

**FACTS & OPINIONS TOUCHING THE REAL
ORIGIN, CHARACTER & INFLUENCE OF THE
AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY:
VIEWS OF WILBERFORCE, CLARKSON &
OTHERS; AND THE OPINIONS OF THE FREE
PEOPLE OF COLOUR OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Facts & opinions touching the real origin, character & influence of the American colonization society: views of Wilberforce, Clarkson & others; and the opinions of the free people of colour of the united states by G. B. Stebbins

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G. B. STEBBINS

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BY
G. B. STEBBINS.

PREFACE BY HON. WILLIAM JAY.

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1853.

PREFACE.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

THE scheme of sending our free colored population to Africa, prosecuted in the manner it is by the Colonization Society, and forwarded as it is by extraordinary and most reprehensible legislation, is exciting a disastrous influence on the prospects of the colored people, both bond and free, and is familiarizing the public mind with injustice and cruelty. The following pages afford ample materials, drawn from the writings and speeches of the advocates of this scheme, for learning its true origin and real purport. It will be seen that the idea of banishing the free blacks sprang from the alarm caused by a slave insurrection; and that, from first to last, the enterprise has been regarded as intimately connected with the security of the slaveholders and the permanency of human bondage.

It is freely admitted that benevolent men of the north have coöperated in this effort, in the hope of benefiting

the unhappy people whom it was proposed to exile. In the pursuit of what appeared to them a good object, they seem not to have been duly scrupulous about the means used to effect it.

It may be true, that some of the emigrants find in Liberia a comfortable asylum from American prejudice and oppression; but it should be recollected that the very money expended in their transportation was collected by appeals powerfully tending to aggravate the sufferings of their brethren who are left behind. The whole drift of the constant stream of vituperation directed against our free colored people, as "a curse and a blight," is to encourage such a course of conduct toward them as shall extort their "consent" to abandon the land of their birth.

The original, active, pervading principle of the Colonization Society is, as Mr. Henry A. Wise, with more frankness than prudence, truly asserted, "FRIENDSHIP TO THE SLAVEHOLDERS." None are better acquainted with this cardinal principle of the colonization effort, nor more ready to avail themselves of it, than our political aspirants. Hence Mr. Webster, in his famous and unhappy speech of 1850, himself an officer of the society, offered the following magnificent bid for the presidency:—

"If any gentleman from the south shall propose a scheme of colonization to be carried on by this government upon a large scale, for the transportation of the free colored people to any colony, or to *any place in the world*, I should be quite disposed to incur almost any degree of expense to accomplish that object. There have

been received into the treasury of the United States eighty millions of dollars, the proceeds of the public lands ceded by Virginia, which have already been sold; and if the residue shall be sold at the same rate, the whole will amount to TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. Now, if Virginia or the south see fit to make any proposition to RELIEVE themselves from the BURDEN of their free colored population, they have my free consent that this government should pay them, out of these proceeds, ANY sum of money adequate to that end."

Here we have no idle professions of sympathy for the free blacks, subjected by our own prejudices and cruelty to poverty, ignorance, and degradation,—no visionary, but benevolent predictions of their regeneration, on being transferred from a land of Bibles and churches to the darkness and heathenism of Africa,—no sickly, puerile sentimentality about the diffusion of the arts and sciences and the light of Christianity throughout a benighted continent, by sending to it "a horde of miserable wretches"—"of all classes of our population," to use the language of Mr. Clay, "the most vicious, who contaminated themselves, extend their vices to all around them." With a boldness and directness of purpose well calculated to conciliate southern electors, he assumes that the free blacks are a BURDEN to the slaveholders, and offers his aid to RELIEVE them from it. He is ready to levy on the whole Union a tax of untold millions to transport this burden to any place in the wide world *they* may select, as best securing them from its noxious influence.

"To Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where."

Of course, as the removal is to be effected by the federal government on a large scale, with unlimited funds at its command ; as the burden is to be deposited wherever the slaveholders please ; and as they *are to be relieved*, the transportation offered by the Massachusetts senator is to be compulsory, rivalling in moral turpitude the expulsion of the Moors from Spain and the Huguenots from France.

The legislation of both the free and slave states has long been directed to rendering the condition of the free blacks so intolerable as to coerce them into exile. But these people, with great firmness and pertinacity, cleave to their native land, and, in spite of their wrongs, are rising in education and respectability, and are attracting sympathy and friends. Their oppressors are now adopting the policy of presenting to them the alternative of exile or slavery. Various are the laws now in operation, and new ones are forging, to convert the free blacks into slaves. Until lately, laws of this description have been confined to the slave states. Illinois, in her late act for selling free negroes who come into her limits, has shown us to what a height of villany hatred to the free negro, united with friendship to the slaveholder, is capable of attaining ; for the very law thus perpetrating an accursed outrage on free citizens, guiltless of crime, accords to the slaveholder the privilege of driving his slave coffles over the soil of Illinois ! Now, this hatred to the free negro, this friendship to the slaveholder, the Colonization Society has been actively engaged in fostering, from the day of its organization to the present hour. If the reader thinks this assertion harsh and unjust, he is entreated to

study with deep attention the revelations made in this work. He will find that colonizationists have sedulously endeavored to screen American slavery, as a system, from all imputation of moral guilt; have been instant, in season and out of season, in holding up the free negroes as most pernicious and *dangerous* nuisances; and have hailed with applause execrable laws, aggravating their oppression, but accompanied with pecuniary appropriations for their banishment to Africa. Most truly may it be said, that the tender mercies of this scheme are cruel; for most cruel is the constant effort to excite hatred to the free negro, and a morbid apprehension of *danger* from his presence. Let the reader solemnly ask himself, even admitting a removal to Africa may be advantageous to some emigrants, how far a good end can sanctify unholy means, and how far he can countenance the means used by the society consistently with his obligations to God and man.

August, 1853.

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