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THE STORY OF JOSIAH HENSON [1]

No one ever uttered a more forceful truth than Frederika Bremer when she said in speaking to Americans: "The fate of the Negro is the romance of your history." The sketches of heroes showing the life of those once exploited by Christian men must ever be interesting to those who would know the origin and the development of a civilization distinctly American. In no case is this more striking than in that of Josiah Henson, the man who probably was present to Harriet Beecher Stowe's mind when she graphically portrayed slavery in writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

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[1] On account of ill health Mr. W. B. Hartgrove, who was preparing this article, had to turn over his unfinished manuscript to the editor, who completed it. The story is based on the "*Life of Josiah Henson*," "*Father Henson's Story of His Own Life*" and "*Uncle Tom's Story of His Life*."—The Editor.

Josiah Henson was born June 15, 1789, on a farm in Charles County, Maryland, where his mother was hired out. His parents had six children. The only recollection he had of his father was that of seeing his right ear cut off, his head gashed and his back lacerated, as a result of the cruel punishment inflicted upon him because he had dared to beat the overseer of the plantation for brutally assaulting the slave's wife. Because of becoming morose, disobedient and intractable thereafter, Henson's father was sold to a planter in Alabama and his relatives never heard of him again. His mother was then brought back to the estate of her owner, a Doctor McPherson, who was much kinder to his slaves. Dr. McPherson gave the youth his own name, Josiah, and the family name Henson after Dr. McPherson's uncle, who served in the Revolutionary War. Josiah showed signs of mental and religious development under the pious care of his Christian mother and for that reason became his master's favorite.

Upon the death of Doctor McPherson, however, it became necessary to sell the estate and slaves to divide his property among his heirs. The Henson family was then scattered throughout the country and worst of all Josiah was separated from his mother, notwithstanding his mother's earnest entreaty that her new master, Isaac Riley, should also purchase her baby. Instead of listening to the appeal of this afflicted woman clinging to his hands, he disengaged himself from her with violent blows. She was then taken to Riley's farm in Montgomery County. Josiah was purchased by a man named Robb, a tavern

keeper living near Montgomery Court-House. Both masters were unusually cruel, in keeping with the tyrannical methods employed by planters of that time. Because of ill health resulting from the lack of proper care, Josiah became very sickly. He was then providentially restored to his mother, having been offered to her owner by Robb for a small sum, for the reason that it was thought that he would die.

His third master was "vulgar in his habits, unprincipled and cruel in his general deportment and especially addicted to the vice of licentiousness."[2] On his plantation Henson served as water-boy, butler and finally as a field hand, experiencing the usual hardship of the slave. He ate twice a day of cornmeal and salt herring, with a little buttermilk and a few vegetables occasionally. His dress was first a single garment, something like a long shirt reaching to the ankles, later a pair of trousers and a shirt with the addition of a woolen hat once in two or three years and a round jacket or overcoat in the winter time. He slept with ten or a dozen persons in a log hut of a single small room, with no other floor than the trodden earth, and without beds or furniture. In spite of this, however, Henson grew to be a robust lad, who at the age of fifteen could do a man's work. Having too more mental capacity than most slaves, he was regarded as a smart fellow. Hearing remarks like this about himself, Henson became filled with ambition and pride, and aspired to a position of influence among his fellows.

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[2] Henson, "*Uncle Tom's Story of his Life*," p. 15.

At times Henson would toil and induce his fellow slaves to work much harder and longer than required to obtain from their master a kind word or act, but these efforts usually produced no more from their owner than a cold calculation of the value of Josiah to him. When, however, the white overseer of this plantation was discharged for stealing from his employer, Josiah had shown himself so capable that he was made manager of the plantation. In this position his honest management of the estate made him indispensable to his master also as a salesman of produce in the markets of Georgetown and Washington. He had during these years come under the influence of an anti-slavery white man of Georgetown and had become a devout Christian with considerable influence as a preacher among the slaves.

