Raleigh on October 12th, 1867.
Just Prior to the Convention Called by Congress, in the Effort to Give its Villafny the Appearance of Approval by the People—the Engraschissment of the Negro the Chief Matter at Issue—Invited to Address a Meeting at Raleigh, Called by the People of the State to Consider the Best Course to Pursue, Governor Graham, Being Unable to Attend, Gives His Countrymen the Benefit of His Sage Wisdom.

Under the provisions of the Andy

Under the provisions of the Andy Johnson plan of reconstruction (which was said to have had the endorsement of President Lincoln) North Carolina reorganized its State government with the provisions as to suffrage unaltered

from date of 1861. In 1867 Congress overturned the measure, paid no attention to amnesty granted by President Johnson, enacted new laws as to pardons, disfranchised nearly all officers of the State or naional governments prior to 1861, who had sympathized with the Confederacy, enfranchised the negroes, and then as if to give their villainy the appearance of approval by the people, ovided for an election by the new voters for a convention to frame a constitution.

There was no convention called by he Conservative or Democratic party in the State to agree upon action in the campaign. Apart from private correspondence there was little conference. Each county acted for itself and the nominee made his own platform. The election was to be held in November. Many good men thought opposition to Congress useless. Politiclans thought the proper course was to organize to control the negro vote. Many county conventions were comof whites and negroes.

Some parties called a meeting to be held in Raleigh on October 12, to consider as to the best course to pursue. Prominent persons were invited to address the assemblage.

Not being able to attend, Gov. Graham sent a letter. Upon its publication political matters assumed a definite shape and the "color line" was adopted as fundamental plank in his platform by almost every candidate of the whate people.. This was not solely because Gov. Graham had advised it, but because the course advised was that the white people had individually almost unanimously thought was the proper one and gladly halled the opportunity to support it with their votes. Perhaps on more occasions than any other political leader of the State, he formed his opinion upon pending questions of importance when expressed the sentiment of a large majority of the people. Perhaps something else might have occurred to occasion the same result—but the history of the times prove that the publication of this letter was the foundation of the adoption of the principle, "White men must rule North Carolina"

As those who passed through the times of reconstruction read this letter to-defy-much of it seems to have had the truth of prophecy:

Hillsboro, Oct. 10, 1867. Gentlemen: I shall be unable, by eason of engagements of business, to through such means. be present at the meeting of the conservative people of Wake on the 18th address topics involved. approaching election

ceived from you a few days since. I regret this, both because of the pleasure I should have derived from a free communication with so intelligent an assemblage of ditisons of the State on the duties of the present time, and because the topics in question are too numerous and suggestive to be treated satisfactorily in a letter, without unbecoming tediousness. without unbecoming tediousness.

I was pleased in observing that opinion of some, with whom I have conversed it was supposed there had been too great delay among conservative citizens in communication to-gether, in the face of very active exertions to form a party adverse to them and to the best interests of the State, in which it was sought to com-bine all the colored voters by appeals to prejudice, passion and hopes of unlawful gain. I have not been much disturbed by apprehensions of this kind. The white population of North Carolina, by the census of 1860, outnumbers the black in proportion of two to one, or, thereabouts, and, after deducting all who are distranchised to the latter somewhat in that proportion. The white population, which has been heretofore the depository of the faithful to the constitution of the Inited States as it ever was or as that of any other State of the Union comprehension of their rights and duties as electors and as citizens and, even without much consultation or

promote their safety and happiness. To the military authority, which has been established over them, they yield a ready obedience. Even where it may supercede their ancient and cherished laws and usages, they bow before it and make no issue. But, by the law when an issue is presented to them, to be solved through an election, it is naturally to be understood, as the term imports, that they are to have their choice, to vote either upon measures or candidates as each indivi dual voter according to his views of the public interest or his sense of duty may prefer.

