clung with the tenacity of death to that accursed institution. I am willing to believe, and do believe, that the masses of that party have done so in the belief that somehow the safety of the nation was identified with the salvation of slavery. But that delusion is gone. Slavery, being the manifestation among us of that spirit of caste, despotism, and aristocracy, which is directly opposed to the principle for which I here contend,—slavery confronted the nation, and said, “Your life or mine,”—slavery without the Republic, or the Republic without slavery. Slavery on this issue demanded the arbitrament of the sword, am no quarter. The issue has been met. It has been decided. Slavery would give no quarter; it has had no quarter; it shall have no quarter. “All men are created equal.” That principle, inexorable as the law of gravitation, shall be applied to those who have defied it; and they shall submit or perish.

If you clung to slavery living, *why cling to it dead?* Has it not done enough to absolve you from all obligations of fidelity to it? It has barbarized a once noble people: it has rotted out of them the sense of honor, the vital spirit of religion, the very instincts of humanity. It has starved our brethren and children by thousands, and murdered them by tens of thousands. Blackened and bloody with crimes and cruelties, it has culminated in an act of horror which has shocked the heart of the civilized world as it never was shocked before.

The “logic of events” is the language of 13 God. Less than three years ago, the negro was shot down like a dog in the streets of New York, because public opinion made him there a slave. The other day I saw in that great city those same streets filled with uncounted thousands of men, crowding the sidewalks, filling the windows, and covering the roofs. The body of the great emancipator passed by, and we who stood there trembled as it passed. Behind it came the negro, wearing the blue uniform of the Republic, and bearing its flag in his hand; and the white man uncovered before him, not thereby doing obeisance to the negro, but rendering involuntary homage to the great principle of which I speak, which Lincoln had consecrated by his precious blood, and which had been consecrated eighteen hundred years before by blood only more precious than his.

The “logic of events” like these cannot be misunderstood or resisted. Accept it. Submit to it. Forget consistency. In these days no man a right to be consistent. The man who has not changed his

opinions again and again during the last four years is not fit to live in times like these. Let us be faithful to principles, and we shall be faithful to ourselves.— Mr. Harrison.

Victory would not cheer us. The great plan of civilization and liberty was not yet completed. Suddenly our rules grasped the idea, and in January, 1863, sent forth a proclamation of freedom, declaring slaves forever free. From that hour, Heaven's benignant smiles came upon us, and our gallant armies moved steadily forward to the complete destruction of Southern tyranny and the establishment of the authority of government. But now we have a greater work to perform, such as we are contemplating to-day. Equality, equality, is the word which sounds out from every humble lip; and those who make the laws and hold brief power must heed it, or the State and Nation will go back, and lose the proud eminence it has gained in abolishing forever the institution of slavery.— Mr. Douglas.

XIV. The question affects directly Connecticut alone; but the MORAL INFLUENCE of her decision upon it may be incalculable, for good evil, through the whole country.

Fortunately, the subject is presented to us disembarassed of all extraneous issues. We have no occasion to trouble ourselves about what the Federal Government will do, or ought to do. We are not called upon to vote on matters affecting other and distant communities. The question relates to Connecticut, and only to Connecticut. The people of this State, in their primary capacity, as the source of all rightful political power within its limits, will make their choice between partial and impartial suffrage. It is very grave question. It goes down to the foundations of the social structure, and according to its decision will our love and respect for genuine Democracy be judged.— Gen. Ferry.

We have occasionally extended our view beyond the limits of our own State, in which this question is first practically to be decided, and it may seem to a casual reader, that in so doing, we have wandered from the argument suggested in our preliminary remarks. In fact, however, we have not done so. The number of the colored population in Connecticut is so small, that men are apt to think that the vote upon the Constitutional Amendment here is of but trifling importance; and *there is danger, that, under the influence of this feeling, many will not vote at all.* We have therefore directed attention to the magnitude of the interests involved in the issue in the country at large, and to the serious peril which threatens the Republic, unless the subject be now finally disposed of by a righteous decision.

