We are aware that deference to the opinions and institutions of the States tolerating slavery, to whom we are bound by the federal compact, may induce some to oppose this our application for equal rights. But those States, of all others, are the most tenacious of their rights as sovereign States, and reprobate all attempts to influence their domestic policy by the action of public opinion in other States. We pray you, therefore to do us justice; and, in doing right, imitate the independence they display in doing wrong. Our rights are as high and precious as theirs; and they can have no right to complain of any act of the people of Ohio, improving the condition of any class of her citizens.

We do not ask you to countenance any change destructive to your form of government. The principles we ask you to endorse are recognized by the wise and good of our own and other lands. It will be but the legitimate result of a proper appreciation of the Declaration of Independence and our Bill of Rights. Already five States of the Union have admitted colored men to vote; and we have yet to hear that the action has been followed by any other than beneficial results.

The arguments we have advanced are equally applicable to the statutory enactments which inflict such grievous disabilities upon us as a people.

The inestimable privilege and protection of a trial by a jury of our peers, we are deprived of, and to our great damage. Every legal gentleman in your body must be aware of the facility with which convictions are obtained against colored men.

Admission to your infirmaries and other benevolent institutions, is demanded by the spirit of the age. It is a shame to your civilization and humanity that decrepit age, the helplessly maimed, drivelling idiots and raving maniacs, are turned into the streets to die, as has been done in the metropolis of your State. In your public schools, too, needless and injurious distinctions are made. The duty of the State is the same to all her children. None are so insignificant as to be forgotten; none so important as to be preferred before others. The interests of the State demand that all should be educated alike.

In conclusion, we will call your attention to the duties incumbent on you as legislators—to pass such laws as will increase the happiness, prosperity and security of the people of the State; to remove all just causes of dissatisfaction.

Many may indulge the hope that the colored population is destined to pass away from your midst, and so refuse our prayer. But the hope is a delusion. We are a part of the American people, and we and our posterity will forever be a constituent part of your population. If we are deprived of education, of equal political privileges, still subjected to the same depressing influences under which we now suffer, the natural consequences will follow; and the State, for her planting injustice, will reap her harvest of sorrow and crime. She will contain within her limits a discontented population—dissatisfied, estranged—ready to welcome any revolution or invasion as a relief, for they can lose nothing and gain much. A contrary course of policy will enable us to keep step with our white fellow citizens in the march of improvement, disaffection will cease, and our noble State stand securely defended by the loving hearts of all her sons.

In behalf of the State Convention of colored men—

Charles Langston,
Charles A. Yancy;
D. Jenkins,
John Williams,
Solomon Grimes,
Anderson Flinn,
John M. Langston,
John T. Gaines,
L. D. Taylor,

Committee.

Peter H. Clark, Cha'n.

The memorial was received and read, and referred to a select committee consisting of the following gentlemen: Messrs. Canfield, Brown, and Taylor of Geauga.