

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

STATE CONVENTION OF COLORED MEN,

Held in the City of Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 16th, 17th & 18th, 1856.

The Convention was called to order by the Chairman of the State Central Committee, and, on motion of John Booker, D. JENKINS was chosen President, pro tem, and JOHN BOOKER appointed Secretary.

After reading the call for the Convention, on motion of P. H. Clark, it was resolved that the delegates elected from Franklin county, and all gentlemen present from other parts of the State, who are willing to enroll their names and participate in our proceedings, be considered members of the Convention. The following gentlemen enrolled their names as delegates:

LORAIN COUNTY.

J. Mercer Langston, Solomon Grimes, J. H. Harris.

FRANKLIN COUNTY.

D. Jenkins, L. D. Taylor, C. H. Langston, John Booker, W. B. Ferguson, J. Poindexter, James Evans, Isham Martin, J. S. Ward, George Johnson.

HAMILTON COUNTY.

John J. Gaines, Peter H. Clark, George Johnson.

JACKSON COUNTY.

C. A. Yancey.

HIGHLAND COUNTY.

Anderson Flinn, Granville Foster.

ROSS COUNTY.

D. E. James, O. D. Williams, J. A. Chancellor, J. H. Williams.

PICKAWAY COUNTY.

Hinton Coles, Lewis Toles.

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY.

Lewis Adams, Henry Ford, John H. Williams, Francis Adams, George Reynolds.

LOGAN COUNTY.

A. J. Scott, R. Heathcock, Wm. Walden.

ASHTABULA COUNTY.

H. T. Rankin.

DELAWARE COUNTY.

U. D. Harris, J. Bruce, J. J. Williamson.

GREENE COUNTY.

James Lott.

SCIOTO COUNTY.

John Miner.

CUYAHOGA COUNTY.

John Malvin.

The Committee on permanent organization reported the following gentlemen as officers of the Convention, which report was unanimously adopted:

PRESIDENT,

JOHN J. GAINES.

VICE PRESIDENTS,

L. D. Taylor, C. H. Langston, A. Flinn, Thos. Benford, C. A. Yancey.

SECRETARIES,

John Booker, Granville Foster, W. D. Harris.

The following committees were then appointed:

ON BUSINESS,

John M. Langston, C. A. Yancey, John Booker, Charles Williams, and John J. Gaines.

ON STATE ORGANIZATION,

Messrs. P. H. Clark, Charles Williams, James Poindexter, John Booker, and A. J. Scott.

ON ADDRESS,

Messrs. Peter H. Clark, C. H. Langston, C. A. Yancey, D. Jenkins, John Williams, Solomon Grimes, and A. Flinn.

ON PETITIONS,

C. H. Langston, L. D. Taylor, D. Jenkins.

ON FINANCE,

D. Jenkins, G. Johnson, and J. H. Harris.

ON PUBLICATION,

C. H. Langston, John Booker, and D. Jenkins.

At the close of the last evening's exercises, Rev. Mr. Turban came forward and presented the Convention five dollars in behalf of the ladies of Bethel Church—in consequence of which the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of the Convention are due, and are hereby tendered to the ladies of Bethel Church, for their liberal donation.

All the meetings of the Convention after the first, were large and enthusiastic. Every evening, the large and commodious City Hall was filled to its utmost capacity with anxious listeners, both white and colored.

The speeches made by Langston, Clark, Gaines, and others, were logical, pointed and eloquent, and were delivered with earnestness and great power.

The Committee on Business reported the following resolutions :

1. *Resolved*, That slavery is to be deeply deplored, because it is destructive of "whatsoever things, are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report."

2. *Resolved*, That it may be appropriately characterized as the sum of all villainies, the perfection of all wickedness and outrage, the master-piece of all the devices which Satan has invented to alienate man from his brother man, and thereby destroy the happiness of the human family.