The bill of rights of the State, from 1776 till now, proclaims that "elec-tions ought to be free." It is a noteworthy fact that in France, where, so far as elections are allowed, universal manhood suffrage prevails, under the first Bonaparte in 1804, and under the third in 1852, a republican form of monarchal or despotic one, through unanimity. These results were, of course, attributed only to the influence of duress and fear. But in England and America such influences are not allowed to operate, and like bribery or fraud would render an election void. According to our theory, if the elector at the polls shall express not his own sentiments, but those of some other person or authority, the election is but itself an idle form An election with us, therefore, is an occasion for serious thought, inquiry, unreserved consultation and free discussion; and our suffrages are accustomed to be given, according to the convictions of our minds, effected

In the election now before us, the \* 18th electors are to vote "For a Convention or Against a Convention," and, at the in same time for delegates to represent in their counties in convention, provid-

21 years old and upwards, of whatever race, color or previous condition, who have been resident of the State one year to the day of any election, ex-cept such as may be distranchised for participation in the rebeilion, or for felony at common law." I make this quotation with care, for the pur-pose of collating it in my subsequent remarks, with the qualifications of voters in some of the leading States now represented in Congress, whose members have shown extraordinary

zeal in prescribing its terms to us. Never, heretofore, in America has the election franchise been extended to new classes of voters, except through the agency of conventions chosen by those who have enjoyed it exclusively before. Congress by acts under the military acts of Congress, under consideration, has extended it the majority of the fermer will stand to all males of the black race 21 years of age and upwards, with no other qualifications than those above recited; but only so far, however, as repolitical power of the State, is as gards the present election. And, according to my recollections, it was stated in the debate on these acts by Mr. Fessenden, of Maine, certainly one is now, but they have an intelligent of the ablest and most experienced members of the Senate, that no permanent regulation of this measure could be constitutionally established concert, will, in my opinion, cast a in a State without the sanction of majority of votes only in favor of such | its people; and I think the correctness measures and candidates as will best of the remark was acquiesced in by the subsequent action of Congress. Congress then, has provided that in the present election that the black race, with no other qualifications than already stated, shall vote. That was their act. If it shall be so provided that they shall vote in all future time, the act will be ours. It is not sought to be disguised, that Congress desires that we shall so provide, and it is strongly intimated that representation in Congress will not be allowed us until it is done; but it is still left to the people of the State as represented in convention to be deliberated upon right to vote for five years after setand decided, and no more momentous question was ever presented for the determination of a free people.

ganization, a constitution of government for the regulation of the internal affairs of a State can be forced upon a government was converted into a people against the wishes of a majority of qualified voters, by distraint the ceremony of an election, and by or duress? A constitution or governthe vote of the people approaching ment, says Macauley, which will fit one State or people will not fit another; any more than a coat by the measure of Appono Belvidere may be expected to fit all the human race. And the very idea of republican government pre-supposes, that the peothey shall live, as well as the enactment from time to time by their Legwell address, when he declares "that the basis of our litical system is the right of the ple to make and

The inquiry cannot be excluded

from our consideration, if we could,

whether, under the constitution of the

United States or any republican or-

constitution according to their own conceptions of the public good, is the measure proposed expedient? Will it promote the general welfare to confer the right to vote in all popular elec-tions on the negro race, with no other qualification than those in contem-plation? Is it not perfectly manifest that it will not? The representative republics of this county, with their written constitutions, their divisions of power into legislative, executive or judicial departments, and their introduction to people to participate in and decide upon the rights and the inter-ests of society, as voters and jurors, are looked for in vain in other countries of the world, and are founded upon a certain standard of virtue and intelligence, in the constituent body of electors, without which they cannot be maintained. Who among us be-lieves, that the great mass of the blacks recently in a state of slavery come up to the standard of virtue and intelligence, and are fit to be made self-reliant electors? In such condition as to knowledge and morality, the extension of the right of suffrage to tributing political power, among a States of the North have refused, and greater number of citizens, will in still do refuse, to establish for themfact concentrate in fewer hands; and designing individuals will but enlarge their own power by using them to vote, not their opinions, but those of the men who control them. Already we have learned they have been extensively organized into secret societies and leagues with a view to be votd en masse, and under the influences of prejudices carefully instilled into them, in opposition to whites, who were former masters or may now be owners of property. To elect such a class to be permanent voters, as is now proposed to us, will be to make a revolution tending to anarchy, and to hazard, in my belief, the long continuance of any stable government Foreigners are barred out from the tlement here, by our naturalization laws; in order that they may become acquainted with our institutions and capable of taking part in their administration, and must prove during that time they have behaved as persons of good moral character and are well disposed to good order and happiness of the country. The freedmen as a class are less informed than foreigners and less capable from want of ed-

