

AN

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

COLONIZATION SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY,

AT FRANKFORT,

On the 6th day of January, 1831.

BY ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE.

Let the oppressed go free.....ISAIAH, LVIII. 6.

FRANKFORT. K.

A. G. HODGES, PRINTER, COMMENTATOR OFFICE.

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1831

At a meeting of the Kentucky Colonization Society, January 6th,
1831—

Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of the Society are due to Robert J. Breckinridge, Esq. for the very able and eloquent address delivered by him, on this evening, and that Dr. Luke Munsell, John H. Hanna and James W. Denny, Esq'rs. be a committee to wait on him, and request a copy for publication.

Att. H. WINGATE, Rec. Sec'y.

JANUARY 7th, 1831.

GENTLEMEN:

In answer to your note of yesterday, and in compliance with the request of the Colonization Society of Kentucky, expressed in the resolution accompanying it, you will receive herewith a copy of the address alluded to.

Very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

RO. J. BRECKINRIDGE.

*L. Munsell,
Jno. H. Hanna and
Jas. W. Denny, Esq'rs.*

A D D R E S S.

WHEN the great Lawgiver of the Jews was perfecting that remarkable feature of his code, by which, at the end of every seven years, the debtor, the servant, and the oppressed, among the Hebrews, were to go out free among their brethren, he enforced its observance by the most striking and personal of all arguments: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." Again, after the lapse of a thousand years, when Israel was shorn of all her temporal glories, and the feeble remnant that gathered out of all the East around the sceptre of the house of David, was restored from a long and grievous captivity, it was among the first and most solemn exclamations of their gratitude: "We were bondmen, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage."

If there be any that now hear my voice who have aided in working out the civil redemption of this large empire; if there be any whose kindred have poured out their blood in achieving the glories which have fallen upon us; if there be any who cherish the high exploits of our mighty ancestors, and cultivate an unquenching love for the free and noble institutions which have descended to us, I beseech them to couple with the lofty emotions belonging to such scenes, the solemn recollection, that "we were bondmen." If any who hear me have been led, by the power of the everlasting God, into the liberty of his own sons, and who rejoicing in the hope of eternal life, look back upon the bondage out of which their souls have been redeemed, with unutterable gratitude to Him who gave himself for them, I pray them to bring to the discussion which lies before us, those feelings which are produced by the deep and sacred assurance, that "our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage."

And will He not remember others also? We have his own assurance, that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Will his justice sleep for ever? Will he not "behold the tears of such as are oppressed?" Will he not "judge the poor?" Will he not "save the children of the needy?" Will he not "break in pieces the oppressor?" The forsaken, the afflicted, the smitten of men, will he also utterly cast off? And who shall stand in the way of his righteous indignation? Who shall resist the stroke of his Almighty arm, or shield us from his fierce and consuming wrath? Alas! for that people, who resisting all the lessons of a wise experience, blind to the unchanging course

of the providence of God, and deaf to the continual admonitions of his eternal word, will madly elect to brave the fury of his just and full retribution! "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: Then shall they seek me, but shall not find me."

Such thoughts habitually crowd upon me when I contemplate those great personal and national evils, from which the system of operations which I stand here to advocate, seems to offer us some prospect of deliverance. The scheme of African Colonization, as exhibited by our National Society and its various auxiliaries, is a most noble conception. It is a stupendous plan—spanning the Atlantic and encircling in its wide embrace a nation of slaves, and a continent of heathens.

Africa is classed as one of the great divisions of the earth, and is a vast peninsular continent, extending from the 37th degree of north, to about the 34th degree of south latitude; and from the 17th degree of west, to the 51st degree of east longitude. Its greatest length is about five thousand miles, and its greatest breadth more than four thousand. Considering its peculiarly advantageous situation, it is surprising that, in all ages, it has been comparatively so little known by the rest of the world; for standing, as it were, in a central position, between the other three quarters, it affords a much more ready communication with Europe, Asia and America, than they do with each other. It is opposite to Europe along the Mediterranean, whose shores were the nursery of our race, in a line from east to west, for almost a thousand miles, the distance being seldom one hundred miles, and never that many leagues. It is over against Asia for a distance of one thousand three hundred miles, the whole length of the Red Sea, whose breadth sometimes does not exceed fifteen miles, and seldom one hundred and fifty. Its coast, for two thousand miles, lies opposite to America, at a distance of from five hundred to seven hundred leagues, if we include the islands; whereas America is scarce any where nearer to Europe than one thousand leagues, nor to Asia, except in the inhospitable climate of Kamschatka, than two thousand five hundred leagues.

At a period to which profane history does not reach, but on which the word of God sheds its holy light, Africa was planted by the descendants of Ham, the son of Noah. Cush settled in Lower Egypt, and from him were descended the ancient Æthiopians, known to us as the Nubians and Abyssinians, and embrac-

ing, also, those unknown nations inhabiting the equatorial regions of that continent. Misraim peopled what was known to the antients as the Thebais, Hermopolis, Memphis, and the Delta of the Nile—to us, as Upper and Lower Egypt. From him also were descended, among other people of Africa, the inhabitants of Colchis, the ancestors of the warlike Philistines, whose descendants, until this day, if learned men are to be credited, have occupied so large a space on the page of history. Phut peopled Lybia and Mauritania, embracing the kingdom of Fez, the Deserts, Algiers, and other portions. From these, with such additions as emigration and frequent conquest have given, it is probable that all the nations of Africa, however divided, mixed, or dispersed, originally came.

Agenor, an Egyptian, founded the Phœnecian Commonwealth and the Republic of Tyre. Cadmus, the son of Agenor, founded the Republic of Thebes, and introduced the use of letters into Greece. Cecrops, at the head of an Egyptian colony, founded the Athenian State, and gave laws to the barbarous hordes of Attica. If profane tradition is to be credited, these and other colonies from Africa, were driven out from their native regions by the first of the Shepherd Kings, (who were themselves the Amelekites, descendants of Canaan, another son of Ham,) who devastated Egypt at the head of two hundred and forty thousand warriors, and established at Tanais, the seat of that empire, under whose iron sway the chosen people of God groaned, under a despotism so bitter in its progress, so awful in its overthrow. There are several reflections here which wonderfully illustrate, upon this fated race, the vicissitudes which belong to all that is human. They who gave to our ancestors the first model of those institutions which deserve to be called free, have the longest bowed down under insupportable oppression. They who gave to Europe the first knowledge of the arts, and of human letters, have been shrouded in the longest and the deepest intellectual darkness. They who, in the career of resistless victory, first established the principle of national, perpetual and hereditary slavery, have the sorest, and the most unpitied, wept under that deep and unmitigated curse.