3. *Resolved*, That we regard all organizations, whose object is the maintenance of this stupendous system of wrong, as engaged in a crusade against our holy religion, against the pure principles of righteous civil government, against the spirit and tendency of genuine civilization, and against the tenderest and most important rights which belong to humanity.

4. *Resolved*, That we are compelled to believe, in view of its own pro-slavery and uncharitable action, in view of the inconsistent and unmanly conduct of its agents and leading members, that the professions made by the American Colonization Society, of promoting the abolition of slavery, are altogether delusive, and their pretensions of interest in behalf of the nominally free colored people of the country, hollow-hearted and contemptible.

5. *Resolved*, That we look upon the Society as the embodiment of the pro-slavery sentiment of the country; that its prime object is the perpetuity of slavery; and, while it is unworthy of our confidence and support, it should be despised and loathed by the friends of the slave, as a foul and filthy plague.

6. *Resolved*, That the great political

party which finds its head in Franklin Pierce, and its pillars of support in Cass and Douglas, in Atchison and Stringfellow, has pledged itself to do the menial offices of slavery, to oppose all agitation of the question of Human Freedom, to make final the unconstitutional and inhuman Fugitive Slave Law, and to ignore all the great principles of justice which lie at the foundation of this government.

7. *Resolved*, That we pledge ourselves to each other and to the slave, to use all the means in our power to effect the overthrow of slavery and the destruction of American prejudice.

8. *Resolved*, That we do not despair of the attainment of this grand result; but, believing that God is the God of the oppressed, we are confident that in His own good time He will bring about our deliverance with the same mighty hand with which He led forth the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

9. *Resolved*, That unless we are greatly mistaken in respect to the indications of Providence, the day of our deliverance steadily draws nigh. May the God of the oppressed hasten its glad and joyous consummation.

11. *Resolved*, That while we rejoice in the death of the Whig party, once a strong ally of Despotism, in the waning influence of the Democratic party—the black-hearted apostle of American Slavery—we would welcome the inauguration of the Republican party, which, although it does not take so high anti-slavery ground as we could wish, demanding the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery in the States as well as its eternal prohibition in the Territories belonging to the Federal Government, may do great service in the cause of Freedom, and the young, vigorous, and athletic defender of the Restrictive Policy.

12. *Resolved*, That we regard the great moral results which are coming to pass through the agency of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with unfeigned gratitude and thankfulness, and we will bid it a hearty God speed in its moral warfare against slavery and its audacious encroachments upon the rights of man.

13. *Resolved*, That we are opposed to all Caste, to all discrimination on account of complexion or birth-place, and in favor of the broadest Freedom consonant to just and impartial legislation.

14. *Resolved*, That, in the name of our manhood, in the name of justice and fair

dealing, in the name of our nativity, in the name of the political axiom that Taxation and Representation are inseparable, and in the name of our loyalty and devotedness to our native land and her institutions, we demand the alteration and amendment of all clauses in our State Constitution making distinctions on the ground of color, as well as all laws and parts of laws making complexional differences.

15. *Resolved*, that we recommend to the Convention the appointment of a committee to prepare a petition to be presented to the Convention for signatures.

16. *Resolved*, That the political party that declares that there can be no law for slavery, is the real political party of freedom in the United States, and as such commends itself to the countenance and support of every colored man in the nation.

17. *Resolved*, That we recommend to the Convention the appointment of a committee of three, to prepare a petition to be presented to the Legislature, asking that honorable body to take the necessary steps to secure the alteration of the first Section of the ninth Article of the State Constitution, by striking out the word "white" from said section, and to repeal all laws and parts of laws making complexion discriminations; and we would also recommend that the members of this Convention be requested to circulate this petition for signatures, in their several districts, as soon as may be, and forward the same to the Legislature.

18. *Resolved*, That the Convention appoint a committee of five on State Organization; the object of this organization to be the arrangement of the debate in such way as to secure efficient and united anti-slavery action.

19. *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to take into consideration, and report upon the propriety, necessity, and practicability, of establishing a permanent press, as the organ of the colored people of the State.

