

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

State Equal Rights' Convention,

OF THE

COLORED PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

HELD IN

THE CITY OF HARRISBURG

FEBRUARY 8TH, 9TH, AND 10TH, 1865,

TOGETHER WITH

A FEW OF THE ARGUMENTS PRESENTED SUGGESTING THE
NECESSITY FOR HOLDING THE CONVENTION,

AND AN

ADDRESS OF THE COLORED STATE CONVENTION

To the People of Pennsylvania.

PRINTED FOR AND BY ORDER OF THE CONVENTION.

1865.

***To the members and friends of the Pennsylvania
State Equal Rights' Convention.***

FELLOW CITIZENS—

The Committee, to whom was referred the matter of collecting, arranging and publishing the proceedings of the Convention, after having carefully revised and corrected the various documents placed in their hands by the Convention, would respectfully submit the following as their Report.

Yours fraternally,

OCTAVIUS V. CATTO,	} Committee on Publication.
ALFRED M. GREEN,	
JOSEPH C. BUSTILL,	

THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS
IN PENNSYLVANIA

1865

A Bibliographical Note

by

Maxwell Whiteman

In the final months of the Civil War, Northern blacks articulated their demands for full equality and convened to make known their views. In Pennsylvania, seventy-one highly capable men met in Harrisburg to spell out a program whose main theme was equal rights for 60,000 blacks who contributed more soldiers to the Union Army than the combined number of any two states. In addition, the delegates at Harrisburg appealed again to the legislature to restore to black Pennsylvanians the right to vote.

The equal rights theme of the Pennsylvanians was inspired by an earlier National convention of "Colored Men" held in Syracuse, N.Y., in October, 1864. At that time the National Equal Rights League was organized. Members of the various states present were urged to establish local auxiliaries. Twenty-two were established in various parts of Pennsylvania with the greatest number in Philadelphia.

Many issues came under discussion by the Pennsylvania members of the State Equal Rights' Convention. Among the subjects on the agenda, were the exclusion of black people from public accommodations especially street railway transportation; the exclusion of colored people from barber shops operated by blacks who catered to whites and the insistence that black teachers teach black students, for they best understood the educational needs of children. (A century later this relevant subject is still debated). They also asked, if Germans could command German soldiers of the Union Army, and Irishmen could command Irish soldiers, why blacks could not lead blacks in a cause to which they were wholeheartedly committed?

The three secretaries responsible for the publication of the *Proceedings* were Octavius V. Catto who was killed a few years later by an assassin's bullet because the right to vote had been restored, Alfred M. Green one of the first spokesman for recruiting black troops for the Union and Joseph C. Bustill a direct descendent of a family contemporary with the first English settlement in what became the City of Philadelphia.

Sources: *Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men, held in The City of Syracuse, N.Y., October 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1864.* . . . (Boston 1864), 36, 39. For a brief sketch of Catto see W.E.B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro* . . . (Phila., 1899), 40-42; Alfred M. Green, *Letters and Discussions on the Formation of Colored Regiments and the Duty of Colored People in Regard to the Great Slaveholder's Rebellion* (Phila., 1862). Copy from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

PROCEEDINGS OF
THE STATE EQUAL RIGHTS' CONVENTION OF
THE COLORED MEN OF PENNSYLVANIA,

HELD IN THE CITY OF HARRISBURG,

FEBRUARY 8TH, 9TH, AND 10TH, 1865.

In accordance with a call issued by the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights' League, the Convention was convened in the Union Wesleyan Church, Harrisburg, on Wednesday morning, February 8th, at 10 o'clock.

Mr. William Nesbitt of Altoona, Vice President of the State League, called the Convention to order, and by common consent, acted as its temporary Chairman, and Mr. Octavius V. Catto, of Philadelphia, as Secretary.

By invitation of the Chairman, the Rev. John Price of Harrisburg, offered a prayer for the guidance and blessing of God during the deliberations of the Convention.

On motion of Mr. C. H. Vance, the Convention appointed the following gentlemen a Committee on Credentials:—

CHARLES H. VANCE, *of Harrisburg,*
O. L. C. HUGHES, *of Harrisburg,*
MOSES BROWN, *of Hollidaysburg,*
WILLIAM COOPER, *of Philadelphia,*
JAMES DAVENGER, *of Pittston.*

The first six seats across the front of the Church, were, on motion of Mr. A. M. Green, set apart for the accommodation of the members of the Convention.

On a motion of Mr. A. M. Green, Mr. David B. Bowser of Philadelphia was called upon to address the Convention while the Committee on Credentials were preparing their report.

Mr. Bowser proceeded to show the bright promises for the future which are everywhere now evident, and urged the importance of a strong and united effort for the purpose of securing our political rights throughout this Commonwealth. He hoped that from the proceedings of this Convention, the white citizens of the whole State would be made acquainted with the noble deeds and heroism of the Colored American; that we would make prominent the facts upon which we base our claims for equal and exact justice. The speaker enforced the necessity for organized action,—such, that when we return to our homes, every man shall feel it to be his duty to work earnestly and persistently for the furtherance of the great and glorious objects for which this Convention has been convened.

Mr. Daniel Williams of Hollidaysburg, was the next to address the Convention, on motion of Mr. R. M. Adger. He expressed himself as fully satisfied of the importance which attaches to the actions and proceedings of this body, and hoped that our actions would be harmonious and tend to the advancement of the cause of our people in this State.

On motion of Mr. D. D. Turner, Mr. John Q. Allen of Philadelphia, was called upon to make a few remarks. The gentleman spoke very briefly and hoped that the blood of the Negro, shed upon the fields of this rebellion, would prove sufficient to wash away the obstacles which prevent us from the enjoyment of our political rights.

Mr. J. J. Wright of Wilkesbarre, was next called out, on motion of Mr. P. N. Judah. He believed that what we have come here to ask is, that there shall be restored to us, that which was unjustly wrested from us in 1838,—the right of Franchise. We have come to ask that our white fellow-citizens may act as though they believed in their own Declaration of Independence, and especially in its assertion, that all men are equal.

On motion of Mr. C. B. Gordon, Mr. Aaron Still of Reading, addressed the Convention. The speaker urged the importance of immediate action,—he thought that this was the opportune time, and that we should not allow the shedding of our brother's blood to be in vain. He maintained that there was some equivalent due the black man for his life and services, and that we should exert ourselves to receive it.

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Rev. E. Weaver spoke next. The Reverend gentleman held forth earnestly upon the righteousness of the cause which called us together. He knew that the fact of our assembling had gone abroad over the State, and urged that we proceed to business as wise and earnest men. He referred to the good which had resulted from the labors of John Brown, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner and the other champions of Liberty, and to the recent constitutional amendment abolishing Slavery,—to the admission of John S. Rock to practice in the Supreme Court, and declared it as his opinion that we were moving onward and our cause progressing.

The Committee appointed on Credentials made the following Report. This Roll includes all those subsequently reported from the Committee, and those elected Honorary members by the Convention.

PITTSBURG.

JOHN PECK,	<i>Equal Rights' League</i>
GEORGE B. VASHON,	" " "
A. J. BILLOWS,	" " "
WILLIAM H. SIMPSON,	" " "
A. W. DUNLAP,	" " "

PHILADELPHIA.

JOSEPH C. BUSTILL,	<i>Sixth District Equal Rights' League.</i>
OCTAVIUS V. CATTO,	" " " " "
JAMES R. GORDON,	" " " " "
ALFRED S. CASSEY,	<i>Fifth</i> " " " " "
DAVIS D. TURNER,	" " " " "
WILLIAM COOPER,	" " " " "
JAMES W. PURNELL,	" " " " "
PHILIP N. JUDAH,	" " " " "
JOHN Q. ALLEN,	<i>Fourth</i> " " " " "
CHARLES B. GORDON,	" " " " "
DAVID B. BOWSER,	<i>Third</i> " " " " "
REDMAN FAUSET,	" " " " "
ALFRED M. GREEN,	<i>State</i> " " " " "
ELISHA WEAVER,	" " " " "
WILLIAM D. FORTEN,	<i>Ladies' Union Association,</i>
WILLIAM J. ALSTON,	<i>Sanitary Con. St. Thomas' Church,</i>
ROBERT M. ADGER,	<i>Banneker Institute</i>
GEORGE B. WHITE,	" "
JAMES PROSSER,	(honorary).
JOSEPH S. CAMPBELL,	"
MATTHIAS W. JOHNSON,	"
JOHN C. BOWERS,	<i>Union League</i>
JESSE E. GLASGOW,	" "
WILLIAM MORRIS,	<i>First District Equal Rights' League</i>

PITTSSTON.

GEORGE W. BUTLER,	<i>State Equal Rights' League</i>
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JAMES DAVENGER,
JAMES GREEN, (honorary),
DECATUR BLUE, "

State Equal Rights' League

ALLEGHENY CITY.

BENJAMIN F. PULPRESS,
SAMUEL A. NEALE,
H. B. WILLIAMSON,
GEORGE W. DIMEY,
EDWARD R. PARKER.

HARRISBURG.

JOSEPH A. NELSON,
JOHN E. PRICE,
CHARLES H. VANCE,
WILLIAM M. JONES,
MARTIN PERRY,
CURRY TAYLOR,
B. J. CARTER,
ALEX. T. HARRIS,
O. L. C. HUGHES,
THOMAS EARLY, (honorary)
JAMES ALEXANDER, "
CHARLES H. CANN, "
GEORGE W. SAUNDERS, "

State Equal Rights' League,

*Baptist Church,
Brotherly Love Lodge, O. F.,*

BIRMINGHAM.

JAMES HENRY,
HENRY JACKSON,

Equal Rights' League,
" " "

ALTOONA.

WILLIAM NESBITT,
THOMAS B. SHORTER,
JOHN ALEXANDER, (honorary),
JOHN H. SHORTER, "
GEORGE HOOPER, "

Equal Rights' League,
" " "

WILLIAMSPORT.

LEWIS HILL,
CHARLES BRYAN, (honorary),
CHARLES H. KELLY, "

Equal Rights' League,

HOLLIDAYSBURG.

DANIEL WILLIAMS,
MOSES BROWN,
JOHN THOMAS, (honorary).

Equal Rights' League,
" " "

WILKESBARRE.

J. J. WRIGHT,
BENJAMIN WILSON, (honorary).

BELLEFONTE.

JOHN WELSH,

Equal Rights' League.

SAMUEL MOLSON,	LEWISTOWN.	<i>Equal Rights' League</i>
AARON L. STILL.	READING.	
SOLOMON COOPER.	TOWANDA.	
J. G. CHAPLAIN.	HUNTINGDON.	
MERRIMAN CUPIT, (honorary).	YORK.	

Mr. J.C. Bustill of Philadelphia, moved that a Committee of twelve be appointed to nominate permanent officers for the Convention.

Moved by Daniel Williams of Hollidaysburg, that the motion be so amended that the Committee shall consist of one delegate from each county now represented in the Convention.