Certain portions of Africa were, as early as any other regions, erected into regular communities, after the re-peopling the earth by the descendants of Noah. That some of those communities very early attained to a high degree of cultivation, wealth and power, there is abundant evidence in profane history, in the Holy Scriptures, and in those extraordinary monuments of taste and magnificence, which placed beyond the farthest verge of knowledge, and as it were, beside its regular current, yet remain the wonder and astonishment of mankind. That their progress in immorality and crime, was equal to their ad-

vance in civilization, there remains no room to doubt. He who has dwelt much on such subjects, may consider this as in no way different from the ordinary course of events, and as accounting well enough for many of the calamities which have befallen them in subsequent ages. I dispute not with philosophy; but there is another view of the matter—and I would that philosophy were more frequently enticed to such contemplations—which has appeared to me most solemn and striking. Egypt was the most powerful of the kingdoms of Africa for many ages. As it stood on the threshold of the only entrance to that continent accessible to the ancients, and was itself the medium of all interior communication with it; as its boundaries, if well defined at all, were not accurately known to the nations of Asia and Europe; as their knowledge of her surrounding, tributary and allied states was still less accurate; as it was the uniform habit of all ancient conquerors, of whom Egypt produced many, to manifest the most extravagant pretensions to grandeur and empire; in fine, from a variety of such considerations, it is manifest to every scholar, that when the ancients speak of Egypt, their meaning is most generally to be understood as of a country vastly more extensive, than we, with our better knowledge, would attach to that term. If indeed we should frequently understand them as meaning all Africa known to them, we should not, perhaps, be far from the correct view of the subject.

At a period in her history scarcely less prosperous than any that had preceded it, and when she stood forth famous in arts and arms, the queen of nations; when there appeared beforehand, no probability of great reverses, and the Prince who filled her throne, boasted, as we are informed by Herodotus, “that no God could deprive him of his kingdom;” just then, when it would appear to human observation that the mercies of God were poured out profusely on Africa, his decree went forth against her: “From the tower of Syene, even unto the border of Ethiopia,” the curse of the Most High came unto the land. The seed of his chosen had been enticed and betrayed; they had reposed upon her, and been pierced with many sorrows. “Thou art like a young lion of the nations”—“I will spread my net over thee”—“I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations”—“I will make many people amazed at thee”—“Ashur is there and all her company”—“There is Elam and all her multitude”—“There is Mesheck, Tubal, and all her multitude”—“There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes”—“There be the princes of the North, all of them, and all the Zidonians”—“It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.” For more than two thousand years the annals of every people attest the fulfilment of this re-

markable prophecy. Conquered by the Persians, under Camby-
ses, within fifty years after this prediction; conquered again by
the Macedonians; subjugated and pillaged by the Romans, and
made the theatre of many of their bloodiest wars; overwhelm-
ed by the Saracens; subjugated, scourged and made desolate
by the Mamelukes; devastated by the Turks; overrun by the
French; for a hundred generations, made the battle field of na-
tions, and the constant victim of them all; and worse than all,
her children, for centuries together, swept into distant and hope-
less bondage—scattered and sifted throughout the universe, as
it is this day.

The discovery of America, which was destined to exert so exten-
sive and so benign an influence upon the European race, the de-
scendants of Japhet, added increased bitterness to the cup of afflic-
tion which seemed already overflowing for the children of Ham.
The first adventurers to the western continent and the islands al-
ong the atlantic coast, without the least remorse, reduced the sim-
ple and ignorant aborigines to a servitude so monstrous, that in the
island of Hispaniola alone, from the year 1508 to 1517, the In-
dians were reduced, by the the brutal oppression under which
they groaned, from sixty thousand to fourteen thousand souls;
and the extinction of this miserable remnant was hastened by
more aggravated calamities. You will observe that this whole-
sale butchery was perpetrated under the same execrable pretence
of political necessity, under which every public crime which
has disgraced our race, has found its constant defence. It was
sanctioned by a formal decree of the king of Spain, "that the ser-
vitude of the Indians was warranted by the laws both of God
and man." I have no intention of entering into details which
are not necessary to the complete understanding of the subject
before me. And perhaps enough has been said to show how
easy was the transition from Indian to African subjugation; from
crime perpetrated on a feeble and nearly extinguished race, to
similar crime inflicted on one more robust, more degraded, and
therefore more suitable to the purposes of an insatiable rapaci-
ty. Barthelemi de las Casas, Bishop of Chiapa, heading the
little band of ecclesiastics who still recognized the obligations
of justice and humanity to the Indians, beset the Spanish throne
with prayers in their behalf, until by a fatality, singular and
most unhappy, he saw their chains, which it was the object of
his life to break, riveted forever; and those whom he had de-
signed, in the madness of his zeal, as their substitutes in wretch-
edness, become only their fellows in slavery. As early as 1503,
a few negroes had been sent to the new world. In 1511 Ferdi-
nand permitted their importation in large numbers. Charles
the Fifth, on his accession to the throne, rejecting what was
wise and humane in the plans of Las Casas, and adopting so

much of them as was abhorrent to every virtuous feeling, granted an exclusive patent to one of his Flemish favourites, to import four thousand negroes into America. The patent was sold to certain Genoese merchants for twenty five thousand ducats. The Portuguese had found the trade in slaves, which had been long abolished in Europe, one of the first advantages derived from the discoveries in Africa. The Genoese, under the patent of the Emperor, found no difficulty in procuring the victims of their avarice, and were the first who brought into regular form that commerce in the souls and bodies of men, between Africa and America, which inflicts, of all things else, the most indelible stain on the character of mankind.