20. *Resolved*, That the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes, Agricultural Associations, Educational and Literary, Temperance and Moral Reform Societies, would tend to promote our social and domestic education.

WHEREAS, It appears, from proper information, that former Conventions had contracted with J. M. Langston and D. Jenkins, to perform certain public duties, in the discharge of which J. M. Langston

expended thirty-three dollars, of which but five have been refunded, and D. Jenkins the sum of twenty five dollars, therefore,

Resolved, That the delegates composing this Convention be requested to raise a fair proportion of said amounts, in their counties, and forward the same to a committee of three in the city of Columbus, who shall have charge of said funds, and who shall appropriate them to the satisfaction of said claims. We also recommend that the claims of John J. Gaines and Peter H. Clark, for thirty dollars, expended by them for printing the Minutes of the Convention of 1852, be allowed.

D. Jenkins, P. H. Clark, C. A. Yancey, were appointed that committee.

21. *Resolved*, That each Delegate present be requested to order a copy or copies of the *Ohio Columbian*, containing the proceedings of our Convention, and be requested to read such proceedings to their constituents, and urge them to carry out the recommendations therein contained.

22. *Resolved*, That Messrs. Clark, J. M. Langston, John S. Gaines, C. H. Langston, and L. D. Taylor, be appointed a committee to wait upon the Legislature now in session, asking a hearing concerning the grievances of which we complain.

23. *Resolved*, That this Convention return thanks to the City Council for the use of the City Hall; also to the officers of the Convention, for the manner in which they have performed their duties.

PLAN OF STATE ORGANIZATION.

The Committee on State Organization reported the following:

WHEREAS, The thorough organization and united effort of the Colored people of the State, is absolutely essential to the success of the struggle in which we are engaged for the acquisition of our rights, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Colored people of Ohio in Convention assembled, That the State Central Committee shall consist of ——— members, to be elected annually; and the State Convention to be organized with a President, Secretary and Treasurer, to perform duties as hereinafter defined.

There shall be appointed by this Convention a Central Committee of five for each county here represented, to perform duties hereinafter provided, and to hold their office for one year, and until their successors shall be elected and qualified by the people of their respective counties.

The State Central Committee shall be empowered to employ an agent or agents to traverse the State, holding county conventions and township meetings of the colored people, to print and circulate memorials and petitions

praying for relief from the oppressive laws under which we suffer, to collect in each county the statistics of wealth, education, mental and moral condition of the colored people of the State, and to raise funds for defraying the expense of said meetings, publications &c. And the Central Committee shall make out and publish an annual report, embodying all the statistics collected by said agents, the amount and mode of expenditure of all monies collected by them or their agents, and shall recommend such measures as they deem important to the welfare of the colored people of Ohio—And the agent or agents of the State Central Committee and of the County Central Committees, shall report the amounts of money raised by them, quarterly, or oftener if required, to the State Central Committee: the county agents shall make monthly reports to the county committees.

Also, that the State Central Committee, and County Central Committees, shall, immediately on their organization, establish rules for the proper keeping of their accounts, the mode of disbursing their funds, and shall define the duties of their agents, and establish by-laws for the government of their own action.

The County Central Committees shall aid and assist the agents of the State Central Committee to hold county conventions, township meetings, &c., or shall, at their discretion, employ such competent persons as they may select, to lecture and circulate memorials and petitions, &c in their counties, and shall take measures to have their counties represented in the annual meetings of the State Convention, and do all that lies in their power to advance the moral, mental, and financial condition of the colored people of the State.

That we proceed to raise the sum of three thousand dollars, to be expended by the State Central Committee for the before mentioned objects; and that the delegates be required to pledge themselves to raise, within their respective counties, a reasonable portion of said fund, and report the same to the Treasurer of the State Central Committee, who shall give bonds for the security of said funds.

