

No. 4265. 432 A



Am. Col. Socy.

Examined

A VIEW

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OF

EXERTIONS LATELY MADE

4265.432

FOR THE PURPOSE OF

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COLONIZING

THE

FREE PEOPLE OF COLOUR,

IN THE UNITED STATES; IN AFRICA,
OF THE
OR ELSEWHERE.

CITY OF WASHINGTON,

Printed by Jonathan Elliot, Pennsylvania Avenue

1847.

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From ^{*}7585.64

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Aug. 26, 1880.

From 7585.64

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A VIEW, &c.

THE present age witnesses numerous and unexpected changes, and it is peculiarly grateful to the benevolent man to notice among these changes many which are ominous of good. As a traveller, wearied with the roughness and barrenness of the region he has past, enjoys the scenery of a cultivated and luxuriant country; so the philanthropist, distressed with the confusion and misery which pervade many portions of the world, may still fix his attention on those favorable occurrences in Divine Providence, and contemplate with peculiar pleasure the rising glory of the kingdom of Christ, and the prevalence of that religion which proclaims "peace on earth and good will to men."

The success which attends charitable and benevolent societies, has in many instances surpassed the expectations even of their friends and patrons. And whether the public are encouraged and gratified with the success of past exertions, or whether they are alarmed and excited by the miseries which thousands feel, and in which other thousands sympathize, it is but just to acknowledge that there exists an unusual sensibility and desire to aid the cause of humanity and religion. The tone of public feeling is elevated. If any sufficient object can be assigned for benevolent exertion, and can be enforced by any sufficient reasons, it will scarcely fail to receive all deserved approbation and support.

Influenced by these considerations, the following view of exertions lately made for colonizing free people of colour, is presented to the public.

It is already known that the attention of many intelligent men in the United States has been recently turned with peculiar force and a corresponding zeal and spirit of perseverance to this subject. Some very important preparatory steps to such a measure have been taken. Soon after the commencement of the present session of Congress the expediency of colonizing free people of colour became a subject of consideration with many gentlemen of respectability from the different states. The propriety of such a measure could it be carried into effect, was generally admitted. It was thought that a design of such importance so intimately connected with the best interest of the citizens of the U. States, and promising at the same time to improve and meliorate the state of that class of the community for whom provision was to be made, should not be abandoned without a vigorous and a thorough effort to carry it into execution.

The formation of a colonization society was therefore proposed. Many were led the more readily to approve of an institution of this kind, from a knowledge that this subject occupies the attention of many worthy citizens in different states; but particularly from the

consideration which had been bestowed upon it by the legislature of a highly respectable sister state (Virginia.) As the following preamble and resolution were approved by the House of Delegates of that state, previous to the first meeting for the formation of the American colonization society, it will be proper to introduce them in this place, as they were afterwards amended by the Senate and adopted.

“Whereas the General Assembly of Virginia have repeatedly sought to obtain an asylum, beyond the limits of the United States, for such persons of color, as had been, or might be, emancipated under the laws of this commonwealth, but have hitherto found all their efforts frustrated, either by the disturbed state of other nations, or domestic causes equally unpropitious to its success:

“They now avail themselves of a period when peace has healed the wounds of humanity, and the principal nations of Europe have concurred, with the government of the U. States, in abolishing the African slave trade, (a traffic, which this commonwealth, both before and since the revolution, zealously sought to terminate) to renew this effort; and do therefore resolve, that the executive be requested to correspond with the President of the United States for the purpose of obtaining a territory on the coast of Africa, or some other place, not within any of the states or territorial governments of the United States, to serve as an asylum for such persons of colour, as are now free, and may desire the same, and for those who may be hereafter emancipated within this commonwealth; and that the Senators and Representatives of this State in the Congress of the United States, be requested to exert their best efforts to aid the President of the U. States in the attainment of the above object: Provided, that no contract or arrangement respecting such territory shall be obligatory on this commonwealth until ratified by the Legislature.”

Believing that the Legislature of Virginia had entered upon this subject with a spirit and a determination to prosecute the measure proposed, and desirous of producing a more general and simultaneous feeling and movement in aid of this object, by calling the attention of the general government to the subject, a meeting for the purpose of forming a colonization society was appointed to be held in this city on the 21st of December 1816. At the time proposed a very respectable number of gentlemen attended.

The following extracts relative to the proceedings of the meeting are from the National Intelligencer of December 24.

Mr. *Henry Clay*, of Kentucky, having been called to the chair, and Mr. *Thomas Dougherty*, of this district, having been appointed secretary—

Mr. Clay, (on taking the chair) said that he had hoped to have seen called to the place, for which he had the honor of being selected, a gentleman (judge Washington) who, from his name, his exalted station, and his distinguished virtues, would have communicated an additional importance to the present meeting. But as that gentleman was not present, Mr. C. regretted to learn, from causes beyond his control, he would, with great pleasure, endeavour to discharge the duties of the chair. He understood the object of the present meeting, to be, to consider of the propriety and practicability—

