DE BOW'S REVIEW

AND

Industrial Resources, Statistics, etc.

DEVOTED TO

COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE, MANUFACTURES, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS,
POLITICAL ECONOMY, EDUCATION, GENERAL LITERATURE, ETC.

Commerce is King.

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compared to their usual submissive obedience and docility to the government of white rulers. It is well known to every slaveholder, who has made an overseer of one of his slaves, that the greatest difficulty was because of the discontent of the negroes to be so governed. They will, in most cases, exhibit unwillingness to be commanded by the most worthy and respectable of their fellows, even if allied to them by ties of blood and friendship, and sometimes will proceed to disobedience, and even mutinous conduct, when they would have submissively obeyed and respected any white man as their overseer, even if, in truth, less respectable as a man, and less lenient and less intelligent in exercising the deputed authority of the master. This respect for white, and impatience of negro rule, extends no less through the class of free negroes. It is because of this general feeling that so few of this class have been or can be prevailed upon to emigrate voluntarily to Liberia. In these slaveholding States, the free negroes, in their usual degraded moral position, and inferior political rights, subject indirectly, if not legally, to the dominant white race, necessarily must suffer injustice and hardship from bad treatment in many cases. Yet it is rare that one of them, whether the most ignorant and degraded, or of the most worthy and intelligent, can be induced to accept the offered bounty of the Colonization Society, and of the State, to be sent to Liberia, and there be made a landholder, and an equal sharer of political rights. So strong is their repugnance to be governed by negroes, or to live where there are no white inhabitants, and, (as they say,) “no gentlemen,” that if the free negroes of Virginia should be compelled to choose between being sent to Liberia, to be there free citizens, or to be made slaves, with their families, to white men in Virginia, it is probable that more than half of them would choose to become slaves, to secure white rulers and protectors.

EXPERIMENT OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF NEGROES IN HAYTI.

An earlier experiment than Liberia, and on a much larger scale, has been tried in the insurrection and independence of the slaves of St. Domingo. Even this bloody, and finally successful insurrection, which is so generally understood as presenting full evidence of like dangers attending the condition of slavery, and of the disposition of slaves to rebel, and their ability to succeed, if justly viewed, will fully prove the reverse of all these positions. It was not the slaves of St. Domingo, but the wealthy and educated class of free mulattoes, that commenced the insurrection. And even their efforts would have been speedily and completely quelled, if the contest had been left to be decided by the people of St. Domingo
only. But the then insane government of the powerful mother country interposed, declaring first in favor of equal political rights to the free mulattoes, afterwards repealing that grant, and finally decreeing emancipation and equal rights to all the slaves. Armies were sent from France to enforce these different and opposite decrees. And it was by these extraneous circumstances, and especially by the armed coercion by France, that the final overthrow of the whites, and their consequent general massacre, were effected, and this formerly beautiful and fruitful territory was made a desolate wilderness and ruin—as it still remains, after seventy years of undisturbed negro domination. Even for two years after the mad declaration of equal rights to the slaves, by the National Convention, and after bloody hostilities had been long carried on between the two free classes, (of whites and mulattoes) and after a French army was in the field to sustain universal emancipation, the slaves were still peacefully laboring, as before, on their masters' plantations. But when so long and so urgently invited, and by the then stronger party of their superiors, to accept their freedom, and (what was to their savage dispositions more inviting) to rob, ravage, and slay at will, it would have been strange, indeed, if these long continued invitations, urged by different parties, had not been at last obeyed. Then it was, and only by these means, that the work of slave insurrection was begun, and the subsequent unprecedented rapine and slaughter, and unspeakable outrages and horrors, were consummated. If there had been only white masters and negro slaves, and no foreign and stronger power, although the whites were only one-tenth the number of their slaves, their mastership would never have been seriously disturbed. This, however, is not the present question—but the success or failure of the subsequent experiment of negro independence and self-government. And this question does not need discussion, so well established is the failure and the long continued, and still continuing desolation of the country, and debased condition of its inhabitants. Because the facts are notorious and indisputable, and can be shown by statistical documents, it will be enough here to say, generally, that in regard to cultivation and production, population, social condition, and political importance—refinement, morals, and religion—in short, in everything that can render a country or its people valuable—the general decline of St. Domingo (or Hayti) has been far greater than any person or party could possibly have anticipated. Neither in the descendants of the former slaves, is there any such improvement of comfort, happiness, or of capacity, that can compensate for the inferiority of the present highest and ruling class,
compared to their former white masters. Of course, the individuals composing the present higher classes, by the aid of wealth, and means for education, are much better informed than they could have been if remaining slaves. But the general or average amount of intelligence, as of their industry and productions, is far below what it was formerly—and the class of laborers is far below what they would have been, if they had continued slaves, and for the last seventy years had been operated on by the civilizing influence of slavery. Further: as much as the case of St. Domingo proves from my argument, after all, it was not a trial of a really freed negro people. The black general Touissant, (the only truly great man yet known of the negro race,) who, after suppressing the civil war, assumed and exercised despotic and severe authority, compelled the former slaves to return to the plantations, and to labor under military coercion, and severe punishments for disobedience. They were to receive a stated share of the products of the land, (one-third,) and were coerced to labor by government officials, instead of by individual masters. But under this much less efficient, beneficial, and profitable form of bondage, the former slaves were not less than formerly compulsory laborers, and driven by corporeal punishment, as they continue to be to this time. This system of discipline and constraint is, of necessity, extremely defective. But imperfect as it is, compared to individual slavery, it has served to retard the rapidity of the descent which this community has been, and still is, making to unproductive and savage barbarism. If any civilized people were now (as ought to be done, and will be done in some future time,) to conquer and re-colonize Hayti, and reduce the whole laboring, or destitute, or idle classes to their former condition of domestic slavery, the change would be beneficial for the re-enslaved classes, for the whole community, and country, and for the commercial and civilized world.

