their fellow-citizens, into castes, and in the face of justice, confer privileges on one class that were refused to another. Every free-
man, according to Art. VII. of this firstly-adopted instrument, who paid taxes, and hired a tenement worth forty shillings a year, was
entitled to exercise the common right of voting.

In 1821, in opposition to the intellect, the philanthropy, and con-
sistent republicanism of many noble men, who dignifiedly stood up
and contended against the unprovoked intolerance that urged forward
the measure, an act was passed, which, while it protected liberally
others in the exercise of the franchise, made it incumbent upon every
colored citizen to possess $250 freehold estate, in order to use the
before common privilege. This requirement, as we have before de-
clared, resulted most disadvantageously to us.

We now find ourselves existing in the chief division of the govern-
ment, with no marks of criminality attached to our names, as a class;
no spots of immorality staining our characters; no charges of disloy-
alty dishonoring our birthright; yet prevented (by an invidious com-
plexional proscription) from being, participants in those free-born
rights and sympathies that are bountifully guaranteed not only to
common humanity of this State, but also to foreigners, of whatever
clime or language. We find ourselves the subjects, and not the ob-
jects of legislation, because we are prevented from giving an asent-
ing or opposing voice in the periodic appointments of those who rule
us, and are made passive instruments of all laws, just or unjust, that
may be enacted, to which we are bound to subscribe, even while we
have no instrumentality either in their formation or adoption.

We find ourselves crippled and crushed in soul and ability, because
with all the longing that our spirits may possess to drink deeply of
those purer waters that mentally and morally refresh and invigorate,
we are thrust from the fountain with the cold treatment of aliens,
having even that self-protecting instrument taken from us, which is
the primary assurance and safeguard of citizenship.

We find ourselves shut out by the secondary influence of a monied
restriction, from a right which is the basis of a people's liberties and
prosperity; and by the withering influence of this, we are virtually
and manifestly shut out from the obtainment of those resources of pe-
cuniary and possessional emolument, which an unshackled citizen-
ship does always ensure, and which very resources are held up
before us as requirements for the use of a privilege, that, in accord-
ance with the spirit of the government, should be the freest and most
sacred.

This unequal participation in the privileges of the State, we con-
sider invidious and proscriptive. It proceeds from no principles of
justice; it is not predicable either from the position or character of
the people upon whom it so unequally operates. The causes which
were supposed to justify its enactment, or warrant its continuance,
have either no existence, or are equally applicable to a large body of
the respectable voters of the State.