

**LIBERIA: OR THE EARLY HISTORY  
& SIGNAL PRESERVATION OF  
THE AMERICAN COLONY OF  
FREE NEGROES ON THE COAST  
OF AFRICA**

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Liberia: Or the Early History & Signal Preservation of the American Colony of Free Negroes on the Coast of Africa by William Innes

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**WILLIAM INNES**

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By **WILLIAM INNES,**  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

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## PREFACE.

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**LIBERIA** is the name given to a colony of free negroes who have lately been transported from America to the coast of Africa. This colony seems little known except by name in this country; but as it appears destined to hold a distinguished place in promoting the civilization and improvement of Africa, a short account of its early history cannot, I think, fail to be read with interest.

I have been enabled to furnish this account by the kindness of an American gentleman from Virginia, who supplied me with several publications relating to this subject. It is from these the contents of the following pages are compiled.\* In addition to the

\* Here, to prevent mistakes, the reader will recollect, that when the expressions "this country" or "our own country" occur, it is to America the expressions refer.

account of the origin and early history of the Colony of Liberia, the publications referred to contain some information respecting the state of slavery in the slave-holding states of America, which will probably be new to many readers in this country. Thus it appears that in these states a slave-holder is prevented by law from emancipating a slave, however much he may be disposed to do so, unless he at the same time send him out of the country. The reason is, that in many cases the free negroes are a great annoyance to the community, often living by pilfering the property of their neighbours. This circumstance has proved so far favourable to the Colonization Society, as it has been found that several persons have been willing to emancipate some of their negroes, if the Society will take upon them the expense of transporting them to Africa. In addition to this, as will be afterwards seen, there are many thousands of free negroes in the United States, many of whom are willing to go to Africa, and it costs about L. 8 sterling to transport a colonist to that country, while this includes a grant of 30 acres of land to each emigrant. Where an intel-



ligent negro can be found, it is not easy to discover a way in which so much good might be effected by so small a sum.

Respecting Liberia itself, it will be seen that from very small beginnings, when the colonists had a mere spot of ground on which to erect their habitations, they have now extended along the coast 280 miles; and though it appears from some recent communications that they have not yet been so successful in putting a stop to the slave-trade in the neighbourhood, beyond their own limits, as they could wish, it is obvious that, as the colony increases in strength, it will powerfully tend to check the operation of this iniquitous traffic, if not entirely to abolish it.

The colonists have already been the means of introducing agriculture and the arts of civilized life among the tribes placed in their neighbourhood. These have seen with astonishment how many comforts may be obtained by men of the same colour with themselves by honest industry, whether exercised in agriculture or in mercantile pursuits, and they are beginning to aspire after the possession of those comforts themselves through

this channel. Some of the neighbouring tribes have already requested to be taken under the protection of the colony, and are anxious to have their children taught in their schools.

The preservation of this infant institution under two separate attacks of their enemies with most overwhelming numbers, cannot fail to be read with the deepest interest. Indeed, when we consider the very great disproportion between the number of the assailants and that of the colonists at the time referred to, between six and nine hundred being opposed to thirty-five effective men, their preservation appears little less than miraculous, and the account of it would seem more to belong to the world of fiction than that of reality.

There are other circumstances besides this in the history of the colonists, which very strikingly mark the interposition of Divine Providence in their behalf, and it cannot fail to be gratifying to every friend of religion to observe the manner in which the protecting hand of the Almighty is recognised by them in the signal preservations they experienced. Indeed, few colonies

have at any time been formed, in which the principles of an enlightened Christianity are more distinctly to be observed as forming the very basis of their establishment. How delightful, for example, is it to find them informing two of the neighbouring tribes who were engaged in war, and each of which wished to secure the aid of the colonists, that they would do what they could to promote peace, but would take no share in any of their disputes; that the whole force of the colony was sacred to the purpose of self-defence alone against the injustice and violence of the unprincipled; that, while they were ready to benefit *all* their neighbours, they would injure *none*; and that, if they could not prevent or settle the wars of the country, they should never take part in them.

The colony was formed in 1821. The small number of the original settlers has been already noticed; and in November 1830, they amounted to 1500. Towards the close of 1832 they had doubled this number, and if means are supplied, will probably double it again within a year. But from the whole history of this institution, few, I am per-