March 16th, 1886
Banquet
of the
Union
League
commemorating
Rikers & Hart
Islands’
regiments of
United States
Colored Troops
raised by the club
22 years earlier.
BANQUET

GIVEN BY THE MEMBERS OF THE

Union League Club

Of 1863 and 1864,

TO COMMEMORATE THE DEPARTURE FOR THE SEAT OF WAR OF THE TWENTIETH REGIMENT OF UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS RAISED BY THE CLUB.

New York,
GEORGE F. NESBITT & CO., PRINTERS,
CORNER PEARL AND FINE STREETS.
1886.
Banquet of the Union League Club.

The members of the Union League Club of the City of New York of 1863 and 1864 gave a banquet at the Club House, Fifth Avenue and Thirty-ninth street, on Tuesday evening, March 16th, 1886. The occasion was the commemoration of the departure for the seat of war of the Twentieth Regiment of United States colored troops, organized by the Club in 1864; and the surviving officers of the regiment were entertained by members who belonged to the Club at that time. The dinner was held in the large banquet hall, and covers were laid for seventy.

The immense oval dining table was appropriately decorated with allegorical war-pieces, designed by Camovito. The centerpiece represented "Lincoln and Liberty." It consisted of a figure of the goddess, supported by images of Lincoln and Garfield, on a sugar pedestal, around the base of which a guard of white and colored infantry stood at "shoulder arms." The whole was surrounded by an artificial lake, with mossy banks, in which lively trout and carp sparkled sportively, and a baby turtle tumbled in cool contentment, stopping between whiles to look up approvingly at the jovial faces of the guests and the banks of roses and geraniums, and listening intently to the pleasant jests and witty sallies which passed around the board. The ornament at the west end was a circular fortress, with candy casemates and cannon of confectionery, surmounted by a figure of General Grant on his famous charger, guarded by a corps of Union soldiers; while at the east end a platoon of gray-coated Confederates kept watch about the figure of Lee on a prancing horse. The souvenirs, which explained the occasion of the banquet and were accompanied by miniature banners in silk, were tastefully fastened with ribbons of different colors. A reduced photograph of the scene before the old Club House in Union Square, when the Twentieth Regiment halted on their way to the place of embarkation, and were presented with a stand of colors, showing the men drawn up before a balcony draped with flags.
and filled with ladies, ornamented the face of the souvenirs, and
an engraving in one tint of the handsome new building at Fifth
Avenue and Thirty-ninth street occupied the reverse.

The souvenirs also contained copies of the presentation address
from the ladies of the city, given at the time of the regiment's
formation, twenty-one years ago, and patriotically calling upon
its members to defend the banner which their skill and industry
had wrought, and which they intrusted to the regiment's care.
The address was as follows:

PRESENTATION ADDRESS
OF THE
LADIES OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
TWENTIETH UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS,
March 5th, 1864.

"Soldiers:

We, the Mothers, Wives and Sisters of the members of the
New York Union League Club, by whose liberality and intelli-
gent patriotism, and under whose direct auspices you have been
organized into a body of National Troops for the defense of the
Union, earnestly sympathizing in the great cause of American
Free Nationality, and desirous of testifying, by some public
memorial, our profound sense of the sacred object and the holy
cause in behalf of which you have enlisted, have prepared for
you this Banner, at once the emblem of freedom and of faith, and
the symbol of woman's best wishes and prayers for our common
country, and especially for your devotion thereto.

When you look at this Flag and rush to battle, or stand at
guard beneath its sublime motto, "God and Liberty!" remember
that it is also an emblem of love and honor from the daughters
of this great metropolis to her brave champions in the field; and
that they will anxiously watch your career, glorying in your
heroism, ministering to you when wounded and ill, and honoring
your martyrdom with benedictions and with tears."
Headed by Col. Bartram, the invited guests were escorted into dinner at seven o'clock. President Cannon was supported on his right by Col. Bartram, and on his left by Hon. Chauncey M. Depew, President of the Union League Club. After grace had been said by Rev. Dr. Derrick, the following menu was discussed:

When coffee was served, President Cannon rapped for order and said:

*Members of the Union League Club, Veterans of 1863 and 1864, and our honored guests:*

It is with no little diffidence and embarrassment that I am obliged this evening (substantially as a substitute) to occupy the position of presiding officer at this banquet.

We hoped, and we had a right to expect, that the Hon. John Jay [applause], the oldest surviving ex-President of this Club—an original Abolitionist—who inherited a hatred of the institution of slavery, and who, representing the Club, delivered the parting address to the 26th Regiment on the day of its embarkation for the seat of War, would have presided this evening. No one regrets more than Mr. Jay, that public duties on the Civil Service Commission of this State compels him to be absent. [Applause.]

It is safe to assert that no act of the Club is more memorable in its annals, than the raising of the three regiments of United States colored troops; without that record its history would have been incomplete. We believed that it meant more than recruiting the army of the United States, that its greater significance was the raising from their degradation and bringing into the service of the nation the colored citizens of the State of New York (applause), and by that act purging the City from the taint of that wicked, infamous and inhuman riot of July. The loyal sentiment of the country required that the Club should be the active agent in accomplishing this result. Reviewing the past, it is extremely doubtful if a regiment of colored troops would have been raised in this State except for the riot. High moral courage was the conspicuous quality which governed the Club, and they were ready to face and overcome every emergency during the entire rebellion, not only by directing loyal sentiment into active channels, but to stem the tide of disloyalty in the city, and
to raise to their proper level the colored people who were among us. [Applause.]

It is not necessary for me to enlarge on the difficulties and the success of these efforts. There are gentlemen here who were most conspicuous on the Recruiting Committee, and to them I will shortly appeal.

It occurs to me that there are certain popular errors in the history of the war which should be corrected, with reference to the time and manner in which the United States first possessed and enjoyed in arms the colored men; and I may here say, in the confidence of a dinner table, that we shall be glad to receive from those who will be called upon to address you, not only a relation of the duties assigned to them, but their personal observations and actions, and I will venture to make the stipulation that if they will fully and faithfully relate all that occurred, and all that they performed, they may do so without incurring the charge either of egotism or vanity.

Bearing in mind this stipulation, I will now briefly relate an important fact in connection with the service of colored men, and the accident by which they were first availed of in the war.