The amendment was carried without debate, and the original motion as amended was then put and unanimously carried.

On motion of Mr. Hughes of Harrisburg, that the President appoint the Committee to nominate permanent officers, the President appointed the following :—

JOSEPH C. BUSTILL, of Philadelphia,
 SAMUEL MOLSON, of Mifflin county,
 LEWIS HILL, of Lycoming county,
 JOHN C. CHAPLAIN, of Huntingdon county,
 DANIEL WILLIAMS, of Blair county,
 AARON L. STILL, of Berks county,
 JOHN E. PRICE, of Dauphin county,
 WILLIAM H. SIMPSON, of Allegheny county,
 J. J. WRIGHT, of Luzerne county,
 JOHN WELSH, of Centre county.

The Committee retired for consultation, and in their absence Mr. Turner of Philadelphia, moved that a Committee of five be appointed to draft Rules for the government of the Body.

The motion was carried, and the Convention appointed the following as the Committee :—

DAVID B. BOWSER,
 DAVIS D. TURNER,
 GEORGE B. VASHON,
 BENJAMIN F. PULPRESS,
 MOSES BROWN.

Moved by Mr. Robert M. Adger, that when we adjourn, we adjourn to meet at 2 o'clock this afternoon. Carried.

On motion of Mr. Bustill, the Convention then adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Pursuant to adjournment, the President, pro tempore, called the Convention to order at 2 o'clock.

The Roll, as reported from the Committee on Credentials, was called, and the minutes of the morning session read and approved.

Mr. Joseph C. Bustill, Chairman of the Committee on Permanent Organization, asked permission to make the following Report,—

FOR PRESIDENT,

REV. JOHN PECK, *of Pittsburg.*

VICE-PRESIDENTS,

REV. ELISHA WEAVER, *Philadelphia,*

MOSES BROWN, *Hollidaysburg,*

O. L. C. HUGHES, *Harrisburg,*

JAMES DAVENGER, *Pittston,*

JOHN WELSH, *Bellefonte,*

WILLIAM NESBITT, *Altoona.*

SECRETARIES,

OCTAVIUS V. CATTO, *Philadelphia,*

A. T. HARRIS, *Harrisburg,*

GEORGE B. VASHON, *Pittsburg.*

Mr. A. M. Green, moved that the name of Mr. Redman Fausett of Philadelphia, be substituted for that of Prof. Vashon on the list of Secretaries. Carried.

The Report, as amended, was then unanimously adopted.

The President elect then took the Chair, and the Convention and audience joined in singing:—

“Blow ye the trumpet, blow;”

after which, the President, having delivered an earnest and feelingly eloquent prayer for the harmony and wisdom of the deliberations of the Convention, proceeded to acknowledge the honor conferred upon him by electing him to the position which he occupied, and gave it as his opinion that the present Convention had more reasons to hope for the success of the objects which it was convened to further, than any other ever held by the Colored people of this State. He believed firmly in the hand of Providence as seen in the shifting scenes through which we are now passing, and urged the members to lay aside all sectional feelings and proceed to the business before them, as one man, united in desire and united in action.

On motion of Mr. A. M. Green, the following was unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention ~~are due~~ and ~~are hereby~~ tendered to Messrs. William Nesbitt of Altoona, and Octavius V. Catto of Philadelphia, for the able ~~and~~ efficient manner in which they have respectively served this Body as temporary Chairman and Secretary.

Mr. D. B. Bowser, Chairman of the Committee on Rules, made the following

REPORT.

1st. There shall be two regular daily sessions of the Convention, and each opened with prayer.

The Morning Session shall commence at 9½ o'clock, A. M., and adjourn at 12½ o'clock, M.

The Afternoon Session shall commence at 2 o'clock, P. M., and adjourn at 5 o'clock, P. M.

2d. One-third of the enroled members of the Convention shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

3d. No member shall leave the Convention without permission from the President, and no member shall be recognized or motion received as before the Convention, unless the speaker or mover is at the time within the bar of the Convention.

4th. No member shall be allowed to speak more than twice upon the same question, unless by special consent of the Convention; and not longer than ten minutes the first, and five minutes the second time.

9th. Mathias' Manual shall govern the proceedings of the Body, in all cases for which provisions are not herein stated.

Appended to the Report was a Resolution for the discharge of the Committee, and on motion of Mr. D. D. Turner the Resolution was adopted.

Mr. R. M. Adger then moved the adoption of the Report as presented by the Committee. Carried.

The Convention, on motion of Mr. O. L. C. Hughes, appointed the following gentlemen as a Committee on Finance:

JAMES R. GORDON,	JOHN E. PRICE,
JOSEPH C. BUSTILL,	GEORGE BUTLER,
WILLIAM H. SIMPSON.	

Mr. Redman Fausett moved that a Business Committee of seven be appointed. Carried.

The Committee was appointed by the Body and consisted of

GEORGE B. VASHON,
DANIEL WILLIAMS,
DAVID B. BOWSER,

ALFRED M. GREEN,
BENJAMIN F. PULPRESS,
JAMES HENRY,

JOSEPH A. NELSON.

Moved by Mr. Joseph C. Bustill, that all Resolutions for the consideration of this Convention shall be presented by or through the Business Committee.

Messrs. A. L. Still and William Nesbitt opposed the passage of the Resolution on the ground that it had the appearance of trammeling our action and not allowing that freedom among us which would insure harmony through fair play.

Mr. D. D. Turner urged the passage of the Resolution and argued against the assumption of the gentlemen who preceeded him. He maintained that there was no disposition or intention to trammel, tie, or gag;—but that such a rule was necessary to guard us against subjects of trifling importance over which much valuable time might be wasted.

Mr. E. Weaver believed the Resolution sufficiently proper in the spirit which prompted it, but thought for the sake of disarming even the appearance of unfairness, we might so amend it as to satisfy both sides of the question. He therefore moved as an amendment, "that all Resolutions be read before the Convention and then referred to the Business Committee." He thought, by this course, such Resolutions as the Business Committee deemed impolitic need not be returned to the Convention.

The amendment was then put and unanimously carried. The question was then taken upon the passage of the Resolution as amended, and decided in the affirmative.

Mr. D. D. Turner moved that O. L. C. Hughes be appointed to secure an American Flag, for the decoration of the President's desk. Carried.

On motion of Mr. P. N. Judah, the Rev. W. J. Alston of Philadelphia, was unanimously elected Chaplain of the Convention.

Mr. James R. Gordon moved the appointment of a Sergeant-at-arms. Carried.

The Convention appointed Mr. George W. Saunders, of Harrisburg.

Mr. O. L. C. Hughes having secured the National Flag, was, on motion of Mr. M. Cupit, thanked for his services and discharged from further action in the matter.

Mr. James R. Gordon, Chairman of the Finance Committee, re-

ported, that after due consideration, the Committee had concluded to recommend the Convention to pass the following Resolutions :

1st. That each enroled member of the Convention be taxed two dollars.

2d. That a collection be raised at the close of each session, and that the proceeds from both enactments be disbursed to meet the expenses of the Convention.

The Report, on motion of Mr. A. S. Cassey, was adopted.

Mr. D. D. Turner offered a Resolution endorsing the action of the Pennsylvania delegation to the Syracuse Convention, in forming the basis of the State League of Pennsylvania, and moved the previous question, on its reference to the Business Committee.

The question,—“shall the previous question be taken?”—was decided affirmatively and the question then recurring on the reference of the Resolution, it was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Joseph C. Bustill then presented a series of Resolutions on the state of the country at large, which, on motion of Mr. A. S. Cassey, were referred to the Business Committee.

On motion of Mr. James R. Gordon, the members of the Convention were now requested to proceed at once to the payment of the two dollars tax as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Mr. J. J. Wright moved that Messrs. James Green, Decatur Blue and Benjamin Wilson be elected honorary members of the Convention. Carried. On motion of Mr. A. S. Cassey, Mr. Jas. Prosser, of Philadelphia, was elected an honorary member; and also Mr. Thos Early, of Harrisburg, on motion of Mr. A. L. Still.

The hour of adjournment having arrived, Mr. A. T. Harris moved the suspension of the rule, and that the session be extended one half hour. Carried.

The half hour was passed in hearing the Report of the Committee on Evening meetings, and collecting the Finance Committee's tax.

After the expiration of the half hour extension, the President declared the Convention adjourned to meet this evening at 7½ o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

A large and enthusiastic audience assembled in the Church at an early hour, and at 7½ o'clock the President called the Convention to order.

Prayer was offered by the Chaplain, Rev. W. J. Alston. Sergeant-Major A. M. Green, in accordance with the report of the Committee on Evening meetings, was introduced as the first speaker.

The gentleman proceeded briefly and graphically to a review of the disabilities under which we have been laboring for years, and portrayed in eloquent and vivid language the promises which are now so evidently before us.

He then reviewed the efforts of the Colored man for the restoration of the Union, and reminded the audience of their unswerving and unexceptional loyalty throughout the entire struggle.

The address was frequently interrupted by applause.

Mr. Davis D. Turner was introduced and after a few patriotic remarks, asked to be excused, with the understanding that he would address the audience, if an opportunity were afforded, before the adjournment of the Convention.

Mr. A. M. Green said that the Hon. Morrow B. Lowry, Senator from Erie, (cheers) was in the house, and he was well assured that this assemblage would be highly gratified to hear a speech from so fearless and eloquent a defender of impartial liberty.

The audience immediately raised a shout of applause which was not abated until Mr. Lowry had ascended to the speaker's desk.

The President introduced the gentleman in a few appropriate remarks and Mr. Lowry said, that he had been "advised of the object which has called this highly creditable and large Convention of the most intelligent Colored men of the State,"—he had learned that the most important subject now agitating our minds, was the elective franchise;—and proceeded to point out the difficulty in the way of our immediate possession of this right, so justly due us.

"There is a provision in the Constitution of our State which allows its amendment, only once in five years, and you will remember that one year ago our Constitution was amended so that our soldiers in the field might vote as if at home, and hence we are at present prevented from making any other amendments for five years from the passage of the last." He thought, however, that the general government might propose amendments and in that case the Legislature could take immediate action thereon. Mr. Lowry, claimed to be one of the first who argued for the arming of the negro, and his entering this struggle as a soldier.

He had said in the beginning of the war, that "he would arm the

blacks, put them in front and let the rebels shoot at their stolen property with stolen guns at the rate of a thousand dollars a shot."

For this expression he had been almost mobbed, and was waited upon by a committee and asked to define his position:—this he did not fail to do; in the course of which he went much further in the same direction, and much too to the discomfiture of said committee.

He would remind us that the Government would do nothing for us that it could possibly help; it never had, and never would.

"The Government needed your aid, and on this account you have received the little which to-night you enjoy."

He believed that the white loyalists would be forced to give the colored man his rights;—"if we get those devilish rebels back, they and the foreign copperheads would put the loyalists in a minority, and to avoid this the negro would have to be enfranchised."

