In the broad and far-reaching track of slavery, across this country, we witness a grand desolation of civil and political rights. Every class in the American population can enter its complaint that it has been shorn of many rights and privileges, by reason of its existence. But none can utter that long, loud, lamentable complaint, making the ear to tingle and the heart to bleed, that can be uttered by the negro, the immediate victim of its barbarous torture. As a slave he has been denied himself, his wife, his children, and his earnings. And when emancipated his freedom has been, in some sense, a mockery, because he has been deprived of those civil and political rights and powers which render enfranchised manhood valuable, and its dignities a blessing.

THE NEGRO NOT CONTENT WITH MERE EMANCIPATION.

The negro is not content with given simple emancipation. That certainly is his due, at once and without condition; but he demands much more than that—he demands absolute legal equality. He claims the right to bring a suit, in any and all courts of the country—to be a witness of competent character therein—to make contracts, under seal or otherwise—to acquire, hold and transmit property—to be liable to none other than the common and usual punishment for

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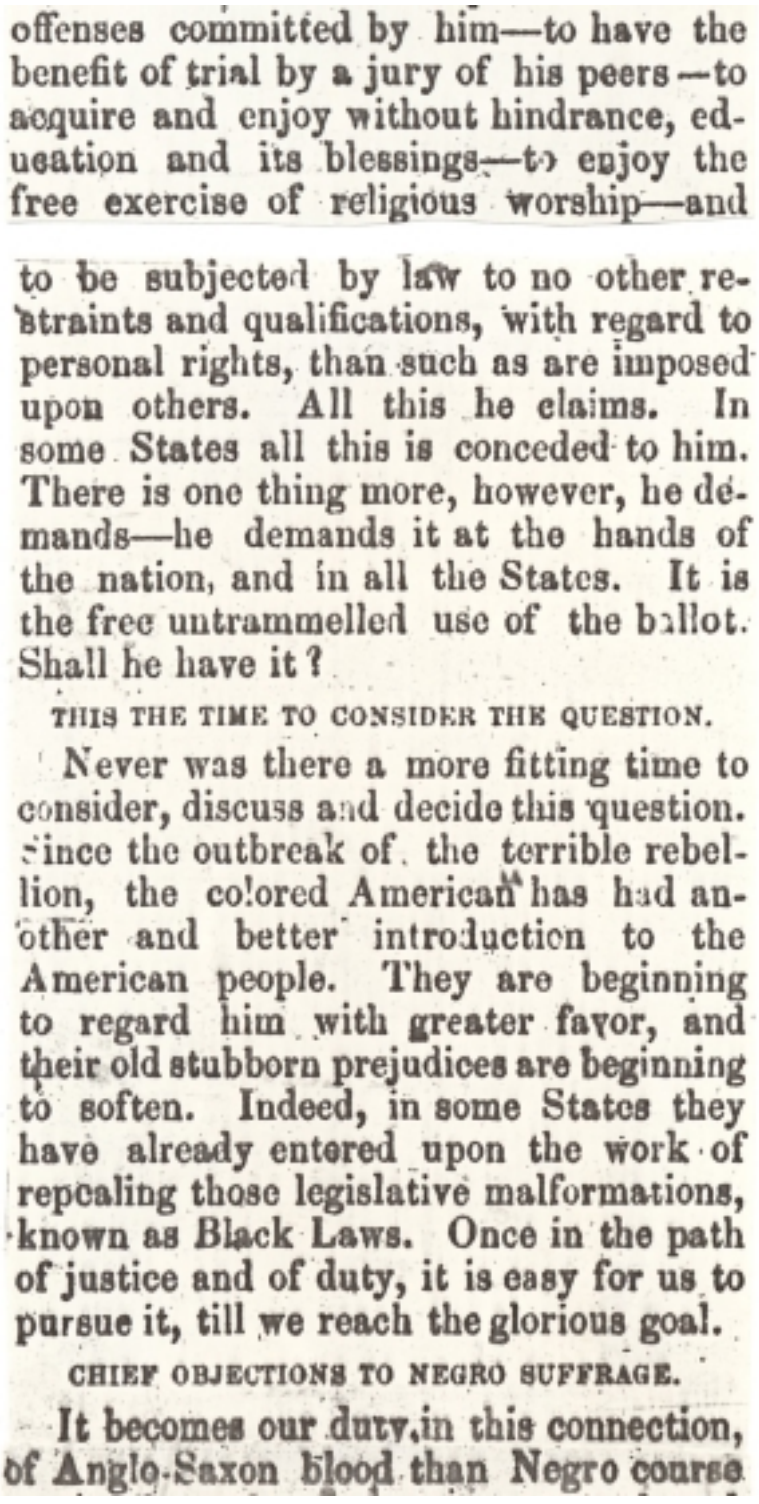
THIS THE TIME TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION.