We are confident that the generation now coming upon the stage of political life will see suffrage made impartial in every State in the Union. We wish to expedite the result; and the decision which Connecticut shall arrive at this year, will, we think, exert an influence in other States, far transcending

in importance the immediate consequences within her own borders. *Providence has placed her in the fore-front in this conflict.* If she falters, while she will not prevent the ultimate victory, she will, nevertheless, make the contest more protracted and severe. If acknowledging the force of evens, and adopting the logic of the Declaration of Independence and our own Bill of Rights, we here shall place suffrage upon the simple basis of manhood, we shall strengthen the hands of the friends of self-government throughout the Republic. If, by neglect or indifference, we fail to do this, we put an argument into the mouths of the advocates of oppression, which we shall find it hard to answer. "If you in New England," they will say, "are determined to continue to govern your colored population without its consent, limited as it is in numbers, and measurably educated in your common schools, how can you expect us to take a different course with ours, under so much less favorable circumstances?" The influence, then, which our example will exert in other States, is an 14 additional reason for the extension of the suffrage in this Commonwealth.— Gen. Ferry.

Gentlemen of the opposition, I beseech you to remember that our State and our country asks from us something more than party tactics. It is absolutely necessary that the loyal whites. Let Connecticut, without regard to party, set them an example that shall influence the action at the South, and prevent a new form of slavery arising there, which shall make all our expenditure of blood and treasure fruitless.

Col. J. McKaye, special commissioner from the War Department to Lower Mississippi, says in his report,—

"The simple truth is, that the virus of slavery, the lust of ownership, in the hearts of these old masters, is as virulent and active to-day as it ever was. They acknowledge that slavery in its old form is dead. but scoff at the idea of freedom for the negro, and await with impatience the withdrawal of the military authorities, and the re-establishment of the civil power of the State, to be controlled and used as hitherto for the maintenance of some form of the slave system."

Judge Humphrey, in a speech delivered at a Union meeting at Huntsville, Ala., says,—

"I believe, in case of a return to the Union, we would receive political co-operation, so as to secure the management of that labor by those who were slaves. There is really no difference, in my opinion, whether we hold them as absolute slaves, or obtain their labor by some other method."

Again: these Southern aristocrats would fine, whip, imprison, and tar and feather school masters and schoolmistresses, who would dare teach colored persons to read; and our soldiers would be sent to the South to protect tyrants from the indignation of such as have learned the lesson of this war by their actual observation.— Mr. Barnum.

Mr. Speaker,—It may be that these remarks have been too extended, and view the question more in its bearing upon the Government than upon a single State. But, sir, the theme is one whose scope embraces not only the interest of Connecticut but of the whole country. The decision we make may have material weight in settling this question in our sister States; and from this house may go out that which shall induce, at an early day, a radical change in the constitutions of the States of this Republic; so that all men, black and white, shall stand equal in making the laws under which they live. God grant that, whatever others may do, Connecticut shall henceforth be free!—Mr. Douglas.

XV. This amendment is due to the MORAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERS which the colored people have maintained, notwithstanding the debasing and disheartening influences to which they have been subjected.

Will it be said that the negro is morally inferior to the white man? Do not say it. If I have conceded to you his intellectual inferiority, concede to me, that, morally, he is our equal. He is kind, gentle, forgiving, obedient to law, religious. His religion may sometimes manifest itself in grotesque forms; but it is profound and sincere. Be just: whatever else you deny to this poor and despised race, do not refuse to acknowledge, that, in moral qualities, they compare favorably with the whites. But what standard of morality do we apply to the white man in order to determine whether we will let him vote or not? The Constitution says he must have a "good moral character." Apply, then, the same standard to the negro. Is not that fair? That is precisely what this amendment does.— Mr. Harrison.

The colored men of this State, who have been educated in our schools, are generally admitted by intelligent men to be useful citizens. Very many of them are properly-owners; and, as a class, they are orderly and industrious members of society, In the war for the Union, they have nobly performed their part. The time has come when they may fairly ask equal and exact justice from their white countrymen. In advocating their cause, we have kept aloof from all party consideration, in the hope that our fellow-citizens of different political connections, upon a dispassionate consideration of the grave interests involved, would arrive at the same conclusion with ourselves.— Gen. Ferry.

