

Mr. CHARLES L. REASON then presented some further facts published by Dr. D. Francis Bacon, in relation to the Liberia colony and the conduct of its inhabitants.

MR. REASON remarked: Last evening I presented some facts which I considered necessary to add to the interest and influence of the meeting, and I am now about to present some additional facts showing the connection of the Liberia colony with the Slave Trade. I learn further, in presenting this series of facts, that during the year 1837, a Portuguese vessel, a slaver, was taken by a British cruiser, carried into Sierra Leone, and by the judgment of the Commission Court, according to British law, was condemned and sold. J.J. Roberts, alias governor Roberts, alias, President Roberts, went up from Monrovia to Sierra Leone and purchased this vessel. At that time it was supposed that Mr. Roberts was not a wealthy man: indeed it was pretty well known that he was not so. However, the vessel was purchased by him. It was then sailed down and laid off the harbour at Monrovia and christened "The Monrovia," in honour of the colony. It lay there at anchor apparently useless; indeed nobody probably knew what Roberts could want of a vessel of that sort—I think, a vessel of twenty tons. It appears, however, that after a few days a young Spanish gentleman, Roderigues Buron, an agent of the slave dealer, Pedro Blanco, came down from Galinhas, a station between Monrovia and Sierra Leone. He was taken sick in the colony, and was attended by Dr. Bacon. When he became convalescent he desired one day, while going down the coast in the small boat, to be taken out to this vessel. He was in company with the Doctor at the time, and he remarked, "that craft is mine." It was well known that Buron was a person of no means of his own, but simply the agent, acting under the commands of

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Pedro Blanco. Very soon after this, the vessel was again christened : the name of Monrovia was taken from it, it was taken up to Galinhas, stored full of slaves, and sailed for Cuba.

Well, it would seem that this change having been made in the face of President Roberts, while he was here last year, if it was untrue it would have been disproved. Mr. Roberts proves only that his *name* did not appear on the face of the transaction: and indeed it cannot be shown that he was the person in whose name the slaver was sent out from Galinhas. But it does seem strange that while the slave-trader could not go up to Sierra Leone and purchase with his doubloons in his hand the condemned slaver, Mr. Roberts could go there and bring her down to Monrovia, anchor her off the harbour, and sell her almost immediately to that slave-trader, for the express purpose of filling her hold with slaves at Galinhas.

But it appears that there is a reason for the connection of the colony with the slave-trader in this way; and that reason, so far as I can learn, is urged to be this:—the pecuniary condition of the colony. You know it is no strange thing that coloured men should be slaveholders, for such is the fact in this country, in Louisiana and other States. It is judging human nature by a very curious standard to suppose that coloured men are essentially different in this respect from other men. Dr. Bacon, with whom I had an interview this afternoon, informed me that dealing in slaves was a matter of very little moment [at] the colony; and I was particular to ask him whether he had any knowledge of the continuance of this state of things since he left in 1839. He informed me that he had correspondence and communication with gentlemen who have since been residing in the colony, and who in-

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form him that the practice still continues. He said he had an interview not long since with a gentleman who, at the time, he (Dr. B.) was there, was a large slavedealer on that coast (Canot, I think is the name,) who informed him that the state of affairs is precisely as it was ten years ago. Dr. Bacon said that he could from the government house where he resided take his spyglass almost any day and look up the river to the little slave depot, about seven miles from Monrovia and see them loading.

Now, it would seem from these facts that we can place no confidence in the present leading men in that colony, nor in the representations, which they make of the influence of that colony in the suppression of the Slave Trade on the coast.

Last night I was put in possession of the Maryland Colonization Journal, which contains a letter from a gentleman in the British navy, lauding in very high terms the accession to the cause of human freedom by the establishment of the American Colony on the coast. He speaks of the facility of blockade on that coast by the British and American vessels, and goes on to throw out the theory that there can be no actual suppression of the Slave Trade unless by the establishment of such colonies as that of Liberia. He says that since the colony has been stationed there the Slave Trade has almost ceased at Sierra Leone. But the fact is, that the British captains who go on the coast are not quite so well-informed of the true state of things as those who have resided in the colony; because, as you are perhaps aware, British law is very definite; and a British captain who would connive in any way at the continuance of the Slave Trade would be likely to be broken. Hence, while the British vessels are on the coast—while they are keeping up the

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blockade, there is very little done in the way of taking off slaves from the vessels on the coast. It is understood that the slave-traders calculate upon losing about two cargoes in every three that leave the coast, but they obtain on the remainder as much as will compensate for the loss of the other two cargoes. In fact, they think themselves lucky if they can save one out of three cargoes. The gentleman's name who throws out these facts, is Lieut. Jackson, I believe. Dr. Bacon tells me that the mode of the continuance of the Slave Trade there is scarcely known to the captains of the British vessels that lie off the coast, because Liberians are very cautious of the British, and the Spanish slave-traders are very shy about getting into the clutches of the British vessels. He says he has no faith whatever in the declaration that is continually being made, that the colony is the chief destroyer of the Slave Trade on the coast. This declaration has been made ever since the colony came to be anything at all; and he says, that even while he was there he read, from American newspapers which were sent to him, this oft-repeated declaration, when he knew that the Slave Trade was then actually going on right before his own door.

