

war; who had ever been willing to aid them in achieving their independence; we say, they did not divide these, their fellow citizens, into castes, and in the face of justice, confer privileges on one class that were refused to another. Every freeman, according to Art. VII of this firstly adopted instrument, who paid taxes, and hired a tenement worth forty shillings a year, was entitled to exercise the common right of voting.

In 1821, in opposition to the intellect, the philanthropy, and consistent republicanism of many noble men, who dignifiedly stood up and contended against the unprovoked intolerance that urged forward the measure, an act was passed, which, while it protected liberally others in the exercise of the franchise, made it incumbent upon every colored citizen to possess \$250 freehold estate, in order to use the before common privilege. This requirement, as we have before declared, resulted most disadvantageously to us.

We now find ourselves existing in the chief division of the government, with no marks of criminality attached to our names, as a class; no spots of immorality staining our characters; no charges of disloyalty dishonoring our birthright; yet prevented (by an invidious complexional proscription) from being participants in those free born rights and sympathies that are bountifully guaranteed, not only to common humanity of this State, but also to foreigners, of whatever clime or language. We find ourselves the subjects and not the objects of legislation, because we are prevented from giving an assenting or opposing voice in the periodic appointments of all laws, just or unjust, that may be enacted, to which we are bound to subscribe, even while we have no instrumentality, either in their formation or adoption.

We find ourselves crippled and crushed in soul and ability, because with all the longing that our spirits may possess to drink deeply of those pure waters that mentally and morally refresh and invigorate, we are thrust from the fountain with the cold treatment of aliens, having even that self-protecting instrument taken from us, which is the primary assurance and safeguard of citizenship.

We find ourselves shut out by the secondary influence of a monied restriction, from a right which is the basis of a people's liberties and prosperity; and by the withering influence of this, we are virtually and manifestly shut out from the obtainment of those resources of pecuniary and possessional emolument, which an unshackled citizenship does always ensure, and which very resources are held up before us as requirements for the use of a privilege, that, in accordance with the spirit of the government, should be the freest and most sacred.

This unequal participation in the privileges of the state, we consider invidious and proscriptive. It proceeds from no principles of justice; it is not predicable either from the position or character of the people upon whom it so unequally operates. The causes which were supposed to justify its enactment, or warrant its continuance, have either no existence, or are equally applicable to a large body of respectable voters of the state.

What are we, as a people, in the state? What is our condition? What is the character we have? What the reputation we sustain? We are native born citizens of the state--immediate descendants of men, held, not long since, as slaves. From this state we were translated into the partial enjoyment and limited possession of freedom. Cut off from the sympathies of our fellow citizens, almost abject in poverty, allowed, in many places, but a scanty, and inadequate participation in the privileges of education, and deprived almost entirely of the elective franchise, we have nevertheless, by the practical operation of common sense, by habits of industry, and the cultivation of the religious sentiments, been enabled to elevate ourselves above abasement, and possess ourselves of many of the advantages of RELIGION, INTELLIGENCE and PROPERTY.

We present the curious and acknowledged creditable spectacle of a people, bending under the weight of proscription, who yet will not suffer by a comparison with their more privileged fellow citizens of the same rank, in either religion, virtue or industry.

Although from arbitrary distinctions that prevail throughout the community, we have been debarred entirely from collegiate education; although, to a considerable extent, we have been excluded from the advantages of the