XVI. The privileges of citizenship are due to the colored race for their SERVICES IN OUR FORMER WARS.

What has the colored man done, what is his offence, that he should thus be lopped off from the State, and cast out? Has he justly forfeited the confidence of the Commonwealth by any overt deeds of villany? Has he abetted the cause of our foes, either internal or external? Has he plotted and fomented insurrections involving us in disasters? When the war-cloud was overhanging the land, and thick darkness rested upon it, did he go over to our foes, and raise a traitorous arm against us? No, sir: he has uniformly shown himself true to the country. In all our wars, colored men have rallied

to our defence. They were in the Revolutionary War: they were in the last war with England. Their blood has been poured out upon your battlefields: their blood has streamed from the gun-deck, mingling with the ocean and the lakes. So gallantly have they acquitted themselves in our battles, so bravely have they fought in our defence, that the commanders of our armies have, at various times, rendered them their acknowledgements, and borne public testimony to their soldierly virtues and dauntless valor.

But what have they received in token of our gratitude? *Oppression* and *scorn*. Not permitted to enjoy the peace their valor contributed to win, not greeted on their return with the welcome of kindness, they came back from your victorious battles by land and by sea, wounded, scarred, and maimed. They returned bearing these sad but honorable proofs of their heroism and virtue; they came to participate in the hard-earned fruits of their valor; but, alas! so far from this, they were stripped of their rights, not acknowledged even as fellow-citizens, but doomed to oppression, proscribed, and down-trodden. They could be trusted in the day of battle, but not in the day of peace. *They helped to gain our rights, but lost their own*. They were fit marks for the deadly aim of the foeman, but unfit to enjoy the common and inalienable rights of mankind.

Is not this treatment wrong? While it does flagrant injustice to its victims, does it not reflect *deep disgrace* upon ourselves? It is ungrateful, unmerciful, utterly unworthy of the character of a great and gallant people. *Every principle of honor and justice frowns upon it*. — Mr. Gillette.

XVII. After our call upon the colored men to assist us in our late terrific struggle for national existence, after their fidelity to us and the indispensable aid which they rendered us, then to deny them still the rights of citizenship, to which they were before entitled, would be not mere persistent injustice; but the BASEST INGRATITUDE, the LOWEST DEPTH OF INFAMY.

There has been for the last four years a mighty struggle going on in this nation between the elements of aristocracy and democracy. The slave power was essentially aristocratic, rejecting as false the doctrine of universal suffrage, and believing that the governing power should be kept in the hands of what they called the superior race. Out of this conflict of ideas and institutions sprang a civil war, such as the world has never before seen. Our Union and our Constitution were in danger. Nearly a million of the true and brave men of this nation went forth to battle, and still the contest was not ended. Then we called upon the black man for his help; and they whom we had despised and rejected, more than two hundred thousand strong, came to the help of this nation, and, with their assistance, we are this day saved, a united people. Our enemies called on the same strong arms; but they called too late. They shouted for aid, when the death-rattle was in their throat. One word more, and I close. The contest which has been going on for four years past is nearly ended. The States which have been in rebellion are now under the authority of the general government. This is

not the time or place to discuss the civil rights of those men who have lately been in arms against us, nor to speak fully of the means to be used for the political regeneration of the seceded States. But I know that there is not a member of this house who will act and vote against this amendment, who will not also act and vote in favor of allowing all those lately in arms against us to use and exercise all the privileges of electors in their respective States, when they cease from being in a state of war. I am not going to discuss the validity of this position; but I cannot help exclaiming against the inconsistency of those who would allow the hand, red with the blood of our brothers and our sons, to vote—to permit him who has been striving to destroy our Union to exercise all the privileges of a citizen, but yet would deny, to one who has nobly fought for our land, the same rights, because, forsooth, he is black. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and my right hand forget its cunning, before word or deed of mine should sanction such an outrage upon justice, such a disgrace to our common manhood!— Mr. Pratt.

It is difficult not to feel a degree of respect for a class of our countrymen, one-fourth of whose males, of an age suitable for bearing arms, have voluntarily shouldered the musket, and undergone the stern discipline of the soldier, for the salvation of the Republic. It is said that one hundred thousand negro veterans still wear the uniform of the Union, and stand ready to do battle in its behalf against domestic or foreign foes.

