

101010117

First Annual Meeting

OF THE

National Equal Rights League,

HELD IN

CLEVELAND, OHIO,

October 19th, 20th, and 21st, 1865.



PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

NATIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS LEAGUE,

• HELD IN

CLEVELAND, OHIO,

October 19, 20, and 21, 1865.

PHILADELPHIA:

**E. C. MARKLEY & SON, PRINTERS, GOLDSMITHS HALL,
LIBRARY STREET.**

1865.

XPS 334 (1865)
~~10701.17~~



Summer fund

*To the Members and Friends of the
National Equal Rights League of the United States.*

FELLOW CITIZENS:

The undersigned Committee, appointed to revise the proceedings for publication, believing that a delay in issuing the same would lessen your interest in the doings of the League, have exerted themselves more toward immediate publication than to elegance and finish of style or language. But our effort has been to give them to you as correct as possible.

We are yours truly,

ST. GEORGE R. TAYLOR, } Committee
OCTAVIUS V. CATTO, } on
JOHN D. RICHARDS, } Publication.

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

NATIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS LEAGUE.

THE First Annual Meeting of the National Equal Rights League assembled in Garrett's Hall, Cleveland, Ohio, September 19, 1865, at 10 o'clock A. M.

John M. Langston, Esq., the President of the National Equal Rights League, called the meeting to order.

John D. Richards, of Michigan, was chosen Secretary during the temporary absence of the Secretary, St. George R. Taylor.

Rev. Samuel Lowery, of Nashville, Tenn., was invited by the President to open the session with singing and prayer.

On motion, the President appointed a Committee of three on Credentials, consisting of Peter H. Clark, of Ohio, Alfred M. Green, of Pennsylvania, and Jermain W. Loguen, of New York. After which the President made some remarks, in which he hoped that a closer union might be effected between colored Americans in both sections of our country, and that the true interests of all might be considered during this season of our deliberations.

The President suggested that the meeting should be addressed by some of the members while the Committee on Credentials were preparing their Report.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, inquired if the League proposed to adhere to the fifty (50) dollar representation clause in the Constitution. The President replied that he could not answer until after the Committee on Credentials had reported, nor did he propose to express an opinion in the matter.

Mr. Anderson, of Michigan, thought the raising of that question was premature.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, thought the action of the Committee would not be final, and that the League here assembled should decide.

A motion was made, that while the Committee on Credentials were out, the meeting be addressed by gentlemen in short speeches. Adopted.

The President extended an invitation to Mr. Johnson, of Richmond, Va., who urged upon the League the necessity of extending itself into the rural parts of his State. It is there, said the speaker, much work was to be performed, owing to the oppressive and degrading influence to which slavery has subjected the colored Virginian. The gentleman concluded by thanking his auditors for their attention during his remarks.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, said that he was glad of the opportunity extended him of standing before such an audience as confronted him. He thanked God that as an American citizen, as a negro, and as a man, he had lived to see the American flag floating over territory which Government has declared forever free. The gentleman made allusion to his experience in Canada, Oberlin, and other parts of Ohio, as warranting him in endorsing an oft repeated assertion of President Langston's, that "white men are white men" the world over. And he felt that the elevation of the Negro depends upon his own right arm.

Mr. Harris paid a glowing tribute to the fidelity of Mr. Langston as President of the National Equal Rights League,

and to his people in the United States. The speaker hoped that the educated portion of the colored people would hold up his, *Langston's* hands, in the good work, and that those whose pecuniary interests towered above all other feelings, would not interfere in the great work of reform.

Mr. Ransom Harris, of Tennessee, spoke of the importance of our people being active in the good work progressing in our land. In his early life he had been debarred from every privilege of preparing himself for the duties of manhood. The freedom accorded the most common reptile of the earth had been denied him. The speaker stated that the fears entertained by many, that colored Tennesseans would migrate into the adjacent free States, were entirely unfounded. He had little or no ability to speak or write, but this was no fault of his. Withal, the League should have his prayers and votes for its success.

David Jenkins, of Columbus, Ohio, was the next speaker. He said that so much had been said by those gentlemen who had preceded him, that he knew not what to say. In the latter part of Mr. Jenkins' remarks, the speaker said that social intercourse was subject entirely to the people's *instincts*, and no laws could or would be operative in such matters.

On motion of Mr. Malvin, of Cleveland, the house adjourned until half-past two o'clock in the afternoon.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

President in the chair.

Peter H. Clark, from the Committee on Credentials, reported the following named as entitled to seats in the National Equal Rights League.

SAMUEL G. GOULD,	-	-	-	New Jersey.
JERMAIN W. LOGUEN,	-	-	-	Syracuse, New York.
GEORGE DOVER,	-	-	-	Buffalo, "
L. D. TUCKER,	-	-	-	" "
PEYTON HARRIS,	-	-	-	" "

ALFRED M. GREEN,	-	-	-	Philadelphia.
ST. GEORGE R. TAYLOR,	-	-	-	“
WILLIAM D. FORTEN,	-	-	-	“
WILLIAM NESBIT,	-	-	-	Altoona, Penna.
O. L. C. HUGHES,	-	-	-	Harrisburg, Penna.
B. W. ARNOTT,	-	-	-	Brownsville, “
B. F. PULPRESS,	-	-	-	Allegheny City, Penna.
GEORGE B. VASHON,	-	-	-	Pittsburg, “
MOSES BROWN,	-	-	-	Hollidaysburg, “
DAVID JENKINS,	-	-	-	Columbus, Ohio.
JAMES A. SHORTER,	-	-	-	Cincinnati, “
PETER H. CLARK,	-	-	-	“ “
P. W. HENDERSON,	-	-	-	Oberlin, “
WILLIS N. BRENT,	-	-	-	“ “
MATTHEW GOOSELAND,	-	-	-	“ “
HENRY EVANS,	-	-	-	“ “
JAMES WEAVER,	-	-	-	Cleveland, “
C. M. RICHARDSON,	-	-	-	“ “
JAMES THOMSON,	-	-	-	“ “
J. E. SAMPSON,	-	-	-	“ “
M. TILLEY,	-	-	-	“ “
JAMES C. OLIVER,	-	-	-	“ “
P. A. DAVIS,	-	-	-	“ “
JOHN MALVIN,	-	-	-	“ “
R. J. ROBINSON,	-	-	-	Wellington, Ohio.
J. M. LANGSTON,	-	-	-	Oberlin, “
ROBERT W. JOHNSON,	-	-	-	Richmond, Va.
J. HENRY HARRIS,	-	-	-	Raleigh, N. C.
D. B. F. PRICE,	-	-	-	Cairo, Ill.
ALFRED B. ANDERSON,	-	-	-	Knoxville, Tennessee.
SAMUEL LOWERY,	-	-	-	Nashville, “
JEREMIAH STOTHARD,	-	-	-	“ “
NELSON WALKER,	-	-	-	“ “
RANSOM HARRIS,	-	-	-	“ “
JAMES RAPIER,	-	-	-	“ “
JOHN D. RICHARDS,	-	-	-	Detroit, Michigan.

The Committee on Credentials also suggested in their Report the striking out the latter clause of the Second Section of the Constitution.

On motion of O. L. C. Hughes, of Harrisburg, the Committee's Report was adopted.

The President suggested the adoption of the Rules of the Syracuse Convention.

Mr. Forten moved their adoption.

Mr. Richards said he would not be ready to sustain the proposition unless an evening Session was held. He thought three Sessions per day was necessary in order to despatch business, therefore he would move, while on the floor, that the League continue its deliberations during the evening, commencing at half-past seven o'clock.

After some debate, the Rules, as amended, were adopted.

Mr. Forten, of Philadelphia, moved that a Committee of seven be appointed on Business.

Mr. A. M. Green's motion to amend, by saying one member from each League represented, was adopted.

An enquiry was made as to whether the President or the House should construct the Committee.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, moved that the chair appoint the Committee.

Mr. P. H. Clark moved to amend, by saying that the chair shall appoint, and that the Committee shall select its own chairman.

Mr. J. D. Richards was opposed to the Committee appointing its own chairman; he had sufficient confidence in the President's capacity to act wisely in the premises.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, inquired if it was not parliamentary for the first named by the chair to act as head of the Committee.

Mr. Clark said he hoped that the time of the Session would not be unnecessarily consumed by pleas of parliamentary usage. He felt that the meeting was free to act as seemed best to it, without regard to Jefferson's ghost of rules. After some further debate, in which Messrs. Forten, Robinson, of Ohio, and Pulpress, of Pennsylvania, participated, the amendment of Mr. Clark was rejected by a vote of 16 yeas and 17 nays, the members voting by a division of the House.

The previous motion was adopted.

Mr. Arnott, of Pennsylvania, moved that the President appoint a Committee of five on Finance. Adopted.

Mr. Robinson, of Ohio, moved that Mr. Willis N. Brent, of Oberlin, act as Assistant Secretary. Adopted.

The President announced the following named as the gentlemen forming the Finance Committee: C. M. Richardson, Cleveland; Matthew Gooseland, of Oberlin; B. F. Pulpress, of Pennsylvania; James A. Shorter, of Ohio, and Jeremiah Stothard, of Tennessee.

During the temporary absence of the President, the Rev. Jermain W. Loguen, of Syracuse, N. Y., presided over the meeting.