Never was there a more fitting time to consider, discuss and decide this question. Since the outbreak of the terrible rebellion, the colored American has had another and better introduction to the American people. They are beginning to regard him with greater favor, and their old stubborn prejudices are beginning to soften. Indeed, in some States they have already entered upon the work of repealing those legislative malformations, known as Black Laws. Once in the path of justice and of duty, it is easy for us to pursue it, till we reach the glorious goal.

CHIEF OBJECTIONS TO NEGRO SUFFRAGE.

It becomes our duty in this connection, of Anglo-Saxon blood than Negro course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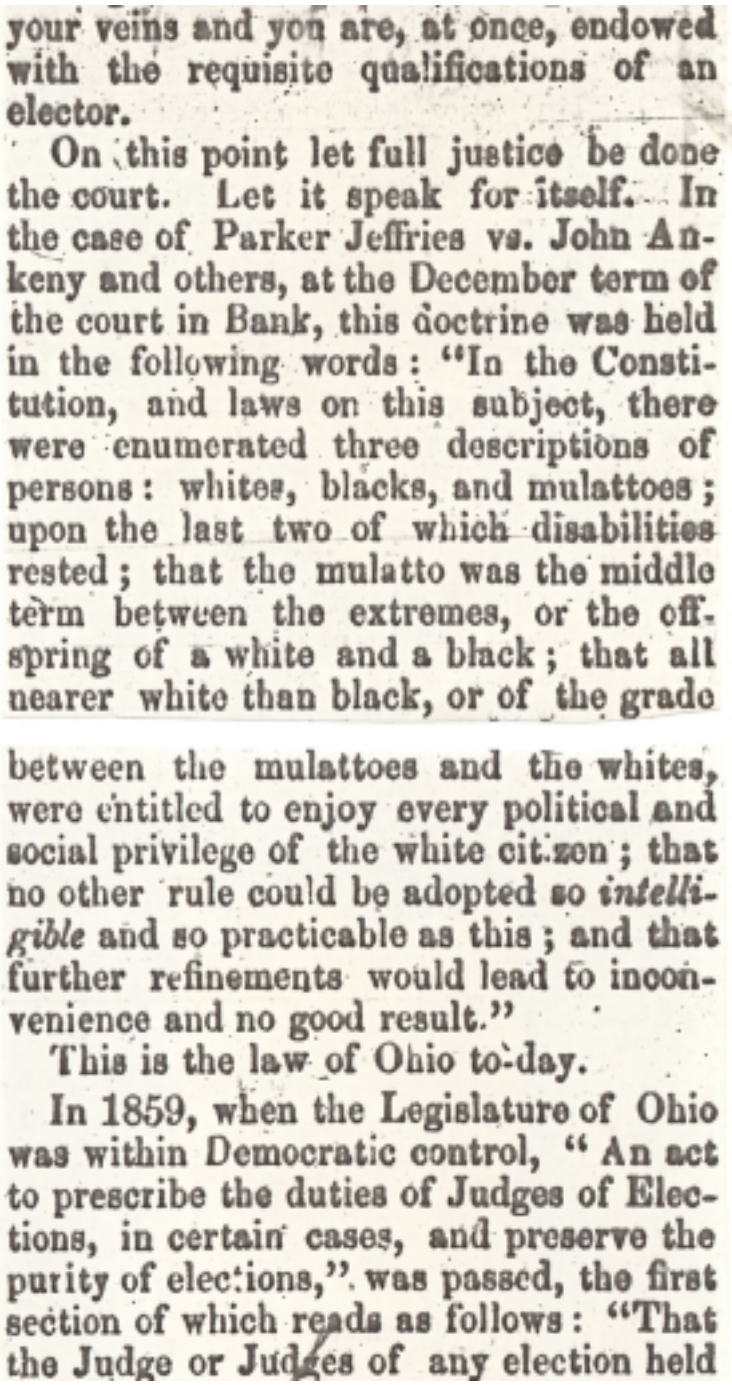
On this point let full justice be done the court. Let it speak for itself. In the case of Parker Jeffries vs. John Ankeny and others, at the December term of the court in Bank, this doctrine was held in the following words: "In the Constitution, and laws on this subject, three were enumerated three descriptions of persons: whites, blacks, and mulattoes; upon the last two of which disabilities rested; that the mulatto was the middle term between the extremes, or the offspring of a white and a black; that all nearer white than black, or of the grade between the mulattoes and the whites, were entitled to enjoy every political and social privilege of the white citizen; that no other rule could be adopted so *intelligible* and so practicable as this; and that further refinements would lead to inconvenience and no good result."

