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MR. CLAY'S ADDRESS
ON AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

Delivered at Frankfort, Ky. before the Colonization Society.

[Concluded from our last.]

This brings me to the consideration of the particular scheme of the American Colonization Society, to which this is Auxiliary. That scheme does not owe the first conception of its design to any individuals, by whose agency the Society was first constituted. Several of them, and especially the late Rev. Mr. Finley, of New Jersey, and Mr. Caldwell, of the District of Columbia, were entitled to great praise for their spirited exertions in the formation and organization of the Society. But the original conception of such a project is to be traced to a date long anterior to their laudable efforts on this subject. However difficult it might have been supposed to be in the execution, it was an obvious remedy, and the suggestion of it may be referred back to a period as remote as the Revolutionary War. The State of Virginia, always pre-eminent in works of benevolence, prior to the formation of the American Colonization Society, by two distinct acts of her Legislature, separated by intervals of time of sufficient length to imply full deliberation, expressed her approbation of the plan of colonization.

In considering the project of the American Colonization Society, our first inquiry should be into what it really is; then what it has done; and finally what it is capable of achieving. It is a voluntary association formed for benevolent purposes, as must be freely acknowledged by all, if they should even prove an experiment to be impracticable. Its aim is to transport to the Western shores of Africa, from the United States, all such free persons of colour as choose voluntarily to go. From its origin, and throughout the whole period of its existence, it has constantly disclaimed all intentions whatever of interfering in the smallest degree, with the rights of property, or the object of emancipation, gradual or immediate. It is not only without inclination but it is without power, to make any such interference. It is not even a chartered or incorporated company; and it has no other foundation than that of Bible Societies or any other christian or charitable unincorporated companies in our country. It knows that the subject of emancipation belongs exclusively to the several States in which slavery is tolerated; and to individual proprietors of slaves in those States under and according to their laws. It hopes indeed, (and I trust that there is nothing improper or offensive in the hope) that if it shall demonstrate the practicability of the successful removal to Africa of free persons of color, with their own consent, the cause of emancipation, either by States or by individuals, may be incidentally advanced. That hope is founded not only on the true interest of both races of our population, but upon the assertion, so repeatedly made that the great obstacle to emancipation arose out of the difficulty of a proper disposal of manumitted slaves. Its pecuniary means, applicable to the design of the institution, are voluntarily contributed by benevolent States or individuals. The States of Virginia and Maryland, besides numerous pious or generous persons throughout the U. States, have aided the society.

Such was the object of the American Colonization Society, organized at the City of Washington about thirteen years ago. Auxiliary institutions have been formed, in various parts of the Union to aid and co-operate with the parent association, which have limited their exertions chiefly to the transmission to the Treasurer of the Society, of such funds as they could collect by the voluntary contributions of benevolent and charitable individuals. The Auxiliary Society for the State of Kentucky, which I now address, was organized at the commencement of the present year.

The American Colonization Society, so constituted, with such objects and such means, shortly after its formation, went into operation It transacts its business at home, principally through a Board of Managers which for the sake of convenience is fixed in the Metropolis of the Union, and in Africa, through an agent abiding there and acting under instructions received from the Board. The Society has an annual session in the city of Washington which is attended by its members, and by representatives from such of the auxiliary institutions as can conveniently depute them, at which sessions the Board of Managers makes a report of the general condition of the affairs of the society, during the previous year.

It would be an inexcusable trespass upon your time to enter into a minute narrative of all the transactions, of the society from its commencement up to this time. Those who choose to examine them particularly, will find them recorded in the several reports of the Board of Managers, which from time to time have been published under its direction and authority. It will suffice at present to say, that one of the earliest acts of the Society was to despatch a competent agent to Africa, to explore its coasts and the countries bordering upon them, and to select a suitable spot for the establishment of the contemplated colony. The society was eminently fortunate in the choice of its agent, as it has been generally in those whom it subsequently engaged in its service. A selection was finally made of a proper district of country, a purchase was effected from the native authorities, to which additions have been made, as the growing wants of the colony, actual or anticipated, required. The country so acquired upon terms as moderate as those on which the Government of the Union extinguishes the Indian title to soil within the United States, embraces large tracts of fertile land, capable of yielding all the rich and varied products of the Tropics, possessing great commercial advantages, with an extent of sea coast from 150 to 200 miles, and enjoys a salubrious climate, well adopted to the negro Constitution, and not so fatal to that of the whites as many thickly peopled parts of the United States.