The first settlements which were made by the English on the continent of North America, were under the auspices of Corporations, or individuals, to whom extensive grants had been made by the English crown. The company that settled the colony of Virginia had monopolized its commerce up to the year 1620. In that year, this monopoly was given up, and the trade opened. A Dutch vessel from the coast of Guinea, availing itself of the commercial liberty which prevailed, brought into James river twenty Africans, who were immediately purchased as slaves. An ordinance that all heathen persons might be held as slaves, and that their descendants, although christians, might be continued in slavery, sealed on this continent the doom of the wretched African. Such was the inception of slavery in the United States. Such was the first settlement among us, of an oppressed and suffering race, which has augmented by a very rapid propagation, and continual importation, in somewhat more than two centuries, from twenty souls, to two millions. Virginia, the most ancient of our commonwealths, was the first of them to lend herself to the oppression of these unhappy men. Holland, who had, within forty years, emancipated herself from a foreign despotism, used the large resources which grew up under the shade of her recovered liberty, to deliver over an unoffending people to hopeless bondage; and, that the climax of cupidity and turpitude might be aptly adjusted, the whole matter was concluded in the name of Christianity.

Men were not so slow in discovering the evils of the unnatural condition of society, whose origin among us I have been attempting to disclose. As early as 1698, a settlement of Quakers near Germantown, in Pennsylvania, publicly expressed their opinion of the unrighteousness of human bondage. And from that day till the present, there have flourished in our country, men of large and just views, who have not ceased to pour over this subject a stream of clear and noble truth, and to importune their country, by every motive of duty and advantage, to wipe from her escutcheon the stain of human tears. They have not

lived in vain. In better times their counsels will be heard. When the day comes, and come it surely will, when, throughout this broad empire, not an aspiration shall go up to the throne of God, that does not emanate from a freeman's heart, they will live in story, the apostles of that hallowed reign of peace, and men will quote their names to adorn the highest lessons of wisdom, and enforce, by great examples, the practice of high and virtuous actions.

With the increase of the number of slaves, became more apparent the injuries inflicted by slavery itself, upon every interest associated with it. The voice of reason and humanity began to be listened to, when that of interest uttered its sounds in unison. What individuals had long foreseen, some of our communities began at length to apprehend and to provide against. A duty on the importation of slaves was laid by New York, in 1753, by Pennsylvania, in 1762, and by New Jersey, in 1769. Virginia, the first to introduce them, was also the earliest in setting the example of their exclusion. In 1778, in the midst of civil war, she put upon the pages of her history, an enduring record of her respect for those rights of other men, for which she was freely pouring out her own blood, by prohibiting the introduction of slaves into any of her ports. In 1780, Pennsylvania passed a law for the gradual abolition of slavery, which has the merit of being the earliest legislative proceeding of the kind in any country. All the states, north and east of Maryland, have since passed similar laws. On the adoption of the Federal Constitution, Congress was authorized to prohibit, at the end of twenty years, the importation of negroes into any part of the United States; and the power was exercised at the appointed time. No slaves have, therefore, been legally brought into this nation since the year 1808.

After the close of our revolutionary war, many negroes who fled from their masters, and sought protection with the British armies during its progress, were scattered through the Bahama Islands, and Nova Scotia. Others had found their way to England. In 1787, a private company in England sent four hundred of them, with their own consent, to Sierra Leone, on the western coast of Africa. About five years afterwards, twelve hundred of those from Nova Scotia were transported to Sierra Leone, by the British government. The Maroons, from Jamaica, were removed thither in 1805. The hostility of the French, the opposition of the natives, the selection of a situation which proved to be unfortunate in many local particulars, and perhaps more than either, the heterogeneous materials of which that settlement was composed, for some years, retarded its growth. All these difficulties, however, have been surmounted. That colony contains more than twenty thousand souls, of whom more

than three fourths are re-captured Africans, whose rapacious owners had destined them for foreign bondage. Towns are reared up, churches and schools established, agriculture has become a settled pursuit, and society has put on a regular and stable appearance.

For some years anterior to 1816, the project of colonizing the free blacks of this country in Africa, had occupied the serious consideration of individuals in several parts of the union. The rapid accumulation of free negroes, who amounted, at that period, to two hundred and ten thousand, to which number they had grown from sixty thousand, in twenty six years, become a subject of general anxiety; in some of the states laws were passed annexing the condition of banishment to emancipation. The idea of colonizing them was probably first suggested in this country from the success which attended the establishment at Sierra Leone. It was known, moreover, that the Portuguese, the French, the Danes, and the English, had established white settlements along the coast of Africa, from the Cape de Verd to the Cape of Good Hope. More than a century ago the French had established a post on the Senegal, four hundred miles from its mouth. At Congo, the Portuguese had grown into a considerable colony. At the southern extremity of Africa, the Dutch and English had spread over a country larger than the southern peninsula of Europe. It was not then a question requiring serious debate, whether America could do what many nations had done before. In 1802, Mr. Jefferson, then President of the United States, in compliance with the request of the Virginia legislature, communicated by Governor Monroe, entered into negotiations, which proved unsuccessful, with the Sierra Leone company, and afterwards with Portugal, to procure a situation for an American colony of blacks in Africa. The project continued to gain strength, until, on the 21st day of December, 1816, the first public meeting to form a Colonization Society in this country, was held at Washington City; and shortly afterwards the American Society was established, under the patronage of many of the most distinguished citizens of this nation.

Formed under such auspices, at such a crisis, and for such an object, this society has steadily pursued its onward course, the object of many a bitter sarcasm, of various and contradictory accusation, of flippant and most impertinent contempt, and of grave and deep reproach. Full of the noble ardour which belongs to generous enterprise, it has triumphed at every step, and won its way to the confidence and applause of men. It numbers over one hundred and sixty auxiliary societies; eleven states have, by their legislatures, recommended it to the patronage of Congress; and all the leading sects of evangelical christians in the United States, have, through their highest ecclesiastical tribu-