The Committee on Address reported the following:

A D D R E S S,

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Ohio:

GENTLEMEN:—We, the disfranchised Colored Citizens of Ohio, assembled in General Convention, feeling deeply the grievous wrongs unjustly imposed upon us by the prohibitions implied in the first Section of the fifth Article of the Constitution of the State, and knowing the people have the right to assemble together, in a peaceful manner, to counsel for their common good, and petition the General Assembly for a redress of grievances;" and, believing it to be a solemn duty we owe to ourselves, our posterity, and the honor and dignity of the free State of Ohio, to use every constitutional means which the law-makers of Ohio have left in our power, to remove from our necks the burdens too grievous to be borne; we do, therefore, most earnestly, in the name of our common humanity, in the name of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights of the State of Ohio, ask your Honorable Body to take the necessary constitutional steps to

strike the word "white" from the section before referred to, and all other places in which it occurs in the Constitution, and thereby abrogate the unwise and unjust distinction therein made between the citizens of the State on account of the accident of color. The section referred to is couched in the following language: "Art. V. Sec. I. Every *white* male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of the State one year next preceding the election; and of the county, township, or ward in which he resides, such times as may be provided by law, shall have the qualifications of an elector, and be entitled to vote at all elections."

The first reason we will assign for the removal of this odious word from the Constitution of a professedly free State, is, that we are MEN. This, to our minds, seems an all sufficient plea. Human rights are not to be graduated by the shades of color that tinge the cheeks of men. Any being, however low in the scale of civilization, that yet preserves the traits that serve to distinguish humanity from the brutes, is endowed with all rights that can be claimed by the most cultivated races of men.

That we are men, we will not insult your intelligence by attempting to prove. The most bitter revilers and oppressors of the race admit this, even in the enactments by which they wrong us. Statutes and ordinances are not necessary for the regulation and control of animals, but men, reasoning men, who can understand and obey, or plot to overthrow. The section of which we complain, by defining that *white* men may exercise the right of franchise, virtually admits that there are black men who are by the rule prohibited from voting. We ask any who doubt our manhood, Hath not the *negro* eyes? Hath not the *negro* hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?—fed with the same food—hurt with the same weapons—subject to the same diseases—healed by the same means—warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as the *white man* is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?

We ask you to ponder the danger of circumscribing the great doctrines of human equality, which our fathers promulgated and defended at the cost of so much blood and treasure, to the narrow bounds of races or nations. All men are by nature equal, and have inalienable rights, or none have. We beg you to reflect how insecure your own and the liberties of your posterity would be by the admission of such a rule of constraining the rights of men. Another nation or race may displace you, as you have displaced nations and race; and the injustice you teach, they may execute; perchance they may better the instruction. Remember, in your pride of race and power, 'That we are all children of one Father, and all ye are brethren.'

But the principles upon which our Government is founded, condemn the practice of excluding colored men from the advantages of the ballot box. To uphold the principle that taxation and representation should go together, the union between Great Britain and the American Colonies was broken, and a desolating war of seven years' duration was waged. As proof of the correctness of the principle, we

have the declaration and actions of our fathers, and your own declarations. If the sentiment was so true in 1776, what new concatenation of circumstances has arisen to render it false in 1856? None whatever. It is one of those immutable truths that change not with time or circumstances. They are emanations from the eternal foundation of truth, which we all worship—the Deity Himself. Yet, in nearly every county of our State, colored tax payers are found, who are unrepresented, and can only be heard in your halls as a matter of favor.—We are aware that difference of race is urged by our enemies as a reason for our disfranchisement; but we submit that we are not Africans, but Americans, as much so as any of your population. Here then is a great injustice done us, by refusing to acknowledge our right to the appellation of Americans, which is the only title we desire, and legislating for us as if we were aliens, and not bound to our country by the ties of affection which every human being must feel for his native land; which makes the Laplander prefer his snows and skins to the sunny skies and silken garb of Italy; which makes the colored American prefer the dear land of his birth, even though oppressed in it, to any other spot on earth.