In the seventy years of independence of St. Domingo, and of freedom from invasion and foreign aggression except Touissant, (who had been a slave, and continued to be perfectly illiterate,) there has not arisen a single man who would be deemed of more than ordinary ability, if he had been of the white race. The higher classes there possess all the still remaining wealth of the country, and can command every facility for education, and mental instruction and improvement. There have ruled and flourished hundreds of high dignitaries, military, political, and clerical—emperors and kings, dukes, generals, and bishops. But there has not yet appeared even one man whom all the advantages of wealth, education, and rank have enabled to exhibit the possession of
strong or remarkable mental power. Is not this alone, sufficient to prove the natural and great inferiority of the negro mind?

EXPERIMENT OF GENERAL EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH COLONIES.

A fourth great experiment of negro freedom has been devised and conducted under the direction, patronage, and philanthropic care of the enlightened, and powerful British Government. This was the general emancipation of the slaves in all the British colonies of the West India Islands, British Guiana, and wherever African and domestic slavery had before existed under British authority. Proofs and details of facts are not called for in this case. The failure is universal, signal, and undeniable, (with a few notable exceptions,) even by the most zealous of the previous British advocates of the act of emancipation, or the abolitionists who continue to urge the like measure, with the like results manifestly impending, for our slaveholding States.

Previous to this extensive, simultaneous, and peaceful emancipation, the abolitionists of England, and elsewhere, had maintained that, after emancipation, the negroes would immediately become hired laborers—and (judging erroneously from the condition of things in England) that the free labor thus supplied would be even more valuable and cheap to the employers than the former slave labor. On the contrary, universal idleness of the blacks has taken the place of the former universal industry in the British islands. As the philanthropic British sentiment which induced the emancipation, (and forced it on the former slaveholders,) cannot resort to the wholesome discipline of Touissant, to force the newly freed blacks to labor, the general neglect of labor, and decrease of production, are even worse and more hopeless in Jamaica, than in St. Domingo. And although the continued supremacy of British Government and authority, and the presence of British military and naval forces, have so far secured the lands to the white owners, and prevented general confiscation of property, and massacre of the few whites, still Jamaica and the other British West Indian colonies are totally ruined in regard to industry, production, and all social blessings.

If required, or suitable to the occasion, I could quote at greater length than all this article besides, testimony of facts, and statistical and official reports, going to show the utter ruin of industry and production in Hayti and the British colonies—the unquestionable results of the suppression of slavery. Many of such facts may be seen in the "Present State of Hayti," written by James Franklin, an intelligent Englishman, and former resident—in Bigelow's...