Within that district of country, the society founded a colony, under the denomination of Liberia, established towns, laid off plantations for the colonists and erected military works for their defence. Annually, and as often as the pecuniary circumstances of the society would admit, vessels from the ports of the United States have been sent to Liberia, laden with emigrants and with utensils, provisions and other objects for their comfort. No difficulty has been experienced in obtaining as many colonists as the means of the society were competent to transport. They have been found, indeed altogether inadequate to accommodate all who were willing and anxious to go. The rate of expense of transportation and subsistence during the voyage, per head, was greater in the earlier voyages. It was subsequently reduced to about $20, and is believed to be susceptible of considerable further reduction. The number of colonists, of both sexes, amounts now to about 1500.

The Colony, in the first periods of its existence, had some collisions with the native tribes, which rose to such a height as to break out in open war, about four or five years ago. The war was conducted by the late gallant Reverend Mr. Ashmum, with singular good judgement and fortune, and was speedily brought to a successful close. It had the effect to impress upon the natives, a high idea of the skill, bravery and power of the colonists, and having since become better acquainted with them, perceived the advantages of the colony, and gradually acquired a taste for it commerce and arts, no further misunderstanding with them, is apprehended, and the colony is daily acquiring a salutary influence over them.

The colony has a government adequate to the protection of the rights of persons and property, and to the preservation of order.—The agent of the society combines the functions of governor, commander in-chief, and highest judicial officer. The colonists share in the government, and elect various officers necessary to the adminstration. They appoint annually Boards or Committees of public works, of agriculture and of health, which are charged with the superintendence of those important interests. It has established schools for the instruction of youth, and erected houses of public worship, in which divine service is regularly performed. And it has a public library of twelve hundred volumes, and a printing press, which issues periodically a gazette. The colonists follow the mechanical arts, or agriculture, or commerce, as their inclinations or attainments prompt them. The land produces rice, caseda, coffee, potatoes, and all kinds of garden vegetables; and is capable of yielding sugar cane, indigo, in short, all the productions of the Tropics. It is rich, easily tilled, and yields two crops of many articles in the circle of a year. They carry on an advantageous commerce with the natives by exchanges for ivory, gums, dye stuffs, drugs and other articles of African origin; and with the U. States, which is annually increasing; and which amounted last year to $60,000, in the produce of the colony, and in objects acquired by their traffic with the natives; receiving, in return, such supplies of American and other manufactures as are best adapted to their wants.

Such is the present condition of the Colony, according to the latest intelligence. Here the society may pause and with its pious and enlightened patrons and a generous public, look back with proud satisfaction, on the work, which with the blessings of Providence, has so prospered. That, in its progress, it has met with obstacles and experienced discouragements, is most true. What great human undertaking was ever exempt from them? Its misfortunes in Africa have been similar in character, though it is confidently believed, less in degree than those which generally attend the establishment of distant colonies, in foreign lands, amidst ignorant and untutored savages. A large portion of the deaths which have taken place may be attributed to rash exposure, and other imprudencies, under an untried sun, and subject to the action of a strange climate. But the Colony can triumphantly exhibit its bills of mortality, in comparison with those of colonies, in their early foundation, on this or any other continent. And experience justifies the hope, that the instances of mortality will constantly diminish with the augmented population, means, and strength of the colony.

But at home, in the parent country, here in the United States, notwithstanding the concurrence of so many powerful motives recommending success to the exertions of the society, has it met with the most serious opposition and bitter denunciation. At one time, it has been represented as a scheme to forge stronger and perpetual chains for the slaves among us. Then, that it had a covert aim to emancipate them all immediately, and throw them, with all their imperfections, loose upon society. Those who judged less unfavorably of the purposes of the institution, pronounce it a bright vision, impracticable in its means, and Utopian in its end. There is unfortunately, in every community, a class not small, who, devoid themselves of the energy necessary to achieve any noble enterprise, and affecting to penetrate with deeper sagacity into the projects of others pronounce their ultimate failure, with self complacency and challenge by anticipation, the merit of prophetic wisdom. Unmoved by these erroneous and unfriendly views, the Society, trusting to the vindication which time and truth never fail to bring, has proceeded steadily and preservingly in its great work. It has not been deceived. It has every every where found some generous patrons and ardent friends.