In conclusion he would urge the colored people "to educate themselves and their children, take care, by all means, of your children; educate and rear them properly, ask for what is right, and submit to nothing wrong."

The speech was received with great applause, and after its eloquent delivery, three hearty cheers were given for Senator Morrow B. Lowry, of Erie county.

Mr. O. L. C. Hughes, offered the following Resolution, and it was adopted with acclamation.

"Resolved, That we have listened with commingled feelings of pride and admiration to the very able and eloquent address of the Honorable Senator Lowry, and that we regard him as an unfaltering, indefatigable and fearless vindicator of the rights of the colored man."

The audience, accompanied by Mr. D. D. Turner at the Melodeon, then sang the John Brown song.

The Rev. William J. Alston was next called upon to address the meeting, but after a few well chosen words, asked to be excused for this evening.

Mr. John Q. Allen then took the stand and delivered a short and very acceptable speech. He believed that the white man had contempt for the condition of a slave, and hence his opinion of the colored man, who either is a slave, or descended from slaves.

Prof. George B. Vashon, made the closing speech; and by his eloquence, argument and truths, kept the closest attention of the vast assembly throughout the entire delivery.

The benediction was pronounced by the President, and the Convention adjourned to meet to-morrow morning at 9½ o'clock.

SECOND DAY.

THURSDAY MORNING, February 9th.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Convention met at 9½ o'clock.

In the absence of the President, Vice-President E. Weaver called the Convention to order, and prayer was offered by the Chaplain.

The Roll was called and the minutes of the last session read and approved.

On motion of Mr. William Nesbitt, Mr. John Alexander, of Altoona, was made an honorary member of the Convention; also Mr. James Alexander, of Harrisburg, on motion of Mr. O. L. C. Hughes.

Mr. D. D. Turner moved that Messrs. Charles Bryan, M. W. Johnson and Joseph S. Campbell be elected honorary members. Carried.

Messrs. John Shorter and George Hooper, on motion of Mr. Moses Brown, and Mr. John Thomas, on motion of Mr. William Nesbitt, were elected honorary members.

The Business Committee, through their Chairman, Prof. George B. Vashon, made their first Report, consisting of a Declaration of Sentiment and the following Resolutions.

On motion of Mr. R. M. Adger, the Declaration of Sentiment was adopted. [See Appendix.]

Mr. O. L. C. Hughes moved that the Resolutions reported by the Committee be taken up separately. Carried.

The first of the series of Resolution was read, as follows:

Resolved, That we, the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights' Convention, in Assembly met, do congratulate one another, the State League, and the friends of Equal Rights without regard to color throughout the State and country, upon the assembling of so large a number of delegates representing the feelings, sentiments and desires of our people upon this all important subject of Political Equality; and that we pledge our harmonious and energetic efforts in all our deliberations for the common good. Mr. Charles B. Gordon moved its adoption. Carried.

2. *Resolved*, That the Emancipation of the District of Columbia, Maryland, Louisiana, Missouri and Tennessee; the amendment of the Federal Constitution, and its endorsement by various State Legislatures, including that of Pennsylvania; the admission of John S. Rock to the Supreme Court of the United States; and the progress of liberal sentiments everywhere manifest, are auspicious signs of the times, and demand our earnest and united efforts for the improvement of our moral, social and political condition. Adopted, on motion of Mr. B. F. Pulpres.

3. *Resolved*, That we, regarding the Elective Franchise as the all important subject for our deliberation and united action, insist upon the necessity of petitioning Congress and the Legislature to so alter and amend the laws as to give every native born colored citizen over the age of twenty-one, the right to vote, as fully as their white fellow citizens possess it. The Resolution was adopted, on motion of Mr. Joseph A. Nelson.

4. *Resolved*, That we are for measures and not for men, and will not permit friend or foe to retard the great movement now in operation, aiming to secure Equal Rights without regard to color; and that every man in the State be solicited to contribute one dollar a year, to create a permanent fund to carry on this great movement. Adopted, on motion of Mr. William Nesbitt.

5. *Resolved*, That the present state of affairs demands of this Convention, which is the legitimate exponent of the sentiments of the colored people of this State, that it give all efforts looking toward their elevation to legal and political equality, and the entire recognition of their rights as men, citizens and soldiers, its unqualified approbation and support. And that of all the many efforts being put forth in the cause of humanity, we recognize none more commendable to the lovers of justice and christianity, than those of the "Ladies' Union Association" of Philadelphia, to which this Convention tender their warmest thanks, for untiring exertions in relieving the wants of our sick and wounded soldiers, whose suffering can only be imagined but never truly described; and that we pledge ourselves to use every influence within our power, to encourage and sustain these ladies in their laudable and benevolent enterprise.

Moved, by Mr. Joseph C. Bustill, that the Resolution be adopted.

Mr. O. C. Hughes moved to amend by inserting "and their auxiliaries," after the words "Ladies' Union Association of Philadelphia." Mr. Hughes argued earnestly for the amendment,—that other associ-

ations which had been working in the same good cause, might receive notice and encouragement at our hands.

Mr. Joseph O. Bustill raised the point that the amendment was not in order, as it destroyed the original intent of the Resolution.

After an animated discussion on Mr. Bustill's point of order, Mr. Hughes withdrew his amendment by common consent.

The question being now on the original resolution, Rev. W. J. Alston desired to make a few remarks in opposition to the passage of the Resolution in its present form. He said, that he was here, a member of this Convention, as a delegate from an Association in his Church. That Association was known as the Ladies' Sanitary Commission of St. Thomas Church, and had been working, and are now earnestly and persistently, in season and out of season, working for the alleviation of the sufferings of the sick and wounded soldiers.

They had commenced early in this good work, and had recently held one of the largest and most successful fairs ever held in Philadelphia, for this cause. Over twelve hundred dollars had been raised at this Fair, by these ladies, and he was deprived accidentally on his way to Harrisburg of a record of their deeds and a report of their workings which would satisfy any member of this body, that there was no association among us which has done, and is now doing more for the sick and wounded soldiers than the Ladies of this Commission. He thought the ladies ought to be included in this Resolution.

Mr. Wm. D. Forten, said that as he had written and presented this Resolution, which seems so to arouse us, he thought it proper to state a few facts in explanation of it. In the first place, this society, the "Ladies' Union Association," was independent of any other in the State, they were not as his friend Alston's society is, connected with, or auxiliary to a white Society. They were entirely free to dispose of their funds as pleased them best, and they were primarily organized for the purpose of relieving the needs of colored sick and wounded troops. Furthermore, this society had so far sympathized with the objects for which this Convention had been convened, that they had paid their ten dollars and joined the State League. He thought this Association alone should go through in this Resolution, and assured the Convention that their noble efforts in behalf of our Troops, merited any compliment we could give.

The Rev. E. Weaver, called for a second reading of the Resolution, after which Mr. James R. Gordon obtained the floor and opposed the

passage of the Resolution. Mr. Gordon said, from what he knew personally, the Association represented by Rev. Alston had done nobly for the suffering heroes who had fallen wounded and sick upon the field and in the camp. He was in favor of giving "honor to whom honor is due," and as both these societies, and others throughout the State had been engaged in this good work—he thought it unfair to notice one and ignore the others;—he would therefore offer an amendment, that after the title, "Ladies' Union Association," there be inserted, "Ladies' Sanitary Commission of St. Thomas Church," "Union Association of Harrisburg," and other similar associations throughout the State."

Rev. W. J. Alston, in favoring the passage of the amendment, wished it to be understood that he was only contending for the equality of these societies,—he did not desire the one to be in the least above the other—he desired a unanimity of action and harmony with respect to both.

Messrs. A. S. Cassey and Jesse E. Glasgow participated briefly in the discussion and Mr. D. D. Turner moved the previous question.

The President inquired if the previous questions should be taken, and it was declared affirmatively.

The question, then being on the amendment offered by Mr. Gordon, it was adopted. The Resolution as amended, was then put upon its passage and carried.

Mr. Robert M. Adger read a Resolution in reference to the Banner Literary Institute and similar Societies. On motion of Mr. Geo. B. White it was referred to the Business Committee.

Mr. J. J. Wright offered a Resolution in reference to colored teachers for colored schools. It was referred to the Business Committee on motion of Mr. M. Cupit.

A Resolution, thanking Charles Sumner, M. B. Lowry and others for their exertions in behalf of colored men's rights, was introduced by Mr. James W. Purnell, and on motion of Mr. William Cooper, referred to Business Committee.

Mr. A. M. Green moved that the Committee on Evening meetings be directed to invite the Hon. Messrs. Graham, Striker and Bingham to address the Convention this evening. Carried.

The President then declared the Convention adjourned until this afternoon at 2 o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention assembled at the appointed hour; the President in the Chair. Prayer was offered by the Rev. C. J. Carter, and the minutes read and approved.

Mr. O. L. C. Hughes offered a Resolution in reference to the formation of a State League. On motion of Mr. A. T. Harris it was referred to the Business Committee.

Revs. Elisha Weaver and John E. Price read, each a Resolution, which were both referred to the Business Committee.

Mr. Jackson, of Birmingham, desired to make a few remarks before the Convention, and was, on motion, permitted to speak.

The gentleman had come from opposite Pittsburg, and had recently an interview with the Hon. Mr. Morehead, who had told him that it was best for the colored people to keep possession of their funds and not to expend them in efforts which at the present time would only prove fruitless.

Mr. Jackson was gratified to see that the Convention had proceeded thus far with so much harmony. He stated that the colored people of Birmingham had taken part in the celebration of President Lincoln's first inauguration, and were invited and expected to participate in his second inauguration. When asked by the copperheads, if they were voters—they answered, they were *men*.

Mr. B. F. Pulpres moved that the Secretary, on behalf of the Convention, extend an invitation to both branches of the Legislature, to attend this evening's session of the Convention. Carried.

Mr. James Alexander, on motion of Mr. A. T. Harris, was elected Assistant Sergeant-at-arms.

Mr. Moses Brown moved that a Committee of three be appointed to wait on the Superintendents of Railroads and enquire what arrangements could be made to secure a reduction of fare to those members of the Convention who had paid full fare. Carried.

The President appointed Messrs. O. L. C. Hughes, Charles H. Vance and Thomas Early, the Committee.

The Business Committee, through their chairman, reported the following Resolutions, which, on motion of Mr. W. H. Simpson, were considered separately.

The following Resolution was read first:

Resolved, "That this Convention, recognizing the importance of the moral and literary elements in a people's character, earnestly urge our

young colored men to organize among themselves institutions tending to their intellectual and moral elevation." Adopted on motion of Mr. J. J. Wright.

