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LETTER OF THE VENERABLE THOMAS CLARKSON, ON COLONIZATION.

This eminent philanthropist has addressed a letter on the subject of African Colonization, to Elliott Cresson, Esq. which is published entire in the London Patriot. He considers the object of the Society twofold; first, to promote the voluntary emigration to Africa of the coloured population of the United States; and second, the suppression of the slave trade, and the civilization of the African tribes. The following extract will show the views of Mr. Clarkson, in regard to the benefits which the scheme of colonization promises to confer upon the African tribes.

I will say then at once, that there can, in my opinion, be no better way of accomplishing these great objects, than by cutting the coast of Africa into certain portions, and by setting upon each portion a certain number of the slaves (manumitted) in question, who are acquainted with the cultivation of the earth, and live upon the plan of civilized life.

To show this, I must take it for granted—first, that a spot be fixed upon on or near the sea-coast, within a few miles either to the right or left of your colony of Liberia, &c.; be fairly and honorably purchased of the natives, so that when the settlers in question come to take possession of it, they may be received in the most friendly manner; and also that these settlers be accompanied by agents, who have an adequate knowledge of law and government; who are particularly acquainted with building, &c.; and who are skilled in the raising of tropical produce.

I must take it for granted again, that these settlers or colo-
nists, after having built their town in a street or streets, with some of the conveniences not known to savage life, should be obliged to devote themselves to the clearing and cultivation of their allotments, unless there should be here and there one, such as tailors, shoemakers, &c., who might, in the first instance, be more useful to the community by following their respective callings. It is a melancholy fact, that several of the first settlers at Sierra Leone, preferred trading with the natives for a livelihood to the cultivation of their lands. These used to go up and down the river in boats, and to be absent from their families in the interior, for a month or more at a time, where they lived with the natives in all their heathen habits of debauchery, intoxication, and other vices. During these excursions, they contracted a rambling, restless spirit, which detached them from a love of home and family, injured their own morals exceedingly, and did no good to the natives as an example, as it was intended they should do. I repeat, then, that the colonists should be obliged to locate themselves, and to live with their families, and to till their lands. If they did not do this to a certain extent in a given time, they should forfeit them.

Now these things having been premised, I ask what would be the effect of such a colony on those of the natives of Africa, who, by living in the vicinity of it, should have frequent opportunities of witnessing its operations? The great effect, I apprehend, would be this:—the natives would see most clearly that the colonists had many more enjoyments than themselves; they would see that they not only had all the necessaries, but many of the luxuries or superfluities of life. They would see, too, how all this happened; or that it was entirely the result of a more than ordinary cultivation of the soil: a small piece of land supplied all their wants; but a larger piece gave them an extra produce; being taken in exchange by the merchants for various commodities, gave them the comforts or superfluities of life, before alluded to. Now, what was the case of the natives in these respects? No native family in Africa cultivated more land than was sufficient for its own support. How, then, did they get their luxuries, their beads, their tobacco, their rum and other articles? I answer, that not one in a thousand ever got these at all, though all wished to have them. The very few who obtain-
ed them, obtained them in two ways. They either collected camwood, bees'-wax, ivory, palm oil, and other articles, for sale to the merchants (which traffic would still go on), or, they obtained them by stealing their fellow-men, and selling them also. This traffic was likely to cease. Not a man in the new colony would buy a slave on principle. It was the land, then, or rather an extra cultivation of the land, which would provide the natives, in the neighborhood of the colony, with that extra produce which would procure for them the luxuries desired. Would the natives, then, reason in this manner—would they imitate the colony by an extra cultivation of the products of the soil?—I believe they would. The Africans reason like other men. They follow their interest, too, like other men. Show them what it would be profitable to them to do, and they would try to do it; nor would they be deterred by any labour necessary to be undergone in doing it. Look at the Kroomen, who live on the windward coast, in which your colony of Liberia is situated. A number of these people, soon after the formation of the colony of Sierra Leone, went in groups, through a large extent of country, to offer their services to the Governor, and settle there, as the Scotch and Irish travel to an English harvest. They were accepted and paid; and after a few months of faithful and useful labour, returned home. They have repeated these visits annually since, and are now employed, as they have been for some years, in cutting down forests of teak wood—a severe employment, as this is the hardest wood that can be offered to the axe of the labourer. Seeing, then, that the natives of Africa are as alive to their own interest as other men, and that they obtained a part of their superfluities by dealing in the bodies of men, and that this traffic was likely to decrease in the neighbourhood of a colony where these bodies would not be purchased, and that an extra cultivation of African soil would give to the natives as many luxuries as the sale of these bodies did before, it is to be presumed that the natives in the neighbourhood of the colony now in question, would betake themselves to cultivation on a larger scale, and that the trade in slaves would gradually decrease.