Mr. Alfred M. Green, of Pennsylvania, moved that the League proceed to substitute a clause for that stricken from Section Second by the action of the House on the Report of the Committee on Credentials.

Mr. Hughes, of Pennsylvania, moved to amend, by the appointment of a Committee of three, to whom the subject should be referred.

After some debate, Mr. Green moved to lay Mr. Hughes' motion on the table. Not agreed to.

The amendment and previous motion was then adopted.

The President announced the following named gentlemen as the Business Committee:

PETER H. CLARK,	-	-	-	-	Ohio.
ALFRED M. GREEN,	-	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
WILLIAM D. FORTEN,	-	-	-	-	"
SAMUEL LOWERY,	-	-	-	-	Tennessee.
SAMUEL G. GOULD,	-	-	-	-	New Jersey.
R. W. JOHNSON,	-	-	-	-	Virginia.
J. H. HARRIS,	-	-	-	-	North Carolina.
D. B. F. PRICE,	-	-	-	-	Illinois.
JERMAIN W. LOGUEN,	-	-	-	-	Syracuse, New York.
H. J. MORRISON,	-	-	-	-	Connecticut.
O. L. C. HUGHES,	-	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
DAVID JENKINS	-	-	-	-	Ohio.

ALFRED ANDERSON,	-	-	-	Tennessee.
WILLIAM NESBIT,	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
JAMES P. RAPIER,	-	-	-	Tennessee.
L. D. TUCKER,	-	-	-	New York.

The Committee on Credentials reported John D. Richards, George De Baptiste, B. D. Paul, O. P. Anderson, and James W. Johnson, delegates from Michigan, as entitled to seats in this body. The Report was adopted.

During the retirement of the Business Committee, a collection was made for procuring stationery. Mr. J. D. Richards, of Michigan, said that for the future all questions of finance should be submitted to the Committee appointed for that purpose.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, arose and said, there seemed to be a misunderstanding as to who was the proper representatives of the Michigan State League, as several gentlemen were contending for that honor. He earnestly appealed to the Convention to allow the gentlemen whose credentials were under advisement to be eligible to seats as members of this body.

Mr. Richards earnestly protested against any such movement, branding it as an act of the greatest injustice to the delegates of Michigan.

Mr. Robinson, of Ohio, rose to a point of order, and gave as a reason, that the report of the Committee on Credentials had been received and adopted, and that further discussion on the matter was out of order.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, claimed that Mr. Richards was not identified with the League as a representative regularly appointed as such, but only by virtue of his connection with the National Equal Rights League at its organization.

The Business Committee reported the following amendments to the Constitution of the National Equal Rights League.

(1st.) To strike out the word "Colored" wherever it occurs in the Preamble of the Constitution.

Section 2d. Hereafter only such persons as shall be duly accredited representatives of the auxiliary associations herein provided for, shall constitute its members, provided that no

auxiliary society shall be entitled to more than one representative for each five dollars contributed annually by such society, with an additional member for each additional sum of three dollars thus contributed.

To strike from Section third the word "*Four*," and insert "*Nine*," and add the words "five of whom shall constitute a quorum."

To add in Section 4th, the following, after the last clause: "And shall give proper security for the faithful performance of his duty, and for the safe keeping of all property entrusted to his charge belonging to the National Equal Rights League."

Section 5th. After the words locating an office in Philadelphia, the following: "In which place they shall hold quarterly Sessions on the fourth Tuesday of September, the fourth Tuesday of December, the fourth Tuesday of March, and the fourth Tuesday in June. The Session to commence at 10 o'clock A. M. Special meetings may be called when deemed necessary or expedient, by the Executive Committee.

To insert in the same Section after the words such demands, the following: "And shall have power to suspend any officer for malfeasance in office." Also to add the following:

A majority of the Executive Committee shall reside in or adjacent to Philadelphia, and they shall have power to fill *vacancies* when such occur, in the Executive Committee.

That the following constitute the 8th Section: Individuals or associations favorable to the objects of the League, and desirous of co-operating with, and supporting the objects it endeavors to accomplish without being themselves connected with the League, as members or representatives, may identify themselves with the work sought to be accomplished, by contributions through the Recording Secretaries.

That Section 9 be amended by the addition of the following words: "The National Equal Rights League shall at each

annual meeting designate the place in which its next Session shall be held."

To be added as the 10th Section: All persons who are members of State Equal Rights Leagues, or Leagues subordinate to State Leagues, may be entitled to honorary membership at the annual meetings of the National Equal Rights League, by the payment of two dollars, or to full membership, by the payment of such an amount as may be required to entitle a State League to one representative.

Also to be added as the 11th Section. The National Equal Rights League shall have power to try its members for breach of order, violation of the Constitution, and other offences at variance with the objects and interests of the League, and upon conviction such person or persons may be suspended, reprov'd, or expelled, as may be determined upon by the judgment of the majority of the members present at an Annual Meeting. And such trial shall be conducted in accordance with the practice and usages of other well governed organizations in similar cases. The Report was adopted.

The Session adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock in the evening.

EVENING SESSION.

President Langston in the chair.

The meeting opened by singing the John Brown song, in which the members of the League *participated*.

Mr. Arnott, of Pennsylvania, moved that Rev. Ransom Harris, of Tennessee, act as Chaplain during the Sessions of the League. Motion adopted.

Mr. Robinson, of Ohio, then opened the debate on the question pending before the House, urging that as the Committee on Credentials had reported favorably on the Michigan delegation, he was in favor of the members from that State adjusting their difficulties among themselves, as a further discussion of

the question was a useless consumption of time, which the League could not afford to lose. Mr. Shorter, of Ohio, also accepted this view of the case.

The Chairman of the Business Committee reported, recommending the erasure of the word "colored" wherever it occurs in the Preamble.

Mr. De Baptiste, of Michigan, opposed the adoption of the Report. He desired our friends and enemies to know what we are doing. He thought by our own efforts we can strengthen and build ourselves firmly and securely, and thus determine our future position in the country. The Report was adopted.

Mr. Hughes' motion to reconsider his proposition to refer to a Committee of three, was adopted.

The Secretary of the National Equal Rights League then read his Annual Report.

PHILADELPHIA, *September 17, 1865.*

Mr. President and gentlemen of the National Equal Rights League:

Your Secretary chosen at the organization of the League, has the honor to report, that the first meeting of the Executive Committee was called over the signatures of the President and Secretaries of the National Equal Rights League, for November 24, 1864.

John M. Langston, Esq., Davis D. Turner, and St. George R. Taylor, assembled for meeting at the place assigned.

Your Secretaries telegraphed to John S. Rock, of Boston, who stated, in answer, that his business prevented him from attending the meeting.

The Treasurer, William Rich, of Troy, was also summoned by telegraph, but made no answer to us. Not having sufficient members for a quorum, we were unable to hold a meeting.

PHILADELPHIA, *March 14, 1865.*

The meeting of the Executive Committee being announced in a call signed by the President and Secretaries, John M. Langston, Esq., Ransom Harris, Esq., of Tennessee; St. George R. Taylor, and Davis D. Turner, being assembled for a meeting of the Executive Committee.

The President decided that a majority of the Committee were present, and that they would proceed to business.

Previous to which the President stated that Treasurer Rich had informed him, through letter, that he would be present at the meeting of the Executive Committee.

The proceedings of the National Convention being yet in the hands of the Committee on Publication, and the Committee, of whom John S. Rock, of Boston, is chairman, having made no report, it was decided to refer the whole matter to the First Annual Meeting of the National Equal Rights League.

Mr. D. D. Turner's motion that an order be drawn on the Treasurer for the sum of forty (40) dollars, to be paid Ransom Harris, of Tennessee, for travelling expenses to Philadelphia, was adopted.

The President stated that he had received from the League, in Oberlin, thirty (30) dollars and fifty cents; from the League, in Cleveland, twenty-five (25) dollars. Total, fifty-five dollars and fifty cents.

The Executive Committee voted that Mr. Langston pay-over to the Treasurer fifteen (15) dollars and fifty cents, reserving forty (40) dollars for his expenses for traveling to the meeting of the Board in Philadelphia.

Mr. Turner moved that an order be drawn on the Treasurer for forty (40) dollars, to be paid to John M. Langston for expenses incurred in traveling to Philadelphia. Motion adopted.

St. George R. Taylor moved that an order be drawn for the sum of twenty-two (22) dollars for the payment of the following bills:

To Christian Recorder, for publishing notice of meetings of Executive Committee, - - - -	\$5 00
Hall Rent, - - - - -	5 00
Telegraphing, - - - - -	4 00
Incidentals, - - - - -	2 00
Books and Stationery, - - - - -	6 00
	<hr/>
Total, - - - - -	\$22 00
	<hr/> <hr/>

Motion adopted.

Mr. William D. Forten presented a petition, and solicited the action of the National Equal Rights League in the matter, as it was properly under their jurisdiction. It had been adopted by the State League of Pennsylvania, and he hoped that this body would see that it was presented to Congress.

On motion, the petition was referred to the First Annual Meeting of the National Equal Rights League.

Since the adjournment of the Executive Committee, Mr. Davis D. Turner, one of the Secretaries of the National Equal Rights League, has entered the military service of the United States.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

ST. GEORGE R. TAYLOR,

Recording Secretary of the National Equal Rights League.