ty of colonizing the free people of color in the United States, and of forming an association in relation to that object. That class, of the mixt population of our country was peculiarly situated. They neither enjoyed the immunities of freemen, nor were they subject to the incapacities of slaves, but partook in some degree of the qualities of both. From their condition, and the unconquerable prejudices resulting from their color, they never could amalgamate with the free whites of this country. It was desirable, therefore, both as it respected them, and the residue of the population of the country, to drain them off. Various schemes of colonization had been thought of, and a part of our own continent, it was thought by some, might furnish a suitable establishment for them. But, for his part, Mr. C. said, he had a decided preference for some part of the coast of Africa. There ample provision might be made for the colony itself, and it might be rendered instrumental to the introduction, into that extensive quarter of the globe, of the arts, civilization and christianity. There was a peculiar, a moral fitness in restoring them to the land of their fathers. And if, instead of the evils and sufferings which we had been the innocent cause of inflicting upon the inhabitants of Africa, we can transmit to her the blessings of our arts, our civilization and our religion, may we not hope that America will extinguish a great portion of that moral debt which she has contracted to that unfortunate continent? We should derive much encouragement in the prosecution of the object which had assembled us together, by the success which had attended the colony of Sierra Leone. That establishment had commenced about 20 or 25 years ago, under the patronage of private individuals in G. Britain. The basis of the population of the colony consisted of the fugitive slaves of the southern states, during the revolutionary war, who had been first carried to Nova Scotia, and who, afterwards, about the year 1792, upon their own application, almost in mass, had been transferred to the western coast of Africa. This colony, after struggling with the most unheard of difficulties—difficulties resulting from the ignorance, barbarity, and prejudices of the natives; from the climate (which were, however, found to be not at all insurmountable; from wars, African as well as European; and such as are incidental to all new settlements) had made a gradual and steady progress, until it has acquired a strength and stability which promises to crown the efforts of its founders with complete success. We have their experience before us; and can there be a nobler cause than that which, while it proposes to rid our own country of a useless and pernicious, if not a dangerous portion of its population, contemplates the spreading of the arts of civilized life, and the possible redemption from ignorance and barbarism of a benighted quarter of the globe!

It was proper and necessary distinctly to state, that he understood it constituted no part of the object of this meeting to touch or agitate, in the slightest degree, a delicate question connected with another portion of the coloured population of our country. It was not proposed to deliberate on, or consider at all, any question of emancipation, or that was connected with the abolition of slavery. It was upon that condition alone, he was sure, that many gentlemen from the south and the west, whom he saw present, had attended,

or could be expected to co-operate. It was upon that condition, only, that he had himself attended. He would only further add, that he hoped, in their deliberations, they would be guided by that moderation, politeness and deference for the opinion of each other, which were essential to any useful result. But when he looked around and saw the respectable assemblage, and recollected the humane and benevolent purpose which had produced it, he felt it unnecessary to insist farther on this topic.

Mr. *Elias B. Caldwell*, (of this district) then rose. He said, he felt peculiar embarrassment in obtruding himself upon the notice of so large and respectable a meeting, in which he found some of the most distinguished characters in our country. I ask, said he, your indulgence in offering to the consideration of the meeting the resolutions which I hold in my hand, and to a few explanatory observations. The objects of the meeting have been feelingly and correctly stated by the honorable chairman. The subject seems to be divided into—

1st. The expediency; and, 2dly, the practicability of the proposed plan. The expediency of colonizing the free people of color in the United States, may be considered in reference to its influence on our civil institutions, on the morals and habits of the people, and on the future happiness of the free people of color. It has been a subject of unceasing regret, and anxious solicitude, among many of our best patriots and wisest statesmen, from the first establishment of our independence, that this class of people should remain a monument of reproach to those sacred principles of civil liberty, which constitute the foundation of all our constitutions. We say, in the declaration of independence, “that all men are created equal” and have certain “inalienable rights.” Yet it is considered impossible, consistently with the safety of the state, and it certainly is impossible, with the present feelings towards these people, that they can ever be placed upon this equality, or admitted to the enjoyment of these “inalienable rights,” whilst they remain mixed with us. Some persons may declaim, and call it prejudice. No matter—prejudice is as powerful a motive, and will as certainly exclude them as the soundest reason. Others may say, they are free enough. If this is a matter of opinion, let them judge—if of reason, let it be decided by our repeated and solemn declarations, in all our public acts.—This state of society, unquestionably tends, in various ways, to injure the morals and destroy the habits of industry among our people. This will be acknowledged by every person who has paid any attention to the subject; and it seems to be so generally admitted, that it would promote the happiness of the people, and the interest of the country, to provide a place where these people might be settled by themselves, that it is unnecessary to dwell on this branch of the subject.

As to the blacks, it is manifest that their interest and happiness would be promoted, by collecting them together where they would enjoy equal rights and privileges with those around them. A state of degradation is necessarily a state of unhappiness. It debases the mind; it cramps the energies of the soul, and represses every vigorous effort towards moral or intellectual greatness. How can

you expect from them any thing great or noble, without the motives to stimulate, or the rewards to crown great and noble achievements? It not only prevents their climbing the steep and rugged paths of fame, but it prevents the enjoyment of the true happiness of calm contentment, satisfied with enjoying but a part of what we possess, of using only a portion of what is in our power. Take away, however, the portion that is not used, and it immediately becomes the object of our fondest desires. The more you endeavour to improve the condition of these people, the more you cultivate their minds, (unless by religious instruction,) the more miserable you make them in their present state. You give them a higher relish for those privileges which they can never attain, and turn what we intend for a blessing into a curse. No, if they must remain in their present situation, keep them in the lowest state of degradation and ignorance. The nearer you bring them to the condition of brutes, the better chance do you give them of possessing their apathy. Surely, Americans ought to be the last people on earth, to advocate such slavish doctrines, to cry peace and contentment to those who are deprived of the privileges of civil liberty. They who have so largely partaken of its blessings—who know so well how to estimate its value, ought to be among the foremost to extend it to others.

I will consider the practicability of colonization under three heads: The territory—the expense—and the probability of obtaining their consent.