About this time, Josiah was serving his master in another capacity, which brought upon him one of the greatest misfortunes of his life. This was accompanying his master to town for protection and deliverance when the owners of his order indulged in excessive drinking and brawls in taverns. Sometimes in removing his master from the midst of a fracas, he would have to handle his owner's opponent rather roughly. On one occasion when Riley became involved in a quarrel with his brother's overseer, Henson pushed the overseer down; and falling while intoxicated the overseer suffered some injury. The overseer decided to wreak vengeance on Henson for this. Finding Henson on the way home one day the overseer assisted by three Negroes attacked him, beating him unmercifully and left him on the

ground almost senseless with his head badly bruised and cut and with his right arm and both shoulder blades broken. Being on a farm where no physician or surgeon was usually called, Henson recovered with difficulty under the kind treatment of his master's sister; but was never able thereafter to raise his hands to his head. The culprit did not suffer for this offense, as the court acquitted him on the grounds of self-defense.

In the course of time Henson's master, Isaac Riley, lived so extravagantly that he became involved in debt and lawsuits which heralded his ruin. Seeing his estate would be seized, he intrusted to Henson in 1825 the tremendous task of taking his 18 slaves to his brother, Amos Riley, in Kentucky. Henson bought a one-horse wagon to carry provisions and to relieve the women and children from time to time. The men were compelled to walk altogether. Traveling through Alexandria, Culpepper, Fauquier, Harper's Ferry and Cumberland, they met on the way droves of Negroes passing in chains under the system of the internal slave trade, while those whom Henson was conducting were moving freely without restriction. On arriving at Wheeling, he sold the horse and wagon and bought a boat of sufficient size to take the whole party down the river. At Cincinnati some free Negroes came out to greet them and urged them to avail themselves of the opportunity to become free. Few of the slaves except Henson could appreciate this boon offered them, but he had thought of obtaining it only by purchase. Henson said: "Under the influence of these impressions, and seeing that the allurements of the

crowd were producing a manifest effect, I sternly assumed the captain, and ordered the boat to be pushed off into the stream. A shower of curses followed me from the shore; but the Negroes under me, accustomed to obey, and, alas! too degraded and ignorant of the advantages of liberty to know what they were forfeiting, offered no resistance to my command." "Often since that day," says he, "has my soul been pierced with bitter anguish at the thought of having been thus instrumental in consigning to the infernal bondage of slavery so many of my fellow-beings. I have wrestled in prayer with God for forgiveness. Having experienced myself the sweetness of liberty, and knowing too well the after misery of a great majority of them, my infatuation has seemed to me an unpardonable sin. But I console myself with the thought that I acted according to my best light, though the light that was in me was darkness."[3]

Henson finally arrived with these slaves at the farm of his master's brother, five miles south of the Ohio and fifteen miles above the Yellow Banks, on the Big Blackfords' Creek in Davies County, Kentucky, April, 1825. Here the situation as to food, shelter and general comforts was a little better than in Maryland. He served on this plantation as superintendent and having here among more liberal white people the opportunity for religious instruction, he developed into a successful preacher, recognized by the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

There he remained waiting for his master three years. Unable

[3] Henson, "*Uncle Tom's own Story of his Life*," p. 53.

to persuade his wife to move to Kentucky, however, his master decided to abandon the idea and sent an agent to bring upon those slaves another heartrending scene of the auction block, though Henson himself was exempted. Henson saw with deepest grief the agony which he recollected in his own mother and which he now unfortunately said in the persons with whom he had long been associated. He could not, therefore, refrain from experiencing the bitterest feeling of hatred of the system and its promoters. He furthermore lamented as never before his agency in bringing the poor creatures hither, if such had to be the end of the expedition. Freedom then became the all-absorbing purpose that filled his soul. He said that he stood ready to pray, toil, dissemble, plot like a fox and fight like a tiger.

