position on our part to assume a tone of excessive humility. While we would be respectful, we must address you as men, as citizens, as brothers, as dwellers in a common country, equally interested with you for its welfare, its honor and for its prosperity.

To be still more explicit: we would, first of all, be understood to range ourselves no lower among our fellow-countrymen than is implied in the high appellation of "citizen."

Notwithstanding the impositions and deprivations which have fettered us—withstanding the disabilities and liabilities, pending and impending—notwithstanding the cunning, cruel, and scandalous efforts to blot out that right, we declare that we are, and of right we ought to be American citizens. We claim this right, and we claim all the rights and privileges, and duties which, properly, attach to it.

It may, and it will, probably, be disputed that we are citizens. We may, and, probably, shall be denounced for this declaration, as making an inconsiderate, impertinent and absurd claim to citizenship; but a very little reflection will vindicate the position we have assumed, from so unfavorable a judgment. Justice is never inconsiderate; truth is never impertinent; right is never absurd. If the claim we set up be just, true and right, it will not be deemed improper or ridiculous in us to so declare it. Nor is it disrespectful to our fellow-citizens, who repudiate the aristocratic notions of the old world that we range ourselves with them in respect to all the rights and prerogatives belonging to American citizens. Indeed, we believe, when you have duly considered this subject, you will command us for the mildness and modesty with which we have taken our ground.

By birth, we are American citizens; by the principles of the Declaration of Independence, we are American citizens; within the meaning of the United States Constitution, we are American citizens; by the facts of history, and the admissions of American statesmen, we are American citizens; by the hardships and trials endured; by the courage and fidelity displayed by our ancestors in defending the liberties and in achieving the independence of our land, we are American citizens. In proof of the justice of this primary claim, we might cite numerous authorities, facts and testimonies—a few only must suffice.

In the Convention of New York, held for amending the Constitution of that State, in the year 1821, an interesting discussion took place, upon a proposition to prefix the word "white" to male citizens. Nathan Sandford, then late Chancellor of the State, said:

"Here there is but one estate—the people—and to me the only qualification seems to be their virtue and morality. If they may be safely trusted to vote for one class of rulers, why not for all? The principle of the scheme is, that those who bear the burdens of the State, shall choose those that rule it."

Dr. Robert Clark, in the same debate, said:

"I am unwilling to retain the word 'white,' because it is repugnant to all the principles and notions of liberty, to which we have heretofore professed to adhere, and to our 'Declaration of Independence,' which is a concise and just expose of those principles." He said "it had been appropriately observed by the Hon. gentleman from Westchester, (Mr. Jay,) that by retaining this word, you violate the Constitution of the United States."