The second Resolution, on motion of Mr. John Chaplain, was adopted, as follows :

Resolved, "That we regard with disdain, and question the loyalty of those members of the State Legislature who so strenuously opposed the ratification of the anti-slavery clause of the United States' Constitution, and all other matters which particularly pertain to the interests of the 50,000 loyal colored citizens of the State: and that we heartily thank the Hon. M. B. Lowry, of Erie County, for his manly and Christian stand in defence of the disfranchised portion of this Commonwealth, and particularly for his answer to the inquiry in reference to the elective franchise;—that he would give that right to the negro, as well as to the white man."

Resolution the third, presented by Mr. J. J. Wright, reads as follows :

Resolved, "That inasmuch as the School Law of Pennsylvania provides that where there are twenty children of African descent, a separate school shall be established for them; and as we know by experimental knowledge, that colored children make greater advancement under the charge of colored teachers than they do under white teachers, therefore we consider it to be our incumbent duty, as lovers of the advancement of our race, to see to it, that our schools are under the charge of colored teachers."

Mr. D. D. Turner opposed the Resolution in its present wording; he thought that as we came to this Convention to protest against proscription and prejudice, we ought to be very careful of the kind of Resolutions we passed.

Rev. Mr. Jones thought the matter under consideration had the tendency to produce ill effects on the welfare of our people,—therefore he could not support the measure.

Mr. B. F. Pulpress, said the subject was illy advised and injurious in its operations—and he was, in consequence, opposed to its going out as the sentiment of this body.

Mr. John Q. Allen took the floor and spoke against the passing of the Resolution. He thought it had the appearance of that very distinction on account of color, against which we were all so ready to complain, and he would therefore offer as an amendment, that the

Resolution be so worded as to include the clause,—“no discrimination on account of color ought to be made in the appointment of teachers for colored schools.”

Rev. W. J. Alston thought the Resolution of Mr. Wright judicious and necessary, he was therefore opposed to the amendment. He said the wisdom of such a Resolution from this Convention, had been made evident to him by an experience of twelve years, and instanced the difference in appearance between the schools under white and those under colored teachers.

Mr. James R. Gordon spoke in opposition to the amendment and mentioned the particulars of an instance in which no such charity toward us was shown, as is provided for in this amendment. Mr. Gordon continued his remarks at length and with earnestness.

Mr. J. J. Wright advocated the passage of the original Resolution; he was unwilling to accept any such amendment as the one under consideration, and said that there was no use of our making any provision about literary qualifications, for white teachers sufficiently qualified could not be induced to take charge of colored schools. He was surprised to hear gentlemen of intelligence discussing this amendment favorably.

Mr. A. M. Green thought it disgraceful for colored men, particularly the Philadelphia delegation, to argue against such a Resolution as that presented by Mr. Wright. He thought it particularly so in their case, as they knew the shameful treatment which colored persons had received at the hands of the Board of School Controllers in Philadelphia. He also believed that these gentlemen from that city would be ashamed to meet their constituents after having opposed such a Resolution as the one under consideration.

Mr. D. B. Bowser, was of the same opinion as the gentleman who had preceeded him, and said that he and others had tried for nine years to secure a colored teacher for a colored school in his section of Philadelphia, and that their efforts were without success. The gentleman instanced several cases of which he knew, in sustaining his position against the amendment, and for the Resolution.

The hour of adjournment having arrived, the rule was suspended and the session extended one-half hour, on motion of Rev. C. J. Carter.

Mr. John Alexander obtained the floor and spoke against the amendment. He thought the Resolution the right thing and at the right time, and would therefore vote for its passage.

The question on the amendment was then put and lost.

Mr. O. V. Catto thought that the Resolution offered by Mr. Wright was just and proper in the motive which prompted it and in the object toward which it looked, but he was of the opinion that while the spirit of the Resolution was right, the phraseology was such that it might be quoted as a document based on preferences for certain teachers merely on account of their color. He did not wish to turn his back on the fact that the colored man was the best teacher for colored children. He had long been of the belief that no white man could so well instruct colored children as could a colored teacher. This opinion he thought was not founded on any superior mental abilities of the one man over the other—he was of the belief that all men under similar circumstances were equal, and while he would vote in favor of the colored teacher as Mr. Wright's Resolution required, he would do it on principle and not from even the shadow of prejudice in favor of any particular color. The colored man, he believed was the better teacher because he had the welfare of the race more at heart, knowing that they rose or fell together, and because he would take more care to strengthen those faculties in which the white race thought the colored child deficient.

As an amendment, he would therefore offer, in order to avoid all misunderstanding and place this body right before the people at large, that the Resolution be so amended as to contain this clause :—"in the appointment of teachers for these schools, colored persons, their literary qualifications being sufficient, should receive the preference; not by reason of their complexion, but because they are better qualified by conventional circumstances outside of the school-house."

Mr. A. M. Green then moved the previous question. The demand "shall the previous question be taken," was declared affirmatively, and the amendment unanimously adopted. The Resolution as amended was then carried, on motion of Mr. R. M. Adger.

The time having expired, the President declared the Convention adjourned to meet this evening at 7½ o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

At an hour long before the opening of the Convention, the Church was crowded to its utmost capacity, and at 7½ o'clock the President called the house to order. After singing a hymn, the Convention listened to an earnest and eloquent prayer from the Rev. W. J. Alston, Chaplain.

Mr. Davis D. Turner was then introduced by the President as the first speaker.

The gentlemen began by making evident the fact that we are a rising people and the times are changing in our favor. He believed that the struggle now going on in this country could not be ended unless colored men entered the war more numerously. He enumerated some of the signs of our advancement, and said these rapid and onward strides of freedom showed the development of a higher civilization: the fact that Hayti and Liberia are placed in the same category with other nations of the earth, the emancipation of several States and the District of Columbia, the amendment to the Constitution, and its being ratified by several Legislatures, are so many evidences of our progress, and urge upon us the necessity of united efforts. We should not falter by the way, but being determined, move steadily onward, allowing no dissensions, no party strifes, no chimerical schemes, nothing whatever, to swerve us for one moment from the line of duty. He would say "let the dead past bury the dead," keep pace with the age in which we live; then and only then, would we be doing our duty to God, to ourselves, and to our race. The speech was frequently interrupted by applause.

Prof. Geo. B. Vashon, now read a memorial to the Legislature of Pennsylvania, asking them to grant the colored man the elective franchise.

On motion of Mr. D. D. Turner, it was adopted, ordered to be printed, and distributed, one to each member of the Legislature, on behalf of this Convention. [See Appendix.]

The Hon. James L. Graham, of the State Senate, being in the house, was loudly called and he responded.

We are living, said he, in a great age, in the midst of a rebellion which has had no parallel in the world's history;—it is similar only to that which occurred in the fair fields of Eden. He had often been reminded through the phases of this rebellion, of the sentiment, that there is a "Divinity which shapes our ends;" and we ought to bow to-night, in reverence and thanks to that God above us, for His interposition in our affairs. We have just begun the work, and you the colored people, have it in your hands to shape your own destiny. The time was, when the black man was looked upon as a chattel, bought and sold in the market place; but thank God a purer and brighter life has burst upon us, and the colored race may now elevate

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itself to a respectable place among the nations of the earth. I am, said Mr. Graham, no new man in the Anti-Slavery belief, twenty-two years ago I entered the field, and although told that I was too young to combat these strong prejudices, I have continued to this day.

Look at the course of this rebellion, just so long as the administration hesitated to let the oppressed go free, just so long did our arms suffer defeat; but when God taught Abraham Lincoln to let them go free, and he did it, we began to conquer, and have gone on from victory to victory. Your disabilities as colored men will be removed, you will yet enter upon the enjoyment of equal rights, and from the fullness of my heart, I hope the day will soon come. The speech was eloquently delivered and at its conclusion, three cheers were given for Senator Graham of Allegheny County.

The Hon. Mr. Bingham, was next introduced by the President, and said that on the question of equal rights, he thought old Allegheny sound. He spoke in complimentary terms of the size and intelligence of the Convention and thought the memorial awhile ago read was an able and opportune paper. One of the members of the Legislature, in a conversation with him thought that should the question of extending the elective franchise to colored people, be presented to the people of the State, it would be lost by about one thousand against one. Mr. Bingham was, however, of the opinion that his county would do much better than that on the question.

He said that the strongest speech, he ever delivered in the Senate, was against that prejudice which endeavored to prevent colored men from presenting such a memorial as the one adopted here to-night. The gentleman proceeded at length to show the changes through which the American people were now passing, and adverted to the fact, that in the Dred Scott case, the Court having decided the man a slave, the Chief Justice went entirely out of the record to give an additional opinion on a subject not before them, and that now the Almighty has overturned him and all who sustained him. He advanced the belief that any man who four years ago would have said that the general government would interfere with slavery where it existed, would have been thought a fit subject for yonder lunatic asylum. But Providence had changed all of this, yes slavery was dead; there is no resurrection or human power that can raise this wrong again, or bind the chains around the black man as they existed four years ago to-night. He declared that this country was yet to be an asylum

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for all men, without regard to color or clime. Still, said he, "you must not hope to see prejudice entirely wiped out in your life time. I will not flatter you; that which had the growth of a century cannot die out in a year, and permit me in conclusion, to say that as long as I live no deed or word of mine shall ever be against the negro's enjoyment of every legal and political right. The address was received with great applause and three cheers given at its conclusion."

The vast audience, led by Mr. D. B. Bowser, and accompanied by Mr. D. D. Turner at the melodeon, then sang the John Brown hymn.

Prof. Geo. B. Vashon was called up and introduced by the President. The Professor said that he was not prepared to make a set speech and thought it best for the audience to excuse him, but as they insisted upon his saying something and as he thought no one could be present in such an assembly as this without feeling some degree of inspiration he would present just such thoughts as naturally arose in his mind.

He said that we had come together in this Convention to present our claim for equal and impartial liberty, that principle of liberty which is instilled in every man at his birth, that spirit, which is common to every human breast, that freedom which is desired by all men, whether they be the fur-clad denizen of the polar regions or the swarthy children, blackened by the sun of the tropics. The sentiment, "that whatever interests mankind, as such interests me," was the sentiment uttered by a slave, and it makes an echo in the heart of every man to-day. It was that sentiment which brought the echo from Russia, England and all Europe.

The speaker said that the American people might become great and powerful,—they might be able to count the whole continent as theirs,—and see no inch of soil not dotted by villages or other marks of civilized life,—their scholars may look in their reach to the limit of human knowledge and become almost creative in their grasp of intellect,—but if their government be not founded and administered in justice and equity, if the people did not enjoy impartial liberty and equality before the law, there was nothing secure or permanent in this country.

He thought, if it were necessary, that we would come together every year until our complete enfranchisement were secured. If we should die while making the effort, let us remember the words of Byron,

"They never fail who die in a just cause."

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the broad expanse of this country would enjoy equal legal and political privileges and immunities.

The address was eloquently delivered and listened to with the utmost attention by the vast audience, except when interrupted by applause.