I come now to speak of the cause why the Slave Trade is carried on by the people of the colony itself. Dr. Bacon informs me that the leading cause for their going into this trade is, the suffering condition of the colony. He says that sometimes for two or three days together the colonists could not get anything to eat;—such, at least, was the case when he was there. The schools could not be kept up, because the children could not be sent on account of their not having enough to eat. He says he has lost patient after patient, all from the inability of their

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constitutions to stand up under disease, in consequence of their not being able to get sufficient food. Hence it is that Liberians are willing to go into any trade that is profitable. They get no supplies from the natives in the interior, except rice or some such food as that. They depend mainly upon the supplies which are brought from this country and England. In order to show that the state of things has not materially altered, I will read an extract from the journal of Rev. J. Paine.

From the "Maryland Colonization Journal."

"BALTIMORE, MARCH, 1849.

Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. J. Payne.—1849.

Wednesday, August 23—Attended this morning the examination of the colonial school at Mount Vaughan. This was postponed a month in consequence of the late scarcity of food, which prevented the children from attending school punctually. The colonists have been almost as great sufferers as the natives; and, indeed, have been only enabled to live by eating the cabbage obtained from the palmtree. In the good providence of God, rice is now again coming in; the hungry ones receive their daily bread, and are enabled to attend school as before. Fifty-one presented themselves to-day for examination. In view of the injurious influence of the famine just adverted to, the attainment of the children were highly creditable. In looking over these little girls, *I could but feel, as I always have on similar occasions, a grateful joy in view of the contrast between their present privileges and what they would have been had not their parents emigrated to this country*

[Thursday ...]—The quarterly examination of the schools at this station was held. A considerable number of children are still absent, who were sent to their parents during the prevalence of the late scarcity of food.

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Wednesday, ... The quarterly examination of the schools at this station was held. A considerable number of children are still absent, who were sent to their parents during the prevalence of the late scarcity of food.

Now then with regard to the profession and declarations which have been made by the leading men who have come here from that colony, I do not think we are prepared (at least I for one am not) to give credence to all that is said in favor of the colony. I do not find by reading the constitution of the colony under its present form of government, that the colony at all independent of the Colonization Society. The colonizationists have heretofore professed that they were doing a piece of great charity;—at least it was lauded as a very benevolent project. They boasted of giving two, three, or four acres of ground to any emigrant who would be sent there. Now I am told by Dr. Bacon that you can purchase three or four acres of ground of the natives for a leaf of tobacco, and they will sell it over half a dozen times for the same price. In fact, you can get cultivated ground for nothing, and nobody will ask you any questions, so that the granting of three or four acres of ground is not what it would at first appear to us in this country who do not usually become landholders so easily.

I am disposed to doubt the sincerity of this project, because I find on record certain things which seem to tell against the individuals who now represent that government.

I am now about to read something in relation to President Roberts. I do not wish the audience to think that I am waging a personal war against the President; not at all. But it is well, I think, when gentlemen get to be Presidents, that they should bear some sort of reputable character. The narrative which I am going to read to you is found in a work entitled “Wanderings on the seas and shores of Africa,” written by Dr. D. F. Bacon. I shall make no comments upon the article; it needs none. I will only remark further that Dr. Bacon told me that

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he could not sit quietly by and see the charities of this country devoted to the support of that colony whose position was so misrepresented. Instead of being a medium for christianizing Africa, it had been a source of immorality, for he says that the natives are not near so intemperate as the colonists themselves. He therefore felt it a matter of duty to publish those statements which he did, and in this I think he did right; he would have been recreant to duty if he had not done so. [Applause.]

It was during my wanderings on the coast, when I had left the colony for a time, that I learned the facts which I shall now relate. I received them from several distinct sources, in the same terms; and I may add that such is the characters of two or three of my informants, that no Colonizationist, no friend of the benevolent enterprises of the age will dare impeach them. All these authorities corroborate each other, not only in the general statement, but in the details.

