

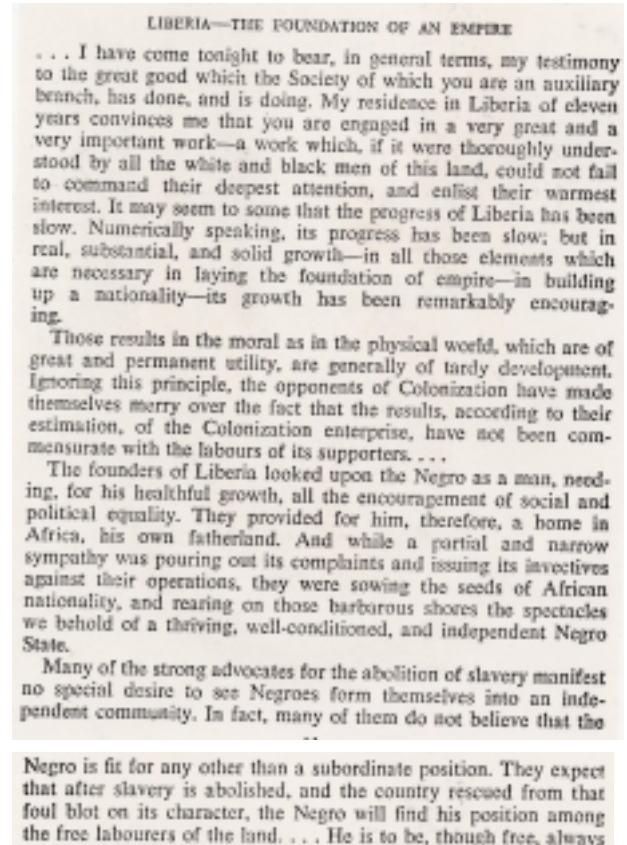
LIBERIA—THE FOUNDATION OF AN EMPIRE

. . . I have come tonight to bear, in general terms, my testimony to the great good which the Society of which you are an auxiliary branch, has done, and is doing. My residence in Liberia of eleven years convinces me that you are engaged in a very great and a very important work—a work which, if it were thoroughly understood by all the white and black men of this land, could not fail to command their deepest attention, and enlist their warmest interest. It may seem to some that the progress of Liberia has been slow. Numerically speaking, its progress has been slow; but in real, substantial, and solid growth—in all those elements which are necessary in laying the foundation of empire—in building up a nationality—it growth has been remarkably encouraging.

Those results in the moral as in the physical world, which are of great and permanent utility, are generally of tardy development. Ignoring this principle, the opponents of Colonization have made themselves merry over the fact that the results, according to their estimation, of the Colonization enterprise, have not been commensurate with the labours of its supporters. . . .

The founders of Liberia looked upon the Negro as a man, needing, for his healthful growth, all the encouragement of social and political equality. They provided for him, therefore, a home in Africa, his own fatherland. And while a partial and narrow sympathy was pouring out its complaints and issuing its invectives against their operations, they were sowing the seeds of African nationality, and rearing on those barbarous shores the spectacles we behold of a thriving, well-conditioned, and independent Negro State.

Many of the strong advocates for the abolition of slavery manifest no special desire to see Negroes form themselves into an independent community. In fact, many of them do not believe that the Negro is fit for any other than a subordinate position. They expect that after slavery is abolished, and the country rescued from that foul blot on its character, the Negro will find his position among the free labourers of the land. . . . He is to be, though free, always



the object of pity and patronage, to be assisted and held up, never to stand alone. They do not conceive how nationality and independence can be at all objects to us. They suppose that after they have given us meat for food, houses for shelter, and raiment to cover us, there is nothing else that we desire, or are fit to enjoy. These men do not know us, or they would understand that we have souls as well as they. They would know that our hearts are made of the same material with theirs; that we feel as well as they; and that the words nationality and independence possess as much charm and music for us as for them.

The upholders of this Society show a truer appreciation of us, in aiding us to deliver ourselves from all this overshadowing and dwarfing patronage, and to enjoy a field of action where we have the whole battle to wage for ourselves, and where thousands this day feel themselves happier in the resources of their own individual industry—limited as those resources may be—than they could possibly have felt in all the provisions which could have been made for them, if they had remained in this country.

