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AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

Aug. 16. 1870.

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 19, 1832.

4265.445

To the President of the United States:

SIR: The colonization of the free people of African descent in this country, on the west coast of that continent, has for a long period engaged the attention of many of our countrymen. The settlement of the Republic of Liberia by the American Colonization Society has been a successful experiment. It is now a recognized nation, and enjoys the fostering friendship of England and France as well as of this country.

I have entertained the opinion for a number of years that the establishment of American colonies in the tropical regions of the west coast of Africa would greatly add to our welfare by producing for us those articles of exchange which are indispensable for our consumption, and which are only produced in tropical climates.

I learn from your public declaration that you favor the experiment of deporting a part of our free colored population; and if Liberia was under our control, it would be to that Republic I would call your attention. As it is not, while feeling the deepest interest in its welfare and success in civilizing the natives in its boundaries, I have turned my attention to other parts of the west coast.

It was when reading the interesting narrative of Dr. Livingstone in 1856, in which he describes his journey from Cassange, in the valley of the Congo, to St. Paul de Loando, a distance from east to west of nearly three hundred miles, that I became convinced that here a glorious colony might be established; and the thought occurred to me what mighty products would here reward civilized labor! What a profitable trade to our people would result! I have the evidence in the books before me that this country and much of the west coast for a breadth of sixteen degrees on each side of the equator possesses as rich a soil as our great Mississippi Valley, and that it is the fittest climate and soil in the world for the production of coffee. It is to the cultivation of that article, now become a necessary of civilized life, that I would give chief attention, and I have not a doubt the future will witness its production to a greater amount on this coast than that of Brazil at the present time. It

also produces cotton, sugar, tobacco, indigo, and all the tropical fruits and vegetables.

This country was discovered by the Portuguese, and trading posts were established by them about the time of the discovery of America. Why has it not been colonized and civilized? The answer is, the slave trade and the climate. The slave trade is a crime which has only carried ruin and misery in its train to the oppressors as to the oppressed. The climate has been destructive to the white man who has confined his residence to the sea coast.

Modern travelers have utterly interested all the world with the accounts of their adventures and explorations in Africa—none more than Dr. Livingstone—and they have discovered that in the interior, commencing in many parts at a distance of less than twenty miles from the coast, the country is as salubrious as many parts of our own.

I conceive it would be easy to find places on this coast with good harbors and rivers which might be acquired by purchase from the natives. I also conceive it would be practicable to acquire, by treaty and purchase from Portugal, all her territorial rights and sovereignty in Angola, of which St. Paul de Loando is the chief seaport. From Dr. Livingstone's book, page 475, we learn the whole of the nett revenue in 1849, at St. Paul de Loando, was £51,298. The population is stated to be about 11,000, of which only 1,600 are of white or mixed European descent; and the entire white population of Angola is about 6,000. The value of the ivory exported in 1849, was £48,225, which was nearly equal in value to all the other exports. It would appear from the statistics that Angola was of very little value to Portugal, but would become a great empire if populated and cultivated by civilized men.

If it is decided by the Government to organize and discipline as soldiers a large body of the free men of color, and also to colonize such of the intelligent of the same class as may prefer to be detailed, would it not be deemed advisable to acquire a large territory on the west coast of Africa, and establish there a military colony under such wise regulations as would secure liberty and justice to the colored race, as well as the white man, and by grants of land foster agriculture? I would not send exclusively colored troops to the colony. While I would send the greater number of that race, I would not exclude any of our people of any color from acquiring property and becoming citizens of the colony; but I would have all men's rights to be equal. At first it would be a military colony, securing protection to all men, and in future, when the population should be fifty thousand registered voters, all of whom could read a constitution, it might be erected into a State.

The idea is entertained by but few persons that the whole colored population of this country is ever to be sent back to Africa, or colonized any where beyond our limits; but it is desired by many that an opportunity should be afforded for a part of them, and they the most cultivated and christianized, to become settled in Africa and become the teachers of that benighted land. Such a colony as I have mentioned, governed by men who are intelligent and just, and fostered by this great country, would soon repay us by the enlargement of our commerce, consuming our manufactures, employing our shipping, and returning us the products of the tropics.

If the present Congress should pass the bill introduced by Mr. Hickman, December 8, "for the suppression of rebellion, treason and insurrection, and other purposes," which authorizes the President to raise regiments of Africans, or colored persons of the United States, for seven years, and officer them with men of collegiate education, either white or colored, the troops might be selected and disciplined in six months so as to be fitted to compose two-thirds of the military force of the colony, the remaining one-third to be taken from the regular army.