About the year 1831 or 1832, when the Slave Trade was beginning to renew its activity through all the nominal territories of the colony, there was a Spanish slave trader named Don. Miguel, who located himself at Pequeaini Bassa, about thirty miles down the coast from Cape Montserrat. The Colonists, who found their own great advantage in the prosperity of the Slave Trade, cultivated a friendly intercourse with Don Miguel, as they did with his worthy compatriots at Gallinas and other places in their neighbourhood. The Don was a gentleman, and lived like a gentleman, keeping open house to all his Liberian friends, and sharing with them and all visitors most hospitality, the luxuries which made his "dreadful trade," and lonely exile barely tolerable. It became known, in process of time,

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to his Liberian friends, that he kept a large stock of doubloons on hand for exigencies of his business. (The practice has since been found rather perilous; and the slave traders now pay in drafts on Havana, New York, and London.) This excited their cupidity, and finally led to the planning of an expedition, the ostensible purpose being no less than a moral crusade against the abominable traffic in human flesh. An imperfect precedent was found in some of Ashmun's queer semi-practical invasions of the Spanish slave factories; and the colonial agent, Mech[...n], was induced to give a secret sanction to it, which he subsequently withdrew, in a fright, when he saw the result and real character of the scheme. The expedition was planned in profound secrecy; and soon, a party of a dozen or twenty embarked on board a little coasting-craft of a few tons burthen, and dropped down to Pequenini Basso, as if on an ordinary trading voyage. They anchored there in the day time, and then went ashore in their small boats to visit Don Miguel, and quietly examining the premises, the mode of approach, and the means of defence in case of alarm. They were, of course, heartily welcomed and hospitably received by their old friend Don Miguel,—the "Americans" being always sure of kind treatment from him. He brought out his dainties and stores, and broke his bread and poured out his wine for them. They ate and drank and were filled and were merry, while they marked him and his for their prey. He had with him a younger brother, and perhaps two or three other Europeans as clerks, [f]actors, and guards,—the slaves being generally kept and watched by kind natives, Kroomen, and others. As the afternoon passed on, he urged them to remain with him all night, and offered them the shelter of his roof, and his beds. But they excused themselves on the score of urgent business, and returned on board. In the dead of night, they

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came off again, fully armed with loaded muskets, and landed in stealthy silence. They approached the gates of his barricade, and knocked loudly. The watchmen sounded the alarm, and asked, "Who comes?" The answer was, "The Americans, YOUR FRIENDS!" Don Miguel awakened at the call, said, "Oh admit them; open to my American friends. All is right." And as the gate was opened, he advanced, lamp in hand, to receive them, always welcome at any hour. The next instant, he received their musket balls through his breast, and staggered back to fall in his death-agony into the arms of his brother,—pouring out his heart's blood on his threshold, while the AMERICANS (for this is the name by which they are known in Africa) walked through the gore of their murdered entertainer to rifle his treasures. They carried off a large quantity of doubloons and other precious moveables, secure by their display of force. Don Miguel's brother, that SPANISH brother, quietly looked on as he laid down the warm corpse, and made no complaint, and seeming so helpless and harmless that they passed him by without harming him. They departed with their bloody spoils; and in the day time, he afterwards departed and sailed to Havana with the tidings and with his own quiet purposes. Roberts was the great author of this expedition, and was its real manager, looking on while others did the bloody work. He was entrusted with spoils, and somehow or other, as all agree, managed to secure the lion's share, and to cheat his associates finely. But the whole colony regarded the proceeding with horror; and the superstitious denounced the treasure as the price of blood, prophesying evil and ruin to all the partakers.

They declare to this day, that all the associates of that bloody scheme were doomed men henceforth, and that nothing would ever prosper in their hands. The gold never

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seemed to benefit them. They grew poor, and most of them died miserable deaths. Roberts failed in business, and in fulfillment of his doom, as was believed, lost six or seven infant children successively, being left childless. His sixth or seventh child died a little after my arrival. There is nothing striking or peculiar in any of these unfortunate circumstances; for such is the history of nine-tenths of all the Liberians of whom I have ever heard. I know other instances where a long succession of infants have been thus buried, leaving childless parents. But the Colonists were determined to construe everything in this way, and afterwards mentioned these calamities to me as the special judgements of God on these mercenary and bloody violators of the laws of hospitality. Roberts, and two others of the survivors of the expedition against Miguel, were among my ordinary acquaintances at Monrovia, and served as a precious hint of the real character and hidden capabilities of my fellow residents in Liberia. It so happened that none of these particular individuals ever had any chance to give me any cause of personal dissatisfaction. With Roberts himself I never came in collision in any way; but I afterwards heard more of his actual conduct from certain persons of the highest character, who, having occasion to employ an agent to do some business in the colony, selected him merely on the grounds of impressions of his honour and worth derived from his personal appearance and manners, which deceived others as much as me. They found on repeated trial, that he was the most shameless cheat they had ever known—wantonly contriving vexation, and inventing falsehoods, often without any assignable motive,—yet all the while to their faces professing the greatest respect for them and anxiety for the

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