But admit, for argument, that there is an irradicable difference between us and the whites of our land. That very difference unfits them to represent us. Our wants and feelings are unknown or unappreciated by them; nor can any one presume to represent us whom we have not aided to select. In our government, every citizen should be represented in the legislative councils, and this can only be attained by permitting each one a voice in the selection of representatives. No class of the white population would be willing to concede to any other class, however honest and enlightened, the custody of their rights. To demand such a thing, would be deemed monstrous; and the injustice is not lessened when the demand is made upon black men instead of white men.

Our want of intelligence is urged as a reason against our admission to equal citizenship.—The assumption that we are ignorant is untrue; but, even if it were true, it really affords an argument for the removal of the disabilities that cramp our energies, destroy that feeling of self respect, so essential to form the character of a good citizen. Give us the opportunity of elevating ourselves:—It can do you no harm, and may do us much good; and if we fail, upon us be the blame. We would bring to your recollection that, by a decision of your Supreme Court, a large portion of our people are already in the possession of the elective franchise. These men are not above the average of colored men in intelligence or morals. They are educated under the same depressing social influences with the rest of us, and are no better fitted to exercise the right of voting than their brethren. Yet, by an accident of color, they are enfranchised. What good reason can be adduced for permitting the father to vote and not the son, or the son and not the father, as is frequently the case? The most obtuse intellect can at once perceive the utter folly and injustice of such distinctions. But the folly and injustice is equally as great when the difference is made between white and colored men.

We are aware that it has been recently as-

serted by a high political personage, that this is a government of white men. This we cannot admit. In addition to the arguments we have already advanced, touching the doctrine of the universality of human rights, we submit that the assertion casts an imputation upon the veracity and good faith of our fathers, who claimed the sympathy and aid of the world on the ground that they were contending for principles of universal application, and desired to found a government in which the doctrine of human equality would be reduced to practice.

The Bill of Rights of the State of Ohio sets forth "That all men are created equal and independent, and have inalienable rights, among which are enjoying and *defending* life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and *protecting* property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and *safety*."

Now, admitted that we are men, how are we to *defend* and protect life, liberty, and property? The whites of the State, through the ballot-box, can do these things peacefully; but we, by the organic law of the State, are prevented from defending those precious rights by any other than violent means. For the same document that asserts our right to defend life, liberty and property, strips us of the power to do so otherwise than by violence. We ask you, gentlemen, in the name of justice, shall this stand as the judgement of the State of Ohio?

We are aware that deference to the opinions and institutions of the States tolerating slavery, to whom we are bound by the federal compact, may induce some to oppose this our application for equal rights. But those States, of all others, are the most tenacious of their rights as sovereign States, and reprobate all attempts to influence their domestic policy by the action of public opinion in other States.—We pray you, therefore to do us justice; and, in doing right, imitate the independence they display in doing wrong. Our rights are as high and precious as theirs; and they can have no right to complain of any act of the people of Ohio, improving the condition of any class of her citizens.

We do not ask you to countenance any change destructive to your form of government. The principles we ask you to indorse are recognized by the wise and good of our own and other lands. It will be but the legitimate result of a proper appreciation of the Declaration of Independence and our Bill of Rights. Already five States of the Union have admitted colored men to vote; and we have yet to hear that the action has been followed by any other than beneficial results.

The arguments we have advanced are equally applicable to the statutory enactments which inflict such grievous disabilities upon us as a people.

The inestimable privilege and protection of a trial by a jury of our peers, we are deprived of, and to our great damage. Every legal gentleman in your body must be aware of the facility with which convictions are obtained against colored men.

Admission to your infirmaries and other benevolent institutions, is demanded by the spirit of the age. It is a shame to your civilization and humanity that decrepid age, the helplessly maimed, drivelling idiots and raving

maniacs, are turned into the streets to die, as has been done in the metropolis of your State. In your public schools, too, needless and injurious distinctions are made. The duty of the State is the same to all her children. None are so insignificant as to be forgotten; none so important as to be preferred before others. The interests of the State demand that all should be educated alike.

