ADDRESS.

I consider this a most happy period in our history,—when we, as a people, are in some degree awake to a sense of our condition; and are determined no longer to submit tamely and silently to the galling yoke of oppression, under which we have so long suffered; oppression riveted upon us, as well by an unrighteous and cruel prejudice, as by unjust and unequal legislation. More particularly do I consider it ominous of good, when I see here collected, so much of wisdom and talent, from different parts of this great nation, collected here to deliberate upon the wisest and best methods by which we may seek a redress of those grievances which most sorely oppress us as a people.

Gentlemen, in behalf of my fellow-citizens of Buffalo, I bid you welcome, from the East and West, the North and South, to our city. Among you are the men who are lately from that part of our country, where they see our brethren, bound and manacled, suffering and bleeding, under the hand of the tyrant, who holds in one hand the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees freedom and equal rights to every citizen, and in the other the scourge of human gore, drawn from the veins of his fellow-man. Here also are those who live in my native New England, among the "descendants of the pilgrims," whose laws are more in accordance with the principles of freedom and equal rights; so that but few laws are found recorded in their statute books, of which we need complain. But though their laws are not marked with such palpable and flagrant injustice towards the colored man, as those of the South; yet there we are proscribed, by a fixed and cruel prejudice, little less oppressive. Our grievances are many and great; but it is not my intention to enumerate or to enlarge upon them. I will simply say, however, that we wish to secure for ourselves, in common with other citizens, the privilege of seeking our own happiness in any part of the country we may choose, which right is now unjustly, and, I believe, unconstitutionally denied us in a part of this Union. We wish also to secure the elective franchise in those States where it is denied us,—where our rights are legislated away, and our voice neither heard nor regarded. We also wish to secure, for our children especially, the benefits of education, which in several States are entirely denied us, and in others are enjoyed only in name. These, and many other things, of which we justly complain, bear most heavily upon us as a people; and it is our right and our duty to seek for redress, in that way which will be most likely to secure the desired end.

In your wisdom, you will, I doubt not, take into consideration these and the many other grievances which we suffer, and form such organizations, and recommend such measures, as shall, in your wisdom, seem most likely to secure our emancipation—the benefits of education to our children, and all our rights in common with other citizens of this our republic.

Two objects should distinctly and constantly be borne in mind, in all our deliberations. One is the diffusion of truth, and the other the elevation of our own people. By the diffusion of truth, I mean that we must take a bold and elevated stand for the constitution of the United States, and in the strength of the will which will advance the great and holy cause of freedom, and nothing that will in the least retard its progress. We must, by every means in our power, strive to persuade the white people to act with more confidence in their own principles of liberty—to make laws, just and equal for all the people.

But while the color of the skin is made the criterion of the law, it is our right, our duty, and, I hope I may say, our fixed determination, to make known our wrongs to the world, and to our oppressors; to cease not day nor night to pour a flood of living light on the minds and consciences of the oppressor; till we change their thoughts, feelings, and actions towards us as men and citizens of this land. We must convince our fellow-men that slavery is unprofitable; that it is for the well-being and prosperity of this nation; the peace and happiness of our common country, that slavery and oppression are abolished within its borders; and that laws be enacted equal and just for all its citizens.

Proscription is not in accordance with equal rights, no more than is oppression with holy freedom, or slavery with the spirit of free institutions. The present system of laws, in this our country, enacted in reference to us, the oppressed and down-trodden descendants of Africa, do, and will continue to operate like the canker-worm in the root of the tree of liberty, preventing its growth, and ultimately destroying its vitality. We may well say, in the language of a distinguished statesman and patriot of our own land, "We tremble for our country when we reflect that God is just, and that his justice will not always sleep." By the example of other nations, who have gone before, whose history should be a warning to this people, we learn that slavery and oppression has nowhere prospered long; it blights a nation's glory and prosperity—divides her power—weakens her strength, and grows like a corroding consumption in her very vitals. "God's judgments will not sleep forever, but he will visit the nations of the earth in justice." We love our common country—

"With all her faults, we love her still."

This is the land where we all drew our first breath; where we have grown up to strength and manhood; here is deposited the ashes of our fathers; here we have contracted the most sacred engagements, the dearest relations of life; here we have found the companions of our childhood, the friends of our youth, the gentle parents who gave us life, and there are the banquets of our infancy, the scenes of early suffering; in a word, this is our own native land. I repeat it, then, we love our country, we love our fellow-citizens, but see liberty more.

We, as a people, are called upon to raise our voice in our own behalf and plead our equal rights, because equal laws are found to plead for us. The oppressed of every other land, no matter how distant their location, no matter what their complexion, when the fact is known that any oppressor are oppressed, and seeking their freedom, the friends of liberty are ready to espouse their cause, with all the talent and eloquence of the great nation necessaries. Men of every rank can plead the cause of freedom. Even the slaveholders, who hold their iron grasp, like the grasp