The Secretary's Report was adopted.

The President then made some remarks explanatory of the grand purposes of the League, and urged the great necessity of concerted action among our people at this time. He also alluded to the progress it was making in the Southern section of the Republic. The President earnestly exhorted all colored men to regard each other in a civil and just manner, and thus command the influence of the dominant class in our behalf for equality before

American law. The discrimination against those of their own condition, as practiced by colored barbers, restaurateurs, and waiters, was severely denounced, as tending to further degrade us in the eyes of a discerning public.

Mr. P. H. Clark, from the Business Committee, moved that each member of the National Equal Rights League be required to pay five (5) dollars, for defraying the expenses of the League.

Mr. Robinson, of Ohio, moved that the consideration of the Report from the Business Committee be deferred until the Morning Session. Adopted.

On motion, the meeting adjourned to meet the next morning, at 9 o'clock.

SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

MORNING SESSION.

CLEVELAND, *September 20th*, 1865.

Vice President Peck in the chair.

The Session opened with prayer by Chaplain Harris. Minutes read and adopted, with corrections.

P. H. Clark moved that the name of Mr. Solomon Day, of Logan County League, be enrolled, the gentleman having presented his credentials in proper form.

A. J. Morrison, of Connecticut, also presented his credentials. The names of both gentlemen were ordered to be enrolled.

A. M. Green moved that the names of B. D. Paul, O. P. Anderson, and James W. Johnson, be stricken from the roll,—those gentlemen having refused to concur in the judgment of the Committee on Credentials, which reported favorably on all the members from Michigan. Adopted.

[NOTE.—*Messrs. Paul, Anderson, and Johnson contended that they were representatives from the State League of Michi-*

gan, and that they only had any right to acknowledgment in the Annual Meeting of the League now in session. They were warranted in assuming this position from the instructions given them by their constituents at home.]

Mr. Arnott, of Pennsylvania, moved the Report from the Business Committee, proposing that each member be required to pay a tax of five (5) dollars, be now taken up. Motion adopted.

Mr. O. L. C. Hughes offered the following resolution :

Resolved, That the representatives of each State represented in this Convention shall pay into the treasury of the National Equal Rights League the sum of five (5) dollars for every delegate of any State or auxiliary League by him represented ; the said member to be an accredited representative of such State or auxiliary Leagues.

Mr. Vashon said that he thought that members having money sent from State and other Leagues for representation fees, could not be appropriated without their consent.

Mr. Jenkins arose to inquire if Mr. Hughes' proposition provided for taxing each member, or the League of which he was *representative*.

Peyton Harris, of New York, said he would define the meaning of the National Convention.

The President stated that he was not speaking to the subject, and was out of order.

The speaker appealed from the decision.

The Chair was sustained.

A. M. Green, of Pennsylvania, moved that the subject under consideration be laid on the table. Motion adopted.

Mr. Richards moved that the House proceed to consider the proposed amendments to the Constitution. Motion adopted.

Mr. Forten's motion that the President be requested to add the name of Professor Vashon to the Business Committee, was concurred in.

Mr. Pulpress, of Pennsylvania, arose to inquire if there was any motion before the House ; if not, he would move that each member be taxed one (1) dollar.

Mr. Robinson, of Ohio, opposed the motion of the gentleman who had just preceded him. He thought that legislation, like other business, required money. To meet the pending difficulty, he would propose, as an amendment, that each subordinate League to the National, pay a tax of five (5) dollars for each of its representatives in the National Equal Rights League.

Mr. Shorter, of Ohio, spoke in favor of the motion of Mr. Pulpress. The gentleman thought the necessary expenses of the meetings could be met.

Mr. Pulpress' motion was then adopted.

Mr. Shorter moved that the consideration of the first proposition of the Business Committee, to strike out the word "colored" from the preamble to the Constitution, be indefinitely postponed.

Mr. Pulpress thought the matter of such little importance, as not to warrant any unnecessary consumption of time.

The question was voted on, and decided in the affirmative.

At this point, Mr. Peyton Harris, of New York, who had frequently expressed a disposition to explain what he considered the meaning of the National Convention, occupied the floor.

Mr. De Baptiste, of Michigan, said he could not help thinking that Mr. Harris' constituents had sent him to the League to talk. He would therefore move that Mr. Harris be invited to speak for four hours on the next Saturday, and that he be notified, that he might make the necessary preparations to do so.

The proposition from Mr. De Baptiste created much merriment among the members.

The second proposition to amend the Constitution was read, and referred back to the Business Committee.

The third proposition was read.

Mr. Pulpress, of Pennsylvania, moved to amend by substituting six for three months; that gentleman thought the frequent meetings would incur unnecessary expense.

Mr. Brown, of Pennsylvania, favored the original proposition.

The amendment was rejected.

The proposition, as made by the Business Committee, was adopted.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth propositions to amend, were separately read, and adopted without debate.

Mr. Clark, of Ohio, moved that a committee of five be appointed to nominate officers for the ensuing year. Adopted.

Mr. Forten arose and stated that in accordance with the decision of the House, Mr. Anderson had withdrawn his credentials; he moved that he be now invited to become an honorary member of this body.

By consent of the mover; the other gentlemen from Michigan, whose names had been stricken off the roll, were added.

The Vice-President announced the Committee on Nominations as follows:—Jermain W. Loguen, George B. Vashon, O. L. C. Hughes, Alfred M. Green, and George De Baptiste.

Mr. Brown moved to reconsider the motion for a nominating committee of five to be appointed by the chair. Adopted.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, moved to adjourn. A call of the House being made, the House adjourned until two o'clock, by a vote of 19 to 7.

SECOND DAY.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Vice-President Peck in the chair.

Minutes read and approved.

Mr. Walker, of Tennessee, moved that all bills remaining unpaid from the last year be settled by the League.

Mr. Pulpress, of Pennsylvania, opposed the motion, on the ground that the meeting had already adopted the Report of the Secretary, and this as a matter of course rendered the League responsible for all debts which have accrued.

Mr. A. M. Green thought the matter had best be referred to the Business Committee.

. On motion of Mr. Harris, of New York, the matter was laid on the table.

The Vice-President being undecided as to the result, a division of the House was called for, the vote being 10 to 7.

Resolutions were offered by Mr. Arnott, of Pennsylvania, in reference to the appointment of a Committee on Education, which were referred to the Business Committee.

P. H. Clark, from Committee on Business, reported substitutes for parts stricken out of latter clause, Section second. The Committee proposed the word "five" in place of fifty, and the word "three" in place of thirty.

Mr. De Baptiste moved that the word "ten" be substituted for "five," and the word "five" for three.

Mr. Richards spoke in favor of the proposed amendments.

Mr. Pulpress was opposed to any increase of the representation fee. He thought five dollars for the first, and three for each additional representative was large enough.

Mr. Walker, of Tennessee, also spoke against an increased amount for representation.

William D. Forten moved to amend, by inserting the word "twenty" in place of fifty, and "fifteen" in place of thirty.

Messrs. De Baptiste's and Forten's amendments were rejected, after a spirited discussion.

The main question being called for, the vote was taken with an affirmative result.

On motion, the House proceeded to select a Nominating Committee. Adopted.

Mr. Lowery, of Tennessee, moved that a member be selected from each State. Adopted.

MOSES BROWN	nominated	- J. W. LOGUEN, New York.
WILLIAM D. FORTEN	"	- MOSES BROWN, Pennsylvania.
NELSON WALKER	"	- JAMES RAPIER, Tennessee.
JAMES A. SHORTER	"	- R. J. ROBINSON, Ohio.
SAMUEL LOWERY	"	- J. HARRIS, North Carolina.
DAVID JENKINS	"	- ROBT. W. JOHNSON, Virginia.

O. L. C. HUGHES	nominated -	SAMUEL GOULD, New Jersey.
P. H. CLARK	“ -	D. B. F. PRICE, Illinois.
A. M. GREEN	“ -	A. J. MORRISON, Connecticut.
GEORGE DE BAPTISTE	“ -	JNO. D. RICHARDS, Michigan.

Each of the gentlemen above mentioned were chosen for the Nominating Committee.

J. D. Richards offered the following Resolution, which was adopted :

Resolved, That in the reconstruction of the Southern States, justice demands that the Elective franchise be extended to men of color in those States, and if the Government fail to do so, it will prove recreant to every principle of honesty and good faith. That as colored men have fought to defend and perpetuate the unity of this Government, and maintain its liberties, every principle of honor demands that they should be placed on a footing with other citizens.

Mr. Clark, from the Business Committee, reported the following petition, which had been adopted by the Pennsylvania State League, and offered by William D. Forten, Esq., of Philadelphia, to the Executive Committee, who referred it to the Annual Meeting of the National Equal Rights League.

P E T I T I O N .

The undersigned officers and members of the National Equal Rights League call the attention of your honorable body to the 4th Article of the United States Constitution, Section 4th, in which we find that “the United States shall guaranty to every State in the Union a Republican form of government;” and seeing that in many States such a form of government does not exist, we therefore most respectfully ask the adoption of

the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States :

That there shall be no legislation within the limits of the United States or Territories, against any civilized portion of the inhabitants, native-born, or naturalized, on account of race or color, and that all such legislation now existing within said limits is anti-republican in character, and therefore void.