In conclusion, we will call your attention to the duties incumbent on you as legislators—to pass such laws as will increase the happiness, prosperity and security of the people of the State; to remove all just causes of dissatisfaction.

Many may indulge the hope that the colored population is destined to pass away from your midst, and so refuse our prayer. But the hope is a delusion. We are a part of the American people, and we and our posterity will forever be a constituent part of your population. If we are deprived of education, of equal political privileges, still subjected to the same depressing influences under which we now suffer, the natural consequences will follow; and the State, for her planting of injustice, will reap her harvest of sorrow and crime. She will contain within her limits a discontented population—dissatisfied, estranged—ready to welcome any revolution or invasion as a relief, for they can lose nothing and gain much. A contrary course of policy will enable us to keep step with our white fellow citizens in the march of improvement, disaffection will cease, and our noble State stand securely defended by the loving hearts of all her sons.

In behalf of the State Convention of colored men—
PETER H. CLARK, Cha'n.

Charles Langston, Charles A. Yancey, D Jenkins, John Williams, Solomon Grimes, Anderson Flinn, John M. Langston, John J. Gaines, L D Taylor,	} Committee.
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The memorial was received and read, and referred to a select committee consisting of the following gentlemen: Messrs. Caulfield, Brown, and Taylor of Geauga.

The following address was presented by Wm. Harris, in behalf of the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society of Delaware:

DELAWARE, OHIO, 1855.

To the Convention of Disfranchised Citizens of Ohio:

GENTLEMEN:—Convened as you are in the Capital City of our State—a State great in wealth, power, and political influence, an avowed devotee of Freedom, and a constituent part of a Christian Democratic Confederacy—to concert measures for obtaining those rights and immunities of which unjust legislation has deprived you, we offer this testimonial of our sympathy and interest in the cause in which you are engaged—a cause fraught with infinite importance—and also express our earnest hope that such determination and invincible courage may be evinced by you in assembly as are requisite to meet the exigencies of the times.

Truth, Justice and Mercy, marshaling their forces, sound the tocsin which summons the

warrior in his burnished armor to the conflict against Error and Oppression. On earth's broad arena—through Time's revolving cycles—this warfare has been continuous; and now here, in this most brilliant star in the galaxy of nations, where Christianity and civilization, with their inestimable accompaniments and proclivities, have taken their abode and add their benign light to her stellate brightness—bands of her offspring, in very truth her own, despised, persecuted and crushed, assemble in scattered fragments to take the oath of fealty to Freedom, and swear eternal enmity to Oppression; to enter into a bond sacred and inviolable, ever to wage interminable intellectual and moral war against the demon, and to demand the restoration of their birthright, *Liberty*—kindred of Deity. Nor is the path to victory strewn with flowers; obstacles formidable, and apparently insurmountable, arise ominously before even the most hopeful and ardent.

As the Alpine avalanche sweeps tumultuously adown the mountain, overwhelming the peasant and his habitation, so the conglomeration of hatred and prejudice against our race, brought together by perceptible accumulation, augmented and fostered by religion and science united, sweeps with seeming irresistible power toward us, menacing complete annihilation. But, should these things exercise a retarding influence upon our progressive efforts? Let American religion teach adoration to the demon Slavery, whom it denominates God: at the end, the book of record will show its falsity or truth. Let scientific research produce elaborate expositions of the inferiority and mental idiosyncrasy of the colored race; one truth, the only essential truth, is unconvertible:—The Omnipotent, Omniscient God's glorious autograph—the seal of angels—is written on our brows, that immortal characteristic of Divinity—the rational, mysterious and inexplicable soul, animates our frames.