Sergeant-Major A. M. Green was loudly called for and addressed the Convention as follows: He had endeavored last evening to present a legal argument in favor of our demands. Thus far, this evening's speeches have tended to show, upon moral principles and natural rights, the title of the colored man to liberty and equality before the law. I will, said he, throw aside these arguments and take those which God is pleased to be showing throughout the land in events now transpiring. He then presented the part which the colored American had taken, the suffering he had endured, and the labor he had performed in saving the government and institutions of this country.

He asserted that Daniel Webster had years ago said, that this anti-slavery principle would force itself into respect, and that he knew nothing in the Union which was secure against its advance. The speaker believed that the two principles admitted in the administration of our government are in direct opposition, they must conflict, slave and free labor are irreconcilable, and freedom has for years been making concessions to the slave power:—in the purchase of Louisiana and Florida, in waging the Mexican war, in forming and repealing the Missouri Compromise and in giving the Dred Scott decision, slavery had received what she demanded. But after a few years the conflict took another phase, and John Brown began it at Harper's Ferry, and it was now being continued in the midst of a sea of blood. He proceeded next to show the changes which had taken place in the character of the war, and said if Pennsylvania asked colored men to enlist in the United States service, let us ask Pennsylvania to grant us our rights. We have the common good in view and are willing to fight for equal rights and privileges. Colored men cannot now be asked to go south to free their brethren, Jefferson Davis himself admits that slavery is dead; let us then demand another plea when we are invited to the field.

We ask that when the colored man returns from the field of battle, he will not be turned from your ballot box, your railroad cars, your hotels and schools, thereby renewing in the bosom of his white fellow

soldier who has fought side by side with him, all the old prejudices which existed before the war. Let us demand that our pensions and back pay may not be so generally neglected as is the case west. Let our white fellow citizens remember that God will make fruitless all efforts for peace until we acknowledge the truth embodied in the principle of the Law and the Prophets,—“thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself,” then shall we have a permanent and secure peace.

The speech was eloquently delivered and well received,

Mr. J. J. Wright was the next speaker. After thanking God for bringing upon the country this bloody rebellion as an exterminator of the barbarious system of American slavery, and acknowledging John Brown as the champion of freedom, and John C. Fremont as the man who cleared the way for Abraham Lincoln to walk in, he asked to be excused from making a speech as the evening was now so far spent.

Mr. Joseph C. Bustill, on behalf of the ladies of Harrisburg, invited the members of the Convention to attend a collation on to-morrow evening in the basement of this church.

The President, after the benediction, then declared the Convention adjourned till to-morrow morning at 9½ o'clock.

THIRD DAY.

MORNING SESSION.

Friday, February 10th.

The President called the Convention to order upon the arrival of the morning hour, and prayer was offered by the Chaplain. The minutes of the previous afternoon's session were read and approved.

The Business Committee reported, through their Chairman, a series of Resolutions as follows:

1. *Resolved*, That we urge upon our people throughout the State, the necessity of using every exertion to secure real estate, and that we would urge upon our young men and women the desirability of obtaining a good business education, and the great importance of making earnest endeavors to secure positions in which they may be practically

engaged in some mercantile or mechanical pursuit. On motion of Mr. O. L. C. Hughes the Resolution was adopted.

2. *Resolved*, That we re-iterate the sentiment contained in the fifth Resolution adopted by the National Convention of Colored men, held in the city of Syracuse, N. Y., October 4th, 1864, viz:—"that we extend the right hand of fellowship to the freedmen of the South, and express 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." On motion of R. M. Adger the Resolution was adopted.

3. *Resolved*, That this Convention endorse the action of the delegates from this State to the late National Convention, in the preliminaries laid down by them, looking toward the formation of a State Equal Rights' League; and that the movement started by them receive our hearty co-operation and support. The Resolution was adopted on motion of Mr. Thomas Early.

4. *Whereas*, The National Convention of Colored men which assembled in the city of Syracuse, N. Y., October 4, 1864, organized a National Equal Rights' League, having for its objects the promotion of education, the encouragement of sound morality, the simplification of temperance and frugality, the practice of economy and everything which pertains to well ordered and dignified life: and *whereas*, the National Equal Right's League so formed, have invited the co-operation of the several States, and recommended to them the formation of auxiliary Leagues to aid in furtherance of its objects, therefore,

Resolved, That we heartily endorse the action of the said National Convention, in the organization of an Equal Rights' League, approve the principles as adopted by that League, and will proceed to organize in this Convention, a State Equal Rights' League in accordance with its provisions. The Preamble and Resolution were recommended by the Business Committee to be indefinitely postponed.

Rev. Joseph A. Nelson moved, that in accordance with the Business Committee's recommendation, the whole subject be indefinitely postponed.

The motion was opposed by the Rev. C. J. Carter, and supported by

Mr. A. M. Green, who stated that the State League which now exists, had already been sustained and endorsed by the Resolution previously passed.

On motion of Mr. P. N. Judah, the subject was laid on the table until the Report of the Finance Committee should be heard.

Mr. James R. Gordon, Chairman of Committee on Finance, then presented the following Report.

RECEIVED.		PAID.	
Feb. 8, Tax from Delegates,	\$89 00	For Church Hire,	\$50 00
" " Afternoon Collection,	4 86	" Erecting platform,	2 50
" " Evening " "	10 71	" Stationery and Printing,	2 55
" 9, Morning Collection,	1 74	" Expenses of Traveling Agent,	47 00
" " Tax from Delegates,	40 00	" Printing Call and Appeal,	25 00
" " Afternoon Collection,	1 86	" Printing second Call,	7 50
" " Evening Collection,	21 77	" Advertising Appointm's, Agt.	4 00
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total Receipts,	\$174 94	Total Paid Out,	\$138 55
" Paid out.	138 55		
<hr/>			
Balance in hand,	36 39		

Mr. P. N. Judah moved that the Report of the Finance Committee be adopted

Mr. J. W. Purnell spoke in opposition to adopting the Report, as the expenses of the traveling agent have been paid out of their funds; he said this Convention appointed no such agent, and as he was appointed by the State League that body should pay him.

Mr. J. R. Gordon was in favor of the motion made by Mr. Judah, and said that as this Convention have enjoyed the benefits resulting from the labors of this agent, they are justly obligated to pay this bill.

Mr. Charles H. Vance followed in opposition to the adoption and said he would brand it as an imposition and would record his vote against it.

Mr. J. E. Glasgow hoped that we would continue in the harmony which so far has been with us, and that we would pay the bill and part in peace.

Mr. Daniel Williams spoke in favor of paying the bill, and urged that as our time was fast going, we ought to settle this question and proceed to other business.

Mr. J. W. Purnell urged that he was in favor of paying all the legitimate expenses of this Convention, but he could not see that this bill belonged to us at all.

Mr. A. M. Green rose to explain. He desired it to be understood that he was particularly interested in this question as he was here as a

representative of the State League. He was also the agent referred to in this bill, and had travelled and published at his own expense, and as a member of this Convention he would be willing to pay five dollars from his own pocket to reimburse the State League for its outlay in getting up this Convention.

Mr. D. B. Bowser said he came here untrammelled by membership of the State League or any other body, and he would urge that the harmony of this assembly should not be endangered by the small sum of forty-seven dollars. We have come here, said he, to legislate for the good of the people and the cause, let us then not waste time in this idle discussion, but accept the bill and pay it.

Mr. Redman Fausett was opposed to the adoption, he said, he too, was untrammelled, having come from the same source as the gentleman who had just preceded him.

It was not the question of forty-seven dollars, that merited his opposition, it was the principle involved. He denied the right of the Finance Committee to spend the money of this body without their resolution to that effect. If we pay this bill, it will be acknowledging the right of the State League to govern this Convention, on these grounds he objected to its payment.

Mr. James R. Gordon said that it appeared from Mr. Fausett's remarks that the main objection seems to be to the words State League. The gentleman thought this bill ought to be paid to its proper source State League or any other League.

Mr. Thomas Early was not opposed to the State League, he would be willing to pay every cent of the surplus funds of this Convention into the treasury of the League, although not a member of it.

Mr. James Prosser stated that he was no speaker, but was of the belief that if he were Sergeant-at-arms he would silence some of these members in one way or another.

Mr. D. D. Turner thought as the State League had taken all the preliminary expense of getting up the Convention, we ought to pay this bill without further quibbling.

The motion to adopt the report was then put and carried.

The following statement was made by Mr. James R. Gordon, Chairman of the Finance Committee. This entire Church was rented for the use of this Convention at a cost of fifty dollars, and the basement of the Church had been given, without the knowledge of this body, in order to hold an entertainment for raising money to pay the

entrance to this Convention, of the Harrisburg Reserve delegation. The sale of refreshments had been held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and this Convention had been deceived by the notice given from the desk, stating that the proceeds of the entertainment were for the sick and wounded soldiers.

After considerable debate and explanation the following resolution was presented by Mr. Jos. C. Busvill and unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That as the entire Church was under the control of this Convention, and used without their consent, the proceeds from these entertainments, after expenses, are paid, be, and are hereby donated to the Ladies Union Association of Harrisburg, for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers.

Mr. Chas. H. Vance, of the Committee on Railroads, reported that all members who had paid full fare could, by presenting a certificate of membership, signed by the President and Secretary, receive the deduction necessary in each case. The report was received and the Committee discharged.

The hour of adjournment having arrived, the rules were suspended and a motion carried, that when we adjourn we adjourn *sine die*.

Mr. J. W. Purnell now called up the Resolution presented by Mr. O. L. C. Hughes in favor of forming from this Convention a State Equal Rights' League.

Prof. G. B. Vashon moved that that the Resolution be indefinitely postponed. Carried.

5. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention are due, and are hereby tendered to the Colored People's Union League of Philadelphia, for their untiring and successful exertions in regard to the removal of the odious and unjust proscription of certain railroad corporations in Philadelphia, in prohibiting colored persons from the use of their cars. And that we hereby send our hearty congratulations to our brethren of the Union League and all others who have in any way aided in the enterprise, for their partial success in the undertaking, and that we pledge our countenance and co-operation in supporting their well begun and efficiently prosecuted labors.

Mr. J. E. Glasgow moved the adoption of the Resolution.

Mr. Redman Fausett, objected to the motion of Mr. Glasgow, on the ground that other similar organizations could claim mention in connection with the labors in which this Resolution gave the Union League such prominence. He mentioned the Civil, Social & Statistical Association of Philadelphia as equally active and effective in securing our privileges

in the cars, and would, he said, offer an amendment to the Resolution, inserting the Civil, Social and Statistical Association, after the word—
 “Union League.”

Mr. A. M. Green remarked that this car question, was the special object had in view upon the organization of the Union League, and proceeded at some length to name the continued efforts which this League had made in the direction named in the Resolution. He was opposed to the passage of the amendment.

Rev. E. Weaver favored the amendment and spoke of some of the actions of the Civil, Social and Statistical Association in this car movement.

Rev. Wm. J. Alston followed in support of the amendment and said that the most influential meeting on the car question, ever held in Philadelphia, was under the auspices of the Civil, Social and Statistical Association.