This is the law of Ohio to-day.

In 1859, when the Legislature of Ohio was within Democratic control, "An act to prescribe the duties of Judges of Elections, in certain cases, and preserve the purity of elections," was passed, the first section of which reads as follows: "That the Judge or Judges of any election held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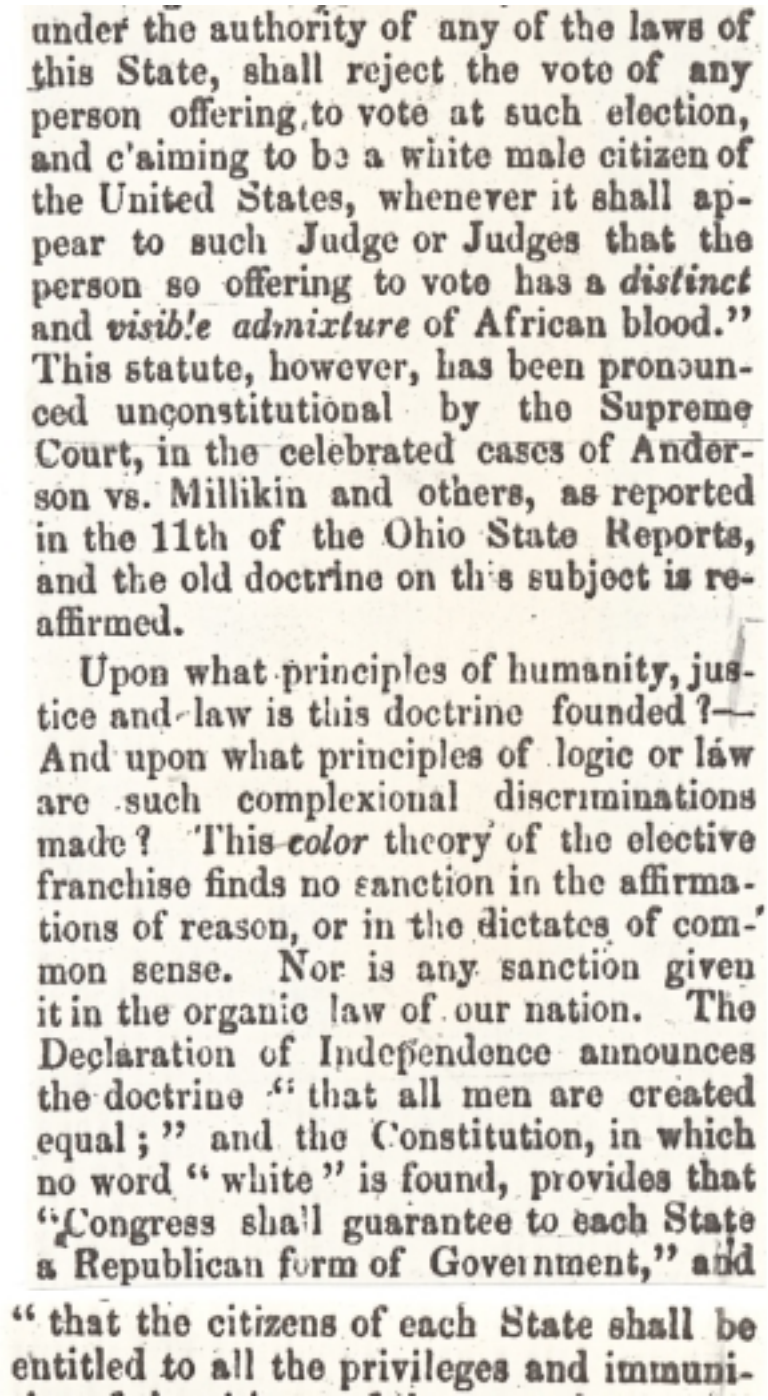
Upon what principles of humanity, justice and law is this doctrine founded?—And upon what principles of logic or law are such complexional discriminations made? This *color* theory of the elective franchise