Also an Address to the colored people of the United States, by William Nesbít, Esq., President of State League of Pennsylvania. The Address and Petition were adopted unanimously. For the Address, *see Appendix*.

P. H. Clark moved that the members present with money from subordinate Leagues, be requested to pay over to the Finance Committee such sums as they may consider proper, and for the purpose of defraying the necessary expenses of the National Equal Rights League, and to which the League would have been entitled but for the constitutional amendment.

William D. Forten objected to paying the money of his constituents to the League, because of the irregular and unconstitutional manner in which the League had admitted delegates for five and three dollars.

Mr. Clark said, in reply, that the necessities of the case were such as required a change of the Constitution, which the League had a perfect right to make, and he wondered at the gentleman's opposition.

Mr. Forten, in his rejoinder to Mr. Clark, stated that it was not against the right to alter or amend the Constitution that he contended, but it was the manner in which *gentlemen* sought to accomplish it.

There was a constitutional mode, and if the instrument is to be remodeled, let it by all means be done in regular and proper form. But for gentlemen to contend that a Committee on Credentials can by mere recommendation overthrow the entire, organic law, is preposterous.

The speaker said the action of the Committee on Credentials was decidedly unconstitutional, and relieved his colleague, Prof.

Vashon, and himself, from complying with its requirements. In violation of an express enactment, which could be readily perceived by referring to Section second, which regulated the manner of admitting members to this body; the Committee on Credentials had introduced upon this floor gentlemen without the slightest semblance of right, and adverse to the interest of the League. They had stricken down with one fell swope the only chart by which we could direct our course, and against this wrong, unparalleled and unnecessary, he felt warranted in entering an earnest and solemn protest.

This he did in justice to his own convictions, and in strict conformity with the instructions of his State.

Pennsylvania's strong voice came here through a linked combination of twenty-one leagues, constitutionally formed to aid the great cause of Negro equality before the law. And by them he meant to stand; he would resist to the last any proposition, coming from whatever source, which admitted gentlemen here to vote away the rights and money of his constituents. What is the use of a Constitution, he would ask, if it was to be broken to pieces at the option of any individual or Committee who desired to accomplish a selfish end? He would return to his constituents their money, and allow *them* to pass upon it. He might be outvoted, but could not be defeated, and gentlemen would find it as easy to turn the sun from its course as him from the path of rectitude to principle.

Mr. De Baptiste said that, in his opinion, there was no question as to the duty of every representative paying in the moneys entrusted to him, so that the League may have means with which to operate.

Mr. Vashon, of Pennsylvania, said the National Equal Rights League had no right to make any such request as proposed in the motion of the gentleman from Cincinnati, (Mr. Clark.) The money in the hands of the delegates did not belong to the National League, but was only sent to purchase certain privileges of connection with it; and now, since the price of obtaining such has been reduced, the League does not possess the right to re-

quest the surplus. He earnestly opposed the proposition of the gentleman who had just preceded him, and in reply said that Pennsylvania was as ready to pay into the treasury the required amount, as Michigan, and only asked to be treated in the same manner as other States.

Mr. Stothard, of Tennessee, urged that interest in the organization should prompt members to pay over to the treasury the money in their possession.

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, thought the proposition of Mr. Clark should not have been in the form of a request, but rather a demand, since the National League had a legal right to the representation fees in the hands of delegates.

The representation clause was stricken out as a matter of convenience in the present session. The speaker declared that he had the interests of the National League at heart, and that the necessities of the case demanded the erasure of the last clause of the second section. The large representation fee had prevented the attendance of a much larger delegation from the State of Pennsylvania. As a duty to their constituents the representatives from his State acted wisely in voting a reduction of the representation fee.

Mr. Clark's motion was adopted.

A resolution from the Business Committee, suggesting Nashville, Tennessee, as the place for the next Annual Meeting of the National League, was adopted after much discussion, in which Messrs. Forten, Vashon, Harris, of North Carolina, Nesbit, Brown, Pulpress, and Green, of Pennsylvania, and Gould, of New Jersey, participated.

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

O. L. C. Hughes proposed to decline in favor of Moses Brown, of Pennsylvania.

John Jones, of Illinois, was objected to as one of the Vice Presidents, because of his not being a member of the National

Equal Rights League, nor in any way connected with it. D. B. F. Price, of Illinois, was substituted in his place.

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, opposed the nomination of Messrs. Bassett and Weaver on the Executive Committee. He would nominate James McC. Crummill in place of E. D. Bassett, and Joseph C. Bustill in place of Elisha Weaver. Both of these gentlemen, said the speaker, were hard working, and devoted to the interests of the League.

These propositions of Mr. Green's were earnestly opposed by several members.

Finally, Mr. Crummill's name was *substituted* for E. D. Bassett's.

Objections to William Lambert, of Michigan, for non-membership in the League, were made. Messrs. Richards and De Baptiste contended that this gentleman was an active member in the State League of Michigan.

The objection was overruled.

Mr. Harris, of Tennessee, moved that the officers be voted on separately. Agreed to.

The vote was taken upon the adoption of the Report, and carried unanimously, as follows :

FOR PRESIDENT.

JOHN M. LANGSTON, - - - Ohio.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

WILLIAM NESBIT,	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
FREDERICK DOUGLASS,	-	-	-	New York.
ARTHUR YOUNG,	-	-	-	Tennessee.
DAVID JENKINS,	-	-	-	Ohio.
J. HENRY HARRIS,	-	-	-	North Carolina.
ROBERT W. JOHNSON,	-	-	-	Virginia.
SAMUEL G. GOULD,	-	-	-	New Jersey.
D. B. F. PRICE,	-	-	-	Illinois.
ABRAM J. MORRISON,	-	-	-	Connecticut.
(VACANT),	-	-	-	Michigan.

NOTE.—By Resolution of the Executive Committee, the Publishing Committee were directed to omit the name of William Lambert from the list of Vice-Presidents, he not being a member of the National Equal Rights League, and the pledge of gentlemen from his State that his full representation fee would be paid, not having been redeemed.

RECORDING SECRETARIES.

ST. GEO. R. TAYLOR,	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
OCTAVIUS V. CATTO,	-	-	-	"

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

GEORGE B. VASHON,	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
-------------------	---	---	---	---------------

TREASURER.

JERMAIN W. LOGUEN,	-	-	-	New York.
--------------------	---	---	---	-----------

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

JAMES McC. CRUMMILL,	-	-	-	Pennsylvania.
WILLIAM D. FORTEN,	-	-	-	"
O. L. C. HUGHES,	-	-	-	"
ELISHA WEAVER,	-	-	-	"
R. J. ROBINSON,	-	-	-	Ohio.
WILLIAM KEELING,	-	-	-	Virginia.
JOHN D. RICHARDS,	-	-	-	Michigan.
ABRAM SMITH,	-	-	-	Tennessee.
SAMUEL G. GOULD,	-	-	-	New Jersey.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, moved that the Bureau of the National Equal Rights League be located in Nashville, Tennessee. The motion was lost.

Mr. Shorter, of Ohio, moved that the Bureau be located in the City of Philadelphia.

Mr. Pulpress, of Pennsylvania, moved to amend by substituting the word "Pittsburg" for Philadelphia.

The amendment was discussed at some length, and rejected.

The main question being called for, it was voted on affirmatively.

Mr. Green moved to continue the session one hour longer, by a suspension of the rule. Agreed to.

Mr. Shorter, of Ohio, moved that so much of the Report as has been altered be rescinded, and the original adopted.

Mr. Green's motion to lay Mr. Shorter's motion on the table, was adopted.

Mr. Vashon, of Pennsylvania, moved that delegates from Leagues proceed to pay into the treasury their representation fees. Adopted. Action deferred until next session.

The session adjourned until 9 o'clock on Thursday morning. No evening session being held.

THIRD DAY.

MORNING SESSION.

Thursday, September 21.

President John M. Langston in the chair.

Chaplain Harris opened the session with prayer. Minutes read and approved, with corrections.

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, moved a reconsideration of so much of the Nominating Committee's Report as related to Mr. Keeling, of Virginia, and Mr. Hughes, of Pennsylvania. Adopted.

Mr. Pulpress, of Pennsylvania, moved that the house reconsider the matter of the next annual meeting being held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Mr. Jenkins, of Ohio, said he was opposed to any unnecessary consumption of time in reconsiderations, and moved that the motion be laid on the table. Adopted.

Mr. Gould, of New Jersey, moved that Mr. Crummill's name be stricken from the members of the Executive Committee, and that of Mr. Bassett inserted.

Mr. Hughes moved that the motion lay on the table. Rejected.

The discussion between several of the members at this point was very animated.

Mr. Price, of Illinois, arose, and regretted the necessity of having to leave at once for his home at Cairo, Illinois. He spoke feelingly of the continued outrages to which he had been subjected in common with the rest of colored men in his neighborhood, at

the hands of rebel sympathisers. The member exhibited marks from wounds received at their hands, and expressed the greatest hope for the success of the efforts of the National Equal Rights League to secure the rights of colored American citizens. As an evidence of his kindly feeling towards the gentlemen whose zeal he admired, he presented to the League eight dollars in behalf of his constituents, feeling assured that they would approve of his action in so doing. The speaker was fearful of imposing upon the time of the League, and thanked the members for indulging him in uttering his broken remarks, and promised *unabated* effort in behalf of his sorely *oppressed* people.