Mr. D. B. Bowser answered the Rev. Alston and explained how the management of that great meeting went from the hands of the League to those of the Civil, Social and Statistical Association. He was opposed to the amendment presented by Mr. Fausett.

Mr. D. D. Turner moved the previous question, which being demanded was unanimously carried, and the amendment adopted.

The Resolution as amended was then put to the body and adopted.

6. *Resolved*, That in the event of the setting apart a day of Thanksgiving, as recommended by the Convention, all the Churches and Associations participating in the same, be, and are hereby requested to donate the proceeds of the same for the use and benefit of the Freedmen. The resolution was unanimously adopted on motion of Rev. C. J. Carter.

7. *Resolved*, That we are highly gratified at the exhibition of intellectual ability and business talent manifest in the columns of the Christian Recorder, a weekly paper published by a colored man (Rev. Elisha Weaver) within the limits of our State; and that we therefore, cordially commend it to the patronage of every colored family therein. Adopted on motion of Mr. Samuel Molsen.

8. *Resolved*, That colored men should receive the same accommodation and meet the same treatment under all circumstances, as white men receive from colored men engaged in all manner of business, and that we will hereafter frown with contempt upon all proprietors of barber shops, restaurants and other places of business kept by colored men who exclude people of their own complexion from privileges they extend to white men.

Mr. H. Jackson, moved to adopt the Resolution and stated in favor of its passage, that much of the seeming prejudice against working and receiving accommodations in common with colored men, was only skin deep with white people. He said that there were under his supervision, colored and white men working harmoniously together.

Messrs. B. F. Pulpress and Wm. Cooper followed in favor of the Resolution, and Messrs. Wm. Nesbit and Mosca Brown opposed it as illy advised and injudicious, assigning that men living and conducting business in Copperhead towns, where prejudice was very strong, could not, without destroying their business, accommodate white and colored men alike.

Mr. Geo. B. White did not agree with the gentlemen who had immediately preceded him, he knew from experience in his own profession; that of a barber, that this question could be successfully and squarely met, for he had been shaving colored and white in his place of business for years; said he, let us get right ourselves and then we may consistently ask others to do right.

Prof. G. B. Vashon moved to amend the Resolution by striking out "will hereafter frown with contempt," and insert, "cannot but regard as inconsistent and highly reprehensible the conduct of all proprietors"

The amendment and the Resolution as amended were then adopted.

9. *Resolved*, That we look with the deepest interest on the efforts which are now being made to secure us equal political rights, by the noblest and best spirits of the land, and that among them we name with feelings of gratitude, Wendell Phillips, the true reformer, Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, Wm. D. Kelley and others in Congress, Morrow B. Lowry and others of the Pennsylvania Legislature, who catching the inspiration of the hour, outstrip the old anti-slavery spirit which seems to rest satisfied with the prospect of securing our freedom: and further, that with feelings of sorrow we observe the attitude assumed by our long tried friend, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, on the subject of the colored man's franchise, involving as it does, our dearest interest as citizens of this country, and that in his seeming determination to support and sustain the policy of Gen. Banks in his plan of reconstructing the States, which excludes colored men from equal political privileges, is evinced an entire departure from the principles which we have always regarded as vital to the security of our best interests.

Mr. James R. Gordon moved that the Resolution be adopted.

Mr. D. D. Turner opposed the Resolution and proceeded to define the position of Mr. Garrison. He thought Wm. Lloyd Garrison was

too old and well tried a friend to receive such consideration as this Resolution expressed, and he thought Mr. Garrison saw plainly, that as a people, we are progressing, and was therefore willing to take up with such men and measures as would advance the cause, whether these men and measures were radical or not.

Mr. William D. Forten, who had presented the Resolution, contended for its passage. He said that Mr. Garrison and all his Resolutions were voted down in the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Convention, and that he had denounced Frederick Douglass because he demanded the right of suffrage for the negro in the conditions of reconstruction.—The Hovey Fund too had been withdrawn from the support of his paper, and Mr. Garrison to-day, said he, is at odds with the leading anti-slavery men of the nation.

Prof. George B. Vashon read the Resolutions which Mr. Garrison presented at the last meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, favoring the disbanding of the Society on the ratification of the anti-slavery amendment to the Constitution of the United States. He quoted from the remarks of Mr. Garrison on Banks, negro-suffrage, and in denunciation of Frederick Douglass' position "that freedom without the right of suffrage was a mere sham."

Mr. A. M. Green argued for the Resolution, and was of the opinion that Mr. Garrison's position against Mr. Douglass could not be otherwise than an evidence that he was either behind the times unknowingly or from a lack of effort to keep up with the events through which we are passing. He believed the right to vote belonged to every native born citizen in the country, and inquired why Mr. Garrison did not come out and put his finger on the objectionable features in General Banks' manner of reconstruction. He was not in favor of denouncing Garrison, but let us express our sorrow at what we believe to be a false position.

Mr. D. D. Turner said there are two classes of rights, one natural and the other conventional, and he thought the right to vote belonged to the latter class. His belief was, that the Anti-Slavery Society had been organized for a special purpose, the abolishment of Slavery, and when that object was achieved their work of course ceases.

Mr. William D. Forten stated, in answer to Mr. Turner, that the whole question before the Anti-Slavery Society, at the time referred to, was the reconstruction of Louisiana, and they could consistently have given expression to their objections to some of its features.

The Resolution was then adopted.

Prof. George B. Vashon, Chairman of Business Committee, presented an Address, which may be found in the Appendix, and the following Preamble and Resolutions. They were adopted on motion of Mr. William Cooper.

WHEREAS, A great and bloody civil war has been raging in this country for nearly four years, destructive of the peace, prosperity and happiness of the American people ; and

WHEREAS, Every offer of compromise and all terms of peace suggested from the beginning of the contest have been utterly abortive, and have failed to secure even a short cessation of hostilities, for the purpose of reconstruction and compromise ; and

WHEREAS, We have distinctly seen the arm of God made bare in leading the nation through this sea of blood to a higher civilization and a more holy and God-approved religion :—

1st. By the emancipation of the District of Columbia and all other territories of the United States from the dark barbarism of Slavery ;

2d. By emancipating all escaping slaves, and fixing a penalty upon all officers who returned said slaves from our lines to their masters ;

3d. By emancipating the slaves of all States in rebellion, on the first of January, 1863 ;

4th. By revoking the infamous decision of the late incumbent of the Supreme Court of the United States, whereby colored men are declared citizens of the same ;

5th. By the enlistment of thousands of colored men in the army and navy of the United States, thus practically setting beyond all doubt the opinion of Attorney-General Bates in regard to their citizenship, etc. ;

6th. By equalizing the pay and compensation of the U. S. Colored Troops, and providing for the freedom and security of their families ;

7th. By the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law ; the recent adoption of a new article in the Constitution forever prohibiting Slavery or Involuntary Servitude throughout the United States, and the endorsement of all these by an overwhelming vote of the people at the late Presidential election ; all of which points with unerring certainty to the wisdom and power of God in subverting the power and contraverting the wicked machinations of the pro-slavery propagandists throughout the country ; Therefore

Resolved, That it is the duty of the American people, viewed in the light of all past history and the Divine revelations, to recognize the mysterious hand of God in vindication of His own righteous will and in verification of the prophetic injunction, "to unloose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke," and, that a full and entire submission to these demands, is the only means left us for a peaceful reconstruction of the Union, and the future peace and prosperity of the country.

Resolved, That the recent emancipation of Maryland, Missouri and other slave States, by the vote of the people of these States themselves, influenced alone by the force and power of these truths, is an example worthy of the imitation of the people of the free States in freeing the colored people from the prejudice and breaking the political yokes which shackle them in nearly every loyal State in the Union.

Resolved, That a Committee of three, consisting of Messrs.

OCTAVIUS V. CATTO, ALFRED M. GREEN,
JOSEPH C. BUSTILL,

be appointed to revise, correct and publish the proceedings of this Convention for general distribution.

Resolved, That this Convention return its sincere thanks to its officers for the manner in which they have conducted its business, and to the citizens of Harrisburg who have so kindly and generally extended their countenance and hospitalities to the members during its session.

On motion of Mr. James R. Gordon the money in the hands of the Finance Committee was paid over to the publishing Committee, and the State League authorized to determine the number of minutes to be published and supervise their distribution.

After a few eloquent and feeling remarks from the President, on the solemnity of the occasion of our parting, and expressing the hope that our labors had not been in vain, the Convention, at 4 o'clock P. M., adjourned *sine die*.

Attest,

OCTAVIUS V. CATTO,)
REDMAN FAUSETT,) SECRETARIES.
ALEX. T. HARRIS.)

MASS MEETING

OF THE

STATE EQUAL RIGHTS' LEAGUE.

FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 10th, 1865.

At an early hour the Church was crowded by the audience waiting for the organization of an adjourned meeting of the State Equal Rights' League.

Rev. John Peck, President of the League called the house to order at 7½ o'clock. After the singing of a hymn, the Rev. W. J. Alston offered an earnest prayer for the success of the League and the achievement of its aims.

Mr. A. M. Green then presented the following Preamble and Resolution, which, upon motion of the Rev. Joseph A. Nelson, were unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS, The objects and aims of the State Equal Rights' League and the Equal Rights' Convention of the colored people of Pennsylvania, are one and identical; and **WHEREAS**, these objects are best promoted by a consolidation of all the interests of our people throughout the State, especially those now assembled in Convention; therefore,

Resolved, That the members of this Convention be declared members of the State Equal Rights' League, for one year, and that by a compliance with sections first and tenth of the constitution, they may continue their connection therewith as long as desired by the auxiliaries or subordinate organizations which they may be elected to represent.

Mr. Jos. C. Bustill read the Constitution of the State League, as it is with Mr. Green's Resolution appended.

The Rev. W. J. Alston was the first speaker introduced, and began by stating that a short time ago the word colonization raised the tiger in him and made him feel like taking up the sword. But there had come over him a change, and he was now a colonizationist as it applied to the occupancy of the Southern States by the colored people. He saw through the freeing of Maryland the gate by which the whole 779,000 square miles of southern territory would be opened to the colored people. He urged upon the people unity, concord and action. The speech was well received and frequently applauded.

Mr. J. J. Wright spoke next. His opinion was that this Convention could very consistently preach the funeral sermon of slavery. He insisted that we should lose no time, or neglect no opportunity to show forth our rights and make plain the claims upon which we demand them, and he believed that our aims would be ultimately successful. The speech was replete with argument, wit and humor, and defied all attempts at our reporting it; the vast audience testified their appreciation of it by round after round of deafening applause.