The Legislatures of more than half the States of this enlightened Union, among which I am happy to be able to mention our own, have been pleased to express their approbation of the scheme. It has conciliated the cordial support of the pious clergy of every denomination in the United States. It has been countenanced and aided by that fair sex, which is ever prompt to contribute its exertions in works of charity and benevolence, because it always acts from the generous impulses of pure and uncorrupted hearts.—And the society enrolls amongst its members and patrons some of the most distinguished men of our country, in its Legislative, Executive, and Judicial councils. We should be guilty of an unpardonable omission, if we did not, on this occasion, mingle our regrets with those of the whole people of these States on account of the lamented death of one of them, which has recently occurred. He was the President of the American Colonization Society from its origin and throughout the entire period of its existence.—Like the Father of his country, his illustrious relative, whose name he bore and whose affection he enjoyed, he was mild and gentle, firm and patriotic. The Bench of which he was an ornament, and the Bar of which he was the delight, feeling his great loss, deeply share with us all in the grief which it produces.

The society presents to the American public no project for emancipation, no new chains for those who unhappily are now in bondage, no scheme that is impracticable. It has no power, and it seeks none. It employs no compulsion, and it desires to employ none. It addresses itself solely to the understanding; its revenue flows from spontaneous grants, and all its means and agents and objects are voluntary.

The society believe it is within the compass of reasonable exertions to transport annually to the colony of Liberia, a number of free persons of color, with their own voluntary consent, equal to the annual increase of all that class in the U. States. That annual increase, estimated according to the return of the last census, from the parent stock of 233,530, at the rate of augmentation of 2½ per cent. per annum, may be stated to be 6,000. Estimating the whole expense of the voyage at 20 dollars per head, the total cost of their transportation will be 120,000. Is this sum of such an appaling amount as to transcend the ability of the people of the United States? All admit the utility of the separation of the free people of color from the residue of the population of the U. States, if it be practicable. It is desirable for them, for the slaves of the U. States and for the white race. Here invincible prejudices exclude them from the enjoyment of the society of the whites, and deny them all the advantages of freemen. The bar, the pulpit and our legislative halls are shut to them, by the irresistible force of public sentiment. No talents, however great, no piety, however pure and devoted, no patriotism, however ardent, can secure their admission. They constantly hear the accents and behold the triumphs, of a liberty which here they can never enjoy. In all the walks of society, on every road which lies before others to honor and fame, and glory, a moral incumbus pursues and arrests them, paralyzing all the energies of the soul and repressing every generous emotion of laudable ambition. Their condition is worse than that of the fabled Tantalus, who could never grasp the fruits and water which seemed within his reach. And when they die,

'Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise.'

Why should such an unfortunate class desire to remain among us? Why should they not wish to go to the land of their forefathers, where, in the language of the eloquent Irish barrister, they would 'stand redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the mighty genius of universal emancipation.'

The vices of this class do not bring from any inherent depravity in their natural constitution, but from their unfortunate situation. Social intercourse is a want which we are prompted to gratify by all the properties of our nature. And as they cannot obtain it in the better circles of society, nor always among themselves, they resort to slaves, and to the most debased and worthless of the whites. Corruption, and all the train of petty offences are the consequence. Proprietors of slaves in whose neighborhood any free colored family is situated, know how infectious and pernicious this intercourse is. And the penal records of the tribunals, especially in the large cities, bear frightful testimony to the disproportionate number of crimes committed by the free people of color. The evil of their increase in those cities is so enormous, as to call loudly for effective remedy. It has been so sensibly felt in a neighbouring city (Cincinnati) as to require, in the opinion of the public authorities, the enforcement of the vigorous measure of expulsion of all who could not give guarantees of their good behaviour. Their congregation in our great capitals has given rise to a new crime, perpetrated by unprincipled whites, and of which persons of that unhappy colored race are the victims.

