

"I could have hoped, gentlemen, that some other person had been called to act as President of this Convention; but inasmuch as it has pleased you to choose me to preside over your deliberations, and as I believe it to be the duty of every man to do whatever he can to benefit his people and to serve his country, with deference I yield to your request, and thank you for the honor you have conferred upon me.

"The object of this Convention is of course well known to all: for it was fully set forth in the call which invited us together. Our political rights have been wrested from us without any just cause. No one can say that we ever conspired to injure a single interest of our country while we enjoyed the elective franchise; no one can say that we ever cast a single vote to the detriment of the commonwealth. There is nothing improper, nothing unjust, in the steps which we are about to take. It is to be hoped that we have come fully determined to adopt some measures by which we shall obtain the privileges of citizens of the State of New York.

"It is necessary, gentlemen, that I should beg your assistance in order that a brotherly spirit may be cherished in all things that may be done. Let us aim to destroy every root of bitterness that may attempt to spring up among us. Let us come forward with warm hearts, and a firm and steady determination to act like men, for the benefit of our people. If we but put our trust in God, we shall be able, through His assistance, to accomplish all things. Our State and our country must be shown the shame and disgrace that now rest upon them.

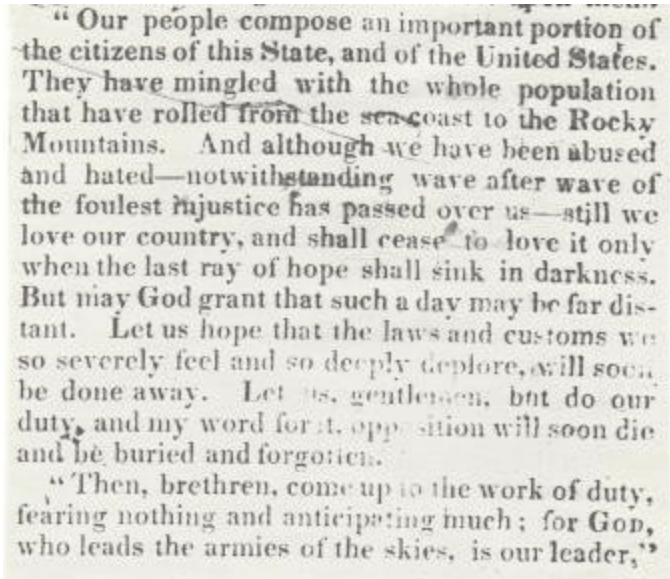
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“Our people compose an important portion of the citizens of this State, and of the United States. They have mingled with the whole population that have rolled from the sea coast to the Rocky Mountains. And although we have been abused and hated – notwithstanding wave after wave of the foulest injustice has passed over us – still we love our country, and shall cease to love it only when the last ray of hope shall sink in darkness. But may God grant that such a day may be far distant. Let us hope that the laws and customs we so severely feel and so deeply deplore, will soon be done away. Let us, gentlemen, but do our duty, and my word for it, opposition will soon die and be buried and forgotten.

“Then, brethren, come up to the work of duty, fearing nothing and anticipating much; for GOD, who leads the armies of the skies, is our leader.”



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