It was my fortune to be stationed in the Department of Virginia in the year 1862 and '63. Great numbers of fugitive slaves escaped into our lines and were protected and supported in idleness from the military chests; their numbers became so great, and with no orders from Washington (except that they should not be permitted to go North), that the Commanding General was embarrassed by the situation. If turned back into the Rebel lines we were repelling our greatest allies, and the North was apprehensive of being overrun by fugitives; indeed, so little did these fugitives occupy the attention of Government, that with some 4,000 idle fugitive negroes in our lines, 300 white stevedores were brought from the cities of New York and the East to unload our transports. The absurdity of this condition of affairs was so obvious that Major-General Wool, commanding the Department (in the failure of all instructions from Washington), appointed a Military Commission to report on the condition of the negroes, with such recommendations as they thought proper and necessary for their status, use and support.
The Commission recommended that they should be treated simply as dependent fugitives, and their condition was vagrancy; that they should be employed by the Government as far as was necessary, and if employed by individuals, they should be protected and be the recipient of their earnings.

Gen. Wool adopted the recommendations of the Commission—dismissed the white stevedores, issued an order which brought into the various departments of his army the able-bodied colored men in our lines. 350 picked men (principally field hands) were assigned to the Quarter-Master's Department.

Shortly after this event the battle between the Merrimac and Monitor was fought. The result of that engagement proved that the Merrimac was shot proof against any projectile we possessed, and that the only practicable manner of destroying her was by a powerful ram. The Government chartered four sea-going steamers for this purpose—the Illinois, Vanderbilt, Errierson and Arago. These vessels came down under sealed orders. Capt. Gadsden, a member of this Club, commanded the Arago, and on opening his orders found that they covered instructions that his vessel was to be used as a ram. This fact soon became known to his crew, and by the following morning about his entire crew had deserted. Capt. Gadsden reported this fact to Admiral Goldsborough, commanding the fleet, for assistance; on examining his orders it was found that the Arago was a war office charter; he then reported to head-quarters and stated to Gen. Wool his condition, that his vessel was anchored in the line of fire, and that he wanted fifty men to keep his fires banked and able to weigh anchor. Gen. Wool replied that he needed 10,000 more troops, and that his soldiers would be of no use on a ship. "I don't want seamen," replied the captain; "any men who can work will answer my purpose. Can you give me able bodied men of any kind?" The general replied: "I have nothing but negroes, and Col. Cannon has charge of them." "Very well," said Gadsden, "give me negroes."

Being referred to me, I promised to use my influence in obtaining the men, provided they volunteered for the service on being told its nature and hazards—that they must be rated on his
ship's books, and be the recipient of their wages, to which Capt. Gadsden agreed, that they should be rated as landsmen, and receive $18 per month and rations.

At my request Capt. Wilder, Ass't Quarter-Master, (especially charged with the care of negroes), mustered the 350 men who were working as stevedores, and made an appeal to them to volunteer for the ship, stating the terms and conditions of service. His appeal was earnest, but there was no responsive indication in the faces of the men that they appreciated the situation. He then requested me to speak a few words urging them to volunteer. I made a brief appeal, reminding them of the battle they had witnessed between the Merrimac and Monitor, and that I wanted fifty men to enlist on board the Arago to fight the Merrimac and destroy her; that I did not know what would be the result of the war as to their future condition; but one fact I did know, that they must commend themselves to the people of the North, by showing that they were fit to be free, and that to do so they must make some sacrifice; some must shed their blood and others offer their lives, and it was my privilege, and the first one offered to them to fight for the country, and I could only offer this privilege to fifty, and if every one volunteering were killed they would be martyrs, and all who survived would be heroes. Now, boys, all volunteering will march three paces to the front, and the whole line moved in a solid column, and not a few begged on their knees to be selected. [Great applause.] It was a great problem to solve; if these men would fight, it not only weakened the Rebellion, but furnished us with abundant material for the army and navy. The effort was a success, and as soldiers and sailors they did not disappoint us. [Applause.]

The volunteers were sent on the Arago and proved reliable and effective men. A few days after Capt. Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, came to inspect the fleet at Fort Monroe, and hearing of our success, issued an order to Admiral Goldsborough to fill up his fleet entirely from the fugitives in our department, and thus through army agency the navy is entitled to the credit for first enlisting fugitive slaves, rating them as the equals of whites for similar service, and this occurred eight months before the President's proclamation of emancipation. [Great applause.]
With this digression, which I have been urged by some of my friends to relate, I may be permitted to say that it is not my province to enlarge on the difficulties or discouragements of the committee in raising the regiments. We have with us this evening three members of that committee, who were, above all others, conspicuous in making the undertaking a success, and I now first call on Col. Geo. Bliss. [Applause.]

Col. Bliss, who on rising was greeted with loud applause, spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen—When you told me that you proposed to call upon me to-night to say something about the colored troops marching down Broadway, I told you that I thought you had made a mistake, and I think before I get through I can satisfy you of the fact [laughter]. In the first place, if there are any gentlemen here who still continue to read the New York Times [laughter and applause] they probably will think I know much less of the colored infantry marching down Broadway than I do of the Sharp-shooters riding down Broadway on the cars [laughter]. In the second place, I told this story a good while ago; and in the third place, I can't say anything upon the subject without being egotistical.

[The President—I think I made a plea that every gentleman might speak here to-night with the utmost freedom.]

Col. Bliss—But I have a better excuse than that. I told this story six years ago at the meeting of the veterans of this Club, but most of the gentlemen here are so old that I assume their memories have begun to fail them and they won't remember it, so that I will repeat it [laughter and applause]. Well, Mr. Chairman, I am called upon because, by accident, in spite of my native modesty [laughter], my name happened to precede yours in a letter. The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that on the 12th of November, 1863, a resolution was passed at the meeting of the Union League Club, appointing a committee to aid in reinforcing the army. That committee was appointed by the chair. It consisted of the gentlemen whose names I have here. I will name them in the order in which they were named by the chair:—Alexander Van Rensselaer, Le Grand B. Cannon, James A.
Roosevelt, Elliot C. Bowdin, Charles P. Kirkland, Sherman J. Bacon and George Bliss. Of these you will notice that yourself, myself and Mr. Roosevelt are, I think, the sole survivors. We met on the evening after the appointment, and we started in with the theory that our best plan would be to offer some extra bounties, to seek to encourage men to enter some particular regiment which had suffered losses in the field and in that way fill it up, and get some little credit for ourselves, or rather, for the Club by calling it the Union League Regiment. We issued a circular on the 16th November, asking for subscriptions to that end. But you remember, Mr. Chairman, that, influenced by your experiences at Fortress Monroe, you came around quietly and said to us that that would not do, that it would not put any additional men into the service, and that we must go to work to raise some colored troops. Well, I think pretty nearly all of the committee who were there "kind of shivered" when you suggested that. We stuck to our original idea of filling up some regiment until about five or six days after that time—

A voice—We lived pretty fast in those days, gentlemen.

