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NOTICES.

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No letters to the Repository, will be taken out of the office, unless post paid.

This work is now subject to newspaper postage only.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF LIBERIA.

The laws passed by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Liberia at their first session, (some of which have been published in the third number of the Repository,) give the most satisfactory and gratifying evidence of the ability of the Colonists to govern themselves, so far at least as law-making is concerned. The journal of their Legislative proceedings, with which the American Colonization Society has been furnished, shows that their laws are passed through the usual forms, are reported by, or referred to, committees, discussed, amended, have their readings, and are referred to the Governor for his approval and signature. If returned without his assent, they can still be passed by a vote of two-thirds of the Legislature. Laws of local application, such as the appropriation of moneys to improvements in the several settlements, are urged and opposed with the warmth of men who understand the interests of their constituents.

The union of the several settlements in one government has been productive of the happiest results, and the friends of American Colonization may consider the success of its original plan as fully tested. What can be more gratifying to the philanthropist than to see this new government of freemen springing up in Africa, in which are enjoyed all the privileges of political and religious liberty, where the life and property of the citizen are secured by laws well adapted to their condition and well administered, where the poorest man is habituated to think and act for himself, and where his children enjoy the privileges of education, and may become respectable and wealthy citizens. Such privileges are not enjoyed by any other portion of the negro race. In St. Domingo the colored population effected a revolution, expelled the whites, and established what they call a free republic.
COMMONWEALTH OF LIBERIA.

Some idea of the degree of freedom enjoyed by the laboring classes may be formed by the following extracts from their Rural Code, which puns agricultural laborers both male and female under the control of a military police, and of justices appointed by the president. "The 173d section of the Rural Code thus describes the rural police. "It has for its object, 1st. To repress vagrancy; 2d. Order and assiduity in the labors of the field; 3d. The discipline of the laboring population." &c. Section 120. "Rural police is conducted and administered under the superintendence of the commandants of departments and of the commandants of communes, by the officers of rural police in the sections of each commune, by the rural guards, and, at need, by detachments of troops of the line."

"SECTION 4. Citizens of the agricultural profession shall not be at liberty to quit the country in order to reside in cities and towns, without the authorization of the justice of the peace of the commune."

"Sec. 5. The children of either sex, whom their parents shall desire to send into the cities and towns to be apprenticed or educated, are not to be received either by master workmen, or by teachers of public or private schools, without a certificate of the justice of the peace."

"Sec. 7. No shop either wholesale or retail shall be established, and no commerce in the produce of the island shall be carried on in the country parts, on any pretext whatever."

"Sec. 10. No proprietors of land bordering on the sea shall possess any boats or vessels except for the transportation of his produce to the neighboring city or town, and for this he shall have from the justice of the peace a license, and on no pretence shall these boats be at liberty to carry on the coasting trade of other ports, nor of fishing, except for the use of the plantation."

"Sec. 69. The cultivators shall be obedient and respectful to the proprietors and renters with whom they have contracted as well as to the managers."

"Sec. 71. The cultivators shall not be at liberty to absent themselves from their habitations, except from Sunday morning to Monday at sunrise, without the consent of the proprietor, chief rentor or manager."

"Sec. 150. Every person fixed in the country as a cultivator, who shall on a working day and during the hours of labor, be found unemployed or running about lounging on the public roads, shall be considered as idle, and taken before a justice of the peace, who shall send him to prison for twenty-four hours for the first offence."

"Sec. 184. On working days, the ordinary labors of the field shall commence at daydawn, and continue until midday, with the interval of half an hour for breakfast, which shall be taken on the spot where they are at work; afternoon, the labor shall commence at two o'clock and continue to sunset."

"Sec. 185. Pregnant females shall be employed on light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy they shall not be liable to work in the field."

"Sec. 186. Fourth month after delivery they shall be bound to resume labor, but they shall not be at work until an hour after sunrise, to quit it at eleven o'clock, and from two o'clock to one hour before sunset."

"Sec. 187. No cultivator fixed on a rural property shall absent himself from the labor assigned him without the permission of the manager."

The foregoing is sufficient to show that agricultural laborers (independent in Liberia) are in the most abject condition of slavery in St. Domingo, and
the laws and customs of the Southern States are on the slaves, especially females.

The political and social privileges enjoyed by people under such laws, must be limited indeed; while in Liberia, every colored man over twenty-one years of age is a free citizen, has a right to vote for the officers who make and administer the laws, may employ his time in either cultivating his own land, in laboring as a mechanic, or in selling and buying goods and produce. He may sell his land and remove from one settlement to another; may educate his children or put them to trades—in fact, he possesses all the privileges of a free citizen, all the inducements and incentives to industry and enterprise; the whole product of his industry is his own; he has an immediate interest in improving the country, by making roads, &c., as a means of increasing the value of his own property; he is interested in promoting good order in his settlement, as his person and property are thus rendered more secure. By improving his own mind he can increase his influence and be appointed to office, and it is a strong inducement to educate his children that they may rise in society.

These advantages will not, it is true, be realized and improved by every emigrant: a man who is lazy or vicious in this country may be the same if sent to Liberia; but it will not be denied that the inducements to industry and good conduct there are much greater than in a country where freedom and equal rights cannot be enjoyed. In Liberia, as in our own country, the highest rank in society may be attained by the poorest man or his children. And their lyceums, their several benevolent institutions to provide relief for the poor, to sustain missionaries among the natives, &c., are constantly exerting an elevating influence on the minds and hearts of the Colonists. Every session of the Legislature, and of the Courts of Justice, and all official acts of officers, are a continued stimulant to exertion and improvement. The Colonist participates in the ambition prevalent in man to attain to places of distinction and power. Already this feeling is abundantly manifest at the elections for officers. Every new improvement of the more enterprising operates as a stimulant on others—the commencement of one sugar farm induced several others to enlarge their plantations and plant the cane. The citizens cheerfully submit to the laws levying a small tax for roads, schools, and for the support of the Government; and the money thus raised will not be lost sight of, when collected, but its disbursement will be looked after. Although the country is highly favorable for a poor man, who, by industry, can soon become independent, yet the Colonists require aid and encouragement. Teachers and school books must be furnished, and school houses built; roads and bridges connecting remote settlements must be made; a public farm must be opened at each settlement, on which to employ the poor or vagrant, who can soon be made to support themselves. A well regulated system of premiums cannot fail of being productive of the happiest consequences; and may we not trust that the success of the Society will specially contribute to this object?