Nor is this all. Whenever a Federal army has penetrated into the territory of the Rebellion, its most trusty guides, its most reliable 16 scouts, have been of this long-oppressed race. Whenever a Federal prisoner has broken away from the horrors of the Libby or Belle Isle, of Salisbury or Andersonville, the beacon of his hope has been the light of the negro cabin, whose humble inmates were certain to be ever ready to give him food and covert, and to guide him, by the shortest route, to the protection of the starry flag. Amid the millions of the disloyal within the confederate lines, *the negro alone has always been loyal*, and that because he believed the Union was the realized embodiment of the maxims of the Declaration; *i. e.*, universal liberty, government based on the consent of the governed.

The colored population of Connecticut has furnished its full proportion to the ranks of the army. We have before us the Report of the Adjutant-General of this State, whereby we learn that the casualties in one regiment (29th Conn., colored), in the operations before Petersburg, were nineteen killed and one hundred and twenty-one wounded, all enlisted men. The dead lie by the shores of the James, side by side with their white countrymen, who fell in the same cause; the solemn pine-trees sing the same requiem over both; and their brave souls have gone to that award where all merely external earthly differences are forgotten forever. But what shall we say of the one hundred and twenty-one WOUNDED of that one regiment? Shattered and maimed, they have come back to the soil whose dearest interests they went forth to defend. *Come, home-staying citizens of Connecticut, and look these*

men in the face, while you argue of social equality, of the incapacity of the negro, and of waiting till he is fit to vote! We find it difficult to write calmly while we think of the bursting shell which shattered that sturdy limb, of the hiss and roar of the musketry which left that sleeve empty, of the hot carnage out of which these broken fragments have emerged, only, as some would have it, to be crushed down into hopeless ignominy by the very men for whom they have made this horrible self-sacrifice! — Gen. Ferry.

When we reflect upon the record of bravery and sacrifice in the struggle from which we are now emerging, let us not forget what the black soldier has done. He, not entitled to the privilege of a citizen, let us remember, and with no solemn oath resting upon him to maintain and support the Constitution and Government, has taken upon himself the armor of battle, and gone forth, under much less inducement and pay than his comrades in arms, and through the same perilous night kept watch on the outposts, has shared the same hardships, made the same tedious marches, forded the same cold streams, built bridges under the same deadly fire, camped on the same field; and whether he rested his weary head on the hard stone, or pillowed it on a clump in the damp miasmatic swamp, they were soldiers together, the white and black. When the order, "Forward," was given, his attention was arrested at the same instant as the white; and at the word, "March," he went to meet the same fate.

When the evening was approaching, and the contest raged in its fiercest fury, the blue coat covering the black man's breast shielded it no more than the white man's; and often, when an assault was made, the black ensign, clasping the starry banner that had floated in victory over many a rampart, might be seen in the last agonies of death, mingling his life's blood in the same pool that was red with the marks of white soldiers fallen. These are the services he has rendered his country. The only monuments built to perpetuate the record of them are those, imperishable and beautiful, which his bayonet have made.

Milliken's Bend relates his valor. Olustee speaks his lasting praise. Fort Wagner tells a mournful story of two hundred sable men who fell, bearing the honor of New England and the flag of our country.

Mr. Speaker, in the light of such service rendered, can it be that there is a member on this floor with a comprehension so dull and blunted as to vote against admitting the black man to the full rights of a citizen? If there be such, to him I must say, *You occupy a position hostile to every principle of justice, and in direct antagonism to the promptings of humanity;* and the record you make, however it may coincide with the discipline of party, will bring *ineffable disgrace* upon those who are to come after you bearing your name. In the light of an advancing civilization such as now dawns upon us, no man can stand unscathed who battles against the rights of man.

Be grateful to the black man who has struck a blow in defence of your suffering, bleeding country! If you do not wish the blush of shame to mantle your cheek as you meet a colored soldier with an armless sleeve, or with a crutch, making his way (these things being brought upon him by driving the enemy from your door),—I say, if you want to hold your head erect, with a clear title to manliness, BE JUST, AND VOTE FOR THIS MEASURE.— Mr. Douglas.