The superior advantages which our position in Liberia gives us have never been fully set forth in all the eulogiums of Colonization papers. They can never be expressed. As soon as the black man of soul lands in Liberia, and finds himself surrounded by his own people, taking the lead in every social, political educational, and industrial enterprise, he feels himself a different man. He feels that he is placed in the high attitude of an actor, that his words and deeds will now be felt by those around him. A consciousness of individual importance, which he never experienced before, comes over him. The share which he is obliged to take in the affairs of the country brings him information of various kinds, and has an expanding effect on his mind. His soul grows lustier. He becomes a more cultivated and intellectual being than formerly. His character receives a higher tone. Every sentiment which his new position inspires is on the side of independence and manliness. In a word, [h]e becomes a full man—a distinction to which he can never arrive

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in this country.

When I say that the Negro can never attain in this country to the distinction of true manhood, I say so deliberately and from heart-felt conviction. I am aware there are many who are enduring their disabilities in this land with great fortitude, in view of the future. Their tranquil hearts, drilled into a most undignified contentment, are cherishing a better prospect, and reposing on the sure anticipation of happier days in this land of their thralldom. They hope that the growth of free institutions and the progress of Christian sentiment will eradicate the intolerant prejudice against them. Such advance and progress may have that effect, but by that time the Negro will have passed away, victimized and absorbed by the Caucasian.

RACIAL PREJUDICE INTENSIFYING

This feeling of prejudice seems to be intensifying, instead of decreasing. It pervades the whole national mind. And so strongly has it laid hold upon the hearts of the people, that grave and venerable legislators, in the national councils, are not ashamed to acknowledge themselves under its influence. And there is every thing to produce the conviction that it is destined to be permanent. There is every thing, both in the condition of the Negro, and in the lesson which the European daily imbibes, to perpetuate it. The condition of the Negro in this country is one of universal degradation, and of course with the characteristics inseparable from such a condition. I say this with a full knowledge of the very few honourable exceptions here and there. The occupations to which he is driven for a livelihood are of such characters as to keep him low and groveling in his aims and aspirations. He is almost universally the servant of the white man; so that, as soon as a Negro is seen, the presumption at once is that he is a menial. His colour at once associates him with that class of persons, and the general feeling is to treat him as such.

I do not wish to be understood as despising any employment by which a man honestly makes his living. But I am just speaking in accordance with what is the general experience, that where one man is a servant and the other is master—where one class of per-

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I do not wish to be understood as despising any employment by which a man honestly makes his living. But I am just speaking in accordance with what is the general experience, that where one man is a servant and the other is master—where one class of per-

sons, as a class, are in power and authority—it matters not how well the menial class perform their part, or how ill the ruling class perform theirs—the honour, in the world's estimation, is almost sure to be given to the superior. Now, as I have said, and is everywhere evident, the Negro's condition is a menial one. In consequence of the steady stream of European immigration pouring into the country, his help in the higher department of labour is rendered unnecessary. He is confined to sordid employments. And as the immigration increases, his sphere, even in those menial occupations, is getting lower and narrower. How—I appeal to commonsense—on what ground can the Negro, driven every day to the wall by a superior force, hope to counteract these things, and elevate himself in this land? And then, as I have said, the lessons every day taught the rising generation of whites are far from favourable to the counteraction of this prejudice. Wherever the little children turn, there is everything to cause them to look upon the Negro as an inferior being, to be pitied by kind hearts, to be employed and hired but never to be respected or honoured. They learn these lessons at home, and they are impressed upon them abroad. In the public vehicles, in the hotels, on the steamboats, they see the black man always subordinate. They see this inferiority represented in pictures by the way; they read of it in newspapers and books; they hear it pointed out in the great Congress of the nation. In all the cities which I have visited, I see the Negro caricatured at the corners of the streets. He is held up constantly before the people in every possible light that can excite ridicule and contempt. Every impression which the child or the foreigner receives is unfavourable to the black man.

