“My friends.—Hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear me. I, too, have read medicine, and studied dead men’s bones, as well as Mr. Grant. I have often heard of the magnanimity of Captain Rynders, but the half has never been told me. I agree with Mr. Douglass—it makes no odds if the chin protrudes or the forehead retires. I don’t come here to find fault with Capt. Rynders; but he is a democrat—a friend of Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, and says that every man is born free and equal, and has the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. All I ask of Americans is, that they should stick to that, to their own doctrine. As to the learned theory we have heard, Euclid was a black man, had the elliptical head, the protruding jaw, and if he was not a man then there are no men, white or black (applause.) I might quote Mr. Everett, who says we derive our knowledge from the Romans, they from the Greeks, they from the Jews, and lastly, they from the Egyptians. Now the Egyptians were blacks. Herodotus, the father of history, says so, and he would not lie, and he resided for years among them, and surely he knew black from white.

But Dr. Grant tells us that we cannot be improved or cultivated. His theory is at war with facts. If you will allow me to allude to myself, one of the poorest specimens of my race; I remember well when I ran about the streets of New York a little boy, fifteen years ago; they often told me I was a nigger, and tried to make me believe it, but I would not believe it. And
I think I have proved myself capable of improvement. I have kept school in New York and New Jersey, and had all complexions among my scholars, from the unmistakeable jet black down to the nicest dissolving views, and I have found no lack of capacity for cultivation among black children any more than among whites. I have found bright and dull scholars of every complexion; blacks of the finest powers of mind, and some white men that, if you knocked at the door of their head—as a writer says—there was nobody at home. (Laughter.) One word about natural instinct. Have you a Bible here? In Acts, chapter 13, verse—; you will find whites and blacks in close propinquity. There were a number of prophets in the church at Antioch, and one of them was Simeon, who was called Niger—and that is the Latin for a black man. If that which they have told us is instinct, tell me why such an instinct is only known in America? It is an instinct of American origin; a Yankee invention—something like pine-wood hams and wooden nutmegs. I am going to speak this evening to colored people on their rights and duties; and if they don’t behave better than some white men, why, it will be time for me to give up my argument.”