trates thereof. The Constitution and laws of California make all men free, slavery or involuntary servitude is forbidden within her borders, hence all whose citizenship can be established are fully entitled to equal rights before the law. Slavery existed for three quarters of a century and was sanctioned by the Government; it was sustained by compromises, not by the Constitution, until the Government declared that slavery and Republican principles were incompatible with each other and could not co-exist, and must be separated. Then, to effect that object, and to establish a Republic based on freedom, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, and the Constitutional Amendments, abolishing slavery for ever from the land, were introduced. These positions and facts are known, and need no argument from us to establish them.

Second--We claim the privileges of citizenship by right of birth, as natives of the soil, against whom no attainder can exist. The former slavery of a portion of our race works no corruption of blood in them; they are now freemen, and consequently citizens, and as such are subject to all the liabilities and entitled to all the rights, privileges and immunities of citizens. Our citizenship being established, we maintain that there are other and still stronger reasons why the rights which are in equity guaranteed to all citizens should not be withheld from us. We are loyal to the Government, and yield willing obedience to the powers that be. No taint of treason lurks within the bosoms of our race; no charge of disloyalty has ever been brought against one having Negro blood in his veins. Our love of country is proverbial; our devotion to the land of our birth, its customs, habits and institutions, and our reverence for the laws which govern us, are unquestioned. We have given evidence of our fealty to the Union by the ardor with which we flew to arms at our country's call, and by the sacrifice of thousands of lives to preserve intact the indissolubility of the Union, and to vindicate Republican principles before the world, as exemplified in this Government. Notwithstanding the ignominy with which we have been treated by the American people, we have ever maintained a Christian spirit of forgiveness, and a willingness to sustain our reputation as peace-loving, law-abiding citizens, and a desire to perpetuate the name and glory of our common country.

Third--We assert our right to the immunities of citizenship by our intelligence and moral worth, our reputation for truthfulness, the religious and devotional characteristics of our race, and our ability to understand and appreciate the principles of the Government under which we live. We assert, and defy contradiction, and the criminal, sanitary and eleemosynary statistics of the country will sustain our assertion, that of the colored population throughout the United States, there are fewer criminals and paupers than among any other class of the community. We are a self-sustaining community, and are no burden on the body politic, while we contribute to the general expenses of Federal and State Governments.

Fourth--We claim the Elective Franchise on the universally conceded ground that representation and taxation should accompany each other. By representation is not meant the mere fact of being included in the apportionment, but by having a voice and vote in choosing representatives. We are taxed in common with all other citizens. We pay cheerfully not only the State and Municipal tax on property and for business purposes, but we also pay War tax, Poll tax, and all others which are assessed. We do not demur at that. We live under a wise, liberal and beneficent Government, which extends its parental protection, like the sunlight of heaven, on all who come within its sphere. We are willing to aid in sustaining the Government by means, as our brethren have by arms, we only claim those rights which should be awarded to all citizens of the Republic. We also claim additional educational facilities for our children. By the present and unjust and partial laws many of our children are growing up in ignorance, deprived of all advantages of education. We require, for the above reasons, full and equal school privileges. We are not content primary schools alone, we want the higher advantages of education to produce in the rising generation the highest development of mind. These advantages are open to others, and, in a free country, the blessings of education should be diffused on all, irrespective of rank or station.

FELLOW-CITIZENS--We present to you our views on this important subject, and we refer you to the proceedings of our Convention for a fuller explanation of our action on these important subjects.