and independence so brightly burning. Why is it the charmed land that
cradled renowned Luther and moulded the transcendant genius of Schiller. When did these people prove recreant? For their love and struggles for
liberty have illumined all Europe and the world, from the dread conflicts of
past ages to the memorable revolution of 1848. Do I hear that it is the
chivalric son of gigantic France, whose own great Lafayette dedicated life
and fortune to the maintenance of the rights of man? Have they degenerated
from the electric of the Marseillaise battle hymn of liberty, or will they
attempt to wipe from memory the aspirations of their sincere but dreamy
Lamartine? To all these people of different races, speaking different lan-
guages, and having diverse notions of the true policy of the American govern-
ment. I know that plausible argument will be produced by our antagonists
against the Negro's right to equality before the law. But every righteous
cause has always been assailed by subtle argument and almost convincing
logic. It is little over the lifetime of temperate men when England's most
astute statesmen endeavored to make America believe that George III had a
divine right to impose upon the infant colonies "taxation without representa-
tion;" but Patrick Henry, in the House of Burgesses of Virginia, and black
Crispus Attucks, in the streets of Boston, demurred, and the once humble
dependencies are now a mighty and expanding nation. I need not cite the man-
sacrifice of St. Bartholomew, where the poor but faithful Huguenot bit the dust
of persecution, the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, and the inhuman
cruleties of the monster Philip the Second—all of which have been justifi-
ced by as potent argument as that now produced in opposition to the Negro's
elevation. The Negro's right to vote is indisputable, because wherever his
mind has been educated he has given the same evidences of proficiency,
because he has measured steps with the highest perfection of man's courage,
by three times signally rescuing the country from the most impending dangers;
because the wise men who lived about the time the National Government was
framed, gave black men the right to vote in North Carolina, Virginia, Mary-
land, Delaware, and many other slave States, without detriment to the general
weal; and it is a historical fact, that there is no word, no line, nor arti-
cle, interpretative or constructive, embodied in the great instrument, that
invalidates the rights of freemen, white or black from its adoption, eighty
odd years ago, down to the infamous dogma uttered by Roger B. Taney (oh, that
execrable name, equal in infamy with the notorious Jeffreys), the Dred
Scott decision, enunciating that black men had no rights, because God so
willed the color of their skins,—has left an indelible stain upon American
jurisprudence, which in a free country should be the most important and use-
ful to all classes of men. Why, sir, the spotless fame of Storey and
Marshall will nearly become tarnished in veneration of future generations
through the very process of contact that seated such a man upon the same
bench or under the same roof where they dispersed the Godlike attributes of
justice. The word white, Mr. President, in the Constitution of California,
is anti-republican—at variance with the good sense and magnanimity of her
people, repugnant to many of her sister States, inconsistent with the present
age, and unwise when considered in connection with the intercourse soon to be
established with the copper-colored nations of China and Japan. We, as black
men, concede the fact that a few years since, when our interest was mingled
with slavery and degradation, and when the interest of this flourishing State
was under the dominion of such satellites as W. M. Colin and P. T. Herbert
and J. B. Waller, that the black race had nothing to look for but cold in-
difference and contemptible hatred; but now that the country is reeling upon
the brink of ruin, with a yawning abyss of destruction awaiting to receive its
crumbling wreck, we ask, calmly but firmly, shall we not be allowed once more
to prop its mighty superstructure, so that it may stand the ravages of time?
Remember, men in power, the vast responsibilities resting upon your judge-
ment. Other nations have passed through somewhat similar ordeals like yours
before they became strong and consolidated; but none like yours have ever
been seen trying to devise escapes from the strongest and most reliable
element of their support. If you are inspired by that patriotism that sinks
all consideration of prejudice, to the greatness and glory of America's future, then all will be well. But if expediency and narrow contracted views
govern your councils, and the unmistakable purpose of Divine authority be dis-

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