A new light dawned upon the dark pathway of Josiah Henson, however, in 1828. A Methodist preacher, an anti-slavery white man, talked with Henson one day confidentially about securing freedom. He thereupon suggested to Henson to obtain his employer's consent to visit his old master in Maryland that he might connect with friends in Ohio along the way and obtain the sum necessary to purchase himself. His employer readily consented and with the required pass and a letter of recommendation from his Methodist friend to a preacher in Cincinnati, Henson obtained contributions to the amount of one hundred and sixty dollars on arriving in that city, where he preached to several congregations. He then proceeded to Chillicothe where the annual Methodist Conference was in

session, his kind friend accompanying him. With the aid of the influence and exertions of his coworker Henson was again successful. He then purchased a suit of comfortable clothes and an excellent horse, with which he traveled leisurely from town to town, preaching and soliciting as he went. He succeeded so well that when he arrived at his old home in Maryland, he was much better equipped than his master. This striking difference and the delay of Henson along the way from September to Christmas caused his master to be somewhat angry. Moreover, as his master had lost most of his slaves and other property in Maryland, he was anxious to have Henson as a faithful worker to retrieve his losses; but this changed man would hardly subserve such a purpose.

The conditions which he observed around him were so much worse than what he had for some time been accustomed to and so changed was the environment because of the departure or death of friends and relatives during his absence that Henson resolved to become free. He then consulted the brother of his master's wife, then a business man in Washington, whom he had often befriended years before and who was angry with Henson's master because the latter had defrauded him out of certain property. This friend, therefore, gladly took up with Henson's master the question of giving the slave an opportunity to purchase himself. He carefully explained to the master that Henson had some money and could purchase himself and that if, in consideration of the valuable services he had rendered, the master refused

to do so, Henson would become free by escaping to Canada. The master agreed then to give him his manumission papers for four hundred and fifty dollars, of which three hundred and fifty dollars was to be in cash and the remainder in Henson's note. Henson's money and horse enabled him to pay the cash at once. But his master was to work a trick on him. He did not receive his manumission papers until March 3, 1827, and when Henson started for Kentucky his master induced him to let him send his manumission papers to his brother in Kentucky where Henson was returning, telling him that some ruffian might take the document from him on the way. In returning to Kentucky Henson was arrested several times as a fugitive, but upon always insisting on being carried before a magistrate he was released. He had no trouble after reaching Wheeling, from which he proceeded on a boat to Davies County, Kentucky.

Arriving at the Kentucky home, he was informed that the master had misrepresented the facts as to his purchase. He had written his brother that Henson had agreed to pay one thousand dollars for himself, the balance-of the six hundred and fifty dollars to be paid in Kentucky. As the only evidence he had, had been sent to his master's brother, it was impossible for him to make a case against him in court. Things went on in uncertainty for about a year. Then came a complaint from his master in Maryland, saying that he wanted money and expressing the hope that Henson would soon pay the next installment.

Soon thereafter Henson received orders to go with Amos

Riley carrying a cargo to New Orleans. This suggestion was enough. He contrived to have his manumission papers sewed up in his clothing prior to his departure on the flat boat for New Orleans. He knew what awaited him and his mind rapidly developed into a sort of smoldering volcano of pent-up feeling which at one time all but impelled him to murder his white betrayers. Blinded by passion and stung by madness, Henson resolved to kill his four companions, to take what money they had, then to scuttle the craft and escape to the North. One dark night within a few days' sail of New Orleans it seemed that the opportune hour had come. Henson was alone on the deck and Riley and the hands were asleep. He crept down noiselessly, secured an ax, entered the cabin, and looking by aid of the dim light, his eye fell first on Riley. Henson felt the blade of the ax and raised it to strike the first blow when suddenly the thought came to him, "What! Commit murder, and you a Christian?" His religious feeling and belief in the wonderful providence of God prevented him.

Riley talked later of getting him a good master and the like but did not disguise the effort to sell him. Fortunately, however, Amos Riley was suddenly taken sick and becoming more dependent on Henson then, than Henson had been on him, he immediately ordered Henson to sell the flat boat and find passage for him home in a sick cabin at once. Henson did this and succeeded by careful nursing to get Amos back to his home in Kentucky alive. Although he confessed that, if he had sold

Henson, he would have died, the family showed only a realization of an increased value in Henson rather than an appreciation of his valuable services. He, therefore, decided to escape to Canada.