The motion of Mr. Gould's, to reinsert the name of Mr. Basset, was adopted.

Mr. Shorter, of Ohio, moved that the report be adopted as offered from the Nominating Committee, without further amendment. The motion was adopted.

At the request of a member the President rendered an opinion as to the status of delegates in the League since the amendment to the Constitution.

All delegates who had entered the meeting under the constitutional provision made for them, were bound, under every principle of right, to pay their full representation fees, as well as those who entered after the amendment. The first class could not consistently lay claim to any advantage which may have resulted from a change in that instrument, and he felt assured that it was not the intention of the League to impose upon any portion of its members an *ex post facto* law.

Messrs. Green, Vashon, and Forten severally debated the question of paying the amount of representation fee as prescribed in the second section of the Constitution before the amendment.

Mr. Forten was opposed to the admission as members, of gentlemen whom the speaker said had paid one dollar for the privilege, when the Pennsylvania delegation was expected to pay the sums of fifty and thirty dollars, according to the President's decision.

Mr. Morrison, of Connecticut, arose to inquire if the same body which sat in Syracuse are now in session; the President replied in the affirmative.

Professor Vashon, of Pennsylvania, arose to inquire of the President if he decided that each State League was bound, through its representatives here present, to pay fifty dollars for their first and thirty dollars for the second representative. The President replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Green moved that the house sustain the President in his decision. The yeas and nays being called for, resulted in a vote of 26 yeas and 4 nays.

Mr. Richards offered the following resolutions, which were adopted:

Resolved, That in the reconstruction of the Southern States on a true and equitable basis is involved the destiny of those who have been made free as a result of this war; and we, the National League of colored men of the United States, do recommend to such persons the necessity of acquiring property, of educating their children and themselves, and of pursuing such a course of conduct as shall be best calculated to win the respect and elevate them in the good opinion of mankind; and that we of this League do promise to these, our Southern brethren, our utmost sympathy and support in the accomplishment of these ends.

Resolved, That we hail with pleasure the fact that in three States of this Union the question of permitting colored men the right of franchise, is soon to be submitted to the people. We accept it as an evidence of a returning sense of justice, and an acknowledgment of our citizenship, and a tribute to the loyalty, patriotism, and devotion displayed by colored soldiers during the conflict through which the nation has passed.

Resolved, That in the present condition of the South it is imperatively necessary that the positions of teachers for our people in that section should be filled by persons of our own color; and we recommend to the educated portion of our people the importance of seeking such positions as soon as possible.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed by the chair to arrange, revise, and print the proceedings of this League.

The President appointed St. George R. Taylor and Octavius V. Catto, of Pennsylvania, and John D. Richards, of Michigan, as the Publishing Committee.

John D. Richards moved that the names of B. D. Paul, O. P. Anderson, and James W. Johnson, be enrolled as members of the National Equal Rights League, as accredited delegates from the Equal Rights League of the State of Michigan; upon the presentation of their credentials, and after compliance with the constitutional provision. Adopted.

Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, moved that the House reconsider so much of the Nominating Committees' Report as refers to William Lambert, a Vice President elect, from Michigan.

Mr. Richards, of Michigan, moved the motion be laid on the table. Adopted.

Mr. Vashon, from the Business Committee, reported an address and resolutions by William D. Forten. *See Appendix.*

Adopted unanimously.

Mr. Green, of Pennsylvania, presented a resolution for the appointment of a Committee of three on Statistics. Referred to the Executive Committee.

A communication from citizens of Indiana, addressed to the President of the National Equal Rights League, was read by the President, and ordered to be placed on file.

A resolution was offered to amend the Constitution of the National Equal Rights League, so that persons may become life members of the League, with all the rights and privileges of representatives, by the payment of such a sum as may be required, and without further charge thereafter. Laid on the table.

The Business Committee reported resolutions in the matter of an organization in Boston, with which George L. Stearns, Esq., is connected, for securing Universal Suffrage.

Also, from State League of Pennsylvania, propositions for establishing a newspaper, as a national organ; for a resident agent at Washington, and the employment of lecturers to can-

vass the country for furthering the aims and interests of the National Equal Rights League.

Also, against colonizing Colored Americans on the Coast of Africa, or elsewhere.

Also, authorizing the Executive Committee to make inquiry, for the benefit of the National Equal Rights League, in the matter of the will of the late Rev. Charles Avery, of Allegheny City, Pennsylvania.

Also, resolutions of thanks to the Officers of the National Equal Rights League, for services rendered; and to the citizens of Cleveland, for the kindly feeling exhibited towards the members and representatives of the League.

Also, on the death of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the United States. All of which were adopted.

SEE RESOLUTIONS IN APPENDIX.

Contributions were made by members, in behalf of their respective Leagues; for the purpose of meeting some of the most pressing liabilities of the National Equal Rights League.

The Secretaries were ordered to give certificates of the fact, to such as required them, as vouchers to their constituents.

The President proposed that the session should terminate after singing the tune "Old Hundred," to a Doxology.

The meeting then adjourned.

APPENDIX.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

Received from members of the National Equal Rights League, from tax of one dollar per member	\$40 00
Received from collections	9 59
Received from Representation fees	68 00
Received from representatives and members' contributions, for publishing proceedings, also additional representation fees	140 96
Whole amount received	————— \$258 55
Paid for hire of Hall and for Stationery, etc.,	40 69
Balance on hand	<u><u>\$217 86</u></u>

OFFICERS
OF THE
NATIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS LEAGUE.

PRESIDENT.

JOHN M. LANGSTON.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

WILLIAM NESBIT,	ROBERT W. JOHNSON,
FRÉDERICK DOUGLASS,	SAMUEL G. GOULD,
ARTHUR YOUNG,	D. B. F. PRICE,
DAVID JENKINS,	ABRAM J. MORRISON,
J. HENRY HARRIS,	WILLIAM LAMBERT.

RECORDING SECRETARIES.

ST. GEORGE R. TAYLOR,
OCTAVIUS V. CATTO.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY,
GEORGE B. VASHON.

TREASURER,

JERMAIN W. LOGUEN.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

EBENEZER D. BASSETT,	R. J. ROBINSON,
WILLIAM D. FORTEN,	WILLIAM KEELING,
O. L. C. HUGHES,	JOHN D. RICHARDS,
ELISHA WEAVER,	ABRAM SMITH,
SAMUEL G. GOULD.	

PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS LEAGUE.

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

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

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

SECTION 1. The objects of this League are to encourage sound morality, education, temperance, frugality, industry, and promote every thing that pertains to a well-ordered and dignified life ; to obtain by appeals to the minds and conscience of the American people, or by legal process when possible, a recognition of the rights of the colored people of the nation as American citizens.

SEC. 2. The members of this Convention shall be constituted the members of the National Equal Rights League for the first year. Hereafter only such persons as shall be duly accredited representatives of the auxiliary associations herein provided for shall constitute its members ; provided, that no auxiliary society shall be entitled to more than one representative for each five dollars contributed annually by such society, with an additional member for each additional sum of three dollars thus contributed. And further provided, that the credentials of such delegates be endorsed by the State Leagues of the States from which the delegates are sent.

SEC. 3. The officers shall be a President, one Vice-President from each State represented in this Convention, Recording and

Corresponding Secretaries, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee, consisting of the President, First Vice-President, Recording Secretaries, and nine other persons, to be elected by the League at the same time with the other officers, five of whom shall constitute a quorum.

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

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

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

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

The Treasurer shall keep all money collected by the agents, or contributed by the auxiliary Leagues. He shall report to the League annually, and to the Executive Committee whenever required, the condition of the treasury. He shall pay out money only upon order of the Executive Committee, and when properly signed by the President and Recording Secretary. Shall give proper security for the faithful performance of his duty, and for the safe keeping of all property entrusted to his charge belonging to the League.

SEC. 5. The Executive Committee shall establish an office in the city of Philadelphia, Penn'a, in which place they shall hold quarterly sessions on the 4th Tuesday of September, the 4th Tuesday of December, the 4th Tuesday of March and the 4th Tuesday of June, the session to commence at 10 o'clock,

A. M. Special meetings may be called when deemed necessary or expedient, by the Executive Committee, and they shall have power to suspend any officer for malfeasance in office. A majority of the Executive Committee shall reside in or near Philadelphia, and they shall have power to fill vacancies when such occur, in the Executive Committee. They shall hire an agent or agents, who shall visit the different States of the nation accessible to them, and shall call the people of those States together in convention or otherwise, and urge them to take the steps necessary to secure the rights and improvements for the attainment of which this League is formed. They shall encourage the publication of such documents as may be of advantage to our cause; and may, at their discretion, publish brief appeals, arguments or statements of fact, which may have a tendency to promote the ends of the Association, provided that such documents shall be furnished to the public at such rates as shall admit of their general distribution. They shall apportion among the auxiliary leagues, according to the number of members reported, the amounts which the League shall determine to raise, and shall urge upon the officers of such auxiliary societies a prompt response to such demands.

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

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

SEC. 7. Persons in the different States friendly to the purposes of this League may form State Leagues auxiliary to this, with such subordinate organizations as they may deem proper, provided that no distinction on account of color or sex shall be permitted in such auxiliary or subordinate association. Such Leagues may, at their discretion, employ agents, and issue such documents as they may deem conducive to the ends for which this League is formed. They shall collect and pay into the treasury

of the National Equal Rights League such sums as may be assessed upon them by a vote of the majority at the annual meeting, and shall co-operate with that Association in all movements which it shall inaugurate for the accomplishment of the purposes for which it was formed.