1. The territory.—Various places have been mentioned by different persons: a situation within our own territory would certainly possess some considerable advantages. It would be more immediately under the eye and control of our government. But there are some real and some apprehended evils to encounter. Many apprehend that they might hereafter join the Indians, or the nations bordering on our frontiers in case of war, if they were placed so near us—that the colony would become the asylum of fugitives and runaway slaves—added to these difficulties, there are inveterate prejudices against such a plan, in so large a portion of the country, which would be impossible to overcome or remove. Upon mature reflection, with all the light that has yet been shed upon the subject, I believe it will be found, that Africa will be liable to the fewest objections. A territory might, no doubt, be procured there; the climate is best adapted to their constitutions, and they could live cheaper. But, Mr. Chairman, I have a greater and nobler object in view, in desiring them to be placed in Africa. It is the belief that, through them, civilization and the christian religion would be introduced into that benighted quarter of the world. It is the hope of redeeming many millions of people from the lowest state of ignorance and superstition, and restoring them to the knowledge and worship of the true God. Great and powerful as are the other motives to this measure; (and I acknowledge them to be of sufficient magnitude to attract the attention and to call forth the united efforts of this nation,) in my opinion, and you will find it the opinion of a large class of the community, all other motives are small and trifling compared with the hope of spreading among them the knowledge of the gospel. From the importance of this view of the subject, permit me to enlarge

a little upon it. Whatever may be the difference of opinion among the different denominations of christians, I believe they will all be found to unite in the belief that the scriptures predict a time, when the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be spread over every part of the world, shall be acknowledged by every nation, and perhaps shall influence every heart. The opinion is, perhaps, as general, that this glorious and happy day is near at hand. The great movements and mighty efforts in the moral and religious world, seem to indicate some great design of Providence on the eve of accomplishment. The unexampled and astonishing success attending the various and numerous plans which have been advised and which are now in operation in different parts of the world, and the union and harmony with which christians of different denominations unite in promoting these plans, clearly indicate a divine hand in their direction. Nay, sir, the subject on which we are now deliberating has been brought to public view, nearly at the same time in different parts of our country. In New Jersey, New York, Indiana, Tennessee, Virginia, and perhaps other places, not known to me, the public attention seems to have been awakened, as from a slumber to this subject. The belief that I have mentioned leads christians to look with anxious solicitude and joyful hope to every movement, which they believe to be instrumental in accomplishing the great designs of Providence. They will receive your proposal with joy and support it with zeal; and, permit me to say, that it will be of no small consequence to gain the zealous support and co-operation of this portion of the community.

On the subject of expence, I should hope there would not be much difference of opinion. All are interested, though some portions of the community are more immediately so than others. We should consider that what affects a part of our country is interesting to the whole. Besides, it is a great national object, and ought to be supported by a national purse. And, as has been justly observed by the honorable gentleman in the chair, there ought to be a national atonement for the wrongs and injuries which Africa has suffered. For although the state legislatures commenced early after our independence to put a stop to the slave trade, and the national government interfered as soon as the constitution would permit, yet, as a nation, we cannot rid ourselves entirely from the guilt and disgrace attending that iniquitous traffic, until we, as a nation, have made every reparation in our power. If, however, more funds are wanting than it is thought expedient to appropriate out of the public treasury, the liberality and the humanity of our citizens will not suffer it to fail for want of pecuniary aid. I should be sorry, however, to see our government dividing any part of the honor and glory which cannot fail of attending the accomplishment of a work so great, so interesting, and which will tend so much to diffuse the blessings of civil liberty, and promote the happiness of man.

Among the objections which have been made, I must confess that I am most surprized at one which seems to be prevalent, to wit: that these people will be unwilling to be colonized—What, sir, are they not men? Will they not be actuated by the same motives of interest and ambition, which influence other men? Or will they pre-

fer remaining in a hopeless state of degradation for themselves and their children, to the prospect of the full enjoyment of the civil rights and a state of equality? What brought our ancestors to these shores? They had no friendly hand to lead them; no powerful human arm to protect them. They left the land of their nativity; the sepulchres of their fathers; the comforts of civilized society, and all the endearments of friends and relatives, and early associations, to traverse the ocean, to clear the forests; to encounter all the hardships of a new settlement, and to brave the dangers of the tomahawk and scalping knife. How many were destroyed! Sometimes whole settlements cut off by disease and hunger—by the treachery and cruelty of the savages; yet, were they not discouraged. What is it impels many Europeans daily to seek our shores, and to sell themselves for the prime of their life to defray the expence of their passages? It is that ruling, imperious desire, planted in the breast of every man; the desire of liberty, of standing upon an equality with his fellow men. If we were to add to these motives, the offer of land, and to aid in the expense of emigration, and of first settling, they cannot be so blind to their own interest, so devoid of every noble and generous feeling, as to hesitate about accepting of the offer. It is not a matter of speculation and opinion only. It has been satisfactorily ascertained, that numbers will gladly accept of the invitation. And when once the colony is formed, and flourishing, all other obstacles will be easily removed. It is for us to make the experiment and the offer—we shall then, and not till then, have discharged our duty. It is a plan in which all interests, all classes and descriptions of people may unite—in which all discordant feelings may be lost in those of humanity—in promoting “peace on earth and good will to men.”