So far for the abolition of the slave-trade. We come now to the civilization of the natives of Africa, as another consequence
which would arise from the establishment of a civilized colony in their neighborhood. Would it be possible for the natives to see the new comers living in an orderly manner, wearing decent apparel, dwelling in houses with the accommodations of civilized life—making use of implements, machines, utensils, all excellently adapted to their wants, with schools for the education of the young, and churches for the worship of God, and not to desire to live in like manner? But the institution of schools alone would lead to the civilization anticipated. There would be no schools in the new colony which would not be open to the children of the natives. Here, while their minds were expanded, they would learn their duty to God, their duty to their neighbor; their situation as moral and responsible beings here, and their prospects hereafter, with every good principle which, under God's blessing, could have a good influence on the heart; and in what does true civilization consist, but in the improvement of the intellectual and moral character?

The above, my dear friend, would be two of the consequences which I apprehend would certainly arise, in time, from establishing a colony on the coast of Africa, such as I have supposed; and I see no reason why, if many other colonies were established there, similar effects should not be produced upon other natives in their respective neighborhoods, in proportion to the number sent. Suppose, for example, that ten new colonies of two or three thousand souls each, were to be put down on the coast of Africa, within ten miles of each other, in a direct line from Sherbo to Cape Mesurado, where Liberia is situated, and thirty other similar colonies, in the same manner from Cape Mesurado to Cape Palmas, should we not expect to see in a few years, a wonderful alteration, both as relates to the abolition of the slave trade, and a change in the disposition, customs, and manners of those natives who should live contiguous to each and all of these establishments? We should then have four hundred miles of coast occupied in one unbroken line, by a cordon of colonies, all having schools and churches, and living on the plan of civilized life: all teaching, practically, that the produce of the earth would procure superfluities, and all protesting against the continuance of the slave trade. Can you doubt, then, for a moment, that the two great consequences mentioned, would, by
such an arrangement, be realized to a considerable extent? Can you doubt that this would be the case, when you have the experience of your own colony of Liberia before your eyes? For, did you not tell me when I saw you last, that one of the native chiefs (Boatswain), residing in the country, had declared to your agents, over and over again, that if other ways could be pointed out, whereby he could get the merchandise he wanted, he would not employ his people in collecting slaves? Nay! has not the slave-trade already greatly decreased in those parts? And did you not tell me, at the same time, that several of the natives up the country had frequently visited your new town, and were struck and pleased with what they saw, and that they had either sent, or were very desirous of sending their children for education there? For my own part, I cannot see, in the case now mentioned, how civilization could be prevented from reaching the neighbouring natives, unless all intercourse between the natives and the colonists were forbidden. Nor can I see that it would be a very easy matter to convey slaves from up the country to the shore, where such a cordon of colonies existed.

Mr. Clarkson then proceeds to speak of the mode and means by which African colonization may be urged forward on a scale sufficiently magnificent and splendid to effect these great results. He believes the spirit of God is disposing thousands of benevolent and pious men in our country, to liberate their slaves, and aid in their establishment as freemen in Africa. He thinks this work of humanity may be liberally assisted by the contributions of the good and pious of England. He expects the churches and congregations of the United States will be roused to great zeal and effort to promote it. But above all, he relies confidently upon the patronage of the States and the Federal Government.

The following extracts are from near the close of this very interesting letter.

