REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF
COLORED PERSONS ENGAGING IN COMMERCIAL
PURSUITS.

The subject which has been referred to your committee is a practical one—one of importance; and we do not deem it essential to submit an extended report. Much of the time of this Convention has, and will be occupied with the consideration of other equally important matters. Our subject, being a practical business question, we hold that it will be in keeping with that practicability to be brief in our report.

The importance of our people's seeking and being found in every reputable avenue leading to wealth and respectability is so palpably manifest, that it would seem superfluous to stop and argue the point. Commerce has had a leading influence in developing intellect. Those countries which have availed themselves of its advantages, have exhibited increased regard for the arts and sciences, as well as social comforts. Commerce is the pioneer of civilization and intelligence. Commerce is expansion; it gives a field space for essential, refined morality. But for it, half of the states and kingdoms of the world would now be unknown—would have remained the subjects of barbarism and ignorance. Commerce sought, found and benefitted them. Behold the "world-seeking" Genoese embarking on board of his sturdy barge, buffeting with unknown waves into depths and space not before traversed—not known by mortal. The mind is lost in the majestic conception which fills his comprehensive brain—a new world before him—space unmeasured! Imagine the ravings of his mind—the probabilities which shot comet-like across his imagination, creating a glare and wonderment. What untold soarings swell the wide range of his hopes, among which is the extension of commerce. From the landing of Columbus, it may be said that the course of America has been progress. She is now considered great. The impetus which she has given to commerce is one of the leading sources of her greatness; and the intercourse, consequent upon the business relation of the world, is to be one of the leading influences which will blot out the unfortunate stigma which now dims her progress and fair name. Let us swell the agency. Commerce leads to respectability. It is because we have not been found in this and similar avenues leading and directing, that we have been dependent and so little respected; and is in fact the reason why we are now the proscribed class of the community. And may not your committee add, that much of the increased respect entertained for us has been brought about by the fact, that we are awakening, especially throughout the less densely settled portions of the country, to active business relations; that we are beginning to become producers as well as consumers. The branch of commerce is almost entirely neglected, while it should receive a proportionate consideration. This avenue is open to us if we will master the perseverance and devotion necessary.—Through commerce, acquaintances and alliances are formed, and power secured. We must emerge from menial positions to the pursuit of commercial and other elevating branches of trade.