finds no sanction in the affirmations of reason, or in the dictates of common sense. Nor is any sanction given it in the organic law of our nation. The Declaration of Independence announces the doctrine "that all men are created equal;" and the Constitution, in which no word "white" is found, provides that "Congress shall guarantee to each State a Republican form of Government," and "that the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immuni-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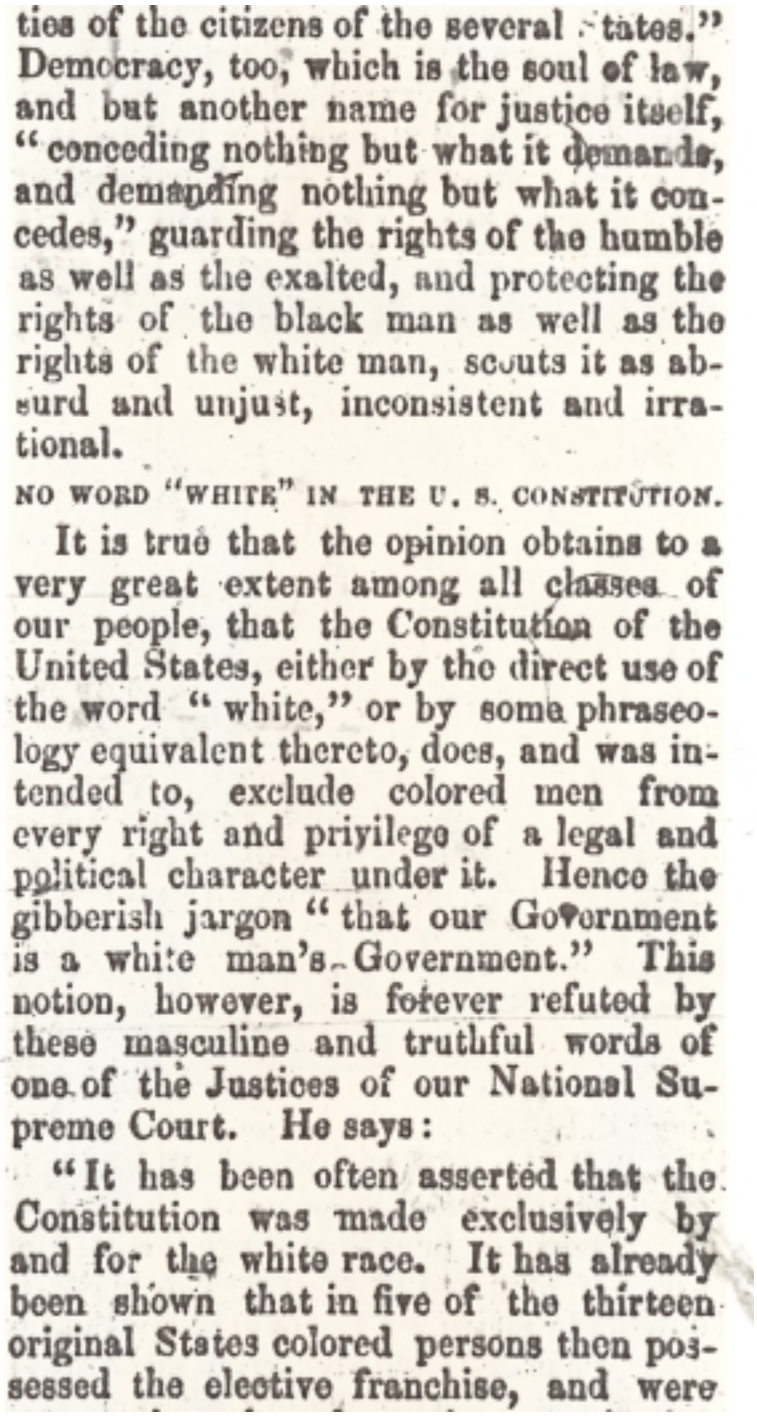
NO WORD "WHITE" IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.

