

Prof. Geo. B. Vashon was called up and introduced by the President. The Professor said that he was not prepared to make a set speech and thought it best for the audience to excuse him, but as they insisted upon his saying something and as he thought no one could be present in such an assembly as this without feeling some degree of inspiration he would present such thoughts as naturally arose in his mind.

He said that we had come together in this Convention to present our claim for equal and impartial liberty, that principle of liberty which is instilled in every man at his birth, that spirit, which is common to every human breast, that freedom which is desired by all men, whether they be the fur-clad citizen of the polar regions or the swarthy children, blackened by the sun of the tropics. The sentiment, "that whatever interests mankind, as such interests me," was the sentiment uttered by a slave, and it makes an echo in the heart of every man to-day. It was that sentiment which brought the echo from Russia, England and all Europe.

The speaker said that the American people might become great and powerful,—they might be able to count the whole continent as theirs,—and see no inch of soil not dotted by villages or other marks of civilized life,—their scholars may look in their reach to the limit of human knowledge and become almost creative in their grasp of intellect,—but if their government be not founded and administered in justice and equity, if the people did not enjoy impartial liberty and equality before the law, there was nothing secure or permanent in this country.

He thought, if it were necessary, that we would come together every year until our complete enfranchisement were secured. If we should die while making the effort, let us remember the words of Byron,¹¹

They never fail who die in a just cause.

But he believed we were nearing the good time when all men throughout the broad expanse of this country would enjoy equal legal and political privileges and immunities.

The address was eloquently delivered and listened to with the utmost attention by the vast audience, except when interrupted by applause.