SEC. 8. Individuals or associations favorable to the objects of the League, and desirous of co-operating with and supporting the objects it endeavors to accomplish, without being themselves connected therewith as members or representatives, may identify themselves with the work sought to be accomplished by contributing through the Recording Secretaries.

SEC. 9. The National Equal Rights League shall, at each annual meeting, designate the place in which its next session shall be held.

SEC. 10. All persons who are members of State Equal Rights Leagues, or subordinate Leagues to State Leagues, may be entitled to honorary membership at the annual meeting of the National Equal Rights League by the payment of two dollars, or to full membership by the payment of such an amount as may be required to entitle a State League to one representative.

SEC. 11. The National Equal Rights League shall have power to try its members for breach of order, violation of the Constitution, and other offences at variance with the objects and interests of the League, and upon conviction, such person or persons may be suspended, reprov'd or expelled, as may be determined upon by the judgment of a majority of the members present at an annual meeting; and such trial shall be conducted in accordance with the practice and usages of other well-governed organizations in similar cases.

SEC. 12. The sessions of the National Equal Rights League shall be held annually, on the third Tuesday of September, at ten o'clock, A. M., for the election of officers, and the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

SEC. 13. At any annual meeting of the National Equal Rights League, this Constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of the majority of the members present.

AN ADDRESS AND RESOLUTIONS

By WILLIAM D. FORTEN, to the *National Equal Rights League*
and its auxiliaries.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEAGUE:—

The choicest and most valued fruit is the offspring of persevering effort and enduring faith, and such scarcely ever perisheth in a single day.

In all branches of life's great stream we may perceive this living principle, and in its economy trace the finger of its divine Author. Then let us, in wise and prudent imitation, see to it that our foundation, on which we design the temple of freedom and enfranchisement to rest, be firmly erected; that the work is thoroughly done; that no stone is left to jostle, and thereby disfigure the beauty of the edifice, mar its symmetrical proportions, or endanger the permanency of its structure. Let us build our house securely, deep-rooted, and earth-fast; so that, from its sky-reaching pinnacle we may smile with impunity, as doth the sun-lit summit of the tall mountain, through the vista of a thousand years, at the ravages of time and tyranny.

Perfect confidence in the justice of our cause, and in the great principles which underlie it, is what we need. And a firm, unwavering trust in the final triumph of right must be our incentive to the necessary toil, in order to reap the fruit which is precious and abiding. Gentlemen of the League, we have met here to-day, I trust, in solemn earnestness, to consider seriously the true position of our deeply injured and faithful race; and I know not what may be the feeling smothered beneath the pleasant countenances before me, but I confess myself enveloped in clouds of sombre threatening. And why should I not thus feel? Am I not a *man*? And do I not comprehend fully the murderous intent of the meanest people God has ever deigned to tolerate? A people who, with the cringing fawning of a spaniel, conceal the deadly poison of the asp. I know them fearfully well. The keen edge of their barbed arrows have sunk deeply into my soul.

What promises have they not made to us, and how have they kept them? Shall I attempt the Herculean task of unmasking their deep, designing villainy? Time will not permit it, and language is inadequate. Treachery and base betrayal stalk up-headed abroad, and we are their victims—bleeding at every pore. The great party which rules the land,—whose animating life sprang from the sympathy extorted by the pictured woes, blasted hopes, broken hearts and agonizing sufferings of five millions of our own people,—*Americans born!*—Crushed in soul, blighted in intellect, and fettered in limb; recognized in the fiery onslaught of red-handed rebellion and northern treason, the rapid approach of national death, and in terror, invited us, as citizens and sons, to its bosom, with proffered pledges, promises, and endearments. They bound themselves before God and the world, to emancipate, enfranchise, and crown us with all the rights of citizenship, and bid us welcome within the magic circle of common brotherhood. Their entreaties to the brave black men to come, in God's name, and cast up their sinewy bodies a living rampart to shield them from the terrors inspired at the name of the brave and renowned Stonewall Jackson, or the much dreaded Beauregard, are written in the blood, suffering, and sorrows of a confiding, betrayed people. They begged us as a boon, to come and fight for them, for freedom, for home, country, and a freeman's rights. The hand, said they, that comes to our rescue and bravely supports and defends us with the bristling bayonet through this shadowy valley of death-peril, shall have as a reward the potent and invaluable ballot. And thus they wooed us to their deadly embrace with the soft cadence of a lover's note.

Gentlemen, you know at heart this gloomy, bloody history. I need not repeat it. You have seen the full picture which I have but slightly touched. You know how, like the supple and fierce tiger we rushed to the battle-field. Fighting to the death for our imperilled country, that none love so well as we. And our valorous deeds in the face of unimagined horrors, history's hand will yet graven in imperishable records.

I must be brief. "Short time affords, nor my plain temper

glozing words." What shall we do, is the cry which comes from every enquiring mind at this juncture of affairs.

We have been deserted by those whom we faithfully supported, and *insolently informed that this is a white man's country, though it required the strong arms of over 200,000 black men to save it, and that the elective franchise is not now a practical question, and we must find homes in some Territory separate to ourselves, as white and black men cannot live together upon terms of equality.*

True, they can fight and die together, and moisten the cold ground with their warm blood, in defence of the spangled-banner, but there can be no abiding place for them here, as freemen and citizens.

Again, we are told that we must wait, for it is unsafe now, and might jeopardize the interests, the true interests of a great party to attempt to do justice to the disinterested and faithful negro, whose blood and sorrows is their capital and stock. How shall we meet this crisis, is a question to be answered here.

Shall we crouchingly submit to the mandates of this base treachery? Or shall we resist it by manly appeals in behalf of truth and right?

And to accomplish this much-desired end we must be a unit. Together we must rally, and forge a chain of consanguinity and interest, reaching around this land of infamy and wrong, and every black man must constitute a link. And this work, gentlemen, I believe to be the imperative duty of us who stand here representing a leagued combination pledged to the overthrow of tyranny and wrong, and to insure the supremacy of those rights which are ours by the sacrifice of thousands of our brothers on our country's altar. Our own people must be indoctrinated properly, and taught that though right is sometimes on the scaffold, yet, in the end, it mounts the throne. We must firmly assure them of this, which can only be accomplished by unity of effort. And satisfied am I that there will no longer exist doubt or hesitancy in the minds of the masses who so cruelly suffer; but all over this broad domain, wherever man is disfranchised,

freedom denied, and humanity outraged, they will, with one accord, present themselves, willing volunteers, with ready hands and open hearts, to aid in constructing, on pillars enduring as time, and eternal as truth, the citadel of our freedom and legal equality.

Then let us, who comprehend completely the justice and right embodied in this sacred cause, which has brought many of us to-day hundreds of miles from our homes over the perilous ascent of the cloud-capped Alleghenies, and who discern the faint aurora, harbinger of the coming day, see to it that no man stumbleth because the disseminator of light hath not yet attained his meridian splendor. Let us guide and direct the short-sighted, comfort and encourage the faint-hearted, and inspire and animate the slothful and indifferent. Our appeals to the nation to impartially distribute justice, exhibit mercy, and deal honestly with her loyal supporters and sable *defenders*, should fill every ear, and pain every heart. They should be heard, trumpet-toned, shrill, and loud, and stern as the blasting tempest.

Every church in which God is worshipped should hear the note, and every honest man who loves his country should raise his voice in echo to the rallying shout of *freedom to all, and all enfranchised*.

To effect this, we must have unison of action and intent. We must be brothers, linked in righteous determination, and concentrate our energies and efforts with those of others whom we can influence.

That which we desire and are determined to enjoy, is our own, undeniably so. We ask nothing new, and every right enjoyed by the pale-skinned and highly-favored class, is ours,—guaranteed by the same tenure. We have purchased them by birth, by taxation, and loyalty, and sealed the bond with our hearts' blood.

Yielding to none, a higher claim to all the rights absolute and relative that pertain to natural or acquired allegiance, we must demand protection and legal equality from the Government in return.

Gentlemen, if you think with me, let us work while it is yet day. Let us arouse every man to action. Let the fiery-cross,

emblem of Scotland's signal to muster in patriotic duty, be held aloft,—

“So that each valley and sequestered glen,
May muster its little horde of men;”

and until all who love their race are linked to the National League.

I have spoken of the solemnity which should pervade our actions; I repeat it, for, standing here this day, the twenty-first of September, in the bright light of its genial sun, with sadness of heart and sorrowful lips I say to you, that the President of the United States has, in his reconstruction policy, pronounced a death-knell to our peaceful hopes, and clouded the sun-light of our future. Cast your eyes on the dark picture, framed in the Southern States,—gloom and horror in bold front, and destruction frowns in the back-ground. The freedman has no home, no oath, no rights, no vote; but left to the mercy of those who have made ornaments to decorate their persons from the bones of the sacred dead;—cups to drink from of their skulls, and candlesticks of their eye-sockets. *Wretches*, whose vindictive hate is aroused to hyena ferocity against us, because of our faithful adherence to the starry emblem of American independence.