Col. Bliss.—About five or six days after that time we made up our minds that we would have to abandon the plan we had started in with and go in for the colored regiments, but we didn't dare to avow it. Good old Jonathan Sturges who was, I think, then the president of the club [applause] and who was also certainly an active member, if not the chairman of the Merchants' Committee appointed to relieve the colored men who had suffered during the riot, and had shown in that way his sympathy with the colored men, came around to the members of the committee and took each one of us aside. "I want to assure you, sir," said he, "that you have no right to go into this business of raising colored regiments. You are exceeding your authority; you are committing the club to a thing which it never agreed to and you must not do it." Well, we didn't dare at once to say anything about it. We set to work and the first thing we did we wrote a letter to Governor Seymour, I think it was on the 20th November, asking Governor Seymour's authority or cooperation in raising a colored regiment. We told Governor Seymour
that we knew perfectly well he had no authority to raise any new regiments, but that we desired his cooperation in raising colored regiments for which we intended to seek authority from the President. Governor Seymour wrote us back with great formality that he begged to assure us he had no authority to raise any colored regiments and that he begged to refer us to the Department at Washington.

Let me tell you here, gentlemen, in this connection, something which may excuse one of the gentlemen present who has been masquerading here as an old member and who appears here as a member of the Committee of Arrangements. If you look back at the record of this Club, you will find that he was not a member of the Club at all when the resolution for raising the colored regiments was appointed. The fact about it is, gentlemen, that Governor Seymour was just at that time engaged in trying Mr. Acton and preparing to turn him out of the Police Department. [Laughter and applause.]

On the 1st of January, 1863, Horatio Seymour was inaugurated as governor. One of his first acts was to cite the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police to appear in Albany at twelve the next day. A messenger served the papers on the Commissioners in New York on the evening of that same day. Mr. James Bowen, the President of the Board, had just been appointed a Brigadier General, and was ready to start for the seat of war, but Mr. Acton, and Commissioner Bergen took counsel of William Curtis Noyes and James T. Brady, and they telegraphed to the Governor, as our counsel, that it would be impossible for them to appear at the time named in the summons, but that they would be pleased to attend to it at as early a day as possible. The Legislature commenced on the following Tuesday, and soon after formal charges were made against the Police, one of which was that the Superintendent, Mr. John A. Kennedy, allowed citizens to stand at the polling places with books, in which to take the names of voters, so that they might be enrolled for drafting. A proper answer was prepared, covering all the charges and was sent to Governor Seymour early in the Spring of 1863, but no attention was paid to it, or further action taken in the matter until
December 31st. The Governor was in the city during the week of the draft riots which commenced on July 13th of that Summer, but said and did nothing in regard to the case; though he was, of course, well aware of all that was done at that time, and knew that for nearly one hundred hours, from Monday until Friday, Acton did not close his eyes; and on Thursday morning he sent two messengers from his staff to the Police complimenting the Board on their efficient work and turning all over to their control. The Commissioners remained under charges the whole year. On December 31st, Governor Seymour appointed a new Board of Police Commissioners, who presented themselves at the headquarters the next day with their commissions, which Mr. Acton and his associates refused to recognize, and the Legislature, meeting on the first Tuesday of January, 1864, and that body being Republican, all went on as before.

The Legislature then enacted a new law, in which the new Commissioners were named, with the length of their terms of office, including Acton for eight years. Then the Governor sent a message by his confidential friend, Commissioner Mr. Murray, congratulating Acton on the arrangements by which he continued President, and stating that the charges against the Police were entirely political, ought never to have been made, and he was very sorry that they had been.

Now you see why we all advised Mr. Acton not to come into the Union League in 1863, because it might lead the Governor by anticipation to suppose that Mr. Acton was an offensive partisan. [Laughter.] John A. Kennedy, the Superintendent of the Police Department, came into the Club as a member, and Acton stayed out until after Governor Seymour got through trying him. So that excuses Acton. And if he did not appear as a member on the rolls of this Club until after 1863, he got in after we went down Broadway.

Mr. Acton:—Thanks. [Laughter.]

Col. Bliss:—Well, we wrote to Governor Seymour and Governor Seymour sent back that letter; and finally, on the 30th of November, we wrote to Mr. Stanton asking authority to raise a colored regiment. That letter was sent to Washington through
Governor Morgan, who was then in the Senate. He took it with him and went to see Mr. Stanton; and then—We are "all gals here together," and I think I may repeat textually what Governor Morgan told me Mr. Stanton said to him:—Said the Secretary, "Do you think I am going to make a fool of myself?" [Laughter] and he wouldn't do it. We then represented to Stanton—I think Colonel Cannon did it personally—that here was the Union League Club asking his authority to raise a colored regiment and that if he refused that authority he would discourage five hundred of the leading and active citizens of New York.

I merely mention these facts as showing you, gentlemen, the difficulties which then existed with reference to the question of raising a colored regiment. Mr. Stanton, even, with all his earnestness, really hesitated to authorize the attempt to be made in this City, and it required pressure to get from him the requisite authority. Finally, however, on the 8d of December, Mr. Stanton wrote a letter which was in the following words—and there is where I got in ahead of Colonel Cannon for the first time in my life. [Laughter.] I had been appointed Secretary of the Committee and I wrote the letter asking authority to raise the regiment, and so the reply came back addressed to me and I received the authority to raise the first colored regiment that was raised in the State of New York. [Applause.] That letter said:

"You are hereby authorized, as the representative of your associates of the Union League Club, to raise in the State of New York, one regiment of infantry, to be composed of colored men, to be mustered into the service of the United States, for three years, or during the war."

To these troops no bounties were to be paid. They were paying full bounties to white troops at that time.

"They will receive ten dollars per month and one ration. Three dollars of the monthly pay may be in clothing."

And the Government promptly proceeded, as soon as the men got mustered into the service, to take $30 out of their pay for uniforms. Well, sir, we got that authority to raise the regiment and then we set to work to see what we should do. We wrote to
Governor Seymour on the 4th of December, stating that we had that authority and asking from him his concurrence and support; and, gentlemen, the truth of history requires me to say that Governor Seymour died last month, and he never found time to answer that letter. [Laughter.]

On the 9th of December the committee did a big thing. As I said, a committee had been formed, of which Mr. Sturges, I think, was the chairman, engaged in aiding the colored men who had suffered during the riot; and on the 9th of December we formed a union with a sub-committee appointed by that committee. The big thing we did at that time was that by that union we got Jackson S. Schultz as a member of our committee. [Loud applause.] Mr. Schultz was from that time a member of the committee, in full standing, if not in good standing [Laughter], until after the 20th Regiment of colored troops was ready to march down Broadway. Then we were making our arrangements about them, and we wanted a band to march ahead of them and play. We applied to Dodsworth. Dodsworth said "he would be d—d if any of his men should march down ahead of niggers." Mr. Schultz threw his arms up in the air—perhaps you never saw him do it [Laughter]—Mr. Schultz threw his arms up into the air, and said: "Gentlemen, you leave that to me. I will fix it all with the Seventh Regiment Band." He went down and saw Mr. Grafalla. Then Mr. Grafalla declined to march down ahead of "the niggers," and the expressions which Mr. Schultz used when he came back forever precluded his being in good standing in that committee. [Laughter.]

