

Dr. Randolph opened by saying that history constantly repeated itself; that an All-Wise Providence dictated the paths which men and nations must pursue; and, whenever they willfully forsook those paths, they were certain to be brought back, sooner or later, by the resistless right hand of the Eternal God. The overruling Father brought out the sons of Abraham from Egyptian bondage three thousand years ago, and to-day he leads us — the negro race — with a strong arm from out of the swamps of slavery. He led the Israelites through the Red Sea, over sandy wastes, into the land of promise and plenty,—glorious Canaan; and so now he is leading us, and with us this nation, through the Red Sea of human blood, towards the glorious highlands of Justice and Freedom. [Applause.] IN the olden time, God passed in wrath over Egypt's hoary strand, and smote the first-born of the oppressor with quick and sudden death; and lo! where is the house in this land, whether of the black man or the white, whose lintels and door-posts bear not the red sign? which have not been smitten with the splash of human gore?

And yet his paths are plain. Let the nations take warning! God never sleeps! Wherefore let us all take heart. He fights our battles; and, where he fights, he wins. Wagner, Hudson, Petersburg, and all the other battles of this war, have not been fought in vain; for the dead heroes of those and other bloody fields are the seeds of mighty harvests of human goodness and greatness, yet to be reaped by the nations and the world, and by Afric's sable descendents on the soil of this, our native land. Be of good cheer! Behold the starry flag above our heads! What is it? It is the pledge of Heaven, that we are coming up from the long dark night of sorrow towards the morning's dawn: it is the rainbow of eternal hope, set in our heaven, telling us that we shall never

Dr. Randolph opened by saying that history constantly repeated itself; that an All-Wise Providence dictated the paths which men and nations must pursue; and, whenever they willfully forsook those paths, they were certain to be brought back, sooner or later, by the resistless right hand of the Eternal God. The overruling Father brought out the sons of Abraham from Egyptian bondage three thousand years ago, and to-day he leads us — the negro race — with a strong arm from out of the swamps of slavery. He led the Israelites

through the Red Sea, over sandy wastes, into the land of promise and plenty,—glorious Canaan; and so now he is leading us, and with us this nation, through the Red Sea of human blood, towards the glorious highlands of Justice and Freedom. [Applause.] In the olden time, God passed in wrath over Egypt's hoary strand, and smote the first-born of the oppressor with quick and sudden death; and lo! where is the house in this land, whether of the black man or the white, whose lintels and door-posts bear not the red sign? which have not been smitten with the splash of human gore?

And yet his paths are plain. Let the nations take warning! God never sleeps! Wherefore let us all take heart. He fights our battles; and, where he fights, he wins. Wagner, Hudson, Petersburg, and all the other battles of this war, have not been fought in vain; for the dead heroes of those and other bloody fields are the seeds of mighty harvests of human goodness and greatness, yet to be reaped by the nations and the world, and by Afric's sable descendents on the soil of this, our native land. Be of good cheer! Behold the starry flag above our heads! What is it? It is the pledge of Heaven, that we are coming up from the long dark night of sorrow towards the morning's dawn: it is the rainbow of eternal hope, set in our heaven, telling us that we shall never

again be drowned in our own salt tears, forced up from our very souls' great depths by the worshippers of Moloch,—bloody-handed Mammon: it is a guaranty, by and from the God of heaven, that we, the mourners, may and shall be happy yet. My very soul leaps onward a full century; and its vision falls on fertile fields, with no slave-driver there, no hearts crushed by fierce oppression, no more heads bowed down. Ay! my soul listens already to the glad prelude of a song of triumph welling up from myriad of hearts, and swelling into a paean that fills the vast concave of heaven itself with the deep-toned melodies of an universal jubilee. [Great applause.]