Mr. Octavius V. Catto was then introduced and said that in the midst of these wildly excited times there were, at least occasional thoughts crowding upon us which like the flashes in the dark sky would light up some of the dark phases of the present crisis. He met the assertion of our inferiority by claiming that we had as many Frederick Douglasses as the whites had Sumners, as many Bannekers as they had Mitchells, and as many Vashons as they had Anthons. He was of the opinion that the political horizon is not clear while Banks is mis-constructing Louisiana, Germans commanding Germans, even Irishmen commanding Irishmen, and Negroes not allowed to command Negroes. He thought we should call without ceasing upon the clergy and all who follow them in communion to vindicate the principles of christianity; upon the Bench and Bar to vindicate the principles of their profession; upon the Press with its great influence; and upon Congress and the Administration to lend us their aid in a cause so just, so reasonable and so necessary, as the possession of equal rights without regard to color. And he believed that while our great armies moved on to victory the nation would move on to justice. The speech was frequently applauded.

Rev. Elisha Weaver addressed a few remarks to the assemblage, and urged the people to a union in their labors and the necessity of encouraging one another in business.

Mr. Joseph C. Bustill then, on behalf of the ladies of Harrisburg, reminded the delegates of the collation awaiting them in the basement of the Church. The meeting was then adjourned and dismissed with the benediction by the President. The vast assembly slowly, and with evident feelings and demonstrations of the deep interest which had been awakened in their minds, wended their way from the Church, presenting an interesting and encouraging spectacle.

APPENDIX.

A FEW OF THE ARGUMENTS PRESENTED SUGGESTING THE NECESSITY FOR HOLDING THE CONVENTION.

1st. It is the duty of any people who have grievances and wrongs to be redressed, to exercise themselves in their own behalf; and we would be unworthy of the notice or consideration of those to whom we appeal, if we possessed no energy, or intelligence, and refused to exert every faculty we possess, and embrace every opportunity within our reach to emancipate ourselves from disfranchisement in the State and on the soil upon which we were born.

2d. The old proverb so often applied to us,

“ Hereditary bondsmen ! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow ? ”

is most faithfully borne out in the more recent motto of the people of this country, that “ self-reliance is the sure road to Independence ; ” and while we accept the application of the former, we feel in duty bound to adopt the practice of the latter, so far at least, as the means and opportunity are at hand.

3. We believe that no people have greater reason to complain, or have suffered greater and more frequent cruelties and injustice, or received less consideration for long and faithful services in promoting the general interests of the State, or have been more patient, law-abiding and discreet, than have been the colored people of the State of Pennsylvania.

4th. We, as a class, are not merely adopted or naturalized citizens of this State ; our residence therein and our connection with the history thereof began with us, as with our forefathers, at the time of our birth. In the pursuits of manual labor and commercial enterprise,

we began with the State itself; and from the time of the revolution, the noble defence of our frontier and the defeat at Red Bank of an enemy flushed with exultation at the prospect of the speedy fall of Pennsylvania's chief commercial city, we have ever been, to the interest and honor of our State, as true as the needle to the pole, never wavering, never changing, never deserting her cause, even when many of her most highly favored children have turned their backs upon her and united their destiny with that of her wayward sisters in rebellion.

5th. We, at one time, enjoyed our suffrages in this State, and met but little of the cruel prejudice that now meets us at every step we make in the direction of human progress. A prejudice barring against us the doors of your public libraries, of your colleges of science, of your popular lecture rooms, of your military academies, of your jury boxes, of your ballot boxes, of your churches, of your theatres, and even of your common street cars; and knowing all this to be the direct result of the defunct system of barbarism—American Slavery—we now ask that, as you have slain the cause with the rebellion, you give us security against the continuance of the effect, as manifested in the existence of these inhuman prejudices and prohibitions.

6th. While nearly every State in the Union is moving in the direction, not only of arming its colored population, but also of securing them their rights of citizenship, it is the duty of the people of Pennsylvania, she having sent more colored men than any two States to the field, to take such action as shall do justice to these soldiers and their friends, and at the same time do honor and credit to the State they represent.

7th. Our duty to the brave men who have represented us and you upon many a well contested field of mortal strife, our duty to the dear ones they have left behind, and to the glorious cause they serve, demand our earnest and untiring efforts towards procuring for ourselves and for them, full indemnity for the past, compensation for the present, and security for the future: and we believe that in so doing we cannot but have the approbation of all good men, and the support and direction of that arm and wisdom which are mightier than the power of man.

8th. With these views then we come to you, and we ask of you a calm and patient hearing, that when our cause is properly before you, we may rest assured that you will do your part earnestly and faithfully as christian men and women, who believe in the practice and exercise of virtue and piety, and in the common brotherhood of the human race

ADDRESS
OF THE
COLORED STATE CONVENTION
TO THE
PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—

We, the colored people of Pennsylvania in Convention assembled at Harrisburg on the 8th, 9th and 10th of February, 1865, viewing the complex state and condition of affairs, and of public sentiment in our State, deem it our duty to present to you our grievances, our sufferings, and the outrages heaped upon us because of our helpless and disqualified position for self-defence, resulting, as we think we can prove, from no greater cause than our long and unjust political disfranchisement.

We do not come to you in the spirit of reproachfulness and denunciation; neither do we feel in pleading for equal rights without regard to complexional differences, that we are in the least degree selfish. Nor do we in any respect seek to lower the standard of refinement, intelligence or honor among the great and loyal people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by urging at this time these questions upon your consideration. On the contrary, we would view if possible, the brightest side of the picture we have to present, and give to our beloved State all honor and credit possible, in this hour of universal rejoicing over the rapid strides our great nation is taking in the direction of universal emancipation and equality before the law.

We would plead for an equality that would recognize all men as created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," believing that to secure these blessings governments were instituted among men, and that when they fail to secure, or seek to subvert these principles, they should no longer exist, but should become extinct or be so revolutionized as to promise these blessings, and not despotism as the recompense to their subjects for loyalty and devotion to the interests and prosperity of the State.

We believe that, in this country, to elevate the standard of political equality in favor of the one and only disfranchised portion of the inhabitants of the republic, is indeed but another word for securing to all the present and future population of the entire continent, those blessings of refinement, intelligence, and honor which having hung tremblingly in the balance of God's eternal truth, weighed and found wanting, are now passing through the fiery furnace of a fierce and bloody revolution.

We recognize, and most gratefully acknowledge the Old Keystone State as among the first to strike off the fetters of slavery from the shackled limbs of her colored people. We turn with the most pleasant emotions to that day in the history of Pennsylvania, upon which the inscription upon the bell (still enshrined within the sacred temple of our liberty—Independence Hall) "proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof," was the universal sentiment of the people of our State. We give full faith and credit to the sentiment advanced in the 9th article, 1st and 2d sections of our State Constitution, which declare

1st. That all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and indefatigable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own happiness.

2d. That all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of those ends, they have at all times, an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government, in such a manner as they think proper.

We remember with feelings of both joy and sorrow, that the time once was, in the history of our State (before the encroaching

spirit and domineering power of the slave oligarchy had subverted or controlled the pulpit, press and forum of almost every State in the Union) that all men were in reality recognized as entitled to the enjoyment of these indefeasible and inalienable rights. But through the dominant power of this crude and most barbarous institution, every right and every instinct, whether inherent or conventional, has been assailed and trampled under foot and crushed out of the black man whenever possible to reach him, over the broad expanse of our country. We have been hunted and driven from State to State, by the the most cruel enactments, and have been abused, insulted, and disgraced wherever found, through and by the influence and power of that monster which having bloated itself by reveling in our blood and tears for more than three centuries upon the continent and adjacent islands, now rolls itself in defiant gluttony in the blood and treasure of your brightest and noblest youth and your unexampled prosperity of more than half a century.

We have borne our disfranchisement patiently. We have calmly submitted to the most wicked and outrageous treatment at the hands of persons, who, in the hour of National trial and State invasion, have deserted your cause, and even invited the enemy to your doors, and given him aid and comfort in the work of sacking your homes and murdering your children, brethren and fathers. We barely escaped the horrid massacre at Detroit, New York, and other places, because of the active measures taken by the National government to protect us against our own irresponsible population of rebel sympathizers and those whom they had invited from other parts of the country to fan and feed the fire of rebellion, and inaugurate a counter revolution throughout the entire North.

The State authorities of Pennsylvania, with a loyal population of loyal colored people numbering a fraction less than sixty thousand, (60,000) through the cruel, proscriptive policy of our State Government toward her colored people, were as perfectly powerless for their own protection as for ours. In the day when the keepers of the house trembled, and strong men bowed themselves, when the doors were shut in the streets, and the sound of the grinding was low, and men rose up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music were brought low,—when the foot of the rebel horde polluted and desecrated our soil, plundered our towns and villages, threatened our State Capitol, and loosed the silver cord of thousands of our best and bravest young men at Gettysburg, and men were afraid of that which was high, and

and the grasshopper had become a burden,—when, instead of the music of the organ and the church choir, our churches were turned into general recruiting offices, and drums and trumpets and the clash of swords greeted the ear, even then, so firm a hold had the power and influence of the accursed institution (that was pouring out the nation's blood in streams) upon the hearts of our people, and so infatuated were they by the seething, poisonous prejudice distilled by this despotic power and diffused throughout the land, that the colored people of the State, rushing by hundreds to the scene of danger and the field of death, were coldly denied the right to strike one blow even for their own defense or yours, under sanction and by authority of the State Government.

Now how does this action comport with section 21st, article 9th of our State Constitution which says, "the right of the citizens to bear arms in defence of themselves and the State, shall not be questioned?" It may be assumed that the word "*citizens*" shuts us out from this privilege, since some claim that we are not citizens, and not eligible to become so on account of color.

We would not insult you by attempting to argue before the world at this day and hour the barbarity of such a proposition. If such statutes have been passed they are contrary to the letter and spirit of our Constitutions, both State and Federal. It cannot be true that color renders us ineligible to bear arms and to exercise the right of suffrage.

Article 3d, section 1st, middle clause of our State Constitution reads thus, "but a citizen of the United States, who had previously been a qualified voter of this State, and removed therefrom and returned, and who shall have resided in the election district, and shall have paid taxes as aforesaid, shall be entitled to vote, after residing in the State six months." Now this is precisely the condition of hundreds of colored people of the State of Pennsylvania to-day. We deem it a work of supererogation to argue our right to citizenship in the United States. All things rise in proof of this now generally conceded opinion. The thousands of brethren in the army and navy fully recognized as citizen soldiers,—the sentence, "no person except a natural born citizen" found in article 2d, section 5th of our Federal Constitution, together with the opinion of Attorney-General Bates, go so far in establishing this point beyond question, that we will not attempt to argue it. Equally clear is the fact that colored men have been qualified voters

of this State, and in every sense filled the requirements of article 3d, section 1st of our Constitution. How then can it be affirmed, even by authority of our amended Constitution, that color is the bar to our eligibility to citizenship in this State?

And even if we concede the point here raised, for argument's sake, there is sufficient in article 9th, section 1st of our Constitution, to entitle us to bear arms in defense of ourselves and the State, and quite enough in section 3d of the same article, to entitle us to such alterations or reforms of our statute laws, or even of the Constitution itself, as shall secure to us the rights of full citizenship within the State, and perfect equality before the law.