It is true that the opinion obtains to a very great extent among all classes of our people, that the Constitution of the United States, either by the direct use of the word "white," or by some phraseology equivalent thereto, does, and was intended to, exclude colored men from every right and privilege of a legal and political character under it. Hence the gibberish jargon "that our Government is a white man's Government." This notion, however, is forever refuted by these masculine and truthful words of one of the Justices of our National Supreme Court. He says:

"It has been often asserted that the Constitution was made exclusively by and for the white race. It has already been shown that in five of the thirteen original States colored persons then possessed the elective franchise, and were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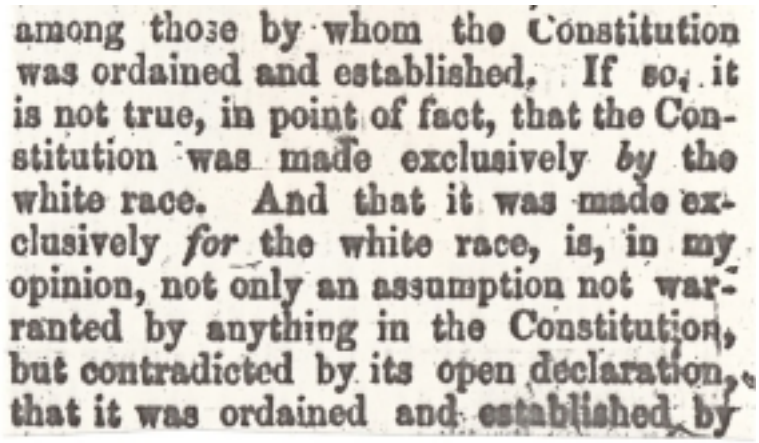
among those by whom the Constitution was ordained and established. If so, it is not true, in point of fact, that the Constitution was made exclusively *by* the white race. And that it was made exclusively *for* the white race, is, in my opinion, not only an assumption not warranted by anything in the Constituion, but contradicted by its open declaration, that it was ordained and established by the people of the United States, for themselves and their posterity. And as free colored persons were then citizens of at least five States, and so in every sense part of the people of the United States, they were among those for whom and whose posterity the Constitution was ordained and established."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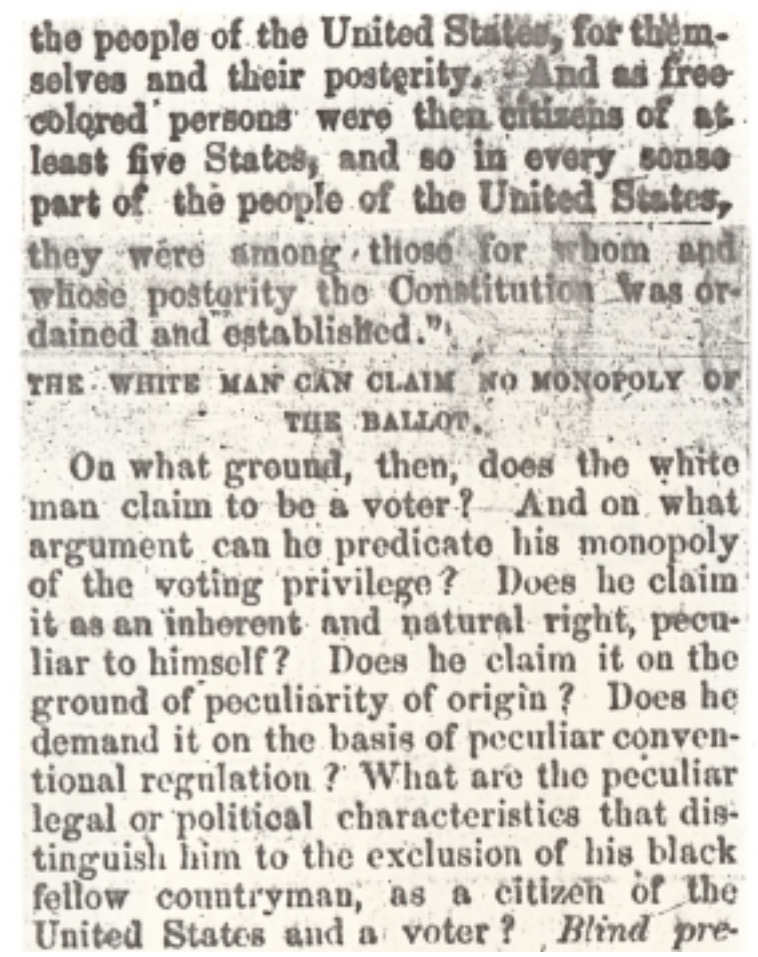
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THE WHITE MAN CAN CLAIM NO MONOPOLY OF THE BALLOT.

