ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

The State Convention of Colored Citizens assembled in Albany, August 18th, 19th, and 20th, to consider their political condition, in behalf of their people in this state, would respectfully address you on a subject to them of the most vital import. They would call your earnest and unprejudiced attention to the unjust and withering policy that in 1821 led to the endorsing of an anti-republican enactment, (Art. II. Sec. 1, State Constitution,) by which a portion of the citizens of this State were restricted in the exercise of a natural right, and refused an equal participation in its political arrangements. And they would also solemnly desire you to look around, and witness the multiplied evils that have for years weighed, and do now weigh heavily upon them, from not being allowed to use, on liberal and worthy terms, the all-important privilege of the elective franchise.

The patriotic framers of our State Constitution, in view of the then recent unwarrantableness of British jurisdiction, and pondering on the self-evident truths that had been made the solemn charter of their country’s liberties, did, in 1777, (by suffrage and free choice appointed,) assemble in deliberative convention, and adopt such “acts and declarations as were calculated most efficiently to secure the rights and liberties of the good people of this State—most conducive to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and of America in general.”

Basing themselves upon the avowed principle of the Democratic Colonies, that taxation and representation should go together, and that governments receive their just power from the consent of the governed—they established in the Constitution, as a foundation guard to the plainest rights of the people, such provisions as were best designed to keep inviolate their undeniable prerogative to select their rulers—this being the first article of belief in their republican faith.

In so doing, they did not think it consistent with the principles they professed, to divide freemen; those who had shared with them the dangers of war; who had ever been willing to aid them in achieving their independence; we say, they did not divide these,