nals, testified their cordial approbation of its operations. The colony established at Liberia, under its auspices, occupies a fertile, and to the black constitution, a salubrious region, extending from Gallinas river to the territory of Kroo Seltra, a distance of two hundred and eighty miles along the western coast of Africa, and from twenty to thirty miles in the interior. About one thousand eight hundred colonists, who have been sent there from the United States, with about half as many more recaptured Africans, constitute an independent, republican, and christian community, in the midst of that benighted land. The rights of our holy religion are regularly observed, and its precepts as well obeyed as among ourselves. Schools are regularly conducted for the education of the youth of the colony, and many children of the natives are also training in them. All the institutions of a young, though very flourishing, community are in successful operation. I have recently seen several numbers of a weekly newspaper, published by a free man of colour at Monrovia, containing notices of the various interests which indicate a well established and prosperous little state. Notices of popular elections, of the condition of the military force and the public defence, of public roads opened and repaired, of the improvement and transfer of estates, of mercantile prosperity and commercial enterprise, of the little incidents of social life, and what is not less striking and indicative of the state of the people, literary notices, and light efforts in the belles lettres, for the gratification of the popular taste. Such traits as these impress us, not less strongly with the existing condition of affairs at Liberia, than those interesting details of its growth, prosperity and general advancement, which are regularly given to the American public from authentic sources, and which I could not now recapitulate, without an inexcusable trespass upon your patience. The result of the whole is full to the point, that one great object of the Colonization Society has been completely attained. A colony has been actually established, possessing all the elements of permanent and boundless prosperity. The germ of a great and cultivated nation has already taken root in the midst of Africa. The leaven of Christianity is already mixed up with the mass of her dark and absurd superstitions. How much feebler was the origin of all those astonishing triumphs of civilization, by which the little states of Greece stamped her indelible name upon the very front of human glory! How small, compared with the actual condition of Liberia, was the beginning of the Roman state—stern, wise, and unparalleled as she was—whose power overshadowed the face of the whole earth, and transmuted every thing into the likeness of itself! And who shall say that, when two centuries have passed away, the continent of Africa shall not behold millions of free and christian men, lifting up their hearts

in thanksgiving to the God of their fathers, and in grateful recollections of the pilgrims of Mesurado, in like manner as we cherish the recollection of the landing at Plymouth Rock.

The American Colonization Society has probably succeeded to the extent of its original expectation. It proposed to establish a colony of free blacks, from the United States, with their own consent, in Africa; and thus to show by the fact, the possibility of removing that population from the United States, in such a manner as would decidedly improve the condition of those unhappy persons, and greatly ameliorate the state of society among ourselves. It was originally objected, that the plan would be rendered impracticable at its threshold, by the impossibility of procuring emigrants. Experience has shown that many more were always desirous of emigrating than the society had the means of removing. At this time not less than three thousand individuals would gladly remove to Liberia, if the necessary funds could be procured. It was also objected, that the expense of removal would be so great as to prevent its being carried to any useful extent. This was clearly absurd, unless it had been shown that it was necessarily more costly to remove a free negro to Africa from America, than a slave to America from Africa; and that our national resources were smaller when our population was ten millions, than when it was three millions. The experiment has shown that emigrants may be sent out for twenty dollars each; a sum equal in value to about three months labour of an adult male slave in most of the slave-holding states. It was farther objected, that the unhealthiness of the climate was an insurmountable obstacle in the way of colonizing any part of Africa. The facts stated in a former part of this address, the accounts of all travellers who have visited that continent—especially of Mungo Park, who saw more of its interior than all other Europeans—and the uniform experience of the American colony, leave no room to doubt that the region of country owned by it, is pleasant, and to the black constitution, extremely salubrious. It was also asserted, that if all these obstacles were overcome, and a colony established, it would be unable to support itself against the native tribes in its neighborhood. This cavil also has been answered by experience. In 1822, when the settlement was weak and but recently established, it was fully competent to carry on, and terminate with success, a war with the native tribes. The result of that war was so decidedly favourable to the colony, that the colonial agent, Mr. Ashmun, in his report for 1825, says, “our influence over them is unbounded, it is more extensive than I dare, at this early period, risque my character for veracity by asserting. But I beg leave to refer, at least, to facts already communicated, to our military expeditions into the heart of the country uninterrupted, to our pur-

chase of the Saint Pauls, admission into the Grand Bassa, and acquisition of the Sesters. On several occasions of alarm from the interior, the whole population of the country has been ready to throw itself into our arms for protection." What adds greatly to the security of the colony, both from internal and foreign enemies, is the connexion of the agent of our government for recaptured Africans, with the affairs of the establishment. That agent is also the society's colonial agent; the re-captured Africans of whom he has the charge, by authority of an act of Congress, form a part of the colony, and their protection of necessity involves its security. Mr. Stockton, of the United States' Navy, was one of the signers of the treaty, by which a part of the territory was ceded to the society. Captain Spence built a fort on the Cape, at the public expense, supplied it with guns, and the American flag was hoisted on its battlements. He, also, left an armed schooner for the better protection of the colony. The agent for re-captured Africans, as already stated, is appointed by the authority of our government, and is supported by it.

We have then a practical illustration of the manner in which three hundred thousand free negroes may be removed from among us, and planted in comfort and security in the land of their ancestors. Almost the entire voice of the country proclaims that object to be worthy of our highest efforts, whether we consider what is due from a christian nation to the victims of its own avarice and oppression, or what is necessary in a wise people towards providing for their own security, and the peace of their offspring.

If I were to attempt to draw a picture of the suffering and degradation of this multitude of beings, reduced to that condition by our own policy and social state, I should only repeat in your hearing what has been often said. If I should set out to develop the ample means, and competent legal authority residing in our different governments, state and national, to redress evils which exceed by far the most forcible descriptions of them which have fallen under my notice, I should have to recapitulate to you, those views and arguments which are already familiar to the public. On none of these points will I detain you; but leaving them to rest on the able expositions from a great variety of sources, which are accessible to every one who desires such information, I will pass on to other considerations, which grow out of the operations of the society. Although they may not have entered largely into its original design, some of them have a higher interest than the direct, primary object for which it was organized. He who has considered the removal of our free blacks to Africa, as the ultimate point of this noble enterprise, has taken a very inadequate view of a subject of singular interest and almost unlimited extent. The blessings to Africa, to A-

merica, and to the whole world, which will follow the accomplishment of the simple and practicable scheme of the society, cannot now be grasped by any human intelligence; but enough can be foreseen to commend it to our earnest and zealous support.