On what ground, then, does the white man claim to be a voter? And on what argument can he predicate his monopoly of the voting privilege? Does he claim it as an inherent and natural right, peculiar to himself? Does he claim it on the ground of peculiarity of origin? Does he demand it on the basis of peculiar conventional regulation? What are the peculiar legal or political characteristics that distinguish him to the exclusion of his black fellow countryman, as a citizen of the United States and a voter? *Blind pre-*

judice can make answer to these questions with great readiness. It would say, *he is white*. But what is the answer of *wisdom*, *logic* and law? They would say, the color of a man's skin is no criterion or measure of his rights.

THE OPINION OF THE SUPREME COURT ON CITIZENSHIP GREATLY NEEDED.

This fact will be fully recognized by our courts when they come to make that definition of citizenship, and the rights and powers of a citizen, which, while it excludes the elements of *white* and black but contains all the essential qualities that distinguish the citizen, will challenge criticism and defy refutation. It is to be hoped that the Supreme Court of the Nation will have occasion to give us this definition very soon. We certainly need it. It ought to be given in justice to the colored American, and that the whole people of the country may learn from some authoritative source who constitute the citizens of the land, and upon what their rights and powers depend.

THE OBJECTION SIMPLY PHYSICAL.

This objection to the black man's voting is wholly physical and external. He is *black* and therefore he shall not vote.

It is as if all the men who have black hair and black beards, being in the majority, and having the power, should decide that they alone are voters, and that no

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man having light hair and sandy beard shall vote. Or, as if all the men of large noses in the land, banding themselves together, should decide that they alone are voters, and that no man having a small nose shall vote. One might well ask, where is the justice of this procedure.—Men of light hair and sandy beards might resis, with propriety, the decision of the black hair and black beard gentry. And who wold say that the small nose men had no right to utter powerful anathemas against the men of large nasal proportions, who had committed this unnatural outrage. These supposed cases sufficiently illustrate and refute this objection.

NEGROES IGNORANT, THEREFORE SHALL NOT VOTE.

It is also urged by way of objection to our use of the ballot, "that we are an ignorant and degraded class, and would not use the elective franchise in an intelligent and manly manner if we had it."

This objection, like all others of similar character, is to be met with firmness and candor. It is not to be forgotten in this connection that we have served as slaves in this country for more than two hundred years, and that during these many years of our servitude, few, indeed, have been the rays of light that have streaked the darkness of our existence. Nor is it to be forgotten that the nominally free among

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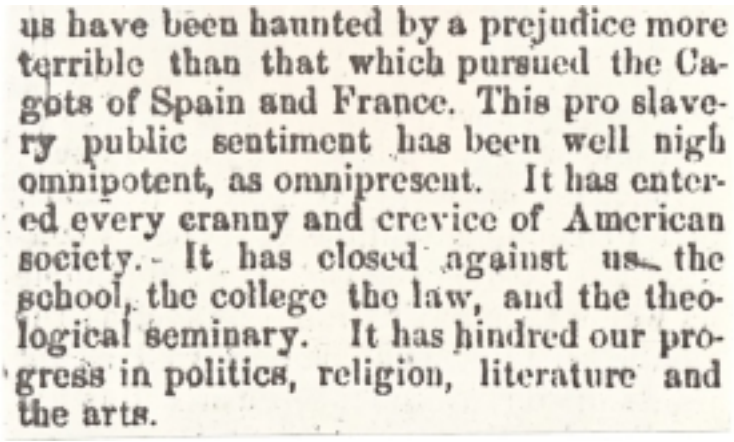
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THEY HAVE MADE COMMENDABLE PROGRESS.