But we repeat that all this is attributable to the firm power with which the despotic and controlling institution of slavery ruled the north on all questions touching the conditions and interests of their colored population. Having yielded every point demanded by the south, up to their treasonable seizure of the national property and murder of the national troops, the remuneration of Pennsylvania has been to be styled "mudsills," "cowardly yankee pimps," and to have their soil dishonored, and their people pillaged and murdered by these minions of the despotic system who, like ravenous wolves, have made our State their hunting ground for nearly three years.

We have never yet been secure in our persons, houses, papers and possessions, from unreasonable searches and seizures, as warranted to all persons under the State Constitution. When tried by accusation before our State Courts, it has been almost impossible to secure an impartial jury of the vicinago where persons of the opposite complexion are parties of the suit; and in no case can it be claimed that we are tried, and judgment rendered by our peers.

All these disadvantages have contributed to rivet the shackles of prejudice and political slavery upon us, and throw us upon the mercy of those who know no mercy even up to this very hour of national calamity and moral revolution. Since, then all this is attributable to the power and prejudice fostered and maintained as the direct result of slavery, why should it not now cease? Slavery is now dead. Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, West Virginia, and even Old Kentucky will yet give the world a spectacle of wealth, prosperity and happiness under the new regime, well worthy of patronage by all their free sisters of the republic.

Slavery dead throughout the land,—black men declared to be citizens of the United States, and marching by tens of thousands on field

and flood against this monstrous rebellion, the common enemy of God and man—fighting, bleeding, dying in defense of our Constitution and the maintenance of our law. Can it be possible that loyal Pennsylvania will still suffer herself to be dishonored by refusing to acknowledge or to guarantee citizenship to those who have suffered so much, and still been foremost among her own sons in defending their country and the interests of the State against treason and rebellion? Is it not our duty to ask in the name of justice, in the name of humanity, in the name of those whose bones whiten the battle-fields of the south, that every bar to our political enfranchisement be now and forever removed? Do this, and all other evils and outrages will disappear as the dews of morning melt before the morning sun.

We have omitted many, very many acts of barbarity and inhuman aggressions made upon us by the dominant race (and which are as commonly perpetrated as though the laws of the land laid the obligation upon those who inflict them to do so) because we believe you are well aware of the facts yourselves, and because we believe that every sense of justice and honor stands out in the vindication of our claims without further argument or encroachment upon your time. We have come together to consult and advise with each other upon these questions of vital interest to ourselves and our country, and having canvassed all the ground, we have concluded to present our desires, our hopes, our claims to justice, before you, and in the sincere anxiety of our hearts, we ask a calm and careful consideration of the whole subject of our disfranchisement, and our suffering originating therefrom; and having given it this, we have no doubt but that truth, justice, honor, and the security, prosperity and happiness of our State will aid you in arriving at such conclusions as shall vouchsafe to us those blessings so long denied us, and for which, above all other considerations, our Constitution and government were formed.

When, after continued refusals of both State and Federal authorities, it was found necessary to arm and muster the colored men of Pennsylvania as United States soldiers, we were urged to enlist, ignoring the question of pay, bounty, and every other consideration that was presented as an inducement to white men to enlist, because it was claimed that it was our duty, discarding all other considerations, to help our brethren of the south to their freedom. On this consideration, more than twelve thousand (12,000) men have been enlisted and sent from our State to swell the ranks of the Federal army. Many of these men are credited to the quota of this State under the several calls of the

President. Pennsylvania still calls for volunteers to fill her quota of the late call. She asks her colored men now as before to assist in the overthrow of the rebellion. But we answer, "what is our reward?" We tell you now, as you told us at first, that pecuniary interests are of minor importance compared with freedom and our enfranchisement. We have the admission on all sides, that the question of slavery is settled. Slavery is dead to all intents and purposes. This is the admission of the confederate authorities themselves.

We have even seen and heard the representatives of slave States demanding, not only freedom but enfranchisement for their colored people, during the past year. Witness Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee and Louisiana, and mark the recent action of the State of Illinois in the repeal of her black laws. Have we not equal claims upon the people of our State? Can you ask us now to aid us to secure your own freedom and interests against the fearful assault made upon them, without promising us an equivalent equal to what you, by a vote of great significance, guaranteed to the soldiers during the past year?

Colored men are no longer fighting for the freedom of the slaves in the south. They are fighting for the Union, the Constitution and the enforcement of your laws; and we ask you, fellow-citizens, to see to it, that our rights and interests be regarded in this respect; that no more fear may be entertained of the overthrow of our National Government by the toleration of the plotters of treason, to the exclusion of true loyalists, and State interests made insecure by traitors in our midst armed with bullets and ballots to do us mischief, while our loyal colored people, as a measure of State policy are denied the use of both.

MEMORIAL

Presented to the Legislature.--February, 1865.

*To the Honcrable Senate and House of Representatives
of the State of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly
met.*

GENTLEMEN :—

Your memorialists, Citizens of Pennsylvania, but disfranchised on account of their *color*,—having met in Convention to consider their grievances, would, in behalf of themselves and their fellows, reiterate the oft made *Appeal*, that you would do them justice.

In respectfully urging you thus to act, they would remind you that, at one time, men of Color were acknowledged as Citizens, under the Laws of Pennsylvania, and possessed all the political franchises which were enjoyed by their white Fellow Citizens. But nearly thirty years ago, the Supreme Court of the State, decided that this class of persons were not included in the term "Freemen," as it was employed in the Constitution of 1790 ;—that consequently they were not Citizens, and therefore had no legal title to the enjoyment of the elective franchise.

Subsequently, an amendment of the State Constitution debarred colored men from any claim to that privilege which they might base upon the wording of that document. Here then, was a blow aimed not at any immunity which they might enjoy as Citizens, but at the very citadel of their Citizenship itself. Now your memorialists are not insensible of the importance of this right of Citizenship.

They know how sacredly it has been prized by all Nations and in all ages. They are conscious, that it is now as ever, a Palladium confer-

ring blessings upon the individual whom it shelters ;—the sun of the political firmament, gilding every object with its beams, and spreading health and happiness with its rays. They therefore hold tenaciously to the position that they are Citizens of Pennsylvania, in spite of the Supreme Court's decision referred to, and of the amended Constitution ; and they insist the more earnestly upon their Citizenship, in view of the fact, that their disfranchisement was based upon the assumption of their not being Citizens. Are they right or wrong in so doing ? Let facts attested by our National records decide.

Your memorialists would premise that, if they are Citizens of the United States, they have a guarantee contained in Art. IV. Sec. 2d, of the Federal Constitution, that they are also Citizens of Pennsylvania. Now, in view of the opinion of Attorney General Bates, they are at present recognized in the former character ; and, therefore, the latter one follows as a necessary consequence. Is that opinion regarded as unsound ? Let it be judged of in the light of History. And to History your memorialists appeal, in order to establish the proposition that Free Colored persons were Citizens of the Union, prior to the year 1789 ; and that, as they were not declared to be otherwise by the Constitution then adopted, they are Citizens still. To substantiate this let us refer to the debates which took place in the Continental Congress, during the framing of the Articles of Confederation. On the 30th of October, 1777, while the motion in reference to the manner of adopting the Articles was pending, an amendment was proposed for the purpose of excluding Colored persons from taking part in that adoption. The Delegates from Virginia were the only ones who voted in favor of it, and they were afterwards instructed to vote for the Articles as they stood.

And again on the 13th of the following month, the 4th Article of the Confederation was proposed. It read as follows :—

“ The better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the people of the different States in the Union ; the free inhabitants of each of these States, paupers, vagabonds and fugitives from justice excepted, shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of free Citizens in the several States.” The Delegates from South Carolina moved that the Article should be amended by the insertion of the word “ White,” before the word “ inhabitants.” This motion was lost, and the Article was then adopted by a unanimous vote. Here then were two recognitions of Colored persons as Citizens within fourteen days of each other, by the assembled representatives.

of the Union. This is proof positive that Colored Freemen enjoyed Citizenship under the Confederation. Where is the Article, in the present Constitution, that denies their claims? And in the absence of any such denial, what is more clear than the corollary that Colored men are still Citizens of the United States? The proposition thus sustained finds additional support in the language of various Congressional Laws enacted during the first half century of our National existence, wherein are contained either direct or indirect recognitions of the Citizenship of men of Color; and it is still farther substantiated by the explicit declaration of such men as Chancellor Kent, the profoundest legal authority of America, and as Alexander Hamilton and Rufus King, both of whom were members of the Convention that drafted the Federal Constitution, and who certainly ought to have known whether or not that instrument had branded Colored men as aliens. Now in view of all this concurrent testimony, your memorialists claim that they are Citizens of the United States, and by virtue of the guaranty of the Federal Constitution before alluded to, Citizens also of the State of Pennsylvania, that they have been unjustly dealt with in being deprived of the elective franchise upon the false assumption of their not being Citizens; and that a proper regard both for the honor of the Commonwealth, and for that consideration which in all true republics is ever due to the meanest Citizen, demands at your hands, the redress of this mighty wrong. They understand fully the importance of this right of suffrage,—the dearest treasure in the gift of any government,—the strongest weapon in the possession of the subject, repelling the approaches of despotism and guaranteeing the possession of all other immunities, a weapon that, in the expressive language of Whittier,

"executes a freeman's will,
As lightning doth the will of God.

Now, to deny such a right to one class of Citizens, while it is accorded to another, without good reason for such a discrimination, is manifestly unjust and anti-republican. The present State Government is an aristocracy the more intolerable, because by it the insignia republican nobility are conferred upon the many, while they are withheld from the few. Your memorialists earnestly implore you to redress this state of things, and to restore to them the rights wrongfully wrested from them. In advocacy of their claim, they insist upon their Citizenship. In the same advocacy, they would modestly and briefly remind you of the proofs of determined manhood and loyalty manifested

by Colored men of Pennsylvania, during the course of the existing unholy rebellion, in defence both of the State and of the Union. Your State Capital was endangered. Straightway a band of Colored men rushed to its rescue. A call for additional troops is issued; and soon twelve thousand black Pennsylvanians respond, and aid in filling up your quota.

There is no need to tell you how those men have comported themselves upon the embattled plain;—at Olustee, before Petersburg, and on other fiercely contested fields. Their general officers have already reported how soldierly those disfranchised Americans imperiled, and in many instances alas, lost life in behalf of a country they loved, and which they hoped would yet prove grateful.

Gentlemen, do not say that years must intervene before the wrong in question can be redressed,—that precedent is in the way of an immediate action in the premises. Remember, that your memorialists do not ask for favors. They claim rights. For the conferring of benefits, there may be another, and more convenient time, but

“for justice

All place a temple and all seasons summer.”

Then, let custom be disregarded, and “let justice be done though the heavens fall.” Do this gentlemen, and your memorialists will ever pray.