The first of what may be called the collateral effects, attending the fulfilment in some good degree, of the national hopes, to which the successful operations of this society have given life and vigour, to which I will direct your notice, is the political and intellectual regeneration of Africa. One of the most uniform and curious facts in the history of man, is his constant propensity to migrate. Hardly one example can be found, of a nation locating the permanent seat of its empire in the native land of its inhabitants. Every people of which we have any account has been a nation of wanderers; some by peaceful acquisition of unoccupied regions, some by purchase, most by the power of their victorious bands. Driven out by the wants of too dense a population; fleeing from the various calamities by which every region has at some period been visited; persecuted children of God; oppressed disciples of liberty; incited by the love of gold, and the still more unappeasable lust of conquest; every motive, in short, has operated to make men wanderers, and all nations colonists. With the tribes that have gone out in all ages, have gone out also the manners, the social institutions, the tastes, the literature, and the knowledge of their country. Behold the overruling providence of God! America, the freest, the wisest, the most practical of nations, is pouring back her streams of liberty and knowledge, upon the most degraded of them all. Behold the noble retribution! She received slaves—she returns freemen! They came savages—they return laden with the fruits of civilization. And though they earned in tears, and anguish the more intense that it found no utterance, every boon they can carry back to their afflicted country; yet, in the day of her regeneration, will Africa forget the wrongs inflicted on her for centuries together, in gratitude for the distant, but sacred, recompense. We can look back through buried ages, to the monuments of her power and grandeur, to the triumphs of her renowned captains, to the early cultivation of her people, and the rich contributions of her sons to the stores of ancient knowledge in all its multiplied departments; and we can well imagine the rapture with which her awakened sons will dwell on the tale of her departed glories, and rekindle in her breast that sacred flame which ages of wo had extinguished. We can look onward, as upon our own country, and see the lessons of wisdom, and liberty, and public strength, and social order, speaking forth in the acts of living men; and we can adequately conceive how confusion, and imbecility, and civil darkness, will flee away from the land into which the knowledge and the practice of such institutions

shall be transplanted. These things we can foresee. But we cannot tell how deeply the seed we are planting may shoot its roots into a kindly soil. We know not how lofty may be its trunk at the meridian of its perfect strength. We cannot tell how many children of affliction may gather round it, and be secure. We see not how far its shadow may extend over nations that we now know of only by their crimes. But we know that we are acting well, and that the issues are in the hands of Him who is mighty to redeem.

I do not doubt that one of the surest, and certainly the most important, effects of the colonization of Africa, on the proposed plan, will be the conversion of its inhabitants to christianity. From the tropic of Cancer to the Cape of Good Hope, that country is possessed by Pagans. The Mahomedans occupy Egypt and the Barbary coast. The people of Abyssinia, or Upper Ethiopia, are called Christians, but they retain many Pagan and Jewish rites. In the north of Africa are a few Jews, who manage what trade that region is possessed of; and in the south of Africa there is a small colony of French Huguenots, planted nearly a century and a half ago. There is a moral fitness in the thought, and it is deeply solemn also, that we, who have contributed so largely to the degradation of Africa, and aided so fully in heaping upon her sons the direst calamities to which flesh is heir, should also be the instruments of bestowing on her the costliest gifts and richest blessings our nature can receive. The christian public cannot fail to perceive, in all these operations, the hand of that presiding Providence, which, having permitted the wretched African to be enslaved, that he might be christianized, now demands his restoration that he may christianize his brethren. The time is fast approaching when the earth and all the fulness of it shall become the large inheritance of those, to whom it appertains by the promise of the eternal God. The reign of his own glorious kingdom is almost at hand; and when his people saw, even afar, the approach of its hallowed dawn, a new spirit fell upon them. They have arisen to do their Master's work, and to possess what is their own. You see them in the islands of the most distant seas. Their feet are in the midst of the pathless wilderness. In the great city, amid the busy haunts of men, and in the desolate abodes of wretchedness and squalid want, you behold the traces of their ardent labours. The Arab in the desert hears his unwritten dialect made the vehicle of salvation. The wandering hordes, whose names civilization is not able to recount, find their tents become the abode of those who are worthy to have been the associates of the Apostles. The Brahmin by the Ganges throws aside the chain of his accursed caste. The savage of our own wilderness forgets the wrongs which the fierce white man heaps

upon his smitten race, and listens to the still small voice, which directs him to a higher and surer hope. The mariner, in his trackless wanderings, rears above his perilous home, the unwonted banner, the emblem of his return to God. The way of the Kings of the East is drying up apace; and the scattered and afflicted seed of Abraham turn their longing hearts again towards the mount of Olivet and the city of the Great King. Nine millions of copies of the Holy Scriptures have been distributed through the world, in one hundred and sixty languages and dialects, by the instrumentality of about four thousand five hundred organized societies. Forty five missionary presses have been established; forty missionary colleges put in operation; and six hundred and fifty ordained missionaries, aided by about three thousand assistants, are operating throughout the world, at more than five hundred and forty foreign stations. There are three hundred thousand children in the missionary schools. Fifty thousand persons converted from Paganism, are members of the Christian churches, and it is computed that more than five thousand are annually converted to the service of the living God. Four hundred thousand heathen have renounced idolatry; and in ten years the Gospel has been preached, at the various missions, to not less than four millions of adult persons. One hundred and sixty millions of tracts have been thrown into circulation; and there are over two millions of sabbath scholars under training throughout the world. It is an era of vast and magnificent christian enterprise. Every engine which the most ardent and intrepid piety could put in requisition, is wielded against the kingdom of darkness, and it already totters to its predestinated overthrow. Africa is partaking of this noble work; and she will partake still more largely. The little band at Liberia, who are spreading over the wilderness around them, a strange aspect of life and beauty, are in every sense a missionary station. Every ship freighted from our shores with their suffering kindred, will be freighted also with the heralds of the cross. You will see the light breaking in upon one and another dark habitation of cruelty. The night of heathenism will depart. One tribe after another will come to the light of Zion, and to the brightness of her rising. Ethiopia will awake, and rise from the dust, and look abroad on the the day, and stretch her hands out to God. The light will still spread, and kindle, and brighten, till all the fifty millions of Africa are brought to the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