Mr. *John Randolph* (of Roanoke) rose and said, that it had been properly observed by the chairman, that there was nothing in the proposition [*Referring to the resolutions which follow*] submitted to consideration which in the smallest degree touches another very important and delicate question, which ought to be left as much out of view as possible. But, Mr. R. said, it appeared to him that it had not been sufficiently insisted on, with a view to obtain the co-operation of all the citizens of the United States, not only that this meeting does not in any wise affect the question of negro slavery, but, as far as it goes, must materially tend to secure the property of every master in the United States over his slaves. It appeared to him that this aspect of the question had not been sufficiently presented to the public view. It was a notorious fact, he said, that the existence of this mixed and intermediate population of free negroes was viewed by every slave holder as one of the greatest sources of the insecurity, and also unprofitableness, of slave property; that they serve to excite in their fellow beings a feeling of discontent, of repining at their situation, and that they act as channels of communication not only between different slaves, but between the slaves of different districts; that they are the depositories of stolen goods, and the promoters of mischief. In a worldly point of view, then, without entering into the general question and apart from those higher and nobler motives which had been presented to the meeting, the

owners of slaves were interested in providing a retreat for this part of our population. There was no fear that this proposition would alarm them: they had been accustomed to think seriously of the subject. There was a popular work on agriculture, by John Taylor of Caroline, which was widely circulated and much confided in, in Virginia. In that book, much read because coming from a practical man, this description of people were pointed out as a great evil. If a place could be provided for their reception, and a mode of sending them hence, there were hundreds, nay thousands of citizens, who would by manumitting their slaves, relieve themselves from the cares attendant on their possession.

Mr. *Robert Wright* (of Md.) said he could not withhold his approbation of a measure, that had for its object the melioration of the lot of any portion of the human race, particularly of the free people of color, whose degraded state robs them of the happiness of self government, so dear to the American people. And, said he, as I discover the most delicate regard to the rights of property, I shall, with great pleasure, lend my aid to restore this unfortunate people to the enjoyment of their liberty; but I fear gentlemen are too sanguine in their expectations, that they would be willing to abandon the land of their nativity, so dear to man. However, I have no indisposition to give them that election by furnishing all the means contemplated. But, while we wish to promote the happiness of these free people of color, we ought to take care not to furnish the means of transporting out of the reach of the master his property.

Mr. *Caldwell* offered the following preamble and resolutions which were unanimously adopted.

The situation of the free people of Colour in the United States has been the subject of anxious solicitude, with many of our most distinguished citizens, from the first existence of our country as an independent nation; but the great difficulty and embarrassment attending the establishment of an infant nation, when first struggling into existence, and the subsequent convulsions of Europe, have hitherto prevented any great national effort to provide a remedy for the evils existing or apprehended.—The present period seems peculiarly auspicious to invite attention to this important subject, and gives a well grounded hope of success. The nations of Europe are hushed into peace; unexampled efforts are making in various parts of the world, to diffuse knowledge, civilization and the benign influence of the christian religion. The rights of man are becoming daily better understood; the legitimate objects of government, as founded for the benefit and intended for the happiness of men, are more generally acknowledged, and an ardent zeal for the happiness of the human race is kindled in almost every heart. Desirous of aiding in the great cause of philanthropy, and of promoting the prosperity and happiness of our country, it is recommended by this meeting to form an association or society for the purpose of giving aid and assisting in the colonization of the free people of colour in the United States.—Therefore

Resolved, That an association or society be formed for the purpose of collecting information and to assist in the formation and execution of a plan for the colonization of the free people of color,

with their consent,⁹ in Africa or elsewhere, as may be thought most advisable by the constituted authorities of the country.

Resolved, That Elias B. Caldwell, John Randolph, Richard Rush, Walter Jones, Francis S. Key, Robert Wright, James H. Blake, and John Peter, be a committee to present a respectful memorial to Congress, requesting them to adopt such measures as may be thought most advisable for procuring a territory in Africa or elsewhere, suitable for the colonization of the free people of color.

Resolved, That Francis S. Key, Bushrod Washington, Elias B. Caldwell, James Breckenridge, Walter Jones, Richard Rush and William G. D. Worthington, be a committee to prepare a constitution and rules for the government of the Association or Society, above mentioned, and report the same to the next meeting for consideration.

And the meeting adjourned until next Saturday evening, at six o'clock.

HENRY CLAY, *Chairman.*

THOR. DOUGHERTY, *Secretary.*

At an adjourned meeting of the citizens of Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria, and many others held in the Hall of the house of Representatives of the United States, on Saturday the 28th day of December 1816, for the purpose of receiving and considering, from the committees appointed to that duty at a previous meeting, a constitution of the Society, for meliorating the condition of the free people of color in the United States, by providing a colonial retreat on this or the continent of Africa; and a memorial to Congress requesting the sanction and co-operation of the general government in the object of the Institution aforesaid—a Constitution was reported by the committee appointed for that purpose; and having been discussed and amended, was then unanimously accepted by the Meeting, in the following words:

Article I.—This Society shall be called, “The American Society for colonizing the free people of color of the United States.”

Article II.—The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of color, residing in our country, in Africa, or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient. And the Society shall act, to effect this object in co-operation with the general government, and such of the states as may adopt regulations upon the subject.

Article III.—Every citizen of the United States, who shall subscribe these articles, and be an annual contributor of one dollar to the funds of the Society, shall be a member. On paying a sum not less than 30 dollars, at one subscription shall be a member of life.

Article IV.—The officers of this Society shall be, a President, thirteen Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Recorder, and a Board of Managers, composed of the above named officers, and twelve other members of the Society. They shall be annually elected by the members of the Society, at their annual meeting on new year's day, (except when that happens to be the Sabbath, and

then the next day) and continue to discharge their respective duties till others are appointed.

