

GENTLEMEN of the Convention, w[e] have met again at the Capital of this State, the third in the Union in point of population—and not second to any in improvement.

Thirteen months and eight days have elapsed since we met in convention, and the hand of Providence has still protected us in the great cause of truth. Sirs, when we look back on past events, we see and feel that our cause is still on the advance.—Sirs, we should consider this period as one of the happiest we have ever witnessed in the history of our common country.

Fellow-countrymen, we are permitted to assemble together to consider our condition as citizens of our beloved country. Am I permitted to say beloved country; yes, it is our beloved country; and here we intend to do our duty as men that love justice and hate oppression. Here we intend to unfurl the banner of liberty—here we intend to make an impression that will last as long as time. We have met for our common good; and the constitution guarantees to us this privilege. The 8<sup>th</sup> art. and 19<sup>th</sup> sec. of that instrument, provides that the people have a right to assemble together in a peaceable manner &c.

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We have met—and here permit me to remark that we have been too long negligent in the great cause of human rights. Too long have we permitted our common enemy to trample on our rights—too long have we kept silent. Thank Heaven we have commenced; let this commencement be remembered (when we are in our silent graves) by our young and rising generation.

Gentleman, in conclusion, and in behalf of our colored citizens of Columbus, I bid you a happy welcome from the north, from the south, from the east and from the west, thrice welcome. I bid you as men who love union, despise disunion, hate oppression and love liberty.

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