The civil, intellectual and religious cultivation of a people, carries with it the possession of all the indispensable ingredients to high national happiness and virtue; and is scarcely consistent with the prevalence of those brutal and inhuman practices which exist among savage and heathen nations. Amongst the present

crimes of Africa, there is one encouraged and shared by nations calling themselves civilized, so horrible and atrocious, that its certain extirpation, by the means we have been noticing, would alone be sufficient to commend the American Colonization Society to the support of every enlightened man. I have already presented you with a brief account of the origin of the slave trade, so far as it was connected with our subject. There are some crimes so revolting in their nature, that the just observance of the decencies of speech deprive us of the only epithets which are capable of depicting their enormity. Every well regulated heart is smitten with horror at the bare idea of their perpetration; and we are uncertain whether most to loathe at the claim of those who habitually commit them to companionship with human nature, or to marvel that the unutterable wrath of heaven doth not scathe and blast them in the midst of their enormities. Let the father look upon the dawning intelligence of the boy that prattles around his knee, the pride of his found heart, and the hope and stay of his honest name; and then, if he can, let him picture him in distant bondage, the fountain of his affections dried up, the light of knowledge extinguished in his mind, his manly and upright spirit broken by oppression, and his free person and just proportions marred and lacerated by the incessant scourge. Let the husband look upon the object in whose sacred care he has "garnered up his heart," and on the little innocent who draws the fountain of its life from her pure breast, recalling, as he gazes on one and the other, the freshness and the strength of his early and ardent love; and then, if he be able, let him picture those objects in comparison with which all that earth has to give is valueless in his eyes, torn from him by violence, basely exchanged for gold, like beasts at the shambles, bent down under unpitied sorrows, their persons polluted, and their pure hearts corrupted—hopeless and unpitied slaves, to the rude caprice and brutal passions of those we blush to call men. Let him turn from these spectacles, and look abroad on the heritage where his lot has been cast, glad and smiling under the profuse blessings which heaven has poured on it; let him look back on the even current of a life overflowing with countless enjoyments, and before him on a career full of anticipated triumphs, and lighted by the effulgence of noble and virtuous deeds, the very close of which looks placid, under the weight of years made venerable by generous and useful actions, and covered by the gratitude and applause of admiring friends; let the man-stealer come upon him, and behold the wreck of desolation! Shame, disgrace, infamy; the blighting of all hopes, the withering of all joys; long unnoticed wo, untended poverty, a dishonoured name, an unwept death, a forgotten grave; all, and more than all, are in these words, *he is a slave!* He who can preserve the even current of

his thoughts in the midst of such reflections, may have some faint conception of the miseries which the slave trade has inflicted on man-kind. I am unable to state with accuracy, the number of the victims of this horrible traffic; but if the least dependance can be placed on the statements of those persons, who have given the most attention to the subject, with the best means of information, it unquestionably exceeds ten millions of human being exported by violence and fraud from Africa. This appalling mass of crime and suffering has every atom of it been heaped up before the presence of enlightened men, and in the face of a Holy God, by nations boasting of their civilization, and pretending to respect the dictates of christianity. The mind is overwhelmed at the magnitude of such atrocity, and the heart sickens at the contemplation of such an amount of human anguish and despair.

This trade has been abolished by the laws of every civilized nation, except Portugal and Brazil. Our own national act for that purpose, passed on the 2nd day of March, 1807, and preceded by twenty three days, a similar act by Great Britain, achieved by the friends of humanity in that realm, after a struggle of twenty years. Acts of mere prohibition, however, were found unequal to the suppression of crimes which had been maturing for more than three hundred years. After several amendments to the law of 1807, it was enacted on the 15th of May, 1820, that every person proved to be engaged in the slave trade, should be adjudged guilty of piracy, and punished with death. Here, also, our country was in the van of nations. The glory of vindicating the rights of man, on the broad principles of truth and nature, and of first assuming this noble stand against the long cherished and guilty customs of the whole world, is due to the Congress of the United States. Nor should it be forgotten that the recommendation for the passage of this law, come from a committee acting on a memorial of the American Colonization Society. Such acts unquestionably exercise a very salutary influence over those persons who might be disposed to engage in the slave trade; and are exceedingly valuable as high indications of public sentiment, and as imperishable monuments, erected by the highest authorities among men, to clear and noble principles of right. But they cannot, of themselves, effect their own benevolent purposes. After the passage of the act of 1820, it was stated on the floor of Congress by gentlemen representing several slave-holding states, that no fewer than thirteen thousand slaves were annually smuggled into the United States. And we have undoubted authority for believing, that at least sixty thousand negroes are yearly transported from Africa, under circumstances of as great cruelty as have ever marked that traffic. The slave trade can be no otherwise effectually abolished than by shedding a stream of mor-

al light upon the dark regions where it flourishes, so broad as to reveal it in its naked atrocity, to all its wretched victims. Nor are there any other apparent means by which this can be effected, but the full accomplishment of the plan of African Colonization.

It is generally known, that the original members of the American Colonization Society anticipated, that at some future period, the general government and some, if not all of the state governments, would co-operate in their exertions for the removal of an evil which was obviously national in all its aspects, and which no private exertions were adequate to extinguish. This just expectation was expressed on the face of their original constitution, and has been constantly manifest in all their proceedings. I do not doubt that the general and state governments possess the constitutional power to make pecuniary contributions in furtherance of the objects of the society; and as it is a point heretofore very ably elucidated, I will not now trespass on your time by drawing it into discussion. Every reason which commends the scheme to the support of the people of this nation, commends it also, to the patronage of all our governments. Every motive which operates on the minds of slave-holders, tending to make the colonization of the free blacks an object of interest to them, should operate in an equal degree to secure the hearty co-operation of the government of every slave-holding state. And I confess it is this view of the subject, which, as a slave-owner and a citizen of this Commonwealth, appears to me, to draw it so peculiarly up to the exigencies of our situation, and to lay open before us a political moral above all others clear and explicit. We say, we are the friends of African colonization; its lesson is already precisely taught, and it only remains for us to go whither the light of its example points us.

It was never the intention of the society to interfere with the rights of the proprietors of slaves; nor has it at any time done so. It took for granted the fact, that slavery was a great moral and political evil, and cherished the hope, and the belief also, that the successful prosecution of its objects would offer powerful motives, and exert a persuasive influence in favour of emancipation. And it is from this indirect effect of the society, that the largest advantage is to result to America. It has shown us how we may be relieved of the curse of slavery, in a manner cheap, certain, and advantageous to both the parties.