Article V.—It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Society, and of the Board of Managers, and to call meetings of the Society, and of the Board, when he thinks necessary, or when required by any three members of the board.

Article IV.—The Vice Presidents, according to seniority, shall discharge these duties in the absence of the President.

Article VII.—The Secretary shall take minutes of the proceedings, prepare and publish notices, and discharge such other duties as the Board, or the President, or in his absence the Vice President, according to seniority, (when the Board is not sitting) shall direct. And the Recorder shall record the proceedings and the names of the members, and discharge such other duties as may be required of him.

Article VIII.—The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of the funds of the Society, under such security as may be prescribed by the Board of Managers; keep the accounts, and exhibit a statement of receipts and expenditures at every annual meeting, and discharge such other duties as may be required of him.

Article IX.—The Board of Managers shall meet on the first Monday in January, the first Monday in April, the first Monday in July, and the first Monday in October, every year, and at such other times as the President may direct. They shall conduct the business of the Society, and take such measures for effecting its object as they shall think proper, or shall be directed at the meetings of the Society, and make an annual report of their proceedings. They shall also fill up all vacancies occurring during the year, and make such by-laws for their government as they may deem necessary, provided the same are not repugnant to this constitution.

Article X.—Every Society which shall be formed in the United States to aid in the object of this association, and which shall co-operate with its funds for the purposes thereof, agreeably to the rules and regulations of this Society, shall be considered auxiliary thereto, and its officers shall be entitled to attend and vote at all meetings of the Society, and of the Board of Managers.

The committee appointed for the purpose having reported a draft of a memorial to Congress, discussion arose respecting the same. Whereupon it was, on motion,

Resolved, That the committee appointed to prepare and present to Congress a memorial on the object of this Association be instructed to report the same to the annual meeting of the Society for its consideration.

On motion, it was also

Resolved, That the first election of officers of the Society shall be held on the first Wednesday in January ensuing; of which due notice shall be given by the Secretary in the public prints in the district of Columbia; and that meanwhile a book shall be opened for receiving subscriptions to the Constitution, at the Reading Rooms in Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria, at the Office of the National Intelligencer, and with the Secretary of this meeting.

And then the meeting adjourned.

THOS. DOUGHERTY, *Secretary*.

H. CLAY, *Chairman*.

Wednesday, January 1, 1817. The American Society for colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States, met this day, agreeably to the directions of the constitution. The hon. Henry Clay, chairman, Thomas Dougherty, secretary. The society proceeded to the election of its officers.

The honorable *Bushrod Washington* was unanimously elected president.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. William H. Crawford, of Georgia.
Hon. Henry Clay, of Kentucky.
Hon. William Phillips, of Massachusetts.
Col. Henry Rutgers, of New York.
Hon. John E. Howard,
Hon. Samuel Smith, } of Maryland.
Hon. John C. Herbert, }
John Taylor, of Caroline, Esq. of Virginia.
Gen. Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee.
Robert Ralston, Esq.
Richard Rush, Esq. } of Pennsylvania.
Gen. John Mason, of the District of Columbia.
Rev. Robert Finley, of New Jersey.

MANAGERS.

<i>Francis S. Key,</i>	<i>James H. Blake,</i>
<i>Walter Jones,</i>	<i>John Peter,</i>
<i>John Laird,</i>	<i>Edmund I. Lee,</i>
<i>Rev. Dr. James Laurie,</i>	<i>William Thornton,</i>
<i>Rev. Stephen B. Balch,</i>	<i>Jacob Hoffman,</i>
<i>Rev. Obadiah B. Brown,</i>	<i>Henry Carroll.</i>

Elias B. Caldwell, secretary.
W. G. D. Worthington, recording secretary.
David English, treasurer.

Resolved, That the president and board of managers be, and they are hereby instructed and required to present a memorial to congress on the subject of colonizing, with their consent, the free people of color of the United States, in Africa or elsewhere.

Mr. Clay having left the chair, Gen. Mason, one of the vice-presidents, presided as president.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to Mr. Clay, for the ability and attention with which he has presided as chairman of the meetings in organizing the society.

On motion of Mr. Herbert, Resolved unanimously, that the Rev. Robert Finley, be requested to close the meeting with an address to the Throne of Grace.

MEMORIAL of the President and board of Managers of the American society for colonizing the free people of color of the United States.

In the House of Representatives, January 14.—Read and ordered to lie on the table.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled—

“The memorial of the President and board of managers of the “American Society for Colonizing the free people of color of the United States,”

Respectfully shows,

That your memorialists are delegated by a numerous and highly respectable association of their fellow citizens, recently organized at the seat of government, to solicit Congress to aid with the power, the patronage, and the resources of the country, the great and beneficial object of their institution; an object deemed worthy of the earnest attention, and of the strenuous and persevering exertions, as well of every patriot, in whatever condition of life, as of every enlightened, philanthropic, and practical statesmen.