Well, sir, we got that authority, as I said, by a letter dated the 3rd of December, and received on the 5th; and soon afterwards we got another communication by which there were turned over to us certain colored troops who had been enlisted or drafted throughout the State, to the number of about one hundred and sixty. Then Colonel Cannon went up to Troy, and he found some gentlemen engaged in raising colored troops under appointment from the Governor of Connecticut or the Governor of Massachusetts, or something of that kind, by which they were to have so much a head. Col. Cannon showed his proficiency in
the favorite game, for he went them five dollars better [laughter], and he took all their men away. [Laughter and applause.] They accordingly came down to us.

Soon after that I went up to Albany and I landed at the Delavan House. The proprietor informed me after I had registered my name, that I could not have a room. I asked him why, and he said because I had taken all his waiters away to the colored regiment. [Laughter.] The fact is, gentlemen, that having received a letter on the 5th of December authorizing us to raise a regiment, and on the 19th of December, taking in those men that we got who had been enlisted, we were able to report to the Secretary of War that we had a thousand and twenty troops, good and true, up on Riker's Island, waiting to be mustered in. [Loud applause.]

Now that was not done, gentlemen, as easily as members of the Club do things now. All that the members of the Club have to do now is to come to the monthly meetings and either to present and get passed a set of resolutions which nobody understands, or to approve a set of resolutions coming from some committee committing them to a scheme of procedure which they don't approve and which they don't understand. [Laughter.] That regiment was raised by hard work. We did not think when we undertook to raise that regiment that we should not be able to persuade a single owner of real estate in the City of New York to rent us a place which we might use as headquarters. We went up and down this city to find a place, and we only got it at last by a fraud [Laughter]. One of the inducements that led us to take Schultz in was that he had some rooms down there on Fourth Street which had been hired by the Merchants' Committee I have referred to, and he agreed to admit us as sub-tenants there if we would take him in here [Laughter]. We were admitted. Colyer here was running the machine for Schultz and Sturges, aiding the colored men who had suffered in the riot. It was only by that subterfuge that we could get a place in the City of New York fit to use as headquarters for raising a colored regiment.

Uncle Sam had some steamboats which were carrying troops up and down to Riker's Island. We found pretty soon that our
recruits whom we were putting on to those boats were abused worse than any negroes had been on the plantations, and they were abused by men who wore the uniform of the army of the United States. Colonel Cannon was instrumental, if I mistake not, in taking the uniform off one or two of those gentlemen, and sending them to positions which were very undesirable [Applause]. Again, we found this condition of things:—The government of the country was paying very large bounties for soldiers, for recruits, and those bounties were received by men other than our recruits. There was one man who had established a headquarters for recruits who went to the war, and is said to have been mustered in as a colonel on the strength of having five companies of troops, by marching around in the lines so that he got each of his companies mustered in twice over. He came home a general, and is now a leading light in the politics of the State of New York. In the Twentieth Regiment alone we found that 262 men who had been mustered by that man received $21,161, while the country paid for them $78,600. There was a clean cheat somewhere of $57,439. Where that stopped I can't say, but I will say that the general in command of the recruiting office, while that occurred, was General Francis B. Spinola.

As I have said, we got a regiment full by the 19th of December, but we were a good deal more active than the United States was. It was not until early in March that the United States had the guns with which to arm the men. If we had had the muskets earlier the men would have left and gone to the front within less than thirty days after the authority was received to raise the regiment.

Having reported that regiment as full on the 19th of December, we applied for authority to raise a second regiment, and the War Department believed we were lying. They did not believe the regiment was full; and they proceeded, with the requisite red tape, to send down an inspecting officer here, who was to find out whether that regiment was full, and then was to go back and report upon the subject. Finally, he reported that we were not lying very badly, and the result was that on the 4th of January I received, as a representative of this Club, authority to raise the
second regiment of colored troops, the 26th regiment of United States colored troops. [Applause.] On the 27th of January, being in Washington, I received a despatch from Colonel Cannon, which I at once communicated to the Secretary of War, stating that the second regiment was full and that we wanted authority to raise a third. [Loud applause.] I then told the Secretary of War that, as to raising a third regiment, we felt that it was a matter of considerable doubt; that according to the census of 1860 there were in the State of New York only 9,000 colored men who were within the ages qualifying them to enter the army; that those men had been recruited from by the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts and by a Connecticut regiment, although, on the other hand, we had probably gained within this State by the colored men who had come from the South, though I did not think they had more than made up those who had gone from us; that of the 9,000 colored men in the State eligible by age, it was not probable, according to the statistics, that over 4,700 were qualified physically to enter the army; and that we had already enlisted 2,040 men. Therefore I doubted whether we should raise the third regiment; yet we proposed to try it. We got the requisite authority and had raised, I think, about 400 men, when there came one of those panics which they got up periodically at Washington, when the city was just about to be captured, and so on, and our new recruits were ordered away. They were subsequently consolidated with some troops from Connecticut and were filled up to a regiment, becoming the 31st United States Colored Troops.

The result of our efforts, therefore, was this: We raised within two months, gentlemen, at a time when recruiting was very slow work, about 2,600 colored troops, and sent them to the front. We raised them amid all sorts of difficulties. There was the opposition of public sentiment; there was that other opposition which I have told you about as instanced in the action of Jonathan Sturges; there was opposition of yet another kind. When the 20th regiment was going away, we prepared to invite the officers to an entertainment at the Union League Club down there in 17th Street, and we did invite them all. There was a
colored chaplain among them, and we found out that somehow or other his invitation had happened to miscarry. We took pains to see that he got one, and insisted upon his coming. I wish you could have seen the backs of some of the members of the Club, gentlemen, when they understood that a colored man was going to be invited down there socially! They "humped" them away up! [Laughter and applause]. But Mr. Le Vere came. Mr. Le Vere was the chaplain, and he made a speech which captured that entire Club. He made the best speech of the evening, and there were some pretty good speeches there too.