A New York paper of the 27th ult. but lately fell into my hands, in which I found the following articles: 'Beware of kidnappers! It is *well understood* that there is at present in this city, a gang of kidnappers, busily engaged in their vocation of stealing colored children for the Southern market? It is believed that three or four have been stolen within as many days. A little negro boy came to this city from the country, three or four days ago. Some strange white persons were very friendly to him, and yesterday morning he was mightily pleased that they had given him some new clothes. And the persons pretending thus to befriend him, entirely secured his confidence. This day he cannot be found. Nor can he be traced since seen with one of his new friends yesterday. There are suspicions of a foul nature, connected with some who serve the police in subordinate capacities. It is hinted that there may be those in some authority, not altogether ignorant of these diabolical practices. Let the public be on their guard.' To which the editor of the paper from this quotation is made, appends the following remarks. 'It is still fresh in the memories of all, 'that a cargo or rather drove of negroes was made up from this city and Philadelphia, about the time that the emancipation of all the negroes in this State took place under our present constitution, and were taken through Virginia the Carolinas, and Tennessee, and disposed of in the state of Mississippi. Some of those who were taken from Philadelphia, were persons of intelligence, and after they had been driven through the country in chains, and disposed of by sale on the Mississippi, wrote back to their friends, and were rescued from bondage.—The persons who were guilty of this abominable transaction are known, and now reside in the State of North Carolina, and very probably may be engaged in similar enterprises at the present time—at least there is reason to believe, that the system of kidnapping free persons of color from the Northern cities, has been carried on more extensively than the public are generally aware of.'

Whilst the concurrence is unanimous as to the propriety of the separation of the free colored race, and their removal to some other country, if it be practicable, opinions are divided as to the most proper place of their destination. Some prefer Hayti, others to set apart a district beyond the Rocky Mountains, within the limits of the territory of the United States, whilst much the larger number concur in the superior advantages of the plan of the American Colonization Society. The Society opposes no other scheme. All other projects, if they are executed, are perfectly compatible with its own and it wishes them full success. The more drains the better for this portion of our population. It would only deprecate the result of a distraction of the public attention amidst a variety of proposals and a consequent failure to concentrate the energies of the community on any one of them.

Hayti is objectionable as the sole place of their removal on various accounts. It is too limited in its extent. Although a large island, containing considerable quantities of unseated land, it is incompetent as an asylum, during any great length of time, for the free persons of the U. S. It possesses no advantages, either in the salubrity of its climate or the fertility of its soil, over the Western Coast of Africa. The productions of both countries are nearly the same. The expense of transportation to the one or the other is nearly the same. The emigrants would be in a state of dependence on the present inhabitants of the island, who have more intelligence and have made greater advances in civilization, and moreover possess all the power of the Government. They speak a different language. It should not be the policy of the U. S. when they consider the predominant power of the island, and its vicinity to the southern states to add strength to it. And finally, Hayti is destitute of some of those high moral considerations which belong to the foundation of a colony in Africa.

The country west of the Rocky Mountains is also objectionable on several grounds. The expense of transportation of emigrants to it, whether by sea or inland, would be incomparably greater than to Africa. They would be thrown in the midst of Indian tribes, to whom they are as incongruous as with the whites. Bloody and exterminating wars would be the certain consequence; and the U. States would be bound to incur great expense in defending them and preserving peace. Finally, that wave of the European race which rose on the borders of the Atlantic, swept over the Alleghany Mountains reached the Mississippi, and ascended the two great rivers which unite near St. Louis, will at no distant day pass the Rocky Mountains, and strike the Pacific, where it would again produce that very contact between discordant races which it is so desirable to avoid.

The Society has demonstrated the practicability of planting a colony on the shores of Africa. Its exertions have been confined exclusively to the free colored people of the United States, and to those of them who are willing to go. It has neither purpose nor power to extend them to the larger portion of that race held in bondage. Throughout the whole period of its existence this disclaimer has been made, and incontestible facts establish its truth and sincerity. It is now repeated, in its behalf, that the spirit of misrepresentation may have no pretext for abusing the public ear. But, although its scheme is so restricted, the society is aware, and rejoices that the principle of African colonization, which it has developed, admits of wider scope and more extensive application, by those States and private individuals, who may have the power and the inclination to apply it.