So generally is it taken for granted that the coloured people are the servants in this country, that Miss Leslie, in her excellent "Behaviour Book", evidently written for white people, recommends that in getting up balls, it is always advisable to secure the services of a "*respectable coloured man*" as caterer; and in all her references and allusions to coloured people in that book, they are represented as *servants*. Now, what is to prevent white children, who never come

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into contact with the better class of coloured people, from imbibing ideas of distance from them—from conceiving that every coloured man whom they meet of *respectable* appearance is an expert and skilful waiter? Do these learned coloured gentlemen who are so deadly opposed to emigration, suppose that when met by white people to whom they are not known, they are taken for anything more than good-looking servants.

And then, among the blacks themselves, on account of the general condition of subordination, there is no mutual respect. As a rule, every black man looks upon another as like himself—a servant—“engaged in business”, as a fine-looking coloured gentleman said to me the other day, “at the Eutaw House”. (Engaged in business at such and such a place, is the new euphemism for the employment in which coloured men are engaged at the hotels.) Whenever a black gentleman comes from abroad to travel in this country, he experiences as much annoyances from the insults and slights of his own brethren in complexion, as he does from the vulgar whites. All black men, except in the limited circle where they are individually known, are on a level, both in the opinion of whites and blacks...

Such, then, is the state of things with the coloured people of this country. They are pressed to the earth by the whites and by each other. And the moral effect of these things upon the masses is, that they give up all hope, and abandon themselves to the groveling influences of their condition. They see no possible chance of rising above their circumstances, and emerging into respectability. Character with them is nothing. In their desperation, they feel that they have nothing to lose. They are entirely free from any check of reputation. They exert themselves just sufficiently to supply their most urgent needs. The poorest and most ignorant Irishman or German, just arrived in this country, rapidly outstrips them, for he is urged by every possible incentive.

Now I ask again, looking at the black man under these deplorable circumstances, is it common sense, is it philanthropy, to counsel him to remain here and fight it out? What has he to fight for? As

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well advise McClellan to disarm his disciplined host, and march up, disrobed of weaponry, to the fortifications of Richmond!

We do not think it strange that *white* men should advise us to remain here and “fight it out”, nor do we blame them, for they cannot feel on this subject as we do. The question whether we should emigrate or not is with them a question of sentiment or theory; with us it is a matter of life and death, of perpetual social and political degradation, or of respectability, influence, and power in the world. But we are particularly grieved at *coloured* men who take up the cry against Africa, under the pretence that they are opposed to Colonization.

MULATTO OPPOSITION TO EMIGRATION

But I must say here that I have not found in this land one black man (I use the term distinctively) of intelligence and standing, who is opposed to Africa. Nor do I believe that the masses of the coloured people have any hostility. All the bitter and unrelenting opposition comes from a few *half-white* men, who, glorying in their honourable pedigree, have set themselves up as representatives and leaders of the coloured people of this country, and who have no faith in Negro ability to stand alone—men who love to sit in the highest places at public gatherings and conventions held by blacks; who do all they can to identify themselves with white people; whose children are white, attend white schools, and keep as far from black people as possible—men who build houses and refuse to let them to black people, open saloons and barber-shops and refuse to accommodate the poor Negro. These are the men who rave and foam at the mouth at the idea of black men’s going to Africa. These are the men who scatter their pestilential teachings with reference to Africa around the whole circle of their influence, paralyzing and poisoning every honest effort made in behalf of that country. No measure can be taken for the elevation of their motherland, but these men, like the Harpies of Virgil, must insinuate themselves and turn it all to loathsomeness. They have placed themselves at the head of the coloured people, and they are sensitively fearful that the discussion of the question of emigration

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will unsettle their hold upon their followers, and eventually leave none in the land low enough to do them honour. These are the men, as I have said, who are clamorous in their hostility to Africa.

And it is marvellous with what acrimony they pursue those who betake themselves to that despised country. The talent, and the eloquence, and the principle which appear to them so very respectable as long as their possessor contents himself to cling to this house of bondage, lose all their respectability and merit so soon as he goes to Africa, or gives signs of African proclivities. These men counsel the poor blacks to remain, assuring them that the prejudice will soon die out. Certainly it will in *their* case. They even now enjoy privileges from which black men are debarred. They are tolerated in places from which a black man would be spurned. . . . Shunned by the whites, and, when it can be successfully done, by his half-brother, he must fight for himself, and achieve his own destiny.