I have already, briefly pointed to the origin of negro slavery in the new world. Throughout the continents of North and South America, it is now tolerated only by the United States and Brazil. The wisest and most imbecile of all governments agree only in this, that oppression, injustice, and hereditary

wrong are sanctified by any pretence of public necessity. Yet we shut our eyes to the iniquity of such conduct, and solace ourselves with the reflection, that we would have been wiser and more virtuous than our fathers, and that no hope of gain could have reduced us into the violation of the plainest dictates of humanity. And how, I pray you, do we manifest the sincerity of such convictions? Is it by professing to be the disciples of the living God, and wringing tears of anguish from our brethren in Christ? Is it by being clamorous about our love of liberty, and exercising daily in private life a ferocious tyranny? Is it by proclaiming the ardour of our sympathy for every people struggling against oppression, while grinding down two millions of human beings in hopeless bondage? Is it by denouncing the slave trader as a pirate, and punishing with death a crime whose horrid fruits are our daily care and enjoyment? Alas! that man cannot act as wisely as he reasons; that he cannot be made to understand, that the union between virtue and happiness is indissoluble and eternal!

Hereditary slavery is at war with the principles of every species of social system. Even the fierce and intolerable rule of a military despotism, has this to alleviate its sway, that it tolerates no subsidiary tyranny. It is at war, also, with every law of nature, with every lesson of experience, and with every conclusion of reason. As it exists among us, it presents an aspect scarcely less singular, than it is indefensible. In those states where it is tolerated the organic law does not pretend to define it. Our own Constitution merely recognizes it as an existing condition, and then limits it in various particulars. Who were to be slaves under it, or how they became so originally, it presumes not to decide. The constitution of Virginia, under whose sway slaves were first introduced into this state, is profoundly silent on the subject. Could the ordinary powers of that government suffice to inflict hereditary slavery on any class of its people? In the general statutes of England, at any time in force here, do we find this question settled? In the common law of that realm, which abhorred slavery, shall we find the recorded doom of endless and involuntary bondage? Alas! we find the record of our national crimes written the plainest in their daily perpetration. The legislative acts, which, with a cool atrocity to be equalled only by the preposterous folly of the claims they set up over the persons of God's creatures, dooms to slavery the free African the moment his eyes are opened on the light of heaven, for no other offence than being the child of parents thus doomed before him, can in the judgment of truth and the estimation of a just posterity, be held inferior in heinousness, only to the first act of piracy which made them slaves. It is in vain that we cover up and avoid such reflections. They cling to us, and

earth cries shame upon us, that their voice has been so long unheeded. The free Lybian, in his scorching deserts, was as much a slave when he rushed, in the wild chase, upon the king of beasts, as is his unhappy offspring before our laws cleave to him. God creates no slaves. The laws of man do oftentimes pervert the best gifts of nature, and wage an impious warfare against her decrees. But you can discover what is of the earth, and what is from above. You may take man at his birth, and by an adequate system make him a slave, a brute, a demon. This is man's work. The light of reason, history and philosophy, the voice of nature and religion, the Spirit of God himself proclaims, that the being he created in his own image, he must have created free.

I am not putting forward any novel or extravagant opinions. All this, and more, was the fruit of our glorious revolution; and to establish it, was its costly blood poured out. It is asserted, as the very first self-evident principle, in the Declaration of our Independence, that all men are created free and equal; and the second is, that these rights are in their nature unalienable. These are the foundation principles of that immortal instrument. They are reiterated in express terms in nine of the American Constitutions, and result by the strongest implication out of them all. They are sentiments consecrated to our country, coeval with its national existence, and illustrated and enforced by the proudest monuments in its history. Yet there are not wanting those who assert that the Constitution of this Commonwealth is directly in conflict with these sacred truths. This is not perhaps the proper occasion to enter into that discussion; and I the more willingly forbear to do so, as I have heretofore argued that question somewhat at large. It is clearly however of the very essence of free government, that it should possess the powers necessary to secure the prosperity of its people, to enforce their unalienable rights, and to provide for its own preservation. He who will show that this is not accomplished by the Constitution of Kentucky, will cast a blot on that assemblage of great men, and on that era, which our citizens delight to contemplate as among the most illustrious in our annals. He will establish the unhappy fact, that our fathers, while they thought they were mitigating the rigors of slavery by a wise forecast and a vigilant humanity, were in truth rendering it hopeless and endless; and that instead of planting a deep foundation for the glory of this beautiful region, they were dooming it to be a prison-house forever, and us, their children, to be its wretched keepers. And when he does all this, he will prove, at the same moment, that that instrument has asserted what is not true in fact, that it has upheld what is indefensible in reasoning, that it has established what is fatal in practice, and that it is wholly inadequate to the exigencies of society.

He who is created free, cannot, in the view of reason, even by his own voluntary act, bind himself to slavery; because no compensation can be equivalent to that from which he has parted—his liberty; and because whatever might be the consideration pretended to be given, it would pass through the slave to his master, who would thus enjoy both the thing bought and the price paid for it. This is an absurdity too gross to be entertained by any one with whom it would be worth the trouble of reasoning. Still less can a man barter away the rights of his unborn offspring, except in a manner subject to their confirmation or rejection at the years of maturity. In this case, every reason applies that does in the other, and these in addition, that here there could be no pretence of necessity over a being not yet created; and in any case, the parent could part with no greater right to control the child, than he himself enjoyed, that is, till the child was capable in mind and body of controlling itself. Such are the plain dictates of common sense. Similar to them are the doctrines of all our constitutions on the subjects of citizenship and naturalization; and that of Kentucky expressly provides for the voluntary expatriation of its citizens, and guarantees that right, as one of “the general, great, and essential principles of liberty.” But if it were otherwise, in stating the original principles of all rational law, we have a right to look beyond all human governments; and instead of being impeded by their dicta, to bring them to the same standard of judgment, by which all things else should be measured. The law is to be obeyed, because it is the law; but it is to be commended only when it is wise and just.