All these things I mention, gentlemen, as showing you the hostility which met the action of the club at that time. I see you have placed on your list here the address of the ladies to the regiment, and seeing it, I went to the library and got a report and brought it up for the purpose of giving you some idea how our efforts were regarded in those days. We all understand that the entire press of New York at that time was earnestly in favor of the raising of colored regiments, and everything of that kind. Of course, we understand it, because they say so now [Laughter]. But I want to read you a little extract from an article, *apropos* of the Le Vere case, that appeared in the New York *Herald* of the 9th of March, 1864. Here it is:

"One hundred and fifty ladies, belonging to the best society of New York, subscribed to a flag for the colored volunteers. In a beautifully worded note, they style themselves the 'mothers, wives and sisters of the members of the New York Union League Club,' and call the flag 'an emblem of love and honor from the daughters of this great metropolis to her brave champions,' and promise the darkies that they will 'watch their career, glorying in their heroism, minister to them when wounded, and honor their martyrdom with benedictions and with tears? Are these promises like piecrusts, made to be broken? If not, this is a pretty fair start for miscegenation. Why, the phrase 'love and honor' needs only the little word 'obey' to become equivalent to a marriage ceremony; and, surely, if the daughters of Fifth Avenue had really married the negro recruits, they could no more 'minister to them' and 'glory in them' and give them
States. We are a good deal in the habit of getting together and "resolving" that we have done lots of good things; but I think we have here something tangible, something that involved work, something that was of benefit to the Government, something that involved a principle. [A voice: That's so.] I have always felt proud of my connection with that matter; and while I have felt that my prominence was accidental in the connection which caused me to be the recipient of the formal authority to raise the regiment, the success was due to such men as Mr. Schultz. It was due to such men as yourself, Mr. Chairman. It was due to Alexander Van Rensselaer. It was due to that quiet, efficient man, whom but few of the members of this Club remember, and yet who was most useful, Sherman J. Bacon. [Applause.] It was due to other members of the Committee; to Mr. Charles P. Kirkland [applause;]—earnest, always earnest, always determined in spite of the infirmities growing upon him, which prevented such activity as was possible to some of us. Nature had not made him a human steam engine as it made "Jack" Schultz. [Laughter and applause.] But after all, we all did our best. I for one know that for four long months I did not see the inside of my office, and I think that is true of most of the members of the committee. Before I sit down, let me call the attention of some of these gentlemen here to the fact that in those days membership in the Union League Club involved something of work. Take that year of 1863-64. One day the resolution to raise these regiments was adopted—in November, 1863, if I remember right. Concurrently with that, preparations were making for the Sanitary Fair, which I believe took place in the spring of 1864. That occupied the time of very many of us. After that came the raising of what was known as the Hancock Recruiting Fund. That fund, gentlemen, amounted to over $400,000 before we got through with it. It was a fund which was raised to put soldiers into the army, paying them the bounty given for substitutes. Ninety-nine percent of it was raised among men who were not themselves liable for service in the army, yet who took a pride in placing in it their representatives. In that same year, and I remember it, we had the "Thanksgiving for the Soldiers," which
consisted in sending a Thanksgiving turkey to every soldier in the army, excepting one set of them. We were in great grief because we could not succeed in conveying any Thanksgiving turkeys to Sherman's army, because they were just on their march to the sea. But we wrote a letter in which we thought we would apologize to them for not having sent them their share of the turkeys, and we got back a letter in reply saying that we need not make any apology, but that if we were short of turkeys they had some left over and we might have them. [Laughter.]

That was the record of the years 1863 and 1864 with reference to the Club. It took time; it took labor; it took attention. Various members of the Club gave it. In so far as the colored regiments were concerned, we were their instruments. We did what we could. Without them, we could not have succeeded. With them, I submit, we succeeded in accomplishing what will go down to history as a great achievement. [Loud applause.]

The President—Gentlemen, Col. Bliss has given you a very faithful narrative of the difficulties.

Col. Bliss—Mr. Chairman, I want to apologize. I understand that Sherman J. Bacon, one of the members of our committee whom I killed off just now, is living here in this city, and am very glad to hear that Mr. Sherman J. Bacon is here, instead of being deceased, is still a living member of this Club. [Applause.] He lives so quietly that I had supposed he had passed away. [Laughter]

The President—Col. Bliss has given us a very faithful narrative of the difficulties, and of the success which attend the labors of the committee in recruiting the colored troops. The recital, however, would be incomplete unless we hear from a member of that committee whose action was an inspiration. I believe it was during that period and during that service that he acquired, and very properly acquired, the title of the "Swamp Angel" [laughter and applause]; for with all his natural ardor, a braver, kinder and more sympathetic heart never beat on this Continent. [Applause.] Every man who has been associated with him knows it—no man more thoroughly than I. I, therefore, believe these veterans will listen with intense interest to our friend, Mr. Jackson S. Schultz. [Loud cheers.]

Skipping Pages 24 -27, proceeding to Page 28 and Mr. Schultz' concluding remarks.
It is only just to state, that as soon as Governor Seymour turned the matter over to the War Department, Secretary Stanton and Col. Bliss came to an agreement, which resulted in placing the entire responsibility of organization, appointment of officers, and all matters connected with the "mustering in" the 20th and 26th Colored Regiments, absolutely in the hands of Col. Bliss.

There was no "accident" about any part of his laborious services, and it is an affectation of modesty he assumes in declining the honors that properly belong to him.

Your attention has been called to the fact, that I was made commissary or "provider" for those regiments, and the Colonel tells you I was terribly troubled because the blankets were too short to cover the toes of these men.

In defense of this statement, I will say that the regiments quartered on Riker's Island, in the middle of winter, with field tents to cover and protect them, did suffer. An officer, who sits by my side, says he suffered more, from cold, while the 20th Regiment was quartered there, than in all the campaigns he subsequently passed through.

An incident occurred, in connection with my official duties, at that time, which has stuck to me ever since.

It was on Sunday morning that I visited the encampment and two new companies had been brought down the river. The thermometer was below zero, and the only fuel the men had to keep themselves warm was wood fires in front of their tents, and many of them had neither woolen stockings or blankets. Without any special knowledge how to proceed, I concluded, although it was Sunday, I would go down to the city and get some of these supplies. I called at the office of Quartermaster Vincent, and told him our situation. He said, "Where is your requisition?" "Requisition, my dear sir," said I, "will be sent to you to-morrow." "That is not according to army regulations," said he. But when I left I took with me two cart loads of blankets! The incident was often recalled by him in our subsequent intercourse, but he said he never did such a thing before, and never would do it again—"It was enough to break any officer." I refer
to this incident as proof, that in those early days of the war, civil and military men joined in the common purpose to save the nation, cutting loose from all forms.

Before I resign my position as Quartermaster, I would like to recall some instances of the integrity of the rank and file of those regiments.

On parting with them as they left for the field, I promised to stand by them, and see that they were supplied with all creature comforts, such as pipes, tobacco and other small matters, which they could not so well get at the South. I opened an account with the Quartermaster of each regiment, and during their absence, I think I must have supplied them with several thousand dollars' worth of these comforts. For every dollar and cent thus advanced I was paid. The same cannot be said of any regiment that ever went from this city.