I am not by any means blaming those who, availing themselves of their complexion, can escape the indignities in this land of caste. Nature has given them that advantage, and they should use it. And those who are “blue-eyed” enough and “fair” enough with Saxon blood, should go, as many have already done, altogether with the whites. They have a right to do so. But all we beg of them is, to let us alone. Don’t divide and distract the councils of coloured men. Don’t keep those whom Providence is calling to do a great work in their fatherland, from responding to that call. We implore them, with tears in our eyes, to have mercy upon their motherland, even though *they* should prefer to cleave to the land which is ruled by their fathers.

Because in gratifying their hatred to Africa, they dare not give expression to the deep feelings of their heart, they conceal their malignity under the pretence that they are repelled by the word *colonization*, and frightened away by the deleterious climate. They sneer at Liberia, and cast at her all the levities of ridicule, and utter contemptuous words of her efforts, and scorn her poverty, rolling in affluence themselves, as if men who, for the most part,

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were slaves in this land, could take a great deal of wealth with them when they went, refugees from slavery, and from the indignities *they* so cheerfully endure, to seek an asylum on a distant shore.

Ah! there is more Negro hate in those men than they are aware of; more want of confidence and trust in their mother's blood than they are willing to admit; more dislike to go under the rule of men of their mother's race, than they give themselves credit for; more recoiling from the thought of having their "Saxon blood", so gloriously inherited, absorbed in Africa, than they would like to confess to. They cling to the side of their father. And so lost are they to all feeling of race and proper self-respect, that while the whites are doing everything for themselves, exclusively and professedly for themselves, declaring that this country belongs to white people, is ruled by them and for them, some of these coloured men, so lofty in the superiority of their benevolence, and so rich in the generosity of their hearts, are proclaiming themselves cosmopolites, as unwilling to recognize any distinction of races and countries, and are gladly welcoming and rejoicing in those abnormal and humiliating process by which the Negro is being absorbed by the Caucasian. But it requires no profound knowledge of human nature to discover the keynote of all this exuberant philanthropy. It lies on the surface. Those persons are generally ready and willing to give away all they have who have nothing to give.

They cling, as I have said, to their father, and perhaps with reason. They have no inward consciousness and no outward demonstration of power and efficiency on the side of their mother. Everything in this country teaches them to despise their mother. Nearly all the literature of the land is anti-Negro. Even Mrs. [Harriet Beecher] Stowe is one-sided in her representations of Negro character, always representing the blacks—the Uncle Toms, Tossies, Candaces—as kind and gentle and submissive, and as showing great adaptedness and attachment to the servile condition. And the contagion is spreading to the other side of the Atlantic. Mr. Anthony Trollope, in his new work on North America, yielding to the

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influence of the American prejudice, gives wings to the slander against the Negro, declaring his conviction that “the full-blooded Negro is inferior, through the laws of nature, to the white man”.

It is impossible, therefore, for the class of men of whom we are speaking to have escaped the conclusion to which everything drives them, and from which nothing they see in this country restrains them, that the Negro *is* inferior. We can quite believe that, under the guise of all that plausible defence they sometimes make of the Negro, there lurks a secret acquiescence in the slanders and exaggerations of the Trollopes. We cannot blame them. We say to them, Believe what you please and do what you please, only keep from distracting the councils and deliberations of those who feel the sting of degradation, and have a consciousness of innate power, under fair opportunity to stand alone.

I can see, Mr. Chairman, no other solution of the Negro question in the United States than that proposed by the Colonization Society—viz., that of transferring these people back to Africa, and building up an African empire of respectability and power. For, supposing that it were possible for black men to rise to the greatest eminence, in this country, in wealth and political distinction, so long as the resources and capabilities of Africa remained undeveloped—so long as there was no Negro power of respectability in Africa, and that continent remained in her present degradation—she would reflect unfavourably upon them. Africa is the appropriate home of the black man, and he cannot rise above her. Water cannot rise above its level; no more can the Negro above his natural home. I feel persuaded, then, that no expedient, whether of Haytien, Central or South American emigration—separate from the elevation and civilization of Africa—can counteract the general prejudice with regard to the inferiority of the Negro. If no Negro state of respectability be erected in Africa—no Negro government permanently established in that land—then the prejudice in question will make its obstinate stand against all the wealth, and genius, and skill that may be exhibited by Negroes in North or South America. The work is to be done in Africa.