It is now reduced to be a maxim, equally approved in philosophy and practice, that the existence of distinct and separate casts, or classes, forming exceptions to the general system of policy adapted to the community, is an inherent vice in the composition of society: pregnant with baneful consequences, both moral and political, and demanding the utmost exertion of human energy and foresight to remedy or remove it. If this maxim be true in the general, it applies with peculiar force to the relative condition of the free people of colour in the United States; between whom and the rest of the community, a combination of causes, political, physical, and moral, has created distinctions, unavoidable in their origin, and most unfortunate in their consequences. The actual and prospective condition of that class of people; their anomalous and indefinite relations to the political institutions and social ties of the community, their deprivation of most of those independent, political, and social rights, so indispensable to the progressive melioration of our nature; rendered, by systematic exclusion from all the higher rewards of excellence, dead to all the elevating hopes that might prompt a generous ambition to excel; all these considerations demonstrate, that it equally imports the public good, as the individual and social happiness of the persons more immediately concerned; that it is equally a debt of patriotism and of humanity, to provide some adequate and effectual remedy. The evil has become so apparent, and the necessity for a remedy so palpable, that some of the most considerable of the slaveholding states have been induced to impose restraints upon the practice of emancipation, by annexing conditions, which have no effect but to transfer the evil from one state to another; or, by inducing other states to adopt countervailing regulations, end in the total abrogation of a right, which benevolent or conscientious proprietors had long enjoyed under all the sanctions of positive law and of ancient usage. Your memorialists beg leave, with all defer-

ence, to suggest that the fairest and most inviting opportunities are now presented to the general government, for repairing a great evil in our social and political institutions, and at the same time for elevating, from a low and hopeless condition, a numerous and rapidly increasing race of men, who want nothing but a proper theatre, to enter upon the pursuit of happiness and independence, in the ordinary paths which a benign Providence has left open to the human race. Those great ends, it is conceived, may be accomplished by making adequate provision for planting, in some salubrious and fertile region, a colony, to be composed of such of the above description of persons as may choose to emigrate; and for extending to it the authority and protection of the United States, until it shall have attained sufficient strength and consistency to be left in a state of independence.

Independently of the motives derived from political foresight and civil prudence, on the one hand, and from moral justice and philanthropy on the other; there are additional considerations and more expanded views to engage the sympathies and excite the ardor of a liberal and enlightened people. It may be reserved for our government, (the first to denounce an inhuman and abominable traffic, in the guilt and disgrace of which most of the civilized nations of the world were partakers) to become the honorable instrument, under Divine Providence, of conferring a still higher blessing upon the large and interesting portion of mankind, benefitted by that deed of justice; by demonstrating that a race of men, composing numerous tribes, spread over a continent of vast and unexplored extent, fertility, and riches; known to the enlightened nations of antiquity; and who had yet made no progress in the refinements of civilization; for whom history has preserved no monuments of arts or arms: that even this, hitherto, ill-fated race, may cherish the hope of beholding at last the orient star revealing the best and highest aims and attributes of man. Out of such materials, to rear the glorious edifice of well ordered and polished society, upon the deep and sure foundations of equal laws and diffusive education, would give a sufficient title to be enrolled among the illustrious benefactors of mankind; whilst it afforded a precious and consolatory evidence of the all prevailing power of liberty, enlightened by knowledge and corrected by religion. If the experiment, in its more remote consequences, should ultimately tend to the diffusion of similar blessings through those vast regions and unnumbered tribes, yet obscured in primeval darkness; reclaim the rude wanderer, from a life of wretchedness, to civilization and humanity; and convert the blind idolater, from gross and abject superstitions, to the holy charities, the sublime morality and humanizing discipline of the Gospel; the nation, or the individual that shall have taken the most conspicuous lead in achieving, the benignant enterprize, will have raised a monument of that true and imperishable glory, founded in the moral approbation and gratitude of the human race; unapproachable to all but the elected instruments of divine beneficence:—a glory, with which the most splendid achievements of human force or power must sink in the competition, and appear insignificant and vulgar in the comparison. And above all should it be considered, that the nation or the individual, whose en-

ergies have been faithfully given to this august work, will have secured, by this exalted beneficence, the favor of that being "whose compassion is over all his works," and whose unspeakable rewards will never fail to bless the humblest effort to do good to his creatures.

Your memorialists do not presume to determine, that the views of congress will be necessarily directed to the country to which they have just alluded. They hope to be excused for intimating some of the reasons which would bring that portion of the world before us, when engaged in discovering a place the most proper to be selected, leaving it, with perfect confidence, to the better information and better judgment of your honorable body to make the choice.

Your memorialists, without presuming to mark out, in detail, the measures which it may be proper to adopt in furtherance of the object in view; but implicitly relying upon the wisdom of congress to devise the most effectual measures, will only pray, that the subject may be recommended to their serious consideration, and that, as an humble auxiliary in this great work, the association, represented by your memorialists, may be permitted to aspire to the hope of contributing its labors and resources.

BUSH. WASHINGTON, *President.*

The memorial, after being read and ordered to be printed, was referred to the *Committee on the Slave Trade*, Messrs. Pickering, Comstock, Condict, Tucker, Taggart, Cilly, and Hooks: their report and resolution follow:

REPORT on colonizing the free people of color of the United States.

February 11, 1817. Read, and committed to a committee of the whole house on Monday next.

The committee to whom was referred the memorial of the president and board of managers of the "American Society for colonizing the free people of color of the United States," have had the same under their deliberate consideration. The subject is of such magnitude, and attended with so many difficulties, it is with much diffidence they present their views of it to the House.