*The President:*—It occurs to me now with a good deal of force, that after having heard from the gentlemen who were appointed on the committee to raise the 20th regiment, it is a proper time for us to hear from the regiment itself. [Applause.] There is this significant fact in the history of all the volunteers who went into the army of the United States, there is scarcely an instance on record of a volunteer regiment brought under fire for the first time which did not stampede, invincible as they proved as veterans. I challenge history to show one single instance where a colored regiment did not stand to its guns. [Loud applause.] And why? The earnestness of those men, those colored men, was a great deal more intense. They had a great deal more to fight for. Freedom from slavery and personal liberty was what they were fighting for. But, apart from the causes which inspired them, they owed their excellence as soldiers, as every regiment does, to the character of their officers. The officers of the regiments of colored troops were men who had passed an examination before a military board, every one of them. They were men who had already achieved distinction in the field. The military knowledge which they possessed when they came into the colored regiments, was not only in the manual but in the art and science of active war-
fare. It was that fact which made the negro regiments conspicuous in their first battle and in every succeeding battle. Gentlemen, I have the honor of presenting to you Colonel Nelson B. Bartram, the officer who commanded the 20th United States colored troops.

Colonel Bartram responded gracefully to the enthusiastic cheers with which he was saluted, and spoke as follows:—

Mr Chairman:—Since I have been sitting here I have thought how much truth there is in the old adage, that it is always the unexpected that happens. I remember very well, when Mr. Schultz was discussing with me the advisability of the regiments marching down Broadway and through the city where, three or four months before, they were amusing themselves by hanging negroes to the lamp-posts, I said to him I thought it would be a very valuable experience, for if a regiment well armed and well officered could not march through New York in spite of a mere mob, why it would not pay to send it to the front. [Applause.] Well, after he had made up his mind to have the regiment brave it, I remember he encountered some new troubles. He could not find any band to play with it. No band for love or money could be found that would play for the regiment. I said to him, "Why, I don't care for a band. I am not anxious to have a band. I have been in the Army of the Potomac a couple of years and I never have seen any use for a band, except for dress parade, and as we don't exactly contemplate that sort of thing, why, we will get along without any band. We have twenty drummers and ten buglers, and that's good field music, and that's all we want. We don't want any band." But at any rate he obtained a band in some way—the Governor's Island Band, I think it was—and we concluded to make the march. I remember we landed at Thirty-fourth Street. The band was ordered to meet us at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street. I requested Mr. Kennedy, who was at that time the Superintendent of Police, to keep the dock clear. I said to him, "Of course I don't want to be attacked while we are landing. I want to get my men on their legs.
without being disturbed, if possible," and there was a cordon of police drawn around the dock, if you remember, so that we were not interfered with, and we took up the line of march. The first three blocks settled it. It was an ovation; and such an ovation! The Seventh Regiment, the famous Seventh, never received anything better. [Applause.] New York had regained her senses. We continued our march up to the corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, and there we met the band. The bandmaster reported to me, and I said to him, "Play 'John Brown.'" [Laughter.] He immediately protested, saying he thought it would be an unnecessary provocation to the crowd, and began to argue with me about what he should play. The crowd was collecting all the while, and I said to him, "Well, now, look here, if you won't play 'John Brown,' play anything you like, but play something, and play quickly, because I don't want to halt here too long." We could not halt there very long; it was not a good place to halt; and so the band began playing some military air, or some operatic air or something of that kind, I don't know what it was; and we soon turned down towards the Club House.

Well, after the glorious reception and presentation that we had there, we fell in again and got under way to march down Broadway; and the instant I gave the command "March!" the band struck up "John Brown" [laughter and applause,] and with brief intervals, they didn't play anything but "John Brown" all the way down to the ship. [Applause.] We went on board the steamer Ericsson—old Captain Lowber was her commander—and took up our quarters in her. She was a nice, roomy transport, I remember. We went to sea, and we had been out, I think, about three days, when the captain sent for me—this same Captain Lowber, whom I afterwards got to know very well—he addressed me something after this manner: "Look here, sir, I have been in the transport service since the war began, and I want you to understand, sir, that this is the best behaved regiment I have ever had on board my ship. [Applause.] I want you to take a glass of wine with me, sir." Well, we got along very nicely with Captain Lowber, and when I reported at New Orleans to General Banks, I was ordered up to Port Hudson, and
he was so much in love with us that he said that if the pilot said
he could take the ship up the river, he was going up to Port
Hudson with us, so as not to compel us to change into another
vessel; and he did take us five hundred miles up the river to
Port Hudson.

We went into camp there, and there the first slight shadow
threw itself across our way. We reported to a man by the name
of Gen. Andrews. Don't know who he was. I never saw him.
He was a sort of Mikado. He was not visible to the common
herd. In about three days after we had arrived at Port Hudson
he sent me an order directing me and my entire staff, and line
officers to report at headquarters for instructions in tactics. Well,
I thought that was rather steep, as we had been through the
school pretty well; and that, after we had all passed the board,
we should be taken up to Port Hudson to go to school was rather
annoying. [Laughter.] I immediately wrote Gen. Andrews a
note saying that Maj. Wells and the other staff and line officers
would report. By the bye, I forgot to say that we were to report
to Maj. J. Lang and war. That gentleman, I believe, is a mem-
ber of the Club. [A voice—Yes.] I said to Gen. Andrews in
that note that if he wanted me to report, or my lieutenant-colonel,
he would have to designate some other instructor. Well, the
upshot of it was that he excused me and my lieutenant-colonel,
and the others went. Of course my officers were inclined to pick
flaws and find fault, and report upon the subject, and there was
so much said to me about it that I sat down and wrote Gen.
Andrews another note, protesting against the kind of instruction
received at headquarters, and asking him to appoint a more com-
petent instructor. The result of that communication was that
Gen. Andrews sent a lieutenant down to the regiment and put
me under arrest [Laughter]; but after eight days had expired I
buckled on my sword again and put myself on duty. [Renewed
laughter.] I knew that he would have to prefer charges against
me before the expiration of eight days, and that if he did not I
might go on duty. Gen. Banks came up shortly afterwards, and
called to see me, and we talked awhile together. I said to him:
"We have not come here to go to school or anything of the sort.
The Union League Club thinks too much of its regiment for that. It wants to hear from us. I hope you will put me somewhere where we can be of use." With that he sent a steamer up and we were ordered to Matagorda Island, and we got away from Gen. Andrews. We remained at Matagorda Island about six weeks, and at last returned to New Orleans, where we found Gen. Sherman—"Tim" Sherman, this was. He always treated me first rate, and he thought highly of the regiment, and when I came home, sent me a very complimentary letter. We spent, I think, about six months in New Orleans doing garrison duty, and he gave us an opportunity for battalion drill, and many chances to instruct the men. We attracted a great deal of attention there and enjoyed ourselves very much.