If Angola could not readily be obtained, the territory which has Mossamedes Bay as its centre, is fifteen degrees south latitude, might be easily obtained, as it pays no revenues to Portugal; the country back of which is described as rich, healthy, and producing every thing peculiar to the tropics.

It would not be admissible to encumber this letter with quotations from the travelers who have described the productions of the Western Coast. I have before me Dr. Tam's visit to the Portugese possessions in 1841; Rev. I. Leighton Wilson's Western Africa in 1856; Missionary Travels, by Dr. David Livingstone, 1856; Tuckey's visit to Congo in 1816, and the 45th Annual Report of the American Colonization Society, all of which concur in saying a civilized population would develop as many sources of wealth and employment in Africa as in America.

N. B. BUFORD,
Brig. Gen. U. S. Vols.

AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

[LETTER NO. 2.]

CAIRO, ILLS., FEB. 12, 1863.

To the President of the United States:

SIR: On the 19th day of December last I addressed you on the subject of an American Military Colony on the West Coast of Africa. If the Government should decide to afford facilities for the deportation of large bodies of the free people of color, which the course of the rebellion is throwing on its hands, the subject is one of grave importance.

It is generally conceded that Africa is the land most eligible for the purpose. The Annual Reports of the American Colonization Society, and the History of Liberia, show that, but for the destructiveness to life by the climate to the white inhabitants on that coast, the inducements for settlement there are as great as those which so suddenly peopled our Pacific Coast when gold was discovered in California. It is believed that if the settlements were removed from the coast to the interior, a salubrious climate exists there.

In my letter I said "If Liberia was under our control it would be to that Republic I would call your attention." As it is not, I suggested the acquisition of Loango by treaty and purchase from Portugal, or some other part of that extensive Coast.

The question now occurs, could not Liberia become our Colony? It was founded by our people; fostered by the religious and liberal sentiments of the nation; supported and guided by the American Colonization Society until it has become a free Republic, acknowledged by England, France, and the United States. It now possesses 600 miles of Sea Coast, with an undefined boundary in the interior. It has only 16,000 inhabitants of American descent, but its laws and influence govern more than 200,000 of the native population.

As long as this Republic is supported by the united sympathies of three great nations, who keep their navies on the coast to prevent the slave trade and to protect commerce, all may go well with it; but should a disturbance arise; should France or England desire to appropriate it; how small a resistance could it make to the designs of either nation.

Should the United States desire now to own this colony with a view to offer a home to the free people of African descent in our communities, who desire to emigrate, and give it strength by deporting some of the black regiments now authorized to be raised by the Government, would it not be a wise and commendable policy? Could it not be obtained by fair treaty; could not its present constitution be maintained with the few alterations rendered necessary by the new state of things; would not the civilized world cheerfully acquiesce in it as the beginning of the solution of the difficult problem of the time?

Suppose you should have the power to appoint a military governor, and send over a force of two regiments of blacks, officered in accordance with the principles enunciated in the bill presented to the House by Mr. Hickman, one regiment of the regular army, and one battery of light artillery, and all selected of men fitted to construct a great military road from Monrovia 100 miles into the interior; to build bridges and erect fortifications, and in the future become the mechanics and agriculturists of the land.

Suppose also your plan should embrace the power, after one year's service, to discharge these soldiers, supplying their places by a new deportation, and grant them a bounty in lands and agricultural implements and provisions; would not the plan, if entrusted to faithful men, lead to the founding a future Empire, fitted to realize our benevolent designs of restoring to Africa her sons, bearing with them the blessings of Christianity and civilization?

And would not such a colony in the future amply repay us by its commerce? producing for us not only coffee, sugar, cotton and indigo, but also the thousand tropical products which are only found beyond our present limits?

Such a force as I have mentioned, small as it is, would be quite sufficient to make the road, guard the passes, and defend the country against any adverse designs of the natives. It could be transported by our wooden vessels of war, that are to give place to the modern inventions of naval architecture. A corps of volunteer men of science could be induced to go with the expedition, the first to open a road inland, who would enjoy an entire new field of scientific discovery.

This design but imperfectly indicated would not interfere with, but aid the benevolent organizations now in operation for deporting our free people of color; neither would it endanger the entire freedom of the black race, nor interfere with their becoming the rulers of the colony when fitted for it.

All great empires have founded colonies, and have thus not only

extended civilization, but profited by them. Unless the order of things is changed, the American Colonization Society will have founded a colony, all the commercial benefits of which will accrue to England.

I have the honor to be, your ob't. serv't.

N. B. BUFORD,

Brig. Gen'l. U. S. Vol's.