Were it simply a question of founding a colony, numerous and well known precedents show with what facility the work might be accomplished. Every new territory established by our government, constitutes, indeed, a colony, formed with great ease; because it is only an extension of homogeneous settlements. But in contemplating the colonization of the free people of colour, it seemed obviously necessary to take a different course. Their distinct character and relative condition, render an entire separation from our own states and territories indispensable. And this separation must be such as to admit of an indefinite continuance. Hence, it seems manifest that these people cannot be colonized within the limits of the United States. If they were not far distant, the rapidly extending settlements of our white inhabitants would soon reach them; and the evil now felt would be renewed; probably with aggravated mischief. Were the colony to be remote, it must be planted on lands now owned and occupied by the native tribes of the country. And could a territory be purchased, the transporting of the colonists thither, would be

vastly expensive, their subsistence for a time difficult, and a body of troops would be required for their protection. And after all, should these difficulties be overcome, the original evil would at length recur, by the extension of our white population. In the mean time, should the colony so increase as to become a nation, it is not difficult to foresee the quarrels and destructive wars which would ensue; especially if the slavery of people of color should continue, and accompany the whites in their migrations.

Turning our eyes from our own country, no other, adapted to the colony in contemplation, presented itself to our view, nearer than Africa, the native land of negroes; and probably that is the only country on the globe to which it would be practicable to transfer our free people of color with safety, and advantage to themselves and the civilized world. It is the country which, in the order of Providence, seems to have been appropriated to that distinct family of mankind. And while it presents the fittest asylum for the free people of color, it opens a wide field for the improvements in civilization, morals, and religion, which the humane and enlightened memorialists have conceived it possible, in process of time, to spread over that great continent.

Should the measure suggested be approved, an important question occurs—In what way shall its execution be essayed?

A preliminary step would be, to provide for the perfect neutrality of the colony, by the explicit assent and engagement of all the civilized powers, whatever dissensions may at any time arise among themselves.

The next important question is:—Will it be expedient to attempt the establishment of a new colony in Africa, or to make to Great Britain a proposal to receive the emigrants from the United States into her colony of Sierra Leone?

At Sierra Leone, the first difficulties have been surmounted; and a few free people of color from the U. S. have been admitted. A gradual addition from the same source (and such would be the natural progress) would occasion no embarrassment, either in regard to their sustenance or government. Would the British government consent to receive such an accession of emigrants however eventually considerable, from the United States? Would that government agree that at the period when that colony shall be capable of self-government and self-protection, it shall be declared independent? In the mean time, will it desire to monopolize the commerce of the colony? This would be injurious to the colonists, as well as to the United States. Should that country, from the nature of its soil and other circumstances, hold out sufficient allurements, and draw to it, from the United States, the great body of the free people of colour, these would form its strength, and its ability to render its commerce an object of consideration. Now as the great and permanent benefit of the *colonists*, was the fundamental principles of the establishment—will the British government decline a proposition calculated to give to that benefit the important extension which will arise from a freedom of commerce? To those, at least, at whose expense, and by whose means, the colony, shall be essentially extended? Should an agreement with Great Britain be effected, no farther negotiation, nor any extraordinary ex-

penditure of money, will be required. The work already commenced will be continued—simply that of carrying to Sierra Leone, all who are willing to embark.

It would seem highly desirable to confine the migrations to a single colony. The two distinct and independent colonies, established and protected by two independent powers, would naturally imbibe the spirit and distinctions of their patrons and protectors, and put in jeopardy the peace and prosperity of both. Even the simple fact of separate independence, would eventually tend to produce collisions and wars between the two establishments, (unless, indeed, they were far removed from each other) and perhaps defeat the further humane and exalted views of those who projected them. The spirit which animated the founders of the colony of Sierra Leone, would be exerted to effect a union of design, and the cordial co-operation of the British government with our own; and, it might be hoped, not without success. It would be in accordance with the spirit of a stipulation in the last treaty of peace; by which the two governments stands pledged to each other, to use their best endeavours to effect the entire abolition of the traffick in slaves, while the proposed institution would tend to diminish the quantity of slavery actually existing.

If, however, such enlarged and liberal views should be wanting, then the design of forming a separate colony might be announced, by the American ministers, to the maritime powers; and their guarantee of the neutrality of the colony obtained.

Your committee do not think it proper to pursue the subject any further at this time; but that the government should wait the result of the suggested negotiations; on which ulterior measures must depend.

In conclusion, your committee beg leave to report a joint resolution, embracing the views herein before exhibited.

JOINT RESOLUTION for abolishing the traffick in Slaves, and the Colonization of the Free People of Colour of the United States. February 11, 1817. Read, and committed to a committee of the whole house on Monday next.

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the U. S. of America, in Congress assembled, That the President be, and he is hereby authorised to consult and negotiate with all the governments where ministers of the United States are, or shall be accredited, on the means of effecting an entire and immediate abolition of the traffick in slaves. And, also, to enter into a convention with the government of Great Britain, for receiving into the colony of Sierra Leone, such of the free people of color of the United States as, with their own consent, shall be carried thither; stipulating such terms as shall be most beneficial to the colonists, while it promotes the peaceful interests of Great Britain and the United States. And should this proposition not be accepted, then to obtain from Great Britain, and the other maritime powers, a stipulation, or a formal declaration to the same effect, garranteeing a permanent neutrality for any colony of free people of color, which, at the expense and under the

auspices of the United States, shall be established on the African coast.

Resolved, That adequate provision shall hereafter be made to defray any necessary expenses which may be incurred in carrying the preceding resolution into effect.

It is doubtful whether the preceding report will be acted upon by congress this session; nor can we decide upon the course which the national legislature will hereafter pursue relative to this subject. The friends, however, of efforts of the kind proposed, will welcome this commencement of a new era of benevolent exertions in behalf of a depressed and needy class of the community. It is hoped that colonization societies will be formed in different parts of our country,* and that whatever interesting information may be collected, relative to this subject, will be forwarded to the secretary of the American Colonization Society, residing in this city. It is expected that a correspondence will be soon opened, by the direction of the society, with certain members of the African Institution in London, and with other societies and individuals in different places, for the purpose of promoting the object presented to the public in this pamphlet.