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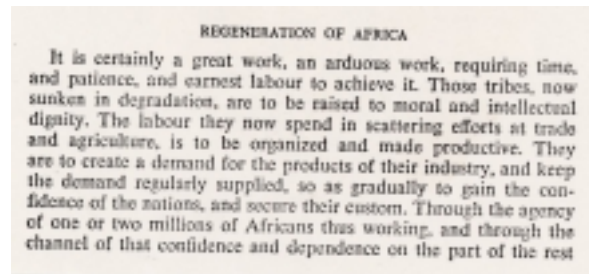
REGENERATION OF AFRICA

It is certainly a great work, an arduous work, requiring time, and patience, and earnest labour to achieve it. Those tribes, now sunken in degradation, are to be raised to moral and intellectual dignity. The labour they now spend in scattering efforts at trade and agriculture, is to be organized and made productive. They are to create a demand for the products of their industry, and keep the demand regularly supplied, so as gradually to gain the confidence of the nations, and secure their custom. Through the agency of one or two millions of Africans thus working, and through the channel of that confidence and dependence on the part of the rest of the world, more will be effected than can ever be achieved by the exertions of individuals or communities in this hemisphere.

But consider the influence of these things upon the moral condition of Africa. I have hitherto been urging the secular aspects and advantages of the work of the Colonization Society; but this to the Christian, is a small part of the glory of the enterprise. Social and political influence is not the end of the labour of the Christian. It is a necessary accompaniment—an unfailing collateral. But let it never be forgotten that the great and crowning reason which justifies the Society in transferring civilized and Christian black men to Africa is the spiritual regeneration of that continent.

I have a strong belief that the evangelization of Africa is to be rapid and sudden, and it is to be brought about through the influence of Christian colonists. Of all the means that have been tried during the last four or five centuries, no other has proved so efficient in the work of African civilization as Colonization. We are only sixteen thousand civilized and Christianized coloured men in Liberia, and we influence, by means of our schools and churches, our commerce and agriculture, over one hundred thousand heathen, while over two hundred thousand are subject to our laws. Supposing, at this rate, one-fifth of the coloured population of the United States, or one million of blacks, were thrown into Africa; see what a mighty influence for good might be exerted!

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imagine. They are very easily influenced. Regular intercourse with them, even for purpose of trade, without reference to their direct evangelization, may gradually bring them to a knowledge of the truth. The Mohammedan religion has attained its great development throughout Central Africa, not by zealous and expensive, or even intentional effort on the part of the Mohammedans, but by the casual communication between the Moslem merchant pilgrims and the rude pagans through whose countries their route happens to pass. And by the same simple means, the manufactures of civilized lands, and with them Christianity and civilization, will be carried through Liberia into the heart of Africa.

This is a noble work in which this Society is engaged. It is one of the grandest philanthropic efforts of the age. I believe that there are many connected with the Colonization cause who do not appreciate its far-reaching and wide-spreading results; who look upon it only as a political measure—as a social purifying of the country, so as to secure all the land to a homogeneous race. But the Almighty has more intimately connected the civilization and evangelization of Africa with Negro slavery and degradation in America than men generally are disposed to admit. He intends, out of all this darkness, to bring great light—to rectify all these crooked things to the greater glory of his name, and to the humbling of the pride and wisdom of man. Slowly but surely he is making the wrath of man to praise him. He is never in a hurry. He inhabiteth eternity. He can afford to wait. A thousand years with him are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. We, in our finite sphere of operation, are impatient and anxious for immediate results. When urged to undertake enterprises of great benevolence, we often hesitate, because we fancy that nothing remarkable will be effected in our lifetime. But we must “learn to labour and to wait”.

I look for the day when black men in this country, roused to a sense of their duty to Africa, will rush to those shores to bless that benighted continent. “Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God.” The Almighty hath decreed it. Soon shall those beautiful valleys, now lying in melancholy loneliness, be peopled

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