It can be no less incorrect to apply any arguments drawn from the right of conquest, or the lapse of time, as against the offspring of persons held to involuntary servitude. For neither force nor time has any meaning when applied to a nonentity. He cannot be said to be conquered, who never had the opportunity or means of resistance; nor can time run against one unborn. Those who lean to a contrary doctrine, should well consider to what it leads them. For no rule of reason is better received, or clearer, than that force may be always resisted by force; and whatever is thus established, may, at any time, be lawfully overthrown. Or, on the other hand, if error is made sacred by its antiquity, there is no absurdity, or crime, which may not be dug up from its dishonoured tomb, and erected into an idol, around which its scattered votaries may re-assemble.

Let it be admitted, for a moment, to be just for one race of men to hold another in perpetual and involuntary slavery; suppose it, farther, to be consistent with the clear and upright spirit of christianity. Is such a condition of things advantageous to a state? Does it add any thing to its strength or riches? There are in this commonwealth, not far from two hundred thousand slaves.

Now, whether is it better to have within our bosom two hundred thousand free citizens, attached to our political institutions, and ready to contend unto death in their defence, or an equal number of domestic foes—foes by birth, by colour, by injuries, by cast, by every circumstance of life—ready to take advantage of every emergency of the state, to work our injury? Whether is it better to have two hundred thousand labourers, in the most abject condition of ignorance, with no motive for toil but the rod, and no rule of conduct but the caprice of a master, sometimes indeed humane and just, but often hardly more refined than themselves; or an equal number of hardy, happy and laborious yeomanry, such as the heart of a patriot would yearn over in the day of his country's prosperity, and repose on, as on a rock, in the hour of her need? Vain and most futile is the philosophy which will allow a man to doubt, choosing between such alternatives.

Whatever is contrary to the laws of nature or the rules of justice, must, of necessity, be ultimately hurtful to every community which attempts to enforce it. For no human sagacity can foresee all possible contingencies; nor can any state of artificial preparation, however ample, encounter, at every point, the ceaseless activity of principles which belong to the very essence of things. This is most eminently true of the evils which result out of slavery. It feeds, as it were, upon itself, and reacts again in multiplied forms of ill. The care which in other countries would be bestowed, in better living and more bountiful support, on the poorer classes of the whites, is in slave countries lavished on slaves, and they increase faster in proportion. Their increase again encourages the emigration from amongst us of the labouring whites, whose small places are bought up, to add to the extensive farms cultivated by slaves. Then our laws of descent reduce the children of the rich to moderate circumstances; who, rather than lose ideal rank, sell out and remove to some new country, where, in the gradual improvement of affairs, they hope to regain their former condition. We lose, in this manner, the bone and sinew of the state; but the slaves remain, and increase, to fill up the space thus created. While this destructive operation is accomplishing, the slave owners themselves are only procrastinating a little the day of their own trial. As the number of slaves increases, their value must diminish, with the diminishing value of the products of their labour, in an increasing ratio. Then comes the competition with free labour from the adjacent states. This region of country is already supplied to a great extent, with articles of the first necessity, from other states, which we ought to produce as cheap as any other people, and some of which we formerly exported in immense quantities. Other articles which we still look upon as among our most valuable staple productions, are brought into this state, and sold at a profit, by auction, in the streets of our villages. All this must produce a continual decline in the value of slaves, which will still decline further as they steadily grow upon the whites, until they become themselves the chief article of export. Such is already the case in large portions of several of the slave-holding states. The value of the staples of the southern states, would, for some years, keep up the value of slaves. But when the progress of events shall produce the same condition of public necessity there, that is steadily advancing here, and they will no longer receive slaves as merchandise, it requires no gift of prophecy to foresee the calamitous condition that must ensue, over the whole slave-holding region. Never was there a more fallacious idea, than that slavery contributed any thing towards the permanent resources of a state. It is an ulcer eating its way into the very heart of the state, and which, while it remains, cannot be mitigated by any change of constitution, but would work its effects with unerring certainty, under every possible condition of society.

There is another aspect of this painful subject, which is full of deep and

mournful interest. Men will not always remain slaves. No kindness can soothe the spirit of a slave. No ignorance, however abject, can obliterate the indelible stamp of nature, whereby she decreed man free. No cruelty of bondage, however rigorous, can suppress, forever, the deep yearnings after freedom. No blighting of deferred and crushed hopes, will so root them from the heart, that when the sun shines and the showers fall, they will not rise up from their barren resting place, and flourish. The stern Spartan took the dagger and the cord. With what avail? The wiser Roman, as he freed his slave, against whom no barrier was raised in the difference of complexion, allowed him to aspire to most of the rights and dignities of citizenship, and to all the privileges of private friendship. Yet, the annals of the empire show, that this was scarcely an alleviation of the calamity. The slaves of the Jews, the remnant of the conquered nations of the land, for a long course of ages, were by turns, their victorious masters, and menial servants. Here is no doubtful experience. History sheds on this subject a broad and steady light, and sheds it on one unchanging lesson. Domestic slavery cannot exist forever. It cannot exist long, quiet and unbroken, in any condition of society, or under any form of government. It may terminate in various ways; but terminate it must. It may end in revolution; bear witness Saint Domingo. The Greek and the Egyptian took other methods, effectual each, if fully acted out, and differing only in the manner of atrocity. It may end in amalgamation; a base, spurious, degraded mixture, scarcely the least revolting method of the three. Or it may be brought to a close, by gradually supplanting the slaves with a free and more congenial race among ourselves; and restoring them to the rights of which they have been so long deprived, and to the land from which their fathers were so inhumanly transported. That would be a just recompense, for their long hereditary sufferings. It would be a noble conclusion to a condition of society, horrible in its inception, cruel and unjust in every stage of its continuance, and which, without some such interference, must be utterly ruinous in all its results. The first part of such a scheme has been matured, and as far as seemed practicable with a degraded caste, executed in many of our most prosperous states. We see by their examples, that it is effectual; by their redundant prosperity, that it is full of wisdom. Of its humanity, let him speak, who living among freemen, owns and governs slaves. But its true and full completion will not come to gladden the hearts of men, until we shall have restored to Africa all the children of whom our avarice has robbed her; until we shall have paid her the vast debt, which centuries of patient suffering under our merciless grasp, give her the sacred and irresistible title to demand; until America, within all her borders, shall contain no slave; and Africa shall receive, in every recess of her dark empire, the light, the freedom, the power of knowledge, and the consolations of eternal hope, which God has given us, in trust for her redemption.