I have hitherto, my dear friend, examined the plan of your Colonization Society in the most favourable light in which I could place it. I have admitted, without reserve, that it will effect in Africa all that you desire there, both with respect to the abolition of the slave-trade, and the civilization of the natives. I have admitted, again, the probability of your being able to find sufficient population and funds to colonize all the coast from Sherbro to Cape Palmas; and yet, notwithstanding these flattering statements, I now feel it right to caution you not to consider this your plan as a specific for the total extirpation of slavery in the United States. The number of slaves there is so great, and their increase also, by birth, is so great,
that taking in all the preparations which must be made, and all the obstacles which may occur, it would be very difficult to name a day when their total removal from thence to Africa might be accomplished. I understand their number to be about 2,000,000, and their natural increase to be about 50,000 souls annually. Now would you not think it a prodigious thing if you were able to ship off 50,000 of these emancipated beings every year, or nearly 1000 of them every week; and yet, if you were to be able to do this, and go on at the same rate for 100 years, you would be, at the end of the hundredth year, no nearer to the accomplishment of your object, than on the day when you began your shipments; for during all this time you would have been taking off only to the amount of the annual natural increase. To do the business therefore, effectually, you must ship off, at any rate, 75,000 persons annually, or nearly 1,500 per week;* and then, perhaps, your object might be accomplished by the end of the present century. These are serious considerations. I do not mean, however, in stating them, to discourage you in your present laudable pursuit. I only wish to impress you, and all our friends in the United States, who wish for the total abolition of slavery there, with the notion that it will be impossible to accomplish it by this one measure alone; but that they must look about them; and see whether they cannot find other plans, to be used as auxiliaries to their own, or whether they cannot institute some new society, or prevail upon Congress to make a provision, or find new homes and destinations for those slaves whom your Colonization Society cannot take off.

There is also another caution which I feel myself bound to give you on this subject. I stated the good effects which would arise to the natives of Africa from having a colony living among them, of emancipated slaves, who should be accompanied by agents of practical skill and knowledge, and who should live on the plan of civilized life. But I did not say that those effects would follow if your colonists were of a different description; that is, if they were ignorant, brutish, and without any knowledge of religion. I believe that the present population of Libe-

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* Mr. Clarkson subsequently writes—"If only the young and middle aged be sent (as is now the case, but 8 out of 140 recently sent, being beyond 40), then the above calculation will be in some degree incorrect."
ria consists of persons well fitted for the objects for which they were sent thither. It is probable that some of these were persons who were but very recently emancipated; but I should suppose that the bulk of them had lived for some time after their emancipation, as freemen among the civilized inhabitants of the United States, whose manners and customs they had adopted, and that you had probably the power of choosing the best of these for your purpose. But you must now be told, that when your Society begins to take its measures on the large scale proposed, you will have no power of such selection; you must take all that come, as they are emancipated: i.e. all fresh from the pollution of slavery. Nor can you stop for such selection, even were it possible to make it, when you have once begun your transportation: for to delay shipping off but for one week, would, if my former calculation be just, be to leave 1,500 persons at the end of the year, to come additionally into the next year's account for shipment. I doubt, then, whether the emancipated slaves to be sent in future, will be of the sort required, as pattern colonists to the natives of Africa. Their agents may be men of knowledge, and accustomed, from infancy, to the habits of civilized life; but they themselves may not have yet been recovered from the pernicious habits of their former condition; their minds may yet continue to be in a broken down and debased state; their reason to be paralyzed, and the vices of slavery to hang about them. But if this should be the case, they would be below those whom they would be sent to civilize, both in intellectual and moral qualities. It is painful to me to be obliged to state such things; but the success of your future colonies may very much depend upon the character of your colonists. I wish therefore, to impress upon you and your friends the necessity of giving to the slaves throughout the United States such an education as may fit them for freedom; i.e. as may fit them for using their freedom well, whether as colonists of Africa, or citizens at home, or as inhabitants of any other part of the world. This education ought to be universal and immediate. One half-hour after work in the evening, if employed in learning to read, and a part of the Sunday, if employed in receiving religious instruction, would do much towards this object. Let every owner then, of slaves, in the United States, who wishes to
liberate them, be informed, that he will make his gift doubly valuable by adopting this preliminary step.

The Editor of the Boston Recorder, who has inserted this letter entire in his paper, gives us some very judicious remarks upon it, which well deserve the reflections of all our readers.—Those who take large and comprehensive views of things will see great merit in the following observations from his pen.

The venerable philanthropist whose Letter on Colonization was published in our last, has been so long accustomed to take expansive views of the interests of humanity and to act for the benefit of others with men of all creeds and in all stations, that true liberality has become a habit. He judges of a plan by its own proper merits. If they are such as commend it to his patronage, it is enough. No matter if erroneous views and expectations do prevail among some of its friends; the experience of more than half a century spent in labors for the relief of the oppressed and suffering, has taught him never to abandon a cause on that account.