The slave population of the United States, according to the last returns of their census, as was shown more in detail on another occasion, increased in a ratio of about 46,000 per annum. It may, perhaps, now be estimated at not less than 50,000. It was said on that occasion: 'Let us suppose, for example, that the whole population at present of the United States is twelve millions, of which ten may be estimated of the Anglo Saxon, and two of the African race. If there could be annually transported from the United States an amount of the African portion equal to the annual increase of the whole of that cast, whilst the European race should be left to multiply, we should find, at the termination of the period of duplication, whatever it may be, that the relative proportions would be as twenty to one. And if the process were continued during a second term of duplication, the population would be as forty to two—one which would eradicate every cause of alarm or solicitude from the breasts of the most timid.—But the transportation of Africans, by creating, to the extent to which it might be carried, a vacuum in society, would tend to accelerate the duplication of the European race, who, by all the laws of population, would fill up the void space.' To transport to Africa fifty thousand persons would cost one million of dollars upon the estimate before stated. One million of dollars applied annually, during a period of sixty or seventy years, would, at the end of it, so completely drain the United States of all that portion of their inhabitants, as not to leave many more than those few who are objects of curiosity in the countries of Europe. And is that sum, one tenth part of what the United States now annually appropriate, as a sinking fund, without feeling it, and which will soon not be requisite to the extinction of the national debt, capable of producing any suffering or creating any impediment in the execution of other great social objects of the American communities? What a vast moral debt to Africa, to the world, and to our common God, should we not discharge by the creation of a new sinking fund of such a paltry sum!

This estimate does not comprehend any indemnity to the owners of slaves for their value, if they are to be purchased for the purpose of colonization. It is presumable that States or individuals, no longer restrained from the execution of their benevolent wish to contribute their endeavors to blot out this great stain upon the American name, by the consideration of the difficulty of a suitable provision for liberated slaves, when they perceive the plan of colonization in successful operation, will voluntarily manumit many for the purpose of their emigration. One of the latest numbers of the National Intelligencer states the fact, that a recent offer has been made of 2000 slaves to the Society, to be sent to Liberia, which the want of funds alone prevents its accepting. If the reasoning before employed, founded upon the decline in value of that description of property, be correct, many will be disposed to emancipate from less disinterested motives. From some, or all of these sources, and from the free colored population, an amount may be annually obtained for the purposes of colonization, equal to the number of fifty-six thousand which has been supposed. As the work of colonization advances, the ability of the European race to promote it will increase, both from the augmentation of its numbers and of its wealth, and the relative diminution of the negro race. And, in the course of the progress of its execution, it will not be found a burthensome appropriation of some of the revenue of the people of the United States, to purchase slaves, if colonists cannot otherwise be obtained. Meanwhile it affords cause of the sincerest gratification, that in whatever extent the scheme of African colonization is executed, good is attained, without a solitary attendant evil.

I could not discuss the question of the extent of the respective powers of the various governments of this Union, without enlarging this address, already too much prolonged, in a most unreasonable degree. That the aggregate of the total powers is fully adequate to the execution of the plan of Colonization, in its greatest extent, is incontestible. How those powers, have, in fact, been divided and distributed between the General and State Governments, is a question for themselves to decide after careful investigation, and full deliberation. We may safely assume that there are some things which each system is competent to perform, towards the accomplishment of the great work. The General Government can treat with foreign Powers of the security of the Colony, and with the Emperor of Morocco, or other African Princes or States, for the acquisition of territory. It may provide in the Colony an asylum for natives of Africa introduced into the U. States, in contravention to their laws, and for their support and protection, as it has done. And it may employ portions of our Navy, whilst engaged in practising to acquire the needful discipline and skill, or in proceeding to their appointed cruizing stations, to transport emigrants from the United States to the Colony. Can a nobler service, in time of peace, be performed by the national flag than that of transporting under its stars and stripes to the land of their ancestors, the sons of injured Africa, there to enjoy the blessings of our pure religion and a real liberty? It can employ the Colony as the best and most efficacious instrument of suppressing the infamous slave trade.