BRIEF SKETCH OF SIERRA LEONE, IN 1814.

Sierra Leone is a country on the western coast of Africa, lying between 7 and 10 degrees N. latitude. A river of the same name passes through it, nearly in the centre. The land on the banks of the river, for a considerable distance, is peculiarly fertile, and furnishes a soil well adapted to the cultivation of cotton, rice, sugar, and most of the other tropical productions. The heat of the climate is moderated by regular breezes from the sea, and is found in a good degree congenial to American and European constitutions.

This colony was established in 1791, under the direction of the Sierra Leone Company in London. The design of the company was to cultivate the lands, to open a trade in that country, and gradually to civilize and improve the Africans. The first settlers were about 200 whites and a number of free blacks from Nova Scotia. They commenced the building of a town, called Freetown, on the banks of the Sierra Leone, divided the land into lots to each individual, and thus laid the basis of a prosperous colony. The natives were friendly, and in less than three years the schools were regularly attended by more than three hundred children. But unhappily a reverse of fortune awaited them; their fair prospects were obscured, and their reasonable expectations defeated. In 1794, a French squadron, contrary to implied promise, and with wanton cruelty, attacked the colony, dispersed the inhabitants, captured the vessels, plundered and burnt the houses. The colony has since been taken under the care of the English government, and is now in a flourishing state.

In 1811 the population in the colony amounted to about 2000,

* A colonization society, auxiliary to the one formed in this city, has lately been organized in New Jersey.

exclusive of several hundred natives, who had emigrated from the adjacent country, and were hired by the colonists as labourers. The emigrants have probably been enrolled in the list of citizens. The present population, therefore, may be about 3000.

There is a disposition among the colonist generally, to encourage new settlers who come among them, either to cultivate the land, or engage in commercial pursuits.

The principal employment of the colonys is agriculture. The productions of the soil abundantly reward their labor. It is believed that coffee, rice and cotton have become articles of exportation. Rewards have been proposed to encourage their cultivation. This tends to excite an honorable emulation among the citizens and to promote among them habits of industry, and a spirit of enterprize.

The education of children is a subject of particular attention. There are a number of schools in the colony, one of which is designed for the instruction of adults, the others for children. The present number of children in the colony exceeds 1000. Most of these are placed in the schools, and instructed in all the necessary branches of education. Separate schools are assigned to the boys and to the girls. Great order is preserved. Here they are not only initiated in the rudiments of literature, but in this state of discipline are taught the important practical lessons of obedience, subjection, sobriety, and industry. Here are laid the stamina of their characters; here are formed their dispositions, habits, and principles; and here, in a great degree, rest the future hopes and prospects of the colony.

The state of religious instruction also deserves notice. They have six places for public worship, where the people generally and regularly assemble. The hours for public worship on the Sabbath are 5 and 10 in the morning, and 2 and 6 in the evening; other religious meetings, during the week, are usually attended at 5 in the morning and 6 in the evening.

Several years ago a society was established in the colony among the people of color for the promotion of the Christian religion. We have before us a copy of one of their addresses to the religious public, which we should be happy to insert would our limits permit. It breathes a spirit of fervent piety. They express gratitude for their mercies, lament the misery and degradation of their African brethren, complain of the slave trade, and finally exhort their brethren to confide in that Being whose government and providence are universal.

Another favorable trait in the character of the colony, is the existence of a society for the relief of the poor and infirm. This was instituted in 1810; the Governor is its patron, and the principal gentlemen in the colony are among its active members. The society is under good regulations, and is calculated to be eminently useful; its good effects on the dispositions and manners of the Africans can be easily imagined.

The civil state of the colony next invites attention. There are five courts in the colony, viz. the court of quarter sessions, the mayor's court, the court of requests, the police court, and the court of vice admiralty. The court of quarter sessions meets quarterly; the governor presides as judge; the jury consists of twelve men selected promiscuously from the Europeans and the people of colour. The

mayor's court meets quarterly. The court of requests meets weekly; its power is limited to the trial of persons for debts not exceeding two pounds. The police court meets weekly: their business is confined to the trial of persons for disorderly conduct. The court of vice-admiralty is held whenever occasion may require.

The colonists are governed entirely by British law, are usually quiet and peaceable, and are disposed to abide by the decisions of their civil magistrates.

There was a society established in the colony in 1812, by the name of the Friendly Society. This society opened a correspondence with the African Institution in London. An intercourse was also kept up between the Societies, in order to encourage the African settlers with a good market for their produce. The Friendly Society commenced with 90*l.* sterling. In the spring of 1816, the society was worth 1200*l.* sterling.

Early in the winter of 1815, about thirty people of colour left Boston with a view of settling themselves in the British colony at Sierra Leone, in Africa. The vessel in which they sailed was the property and under the command of the celebrated Paul Cuffee. Capt. Cuffee has returned to this country, and brings letters from the emigrants to their friends and benefactors. We have seen one of the letters dated April, 1816. It states that they all arrived safe at Sierra Leone, after a passage of 55 days, and were welcomed by all in the colony. The place is represented as "good." They have fruits of all kinds, and at all seasons of the year. The governor gave each family a lot of land in the town, and fifty acres of "good land" in the country, or more in proportion to their families. Their land in the country is about two miles from town. They have plenty of rice and corn, and all other food that is good. There were five churches in the colony, and 3 or 4 schools, in one of which there were 150 female Africans, who are taught to read "the word of God."

1877
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