But I won't follow the peregrinations of the regiment any further. The Adjutant is here and knows all about it, and I will call upon him to say something. [Applause.]

Adjutant Dudley F. Phelps was then introduced, he said:

Mr. Chairman, this is the second shock I have received this evening. The first was when I approached the Club, expecting an evening of unalloyed happiness, and the chairman of the reception committee informed me that I was to be taken into dinner by Colonel Bliss. Now I remember that Colonel Bliss was very active and energetic in the organization of the regiment, but I don't remember hearing of him since I had supposed he was dead, in the same way he supposed that Sherman J. Bacon was; but I find I am in error. He has been very polite to me and, if I have not had an evening of unalloyed happiness, I have at least had an evening of unalloyed Bliss, [laughter and applause]. I was informed by message from Colonel Bartram first before Colonel Bliss began to speak that he intended to call upon me, and I supposed I was the only gentleman who was glad Colonel Bliss talked so long, and even wished he would talk longer, because I didn't expect to get time to talk myself, [laughter].

Aside from Colonel Bartram, we have all the staff of the regiment here; but the line does not seem to be represented, excepting in the person of Mr. Habberton. He is the only line officer here. (skipping rest of this Page 33 and proceeding to Page 56 where club president Chauncey M Depew concludes his remarks, saying "Tens of . . .")
thousands of sick and wounded soldiers lived to join their families and enjoy the gratitude of their countrymen solely through what was done for them by the women, through sanitary commissions, contributions of necessaries and luxuries and personal attendance and care [Applause]. All hail to the mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts of the war. Their courage and constancy were the factors in the salvation of the Republic.

The three hundred founders of this Club who braved social ostracism and contempt, by marching as an escort for the first colored regiment down Broadway, are worthy of commemoration and honor; but the ladies who gave the regiment its flag, must share in this glory [Loud applause]. I am sure that proud as my friend Mr. Astor, who sat beside me, has a right to be, that he was one of the three hundred, there is a source of profounder gratification in the fact that Mrs. Astor was Chairman of the Ladies' Committee which presented the flag [Applause]. The potent influence of the women of position and power in our New York world stamped out prejudice, turned hisses into applause, exalted the humble and despised to places of honor, and in giving the black man not only the right but the invitation to fight for his liberty, created the force which emancipated the slaves and saved the Union (Loud applause).

Mr. President:

We are not favored by the presence of a distinguished officer of our navy, but we are most fortunate in having as our guest a representative who served as a common sailor during the rebellion, and is with us this evening, a representative man of the emancipated race, and now a distinguished divine.

I have the honor of introducing to you Rev. Dr. Derrick, of this city, who served on board the frigate "Minnesota" during the fight with the rebel ram "Merrimac."

Rev. Dr. Derrick, who was received with acclamation, delivered the following eloquent and impassioned address:

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

If my powers of expression were equal to my sensibilities, I would make known to you in more choice language than I can
now command, and therein relate, the supreme pleasure it affords me to be present on this memorable and auspicious occasion.

Two or three nights ago it happily became my very good fortune, while perusing some papers, to come across an eloquent and thrilling speech once delivered by an eminently distinguished member of your Club, the gentleman that preceded me—the same, sirs, who is also the timely and deservingly honored President of your Club—the Hon. Chauncey M. Depew. And, sirs, I am free to confess that through and by said speech I for the first time was brought to understand and made to learn the true import and positive nature of this organization, and I can say that ever since then I am even more than ever a pronounced friend of the Grand Old Party, of which the Union League Club of New York City are the pioneers, the brains and sinews, and who so nobly and boldly stand to-day in defence of human liberty, justice and truth. Well, sirs, while reading that speech I discovered that this association was not only established for social pleasure, but to perpetuate the principles of our National Government, and extending your hands to the oppressed and proclaiming liberty to the bondman and liberty to the slave. [Applause.] When this Nation was tossed upon a sea of blood and war, when not a star was to be seen in the firmament, when the Ship of State had her flag at half-mast, and the cry of distress went up from all parts of this great Republic; when demand after demand rapidly succeeded the other in calls for troops and yet no reinforcement came; when, sirs, the stars and bars would have overshadowed our stars and stripes; and when the glorious principles of liberty, as handed down by the illustrious father of his country, George Washington, to the sons of our Republic—even they would have been trampled in the dust by a miserable slave-holding oligarchy that took the National Government by the throat and vainly strove to strangle it forever—it was then the negro who to-day stands as true as ever, and expects to so stand, yes, so long as the privileges of American liberty are extended to them—they went willingly and cheerfully to the front, amid the hottest fire, though previously unpaid, unrecognized, unhonored and maltreated as they had been, simply
prompted by an unconquerable desire for liberty then smouldering within their bosoms but never enjoyed.

Ah, well was it so eloquently said to-night that the negro soldier and sailor entered the conflict with feelings such as animated no white man. The negro saw that his all was at stake, his wife, his children, his own liberty were then in the balance, and he saw that unless he gave a helping hand he might yet remain a prisoner in the house of bondage. [Loud Applause.] Sirs, it affords me no common pleasure, I repeat it, to stand here to-night and declare the negro is proved to have taken an active part in crushing out the slave-holders' rebellion, and setting upon the ruins thereof this the grandest government under the sun. We feel proud to have had a hand in that war, especially in the great battle of March, 1862, when the "Minnesota," commanded by Rear-Admiral Stringham and Capt. Van Brunt, and the remaining portion of the fleet lay at Hampton Roads, Va. The "Merrimac," as you are aware, was once an American Frigate, which was confiscated by the rebels while it was at the Norfolk Navy Yard at the breaking out of the war between the two sections, and reconstructed into an iron-clad ram, and was placed in charge of Capt. Thomas Buchanan. This man was one among the many that were educated by the Government at the Naval School at Annapolis, Md. They were fed at the Government crib, were taught at the people's expense, yet at the sound of the war bugle were among the first to stab the Nation.

After a delay of some months the news reached our Flagship, the "Minnesota," that the rebel ram would shortly attack the fleet, which was then lying in the Roads. At first it was discredited, but it was not long before the truthfulness of the story verified itself by the steaming down of the long-looked for "Merrimac." As the mouth of the James and Elizabeth Rivers were blockaded with a portion of the vessels composing the Squadron, of which the "Cumberland" and "Congress" formed a part, but as these were the most formidable, but without steam to aid in maneuvering when attacked by the enemy, the commander of the rebel ram knew the helplessness of these wooden ships, made good use of the opportunity in attacking them. Before they were clearly discovered
by the fleet in the Roads they had reached the spot, and had opened fire upon the vessels at their moorings. The drum sounded, we were called to quarters, our cable was slipped, guns run out, and in less than twenty minutes we were on our way to the seat of conflict. On reaching our destination, we were confronted with the sad sight of the "Merrimac" backing from under the port bow of the "Cumberland," and in less than fifteen minutes the ship of war began to keel over and settled to the bottom.