Notwithstanding all this, we have made surprising advancement in all things that pertain to a well ordered and dignified life. Though uttered frequently, it may be in unclassic and inelegant English, we have always been able to give the reason for our political as well as our religious faith.

We have grown among authors and orators, doctors and lawyers; we have established newspapers and periodicals; we have furnished our pulpits with ministers, and our school rooms with teachers of our own complexion. We have held large State and National Conventions—conducting our business with accuracy and precision, according to the rules by which ordinary deliberative assemblies are governed

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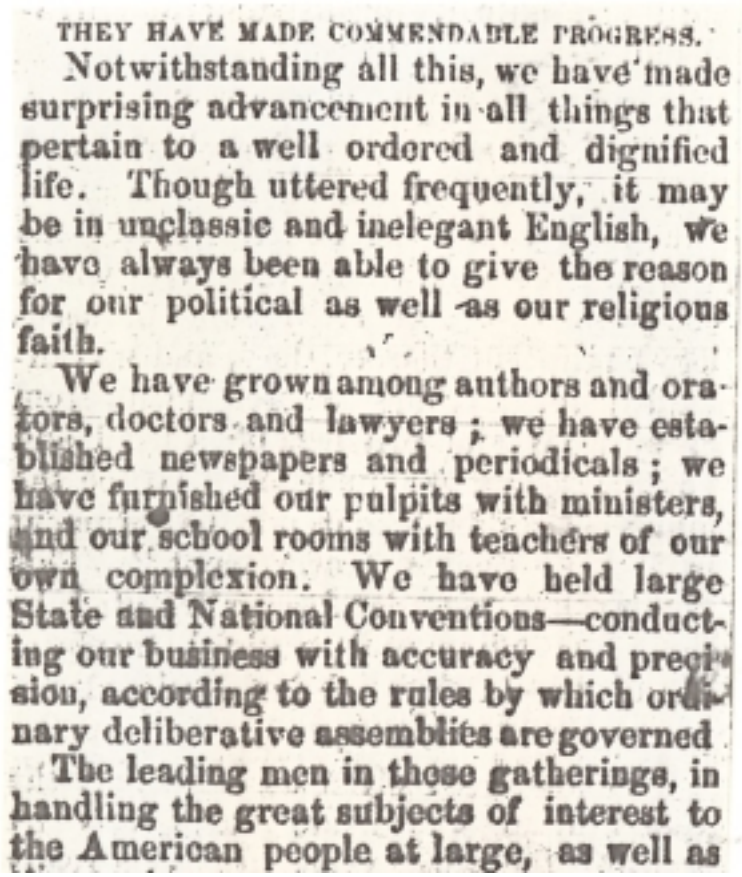
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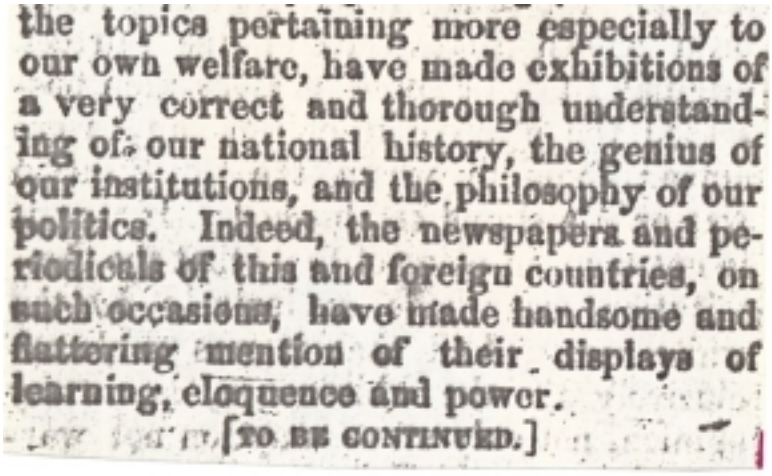
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