ucation and early instruction. But, it may be said, there is little disagreement among ourselves on this question, but Congress has required compliance, the most direful consequences may be expected. This is an argument, which I am not disposed to pass by, or to treat lightly. I think ple themselves can best judge as to some misapprehensions prevails in rethe fundamental law under which gard to it. Congress certainly has denounced no penalty on such delinquency, in any of the three acts of reconislatures. This proposition is most struction. After providing for the esclearly stated in Washington's fare-tablishment of military governments in the ten Southern States the first of these acts goes on to deciare that: "When the people of any one of to alter their constitutions of govern- said rebel States have formed a conment." North Carolina does not seek constitution of government in conto have a voice in the question as to formity with the constitution of the whether the Japanese, Chinese or any United States, in all respects, framed Asiatic race shall exercise the elec- by a convention of delegates, elected tive franchise in California; nor goes by male citizens of said State, 21 years she claim the right to interfere in old and upwards, of whatever race,

mitted therefrom, on taking the onth prescribed by law." This is the only provision touching the subject matter under consideration and its only intimation is, until there is a fulfilment of the requirements the military government shall continue. There has been threatening declarations made by different members of Congress and certain presses have teemed with fulminations against all who should hesistate in taking immediately the steps proposed, but Congress, as a body, has established no penalty and made threats. The first reflection which occurs on hearing these announcements is, that it would be a harsh measure and savor of injustice to require people to vote in an election, and then punish them for voting for the candidate, (whether man or measure) of their choice. And further it would still be more unjust to punish the people of North Carolina for failure to make be more unjust to punish the people of North Carolina for failure to make a constitution and establish a basis of suffrage which Pennsylvania, Ohio, them indiscriminately, instead of dis- New York and other great and leading selves, though with far less cogent reasons than prevail with us? The constitution of Pennsylvania, as re-or-

> these words: "In elections by the citizens, every white freeman of the age of 21 years, having resided in this State one year and the election districts where he offers to vote 10 days immediately preceding such election, and within two years paid State or county tax which shall have been assessed at least 10 days before the election, shall enjoy the rights of an elector."

dained in 1838, regulates suffrage in

That of New York provides that Every male citizen of the age of 21 years, etc., shall be entitled to vote, etc. But no man of color, unless he shall have been a citizen of the State for three years, and for one year next preceding every election shall have been seized and possessed of a freehold estate of the value of \$250 over and above all debts and incumbrances charged thereon, and shall have been actually rated and paid a tax thereon shall be \_ntitled to vote at such elec-

That of Ohio, as follows: "Every white male of the United States, of the age of 21 years, who shall have been a resident of the State one year next preceding the election and of the county, etc., in which he resides, such time as may be provided by law, shall have the qualifications of an elector and shall be entitled to vote at all elections." Since the passage of acts of Congress on this subject, an amendment has been proposed to the constitution of Ohio by the Legislature and submitted to the vote of the people, so as to admit colored men to the right of suffrage on the same footing with white men; and after a most

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and at the she claim the right to interfere in old and upwards, of whatever race, she claim the right to interfere in old and upwards, of whatever race, color or previous condition, who have been residents in said State for one hand, she makes her appeal to the year, previously to the day of suc
substitute. R. H. Jordan & Co.

to-day may become theirs to-merrow; that precedents accumulate and constitute law, and that, as their representatives shall have done to others, so may it be done to them. However, this may be the change propos ed is in a fundamental article of the State constitution deeply affecting the security, safety and peace of society,

guaranties as to life, liberty, and seguaranties as to life, liberty, and security of property, which are vouchsafed to the white men as much as to
women, minors and adults of the
white race, who have not paid public
taxes. The question before us is, therefore, not one of protection to him,
but whether he is qualified for the
exercise of political power here, which
is denied to him in so many States
North, I have my prejudice against
the colored race. As a member of the
Legislature in years gone by, I voted
for their liberation on all proper applications according to the State
of law; in the practice of my profession I aided several of them in establishing their claims to freedom
against white men holding them as
slaves, and prosecuted and defended
their pleas as for white men; and since
their liberation I recommended to
the Legislature in a published communication in reply to inquiries to carthe Legislature in a published communication, in reply to inquiries to cer-tain of its members, promptly to con-cede to them the right to testify in the courts of justice, which was done. I wish them, now, all the happiness and prosperity which can flow from an upright and virtuous course of life in their new condition. But it is better for them and for us, that the elective franchise shall remain as heretofore,

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