The crew, or a portion of those who were not killed, took to the rigging of the sinking ship as a place of refuge, and while there, displayed the white flag, but it was unheeded by the Rebels; these poor fellows were cut down from the rigging like birds from the limbs of as many trees. Yet, notwithstanding the gallant Commander Morris, with the courage of a Napoleon and the pluck of a Perry on Lake Erie declared to the Rebel commander "Before we surrender we will suffer our ship to be sunk, and while sinking, our flag shall remain at the mainmast, showing that the Union shall live forever." [Applause.] The "Congress" was next visited, and for hours received the shots and shells in all parts of her wooden hull. Night, with its dark mantle was fast approaching, death and destruction visible on every side, the cause of Freedom and Liberty appeared to have received its death-blow,—even the very waves of the sea appeared to be washed against the ship's side with a sorrowful wail. But, Mr. President, all was not lost; the all-seeing eyes of the Creator were watching the course of events. The sun at last had passed to its western realm, all nature was wrapped in darkness, the whistling winds began their mournful melody. Our harps were hung upon the willows, when all of a sudden a shell thrown from the enemy's battery found its way to the magazine of the "Congress," and as quick as lightning flash, the most terrific explosion of modern times ensued. The once famous frigate was no more; blown almost into ten thousand fragments, the very heavens appeared, after this terrible catastrophe, to be weeping; not an ark appeared upon the troubled waters. A counsel of war was called on board the Flag Ship off on the quarter deck, when it was concluded to stand by the ship until morning, then evacuate her and burn her to the water's
edge, so as to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. The conclusions had scarcely been announced when the news reached the Admiral, saying that the Errison Battery (as then known instead of Monitor) had reached the Roads, and was awaiting orders.

Sirs, you can imagine the thrill of joy which ran through the many hearts then almost crushed with anguish. After a suspense of four hours a singular looking craft was to be seen coming up the river. The Yankee cheese box on the raft was the name given to our deliverer, for had it not been for this insignificant speck, as it appeared to some eyes, the entire fleet would have been destroyed. The crew and all hands were anxious to take a good look upon the mighty war ship; but little time was allowed, on account of the announcement that the “Merrimac,” accompanied by two transports, the “James” and “Yorktown” were coming for the purpose of boarding the “Minnesota” and making prisoners of all on board. In this attempt she was sadly disappointed, for, as soon as she came within range, the “Monitor” saluted her by the throwing of a shell across her bow. At once the discovery, on the side of the “Merrimac,” was made that the small, insignificant speck was nothing less than the greatest invention of modern warfare. Then the great Commander Warden, who had charge of the “Monitor” coming from Montgomery Rebel prison, had sworn vengeance, to avenge the insults and wrong, done his country’s flag by the Rebels. For four hours these two iron clads fought like two pugilists in a hand-to-hand conflict. All nature seemed to laugh, the sun appeared brighter than it had for days previous. As the battle grew hotter and hotter, all of a sudden the “Merrimac” changed her position and came with full steam, bow on, for the purpose of running down the “Monitor,” and by thus acting, would cause her to meet the fate of the “Cumberland.” But in this attempt she was foiled. In her attempt to run into the “Monitor,” the force with which she came, caused her to keel over just enough to expose a portion of wood work, whereon the gunner of the Monitor made good use of his chance and sent a steel-pointed shot through her hulk, which finally disabled and partially crippled her machinery; this compelled her to make a hasty retreat . . . . (skipping to Page 63)
We are raising men belonging to the race who will stand the test at the hands of any of the masters in the republic of letters, such as professors, teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists and artists, likewise thousands of others who are thoroughly versed in the handicraft of the day. History fails to give account of any people which have made such extraordinary advancement as my people in the last twenty years. No, none have made such wonderful progress as the American negro. This we attribute to your influence in our behalf [applause]. When I forget from what source we derived the help, let "my right hand forget its cunning." Democratic tendency may enter the black man's mind; may manifest a restlessness bordering upon disloyalty; yet, you can rest assured the rank and file of the race will always stand by those who contended in their behalf when they were unable to defend themselves. This we would prove if you would furnish us with protection at the ballot box in the South where our votes amount to something and can be utilized to the benefit of the entire country. 600,000 ballots will be found standing by the party of Lincoln and Grant, and those who sided with the oppressed. [Applause.] Gentlemen, you are unacquainted with us as a race; you are seldom brought in contact with the better element of my people. All your knowledge concerning us is what you glean at your leisure hours from the newspapers of the South, and even in your own city of New York. And then the reports are of the most scurrilous kind. Our good acts, our advancements, are purposely ignored, and all that has a tendency to degrade is given to the world. The negro is counted degraded; still when he attempts to rise he is forbidden to do so. All avenues are sealed to him. No opportunities are given him. All he asks is an equal chance in the race of life. You, the friends of human rights, it is in your power to assist him in his struggle for subsistence. You have aided us thus far; we still crave a continuance of your aid, and the time is not far distant when you will feel proud at having a hand in helping a people who was and is hindered from the acquiring of these necessary ordinary comforts on account of the
fewness of the avenues through which these things are to be acquired. May we not be allowed to say how long, how long will it be before Divine Justice will unchain on earth some master mind who shall drive from the Western World that cruel spirit of caste? How long, how long will it be before the voice will be heard in the wilderness against American prejudice, and for manhood in man and brotherhood in God? [Applause.]

I appeal to the honest friends of liberty, you who had the moral courage to stand up before mobs, once led one thousand negro troops down to the dock for the seat of conflict. Now that the war of bayonets is over, now that shots and shells are still, do not desert us in our hour of need. We crave the influence, that Republican influence, which brought about the freedom of the bondsman. [Applause.] As a veteran of the war I shake glad hands with you, my comrades while you were led by Butler, Banks, Hooker, Meade, Burnside, and last, but not least, under him whose remains sleep by the side of Riverside Park along the banks of the beautiful Hudson. We fought on the sea under Stringham, Van Brunt, and Farragut who stood up nobly and defended the flag of their country. [Applause.]

When the historian shall write the history of the Republic, he shall speak of you, the champions of liberty, as sleeping in the graves of heroes immortal, and the garland which shall bedeck your tombs shall bloom in perpetual freshness, watered by the tears of a grateful people, and watched over by Him in whose sight the just and the good are ever precious. [Enthusiastic applause].