The body I now address is to be not only an historical one; but if we do our duty, as we will, the most important in its results and effects, not only upon us here banded together in the firm concord of brotherhood, but to the nations of the world and the ages yet to come. (Cheers.) Here we are met, not to hear each other talk, not to mourn over the terrible shadows of the past; but we are here to prove our right to manhood and justice, and to maintain these rights, not be force of mere appeal, not by loud threats, not by battle-axe and sabre, but by the divine right of brains, of will, of true patriotism, of manhood, of womanhood, of all that is great and noble and worth striving for in human character. We are here to ring the bells at the door of the world; proclaiming to the nations, to the white man in his palace, the slave in his hut, kings on their thrones, and to the whole broad universe, that WE ARE COMING UP! (Applause.) Yes: we are, at last; and going up to *stay*. He loveth and chasteneth: but he also saves; but saves those first who help themselves. Sheer folly to expect to be raised to a coveted position without self-endeavor. There are two great principles in operation in this

again be drowned in our own salt tears, forced up from our very souls' great depths by the worshippers of Moloch,—bloody-handed Mammon: it is a guaranty, by and from the God of heaven, that we, the mourners, may and shall be happy yet. My very soul leaps onward a full century; and its vision falls on fertile fields, with no slave-driver there, no hearts crushed by fierce oppression, no more heads bowed down. Ay! my soul listens already to the glad prelude of a song of triumph welling up from myriad hearts, and swelling into a paean that fills the vast concave of heaven itself with the deep-toned melodies of an universal jubilee. [Great applause.]

The body I now address is to be not only an historical one; but if we do our duty, as we will, the most important in its results and effects, not only upon us here banded together in the firm concord of brotherhood, but to the nations of the

world and the ages yet to come. [Cheers.] Here we are met, not to hear each other talk, not to mourn over the terrible shadows of the past; but we are here to prove our right to manhood and justice, and to maintain these rights, not by force of mere appeal, not by loud threats, not by battle-axe and sabre, but by the divine right of brains, of will, of true patriotism, of manhood, of womanhood, of all that is great and noble and worth striving for in human character. We are here to ring the bells at the door of the world; proclaiming to the nations, to the white man in his palace, the slave in his hut, kings on their thrones, and to the whole broad universe, that WE ARE COMING UP! [Applause.] Yes: we are, at last; and going up to *stay*. He loveth and chasteneth: but he also saves; but saves those first who help themselves. Sheer folly to expect to be raised to a coveted position without self-endeavor. There are two great principles in operation in this

October 4-7, 1864

Randolph, P. B.

*Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored*

*Men Held in the City of Syracuse, N.Y. ...*

*Presscopy – Boston Athenaeum – Pamphlet Collection*

world. One is that of progression; the other, that of development: one is the body of success; the other is its soul: the one makes us scholars merely; and the other makes us MEN,—and *that*, and that only, is the pearl for which we are seeking. Progress means acquisition of knowledge; and it is very good, if well applied: and yet a man may have a hundred libraries by heart; he may be master of a hundred sciences; a walking encyclopaedia,—and yet be a worthless drone in the world. It is not the thought-gatherer who makes his mark in the world; but it is the thought-producer who is the man of mark and value. Development means persistent culture of our latent powers; and we need it. Slavery and ignorance, liberty and light! It is the mind, not the dollars, that makes the man. Here the orator turned toward the blood-stained flag of the Louisiana regiment, apostrophized it, spoke of Cailloux and Ingraham who fought and bled upon the field where it waved, and with all his power besought his hearers never to disgrace it by word, act, or thought. (Applause.)

world. One is that of progression; the other, that of development: one is the body of success; the other is its soul: the one makes us scholars merely; and the other makes us MEN,—and *that*, and that only, is the pearl for which we are seeking. Progress means acquisition of knowledge; and it is very good, if well applied: and yet a man may have a hundred libraries by heart; he may be master of a hundred sciences; a walking encyclopaedia,—and yet be a worthless drone in the world. It is not the thought-gatherer who makes his mark in the world; but it is the thought-producer who is the man of mark and value. Development means persistent culture of our latent powers; and we need it. Slavery and ignorance, liberty and light! It is the mind, not the dollars, that makes the man. Here the orator turned toward the blood-stained flag of the Louisiana regiment, apostrophized it, spoke of Cailloux and Ingraham who fought and bled upon the field where it waved, and with all his power besought his hearers never to disgrace it by word, act, or thought. [Applause.]