These accumulations of outrages and wrongs overhang us, threatening as despair; and unite we must, in order to stand against their soul-crushing tendency. Then let me urge you, one and all, to consider no exertion too great to bring every man within the League whose claims I now present.

The claims of the Equal Rights League to the support of the people, without distinction of sex or color, is deemed the first and most important subject to present for your consideration. And especially do I direct the attention of those who are disfranchised and oppressed, and entreat them to no longer doubt their power and influence, slight as they may appear, but to avail themselves at once of the growing disposition now evincing itself, to form combinations for mutual protection, mental and moral culture, and political rights.

The want of union among us, as a people, is so palpable, the lack of thorough combination and organized effort so manifest, that I urge, as an indispensable duty, the formation of Leagues in every county, town, village and hamlet throughout the land, and increasing, to the fullest extent, the usefulness of those already in existence, as essential to successfully overcome the obstacles which, at present, retard our progress.

The necessity for us, who are a minority, enfeebled by divisions, dissensions, and doubts, to form combinations to resist the overriding tyranny of a united, powerful, and unprincipled majority, forbids further lingering in order to prove; and therefore, I press the formation of these unions as proposed by the League, as paramount in importance, and call on those who love their race and desire their advancement, to lay aside personal prejudice and political consideration, and join this brotherhood, where, with interests united, we may oppose the encroachments of a common foe.

The League, whose claims I present, is really nothing more than a full and complete union, heart and hand, against oppression, disfranchisement, and outlawry; and I feel satisfied that it needs only to be clearly and fairly set before the people, to command their countenance, respect, and support.

Dwarfed and paralyzed by disunion, that insidious poison by which the slave-power well-nigh destroyed the nation, our hands have found too ready employment in separating and rending each other. Let us turn from this insensate madness, I pray, which has made us easy victims to the oppressor, and gird up our loins with that bond of union, wherein dwelleth strength, so that with firm hands, and fixed intent, we may jointly resist the monster prejudice, wherever its hydra-head is discernable. To effect this end, I present the League, and suggest:

1st. That the reason why Leagues should be formed, be clearly and forcibly laid before the people in the plainest manner.

2d. What reasonably may be expected from this formation, if persistently adhered to, and religiously supported.

3d. The means to be used for the accomplishment of the much desired end (enfranchisement and equality before the law.)

This, I think, cannot be too frequently and explicitly held up to view; for the want of direct, simple, feasible plans, causes many to hesitate who otherwise might enlist in this movement, which we have power to render truly great. If judiciously managed, and entered into with determination by the people, the Leagues cannot but be levers of great strength, and, in my opinion, fully able to lift us from the present degrading, death-like inertness—the natural sequence of disunion and factious opposition. We are so unreliable, so weak, antagonistic, caviling and captious, that it is almost impossible to collect our scattered, spiritless forces, made doubly so from want of systematic combinations, and direct them to any point in our enemies' lines, though assured of its vulnerability.

If when brutally assailed, we appeal to the courts where justice is supposed to exist, divided counsel so enervates the effort that our best friends desert the case ashamed of its imbecility. And so, when we desire to enlist the sympathies of the press in our behalf, a matter readily accomplished by others when needed, the element of discord so fatal to every public undertaking, ensures failure, and stamps the very effort with signal contempt. So apart are our best men in feeling, so separated by hostile cliques, petty associations and personal dislikes, that the inefficiency of all our plans for political amelioration and moral improvement stands blazoned with mid-day brilliancy. These are facts painfully prominent and sorrowfully true, and I am satisfied, after a full scrutiny of the political horizon and reasoning from cause to effect, that separation in feeling, division in interest and counsel, and a general want of confidence in each other, are the main causes of our inability to obtain redress for the many cruel wrongs of the past, and security against them in the future. These I regard as the causes of our present defenceless condition. The effect needs but little delineation. It is only necessary to cast a glance at our position, and any one capable of comprehending it in all its terrible reality, has measured the effect.

It is to remain as we are, a stolid mass, with vigor enough to play the part of a second Cain, and insensible of the golden opportunity which presents itself to struggle for our birth-right. Shall we remain thus, ever ready to impede the upward tending efforts of the few who raise their heads above the turbid waves of oppression? Or, shall we as sensible people, aroused to action by the portent of the hour, adopt the Leagues as a true remedy to remove the cause, and as a consequence, destroy the effect?

I offer the Leagues and urge their acceptance, because they are the converse of the causes which beset us and impede our onward march to the possession of equality and perfect enfranchisement. I urge them in the name of *union, harmony, and fraternity*, and beg you to sustain this movement; sustain it, because it consolidates our efforts, embodies our desires, and gives force and pertinence to that resistance to tyranny, which it becomes us to make, as a people resolved to be free.

I urge it because it is unity, and therefore, strength and power, it proffers moral and social elevation, mental culture and systematic political combination. It is the advocate of temperance, frugality, and the necessity of sustaining and upholding each other in all rightful relations, and, in a word, it aims to make us upright. This is the aim and object of the League, these are its claims, offered for your support.

It asks you, who are taunted, insulted, and cowardly assaulted on the highways by ruffians, on railroads by conductors, and driven from hotels and places of amusement by the proprietors, to sustain it with *your money, your labor, and your influence*. It asks you to join these ranks, leagued to javelin to the wall oppression and prejudice with all their barbarous concomitants, and to strive on, yielding to no danger and shunning no responsibility until all are equal as citizens before the law.

I present the following preamble and resolutions as an evidence of our earnest determination to work in the noble cause; and the annexed *Petition* is adopted by the League as the best form to present for public circulation.

PREAMBLE.

WHEREAS, We, the accredited representatives of the colored people, fully conscious of the terrible responsibilities of the hour, accepting them as men only can who are trained to suffering by the cruel hand of oppression, are moved to the deepest and most serious solicitude as to the future welfare of our race, in this our own native land; and

WHEREAS, We find that after a war unparalleled in its immensity and incalculable in its direful and calamitous effects upon the nation, we who were among the first to tender our services and who have proved faithful among the many faithless, now that the grim visage of ruthless war is smoothed by the gloved hand of peace, are turned out a prey to the merciless, unrespected, unenfranchised and unprotected; and

WHEREAS, We find that the government who remembered us in her hour of peril, forgets us in her seeming prosperity, though to her we rushed in obedience to her call and unflinchingly gave our strong arms, our brave hearts, and even our lives in her defence, knowing the savage barbarity, the uncivilized and fiendish cruelty that would be practised upon us by the nation's deadliest enemies, and freedom's foulest foes; therefore

Resolved, That though we see enfranchisement, protection, office and power proffered with profuse hand to the men who overthrew the government in their respective States, deluged the land with fratricidal blood, exhausted the treasury, piled up a mountain of debt, uprooted our time-honored institutions, destroyed our commerce, blasted and made desolate the fairest portion of our country, attempted the lives of our public men and national leaders by assassination, murdered in cold blood on the battle-field the wounded and captured representatives of our brave, patriotic, and faithful race; starved, whipped, enslaved, and maimed them when prisoners by the fortunes of war; put men to death after an honorable surrender, and finally drove the assassin's deadly bullet into the nation's acknowledged head;

yet, in view of all this, we will neither tremble nor cower, but with our trust in God and our faith in the final supremacy of right, we will continue to petition with the same unfaltering determination, the same unyielding pertinacity which led us to face the iron hail of death on a hundred battle-fields. We will agitate, entreat, and demand in the name of *justice, humanity, and truth*, the fulfilment of the nation's pledges made to us in her darkest hours of trial, when bankruptcy, ruin, and dissolution were rushing madly upon her. This we will do until the nation yields to our prayers, and guarantees us the full enjoyment of our liberties, protection to our persons throughout the land, complete enfranchisement, and until all are equal as American citizens before the law.

Resolved, That we regard the objects which the Equal Rights League stands pledged to carry out, viz:—equal political rights without distinction of race or color, as the same for which thousands of us fought, suffered, and died; and that we pledge ourselves to work for it, recommend it, and in every way labor for its success, believing it to be the best plan proposed for carrying to a successful termination the objects for which we have lived, and which we hope to enjoy as the birth-right of American citizens.

PETITION.

The undersigned, Officers and Members of the National Equal Rights League, call the attention of your honorable body to the Fourth Article of U. S. Constitution, Section 4th, in which we find that “the United States shall guaranty to every State in the Union, a republican form of government;” and seeing that in many States, such a form of government does not exist, we therefore most respectfully ask the adoption of the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

That there shall be no legislation within the limits of the United States and Territories, against any civilized portion of

the inhabitants, native-born or naturalized, on account of race or color, and that all such legislation now existing within said limits, is anti-republican in character, and therefore void.

RESOLUTIONS.

OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA STATE E. R. LEAGUE,
717 Lombard street.

Philadelphia, September 16, 1865.

To the President and Members of the
National Equal Rights League of the United States.

GENTLEMEN :—At a meeting of the Executive Board of the above League, held on the evening of September 12, I was directed to transmit to you the following propositions, with the hope, at that time expressed, that they would meet with your earnest and active approval.

They would respectfully submit the feasibility and importance of your adopting some plan for establishing—

First. A newspaper, which shall be our national organ for the advocacy of complete equality—legally and politically—of all men in the United States, without regard to class or clime, race or color.

