(From the New York Observer.)

THE COLOURED PEOPLE OF OHIO.

In Mercer Co., Ohio, a public meeting of coloured people was lately held to consider an invitation to send a representative to the convention to be held at Columbus in August, for the purpose of adopting measures for securing the right of suffrage to the coloured people of the state.. This the meeting, after consideration, resolved to decline, and appointed a committee to make a suitable reply, and to communicate their views to the committee that sent the invitation. The following letter was prepared and we have been requested to publish it. We comply most cheerfully, commending its sound practical sense and enlightened views to the consideration of those who undervalue the coloured race.

In all their efforts at self improvement, and in every enterprise which promises to assist them to rise from their present degradation, every christian and philanthropist must heartily rejoice.

CARTHAGENIA, *Mercer Co. O., April 29th*, 1843.

To D. JENKINS *and others, Gentlemen of the Committee:*

It is with feelings of pleasure that we acknowledge the receipt of your letter, requesting our co-operation in the great work of obtaining our rights as citizens. It is a subject on which we have thought and prayed and laboured much. We are glad to see an increasing interest growing up among our coloured friends on this great question. If we are discreet in this matter, and are guided aright, we believe, that it will end in great good. As we may not send a delegate to your convention, we take this method of making known to you our faith and practice on this subject. Most of us who reside here are from the slave states.

We came to Ohio to enjoy more liberty than we enjoyed where we were born. Since coming here we have followed different occupations.—Some of us have been barbers, and boot-blacks, and ostlers, and waiters, and cooks, in cities, and on steamboats. Some have been working on leased land, and some have followed trades. Some of the females have been washers and ironers. That is, we have filled the places in the community which popular opinion has assigned to coloured people. After living in this condition for some time, and feeling our degradation, we resolved to do something for our own education. We conversed with the white people around us, and told them our desire for the protection of law. Their answer was, "You have nothing to protect. The black people are a nuisance. They are nothing. They eat and drink all they earn. We must make laws to protect ourselves." We then, agreeably to the advice of our abolition friends, resolved to save our money, and move into the country, and try, by labour, and economy, and honesty, and temperance, to earn for our people a better name than they had heretofore enjoyed. We have found by experiment, that the same money which paid our rent and marketing in the city, will purchase new land, and improve it, in the country. 'Tis true, our undertaking was, for us, a new and an arduous one. But the result is, several hundred of us left our former occupations in the cities, and are now living on our own land. It was new timbered land when we bought it, and the nearest place we could purchase provisions was thirty miles distant. But we struggled along through the hardest of it. We own many thousand of acres of land. We have built comfortable houses to live in. Our land is cleared. We raise our own provisions and manufacture most of our own clothing. We have horses and hogs, and cattle, and sheep. We have meeting-houses and a school-house. We have had a good school most of

the time for six years. Our children have learned to read and write and cipher. We have Sunday schools, where they are taught the principles of morality and religion. We have a saw-mill and a grist-mill. We are striving to live a quiet and orderly life. We wish to have our character plead for us. We wish to have our property stand out and ask for the protection of law. We wish to have those who oppose us, witness our quietness and industry; that they may be satisfied of our character, not by what we say, but by what we do. Our voice has been heard but once at Columbus, by the legislature, asking for a repeal of the "black laws." And we may not now send a delegate to your convention; not because we disapprove of the object, but because we believe there is a more excellent way.

All great changes in public sentiment are made slowly; and we are neither disheartened nor quietly resting, because we have not yet reached the object of our hopes. We still hold on industriously, hoping that the time will come when we shall be judged according to our works. For the Scripture says, "By thy works thou shalt be justified, and by thy works thou shalt be condemned." In view of this, we call upon all our coloured friends to leave the menial occupations in towns and cities and go out into the country and purchase land, and become a part of the support and prop of the state. Let us show by our works that we are worthy citizens of this young and noble state of Ohio. And when that time comes, that all the coloured people of Ohio are industrious, and honest, and temperate, the spirit of oppression will be two weak any longer to bind its galling yoke upon our necks. We do not mention this to justify the oppressor, but to point out a straight and narrow way, that most surely leads to the accomplishment of that great object, for which your convention is called. We do not consider it necessary to inform the legislature of Ohio that their laws oppress us. They know that already. They made them on purpose to oppress us. Their object was to drive us somewhere else. They fear us. We are called idlers, thieves and drunkards. They believe us to be nuisances. They have listened to the whispers of prejudice and the suggestions of slavery, till their black code rivals in cruelty the laws of Nero. But, thanks to an overruling Providence, the people are better than their laws; and we are permitted to live in some degree of quiet and safety. At least, in our present residence in this country, we have never, in any manner, been injured by our white neighbours; but, on the contrary, we have been treated in a kind and friendly manner.

They attend our meetings; come to our mill; employ our mechanics and day labourers; buy our provisions, and we do the same by them. That is, we all seek our convenience and interest, without regard to colour.

Seven years ago, when our settlement first began, there was the common prejudice against us, that we should not be able to take care of ourselves; and of course what we lacked in the supplying of our own wants, they thought must come off from them.

But that we are not idlers, is now apparent from the fact of our having cleared 1000 acres of wild land; made and laid up 350,000 rails, and built at least 200 different kinds of buildings, (to say nothing of some $10,000 which individuals of us have paid for our feeedom) besides having in our settlement a hatter, a wagon maker, a blacksmith, a tanner, a shoemaker, carpenters, masons and weavers, most of whom find constant employment. We have also built several brick-kilns. The means by which we obtain our livelihood, are seen and known by all our neighbours; and the result is as we have stated. We receive no more damage from our white neighbours than we do from one another.

And now, our coloured brethren, we appeal to you, especially to those of you who live in towns, and follow those precarious occupations for a liveli-

Maryland Historical Society

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