Then press on! Manhood's prerogatives are yours by Almighty fiat. These prerogatives American Republicanism, disregarding equity, humanity, and the fundamental principles of her national superstructure, has rendered a nonentity, while on her flag's transparencies and triumphal arches, stood beautifully those great, noble words: Liberty and Independence—Free Government—Church and State! And still they stand exponents of American character—her escutcheon wafts them on its star-spangled surface, to every clime—each ship load of emigrants from monarchical Europe, shout the words synonyma with Americans, their first poem in "the land of the free." Briery mountain, sparkling river, glassy lake, give back the echoes, soft and clear as if the melody was borrowed from the harps of angels. But strange incongruity! As the song of Freedom verberates and reverberates through the northern hills, and the lingering symphony quivers on the still air and then sinks away into silence, a low deep wail, heavy with anguish and despair, rises from the southern plains, and the clank of chains on human limbs mingles with the mournful cadence.

What to the toiling millions there, is this boasted liberty? What to us is this organic body—this ideal reduced to reality—this institution of the land?—a phantom, shadowy and indistinct—a disembodied form, impalpable to

our sense or touch. In the broad area of this Republic there is no spot, however small or isolated, where the colored man can exercise his God given rights. Genius of America!—How art thou fallen, oh Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou fallen!

In view of these things, it is self evident, and above demonstration that we, as a people, have every incentive to labor for the redress of wrongs. On our native soil, consecrated to freedom, civil liberties are denied us, and we are by compulsion subject to an atrocious and criminal system of political tutelage delirious to the interest of the entire colored race, and antagonistical to the political axioms of this Republic.

Intuitively then, we search for the panacea for the manifold ills which we suffer. One, and only one, exists; and when each individual among us realizes the absolute impossibility for him to perform any work of supererogation in the common cause, the appliances will prove its own efficacy; it is embodied in one potent word—ACTION. Let unanimity of action characterize us; let us reject the absurd phantasy of non-intervention; let us leave conservatism behind, and substitute a radical, utilitarian spirit; let us cultivate our moral and mental faculties, and labor to effect a general diffusion of knowledge, remembering that "ascendancy naturally and properly belongs to intellectual superiority." Let "Excelsior" be our watchword; it is the inspiration of all great deeds, and by the universal adoption of this policy we will soon stand triumphantly above that ignorance and weakness, of which slavery is the inevitable concomitant—will soon reach that apex of civilization and consequent power to which every earnest, impassioned soul aspires.

Continued and strenuous effort is the basis of all greatness, moral, intellectual, and civil. "Work, man," says Carlyle, "work! work! thou hast all eternity to rest in."

To you, gentlemen, as representatives of the oppressed thousands of Ohio, we look hopefully. This convening is far from being nugatory or unimportant. "Agitation of thought is the beginning of truth," and, furthermore, by pursuing such a line of policy as you in your wisdom may deem expedient, *tending toward that paramount object*, the results may transcend those attending similar assemblies which have preceded it. True, you are numerically small; but the race is not always gained by the swift, nor the battle by the strong, and it has become a truism that greatness is the legitimate result of labor, diligence, and perseverance.

It was a Spartan mother's farwell to her son, "Bring home your shield or be brought upon it." To you we would say, be true, be courageous, be steadfast in the discharge of your duty. The citadel of Error must yield to the unshrinking phalanx of truth. In our fireside circles, in the seclusion of our closets, we kneel in tearful supplication in your behalf. As Christian wives, mothers and daughters, we invoke the blessing of the King, Eternal and Immortal, "who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, who made the heavens with all their host," to rest upon you, and we pledge ourselves to exert our influence unceasingly in the cause of Liberty and Humanity.

Again we say, be courageous; be steadfast; unfurl your banner to the breeze—let its folds

float proudly over you, bearing the glorious inscription, broad and brilliant as the material universe: "*God and Liberty!*"

SARA G. STALEY,
In behalf of the Delaware Ladies' Anti Slavery Society.