Second. The appointment of a resident agent at Washington, whose duty it shall be, during the session of Congress, to stimulate and aid those statesmen favorable to our cause, in every effort which may advance our interests.

Third. The employment of Lecturers to canvass the country in furthering our aims and interests, and the publication and circulation of all documents which may tend to advance our rights and redress our wrongs.

Respectfully yours, in behalf of our common cause,

OCTAVIUS V. CATTO,

Corresponding Secretary of Pennsylvania E. R. L.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

COLORED PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,

BY WILLIAM NESBIT, ESQ.

Adopted by the first annual meeting of the League.

Union is always good, but never did it promise such grand results to us as at the present.

We have always been torn and distracted; denied a home in the land of our birth; denied access to schools and institutions of learning; every avenue to preferment and honor closed against us; our every effort at improvement and advancement scouted and thwarted; dwarfed in every enterprise, insulted at every step, the refinement of cruelty resorted to to keep us down and crush out our manhood; the cupidity of selfishness and the maliciousness of spite combined against us, until nothing but an innate spirit, implanted in us by a Common Father, gave us even the faintest shadow of a hope.

At last, in His mysterious providence, the beneficent Father so brought it about that the wickedness of man overleaped itself, and the great rebellion came. And, although utterly repudiated during the first two years as being too base to even shed our

blood for our country, in their great peril, having fruitlessly exhausted every other resource, they reluctantly gave their consent to our entering the field. And although every wrong and indignity possible among men had been constantly heaped upon us even to the judicial decision that we had "no rights which white men were bound to respect," we rallied at the earliest possible moment to the sinking fortunes of the nation in such numbers, and with such ardor as to completely stay the torrent, and overwhelm the hordes of slavery and secession.

The most solemn pledges were made us, both expressed and implied, that, in the event of victory we should not be repudiated. But now we find that in the hour of victory we are being cheated, and that, although slavery is dead, the work is only half done.

Those who were loud in their promises to us are now truckling to the late leaders of the rebellion; and instead of administering stern justice, they have forgotten the horrid lessons of perjury and murder, and loathsome prisons and starvation, of rapine and maimed limbs and shattered health, of bereaved widows and orphans, and of an enormous national debt bequeathed to ages yet to come.

They have forgotten these awful lessons inflicted by barbarous men, who learned them by the cruelties which they have always practised on our race. And now they have adopted conciliation and compromise, anything and everything but simple justice, leaving our recognition out of the question.

We believe that it is possible for us to do something for ourselves in this emergency. Certainly, if the matter be properly pressed, the American nation will not be so unjust as to deny us all the tangible benefits that should result from our services. Particularly, as our enfranchisement will detract nothing from any loyal lover of his country, but will, without injury to any one, give to us the only means of self-protection.

To further this end we cordially invite all designed to be benefited, as well as all the friends of the colored man, to co-operate with us in this League. And as the first, all-important, and

indispensable means, we must bring money to the League; we must make pecuniary sacrifices; each one of us saving what was heretofore spent in foolishness and fineries. And when these small tributes come, although separately insignificant, unitedly, they will make a splendid aggregate, which will be powerful for good. It is idle for us to utter our prayers or shed our tears, or make our wailings or complaints, unless all these are accompanied with money. Money is, at last, the lever that almost moves our moral world, and if we do not bring money to our aid, we may as well make up our minds to suffer the sneers and gibes, the contempt and indignities that are, on all sides, indifferently heaped upon us. If we have aspirations for our recognition, we will bring our money to aid the cause; and if we have no hope for ourselves, let us lay our money on this altar in the effort to bequeath to our children recognition and equality as the most precious legacies we may leave them. And now that we have greater access than formerly to the avenues of learning, it is of the highest importance that we let no opportunity slip without getting knowledge.

Learning will elevate us, according to our sphere, either in its rudiments, greater advancements, or in its higher walks. Under favorable or unfavorable circumstances, it is to be sought after and mastered. A man is better or worse in proportion to the amount of cultivation his mind has received, and it is only the ignorant who can be kept down. When the immortal mind is unfettered it will soar aloft and find out this and that improvement, till at last its possessor stands among his fellows, noble and erect.

Let us as a portion of the nation seek the largest improvement in this direction. Let us help each other to learn, and "Ethiopia will soon stretch forth her hand unto God." We can raise ourselves in the scale as far as possible by seeking the higher pursuits.

To a considerable extent, agricultural and commercial pursuits are within our reach. And whenever practicable, let us

acquire a knowledge of the useful arts. Menial occupations are not to be despised when better cannot be obtained.

“Honor and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.”

Our duty is to be useful in whatever sphere our lots are cast, and to acquire wealth for the personal comforts it brings, as well as to do good to our fellows. Consideration for the elevation of our race overrules all minor details, and urges us to habits of industry, frugality, and sobriety, and the careful cultivation of all the domestic virtues. And we are false to ourselves and to our posterity if we fail to adopt every means of improvement within our reach.

We do most certainly hope that the colored people throughout the whole United States will become thoroughly united for the prosecution of these great aims.

We can do nothing without union and concentration. We have, at the country's call, given up those who were near and dear to us, to death and mutilation for Liberty and the Union. Their toils and privations, sufferings and heroism are fresh in the minds of the whole world.

Do not, from indifference or division among us, let these great sacrifices count as nought. We can, if we will, materially aid in our redemption.

Let us lay aside every weight, and end our dissensions, giving our time, talents, money, for the advancement of the principles for which our League was organized; thus united our redemption will be near, and we shall stand disenthralled and redeemed.

WHEREAS, This body has learned with great satisfaction, that an organization, formed of wealthy and intelligent citizens of Boston, Mass., among whom is George L. Stearns, Esq., which is energetically working for the same great results as we, *Universal Suffrage and Equality before the Law*. And

WHEREAS, We believe much good may be accomplished by uniting as far as possible, the interests and energies of all good and great men upon this important subject, at this time; therefore

Resolved, That a correspondence be opened by the Executive Committee of the National Equal Rights League, through the Secretaries, with the aforesaid organization; looking to a harmonious co-operation in the great work to be accomplished, in the circulation and judicious distribution of such documents as may tend to accomplish the desired object; therefore,

Resolved, That we will use our efforts individually in compliance with the four propositions set forth in Mr. Stearn's circular letter, dated Boston, Mass., August, 1865. And be it further

Resolved, That our thanks are due to George L. Stearns, Esq., for his fidelity to the principles of justice and equality, and for his unswerving manhood among the multitude of professed friends, who proffered everything to colored men, as an inducement for them to enlist in the United States Army, and have now abandoned us and our cause, and are willing to hand us over, bound hand and foot to the men whom we have conquered, leaving us an easy prey to the wrath and vindictiveness of those who knew nought but extermination and death for those of their own race as well as ours, during the whole course of this unparalleled and bloody war, from which we have just emerged.

Resolved, That we have no sympathy with any movement having for its object, the Colonizing of Colored Americans on the coast of Africa, or elsewhere. That while we most deeply deprecate the commendable exertions of those who are laboring with such energy and earnestness, to scatter christian enlightenment and civilization in that benighted land, we regard the subject of emigration to Liberia or elsewhere, as impracticable at this time, and only calculated to divert the minds of our people from the all important subject of enfranchisement; and therefore we feel disinclined to countenance, encourage or support any one who may be found striving to agitate or revive in this land, the dead carcass of Liberian Emigration.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee are hereby authorized to make such enquiries in relation to the will of the late

Rev. Charles Avery, of Allegheny City, Penna., as will give the National Equal Rights League a full knowledge of all the facts in relation to it, so far as the same may involve the interests of the colored people of the United States, and report the result of their inquiries at the next Annual Meeting of the League.

Resolved, That this League returns its sincere thanks to its officers for the manner in which they have conducted its business; Also, to such newspapers as have made a just report of our proceedings.

Resolved, That we return our sincere thanks to the people of *Cleveland*, for the hospitable manner in which they have received and entertained the members of the National Equal Rights League.

WHEREAS, It hath pleased Almighty God since our last annual meeting, to call from incessant and arduous labor, to a rich inheritance and a glorious reward, the long tried and faithful servant of the nation, and the advocate and defender of Liberty, our late illustrious President, Abraham Lincoln, a noble type of the true christian, statesman and patriot; therefore

Resolved, That we cannot murmur that God suffered this blow to fall upon us, since death is the common lot of all, and God knows what is best for the promotion of the great ends and purposes for which he has suffered this affliction to fall upon us, and we rejoice that heaven suffered so good and great a man to live so long among us, and to see so much of his labors crowned with the most signal success; a man whose words and deeds will live long after him, to enlighten and cheer the pathway of others in the world's great battles of right against wrong, "who though dead, yet speaketh;" and who like Moses or Simeon of old, having lived to see the beginning of the end was enabled to fold his arms with malice towards none, with chairity for all; and meet the terrible shock of the dastard assassin, who though furious and infatuated by the maddening spirit of a pro-slavery demon, dared not look the honest and brave man in the face,

but stole secretly behind his back and sent forth the fatal messenger of death; therefore

Resolved, That while we can add no new lustre to the grandeur and glory already won by the departed hero, our love for the true and virtuous of every race, as well as the grateful memory written on our hearts by his many deeds of kindness and devotion to the cause of liberty and justice; awakens emotions of the deepest admiration for his deeds, and sorrow for our loss, though it is his gain.