Philanthropists of narrower minds, whose views and feelings have not been liberalized by experience, and especially if unfortunate circumstances have given them an opposite tendency, are apt to become opinionated and suspicious. Every thing must be done in their way. Every fellow-laborer must feel the force of their arguments, and be governed by the motives that influence them, and by no other. There must be a perfect coincidence with them in the motives, the feelings, the language, as well as in the philanthropic end and the noble deed; and he that cannot “frame to say” their watchword rightly, is an “Ephraim-ite” to be neither trusted nor tolerated. Mr. Clarkson’s pathway is entirely aloof from every thing of that kind. A kindred spirit and kindred aims delight him; they engage his attention and his heart; them he loves, encourages, and co-operates with—rightly judging that to keep them, and not their attendant errors and faults, prominent and active, is best for all parties and for the cause. Would that all who labor and pray for Africa and her enslaved sons were equally wise and liberal!

The friends of the Colonization Society are by no means unanimous on all points. Mr. Clarkson supports its claims on common ground. He sees enough in what it may accomplish on the coast of Africa itself, to engage his warm and hearty co-operation. And it appears to us that his doubts on one or two other
points might have been very much lessened at least by a little more thought and better data.

First, as to the character of the colonists. Slavery, in any place and in any form, is polluting enough; but we think it evident that Mr. Clarkson judges our slaves (our slaves!) too strictly by what he knows of the West Indies. They are not quite so ignorant, vicious, and degraded, as he supposes. The emancipation and emigration, too, will naturally be most rapid from states where the slaves are best prepared to become patterns in Africa, of civilized life and self-government; and the emigrants, as a general rule, will first go from under the care of the very best masters in those states—men who will have taken pains to prepare them for their new circumstances. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is great justice in Mr. Clarkson’s caution on this point. We rejoice that he has given it. Coming from him, it will excite attention. Proper care being taken in this respect, much reliance may be placed on the constant intercourse of these colonies with highly civilized communities; on their habits of self-government, formed and strengthened with their growth; on their evident advantages over their uncivilized idle, and enslaved neighbors—the grounds of their superiority being palpable; and especially on that religious influence which Liberia has from the first so richly enjoyed.

But, secondly, the immense number to be transported before all the objects of the Society can be accomplished, is mentioned by Mr. Clarkson. True, 50,000, or 75,000, or 100,000—for even to the last, the annual increase of our colored population may amount before the plan shall be in full operation—is a large number to emigrate in a single year, and the expense must be very great. The Society cannot carry on such a business without some other aid than individual contributions. But the friends of the cause rely on the treasuries of the states and of the nation. The saving made by the Temperance Reformation, in the mere cost of ardent spirits, would be abundantly sufficient for all its purposes. The proceeds of the public lands would be sufficient. It has been estimated that 55,000 emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland entered the St. Lawrence last year. As many as 120,000 slaves were brought from Africa in the year 1824.—There can be no absolute want, therefore, either of funds or of
shipping. Should the enterprise fail, it will be because the people of the United States do not choose to exert their power to carry it forward. More was expended in prosecuting the last war, than the whole enterprise would cost from first to last.—And when we remember that no less than thirteen of the states have already, through their legislatures, expressed their approbation of the plan, we are encouraged to hope that there will soon exist the will, as well as the power to prosecute it to its consummation.

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LETTER FROM THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN MORALS IN FRANCE.

It is gratifying to observe the humane and philanthropic sentiments which are awakened and gaining strength in the public mind of France and England for the relief of the African race. The following letter and memorial will show with what zeal and resolution the benevolent in France are disposed to enter upon measures to improve the condition of the coloured people in their islands, and we may hope that their memorial to the Chamber of Deputies will be received in a spirit worthy of those who have so illustriously shown their regard to the cause of human rights. We would not despair of seeing the great scheme of African Colonization aided largely not only by our own countrymen, but by the resources of other nations. Indeed what could be more honourable, than for France and England and the other nations of Europe, who have partaken so largely in the guilt and gains of this traffic which has so long proved the curse of Africa, to bear to her the blessings of a better commerce, to restore her exiled children, and with them to introduce among her barbarous tribes, the arts of civilization, the light of science and the gospel of peace.

Paris, 14th March, 1832.

To the President of the American
Colonization Society, Washington.

Mr. President:—We have read with great interest, a letter which your Agent at London, Mr. Elliott Cresson, addressed us, and to which he added several of your publications. We beg you to be assured that we follow with admiration all those labours which relate to the cessation of the slave trade and of slavery, and that we comprehend how much the plan which you have adopted, the execution of which has been attended with so great success, is calculated to hasten the accomplishment of this two-fold object. The well supported efforts of your Society, the courage and excellent spirit of the colonists whom you have sent to Africa, present a grand lesson to the world. The remark made by one of your agents in Liberia, Mr. Ashmun, that "it is to the influence which religion exercises on a great part