The Committee on petitions reported the following:

We, the undersigned, citizens of — county, respectfully but earnestly petition your honorable body, 1st. To immediately take the necessary constitutional steps to so alter or amend the Constitution of this State as to strike out the word "white" in the first Section of the fifth Article. 2d. To so alter or amend the first Section of the ninth Article of the Constitution as to strike out the word "white" in that Article. 3d. Also, to repeal all laws and parts of laws which make distinctions on account of color.

The Committee on Finance reported the following receipts and expenditures:

RECEIPTS.

From members of Convention.....	\$24.75
" Ladies A.M.E. Church.....	5.00
Total.....	\$29.75

EXPENDITURES.

For Hall rent.....	\$15.00
Expense of Central Committee....	6.75
Total.....	\$21.75
Balance \$8.00, which was paid to the Committee of Publication.	

The following letters were received and ordered to be published:

PETTERBORO' Dec. 27, 1855.

D. Jenkins, L. D. Taylor, J. Watson, J. Malvin, W. A. Scott, J. Booker, W. H. Day —
State Central Committee.

GENTLEMEN:—I thank you for inviting me to attend your State Convention. I wish I could attend it; but such is the state of my business, that I cannot.

I suppose the object of your Convention is to promote the welfare of the whole colored population of this country.

For many years I have well nigh despaired of the peaceful, bloodless abolition of American Slavery. Two things are lacking to secure such abolition. 1st. Entire *honesty* on the part of the abolitionists. 2d. *Self respect* on the part of the free colored people.

It is dishonesty in the abolitionists to admit that there can be law for the enslavement of the American blacks—for they would admit no possibility of law for the enslavement of the American whites.

It is most painful and pitiable self-degradation, on the part of the free colored people, to admit that there is, either inside or outside of the Constitution, law—real, obligatory law—for the enslavement of their race. They betray their destitution of true self-respect when they vote for men who make such an admission, or when they unite with churches that make it, or patronize free schools or school teachers that make it.

Hoping that the proceedings of your Convention may be earnest, manly and wise.

I remain,

Your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

HALL OF REPS, U. S. }
Dec 26, 1855 }

GENTLEMEN:—I have received your kind invitation to attend the Convention of Colored men on the 16th January.

It would give me pleasure to comply with your request; but you are aware of the importance of the questions now pressed upon the consideration of Congress. Of course it would be improper for me to leave my seat in this body until the election of Speaker and disposal of some of the important questions before us.

I however feel a deep interest in the action of your Convention. There can be no doubt among intelligent men, that knowledge is power. The more our colored friends increase their intelligence, elevate their moral being, the greater influence they will exert, and the sooner will they be admitted to all the privileges which the whites possess.

I know of no absurdity in morals or in politics more palpable than that of making the complexion of a man the criterion of their moral or political worth. While our colored friends should be constant in their demand for a respectful consideration of their claims to the rights and privileges to which their intelligence and moral worth entitle them: while they continue to do this, the philanthropists will

of course use their influence to extend to the colored portion of our people equal rights and privileges.

Very truly,

J. R. GIDDINGS.

D. Jenkins, L. D. Taylor, J. Watson J. Malvin, W. A. Scott, W. H. Day.

STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

D. JENKINS,

O. H. LANGSTON,

JOHN MALVIN,

JONATHAN UNDERWOOD,

ISHAM MARTIN,

J. T. WARD,

P. H. CLARK,

L. D. TAYLOR,

J. O. CHANCILLOR.

In accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Convention, relative to State Organization, the State Central Committee met on the 25th inst., and permanently organized by appointing D. JENKINS President, O. H. LANGSTON Secretary, and JOHN T. WARD Treasurer, all of the City of Columbus.

We do sincerely hope that every county will at once organize their county committees, and proceed to raise the money as recommended in the resolutions above referred to, and forward it to the State Central Committee.

Brethren, this is an *important crisis*. Let us go to work in earnest. If our rights are worth having, they are worth working for. We can only succeed by having MONEY.

D. JENKINS, Pres't.

O. H. LANGSTON, Sec'y.