To the Honourable,
The Legislature of the State of Maine:

The Memorial of the "American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and improving the condition of the African race," assembled at Washington, in the District of Columbia,
Respectfully Represents,—That feeling a strong solicitude to advance the object for which they are associated, your memorialists approach your honorable body for its concurrence and aid upon a matter which they conceive to be of great interest to the American people. That the existence of slavery within the United States is a great evil and one for which an adequate remedy is, of all national objects, the one to be desired, is a truth in which the whole body of our fellow-citizens have for a long time acquiesced; but whether its ultimate and entire removal is ever to be effected, compatibly with that justice to the parties concerned upon which it should be based, is a problem that remains to be solved, but to which philanthropists are now daily directing their attention.

The success however which has attended the efforts of many of the States of the Union, who at an early period of our national history were encumbered by the same evil at a lesser degree but who have since been successful in removing it, induce a hope in your memorialists that slavery may be abolished in the District of Columbia. That if possible it ought to be, some interesting considerations of a local character, peculiarly dictate. The significant and peculiar silence discovered upon the face of the constitutional compact of the land, upon the great subject of human servitude with which the country was thenburthened, the care which was observed by the sages who framed the instrument, not to employ a term in its structure which might in after years and in times of universal freedom, be appealed to for the purpose of accusation or reproach, enjoin it, we think as a strong and imperative duty to their successors to remove this growing evil from the seat of the councils of the nation and the limits emphatically of the national domain. Without therefore attempting to interfere with the exclusive duties of state sovereignties, it is incumbent we think upon national legislators, to give effect to the noble and benign spirit of the great charter under which they are convened, by devising and enacting measures for the gradual emancipation of all who are in a state of servitude in the district of Columbia. Nor can we for a moment believe that it is a subject upon which local situation can give rise to any diversity of sentiment among Americans at large. The dictates of patriotic pride and of national consistency must have the same effect with all of them.

The people of these states have cause to be distinguished for numerous occasions, upon which, and that too in many instances by discarding all interested considerations they have sought the establishment of great national principles. Without adverting to the events connected with the origin of their independence, further than to say that they were founded in a regard for free principles in the abstract, more than in any practical evil under which they were suffering, we may mention the extension of the principles of free trade, the abolition of private warfare on the ocean, the denunciation of the African slave trade as piracy, &c. as propositions by which our country has endeavoured to discharge its duty in the great family of nations. From a people thus naturally disposed, what may not be expected? What circumstances of accident or temporary advantage will be able to stifle the strengthening voice of freedom and manly justice?

The friends of Abolition must indeed expect that the object can only be obtained by very gradual means, but a period no matter how distant, for the certain operation of any principle which may have the desired effect, must afford a great degree of satisfaction to every friend of equal rights and every well-wisher of the reputation of his country. This object however cannot be obtained except at a distance of time now invisible, unless the wishes of the states with regard to it are audibly expressed. Congress has been heretofore memorialized on this subject, but as they were not guided by an expression of the wishes of their constituents, no satisfactory result was produced. But the great body of the American people never can be indifferent to a matter of this nature, and the friends of the cause of Abolition have taken measures to draw the attention of Congress once more to it. Your memorialists therefore respectfully request your honourable body to instruct your senators and request your representatives in Congress, to use all their efforts for the passage of a law, which may have for its end the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, upon principles of justice and a regard to the rights of individuals.

Chas. R. Good

W. Rawle, President

Hon. J. Anderson

Vicary

Dec. 1, 1831.

W. Thorne, Vice President
To the Honourable

The Legislature

Of the State of Maine.