Any of the States may apply, in their proper spheres, the powers which they possess, and the means at their command. They may remove restraints upon emancipation, imposed from a painful conviction that slavery, with all its undisputed ills, was better than manumission without removal. Such of them may as can safely and justly, abolish slavery, and follow the example of Pennsylvania, New York and other States. Any of them can contribute some pecuniary aid to the object. And if an enlargement of the Constitutional powers of the General Government be necessary and expedient, they are competent to grant it.

I have thus, gentlemen, presented a faint and imperfect sketch of what was contemplated by the American Colonization Society, to which you form an auxiliary, of what it has done, and of what the principle of African Colonization, which it has successfully illustrated, is susceptible, with due encouragement & adequate means, in the hands of competent authority. We ought not to be disheartened by the little which has been accomplished, in the brief space of thirteen years during which it has existed, or the magnitude and difficulties of the splendid undertaking which lies before us. In the execution of those vast schemes which effect the condition and happiness of large portions of the habitable globe time is necessary, which may appear to us mortals of long duration, but which in the eyes of Providence, or in comparison with the periods of National existence, is short and fleeting.

How long was it after Romulus and Remus laid the scanty foundations of their little state in the contracted limits of the Peninsula of Italy, before Imperial Rome burst forth, in all her astonishing splendor, the acknowledged mistress of the world? Ages past away before Carthage and other Colonies in ancient times, shone out in all their commercial and military glory. Several centuries have now elapsed since our forefathers first began in the morasses of James river, and on the rock of Plymouth, the work of founding this Republic, yet in its infancy. Eighteen hundred years have rolled over since the son of God, our blessed Redeemer offered himself, on Mount Calvary, a voluntary sacrifice for the salvation of our species; and more than half of mankind continue to deny his divine mission and the truth of his sacred word.

We may boldly challenge the annals of human nature for the record of any human plan, for the melioration of the condition or advancement of the happiness of our race, which promised more unmixed good, or more comprehensive beneficence than that of African Colonization, if carried into full execution. Its benevolent purpose is not limited by the confines of one Continent nor to the prosperity of a solitary race, but embraces two of the largest quarters of the earth, and the peace and happiness of both descriptions of their present inhabitants, with the countless millions of their posterity who are to succeed. It appeals for aid and support to the friends of liberty here and every where. The Colonists, reared in the bosom of this Republic, with a perfect knowledge of all the blessings which freedom imparts, although they have not always been able themselves to share them, will carry a recollection of it to Africa, plant it there, and spread it over her boundless territory. And may we not indulge the hope that, in a period of time not surpassing in duration, that of our own Colonial and National existence, we shall behold a confederation of Republican States, on the Western shores of Africa, like our own, with their Congress and annual Legislatures thundering forth in behalf of the rights of man and making tyrants tremble on their thrones? It appeals for aid and support to the friends of civilization throughout the world.

Africa, although a portion of it was among the first to emerge from barbarism, is now greatly in the rear of all the Continents, in knowledge, and in the arts and sciences America owes to the old world a debt of gratitude for the possession of them. Can she discharge it in any more suitable manner than that of translating them on a part of its own soil, by means of its own sons, whose ancestors were torn by fraud and violence from their native home and thrown here into bondage? It powerfully appeals for support to patriotism and humanity. If we were to invoke the greatest blessing on earth which Heaven in its mercy could not bestow on this nation, it would be the separation of the two most numerous races of its population and their comfortable establishment in distinct and distant countries. To say nothing of the greatest difficulty in the formation of our present happy Constitution, which arose out of this mixed condition of our people, nothing of the distracting Missouri question which was so threatening; nothing of others, springing from the same fruitful source which yet agitate us, who can contemplate the future without the most awful apprehensions! Who if this promiscuous residence of whites and blacks, of freemen and slaves, is forever to continue, can imagine the servile wars, the carnage and the crimes which will be its probable consequences, without shuddering with horror? It finally appeals emphatically for aid and support to the reverend clergy and sincere professors of our Holy Religion. If the project did not look beyond the happiness of the two races now in America, it would be entitled to their warmest

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