His wife, fearing the dangers, would not at first agree to go, but upon being told that he would take all of the children but the youngest, she finally agreed to set out with him. Knowing of the hardships that they must have to experience, Henson practised beforehand the carrying of the children on his back. They crossed the river into Indiana and proceeded toward Cincinnati, finding it difficult to purchase food in that State, so intensely did the people hate the Negro there. After two weeks of hardship, exhausted they reached Cincinnati. There they were refreshed and carried 30 miles on the way in a wagon. They directed themselves then toward the Scioto, where they were told they would strike the military road of General Hull, opened when he was operating against Detroit.

They set out, not knowing that the way lay through a wilderness of howling wolves and, not taking sufficient food, they did not pass homes from which they could purchase supplies on the way. They did not go far before his wife fainted, but she was soon resuscitated. Finally, they saw in the distance persons whose presence seemed to be the dark foreboding of disaster, but the fugitives pressed on. They proved to be Indians, who, when they saw the blacks, ran away yelping. This excited the fugitives, as they thought the Indians were yelling to secure the cooperation of a larger number to massacre them. Farther

on they saw other Indians standing behind trees hiding. After passing through such trials as these for some time they came to an Indian village, the dwellers of which, after some fear and hesitation, welcomed them, supplied their wants and gave them a comfortable wigwam for the night. They were then informed that they were about twenty-five miles from the lakes. After experiencing some difficulty in fording a dangerous stream and spending another night in the woods they saw the houses on the outskirts; of Sandusky.

Using good judgment, however, Henson did not go into the village at once. When about a mile from the lake, He hid his family in the woods and then proceeded to approach the town. Soon he observed on the left side of the town a house from which a number of men were taking something to a vessel. Approaching them immediately he was asked whether or not he desired to work. He promptly replied in the affirmative and it was not long before he was assisting them in loading corn. He soon contrived to get in line next to the only Negro there engaged and communicated to him his plans.[4]

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[4] Henson gives this interesting conversation:"How far is it to Canada?" He gave me a peculiar look, and in a minute I saw he knew all. "Want to go to Canada? Come along with us, then. Our captain's a fine fellow. We're going to Buffalo." "Buffalo; how far is that from Canada?" "Don't you know, man? Just across the river." I now opened my mind frankly to him, and told him about my wife and children. "I'll speak to the captain," said he. He did so, and in a moment the captain took me aside, and said, "The Doctor says you want to go to Buffalo with your family." "Yes, sir." "Well why not go with me?" was his frank reply. "Doctor says you've got a family." "Yes, sir." "Where do you stop?" "About a mile back." "How long have you been here."

He told the captain, who called Henson aside and agreed to assist him in getting to Buffalo, the boat's destination, where the

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"No time," I answered, after a moment's hesitation. "Come, my good fellow, tell us all about it. You're running away, ain't you?" Henson saw that he was a friend, and opened his heart to him. "How long will it take you to get ready?" "Be here in half an hour, sir." "Well go along and get them." Off I started; but, before I had run fifty feet, he called me back. "Stop," said he; "you go on getting the grain in. When we get off, I'll lay to over opposite that island, and send a boat back. There's a lot of regular nigger-catchers in the town below, and they might suspect if you brought your party out of the bush by daylight." I worked away with a will. Soon the two or three hundred bushels of corn were aboard, the hatches fastened down, the anchor raised, and the sails hoisted. I watched the vessel with intense interest as she left her moorings. Away she went before the free breeze. Already she seemed beyond the spot at which the captain agreed to lay to, and still she flew along. My heart sank within me; so near deliverance, and again to have my hopes blasted, again to be cast on my own resources. I felt that they had been making a mock of my misery. The sun had sunk to rest, and the purple and gold of the west were fading away into gray. Suddenly, however, as I gazed with weary heart the vessel swung round into the wind, the sails flapped, and she stood motionless. A moment more, and a boat was lowered from her stern, and with steady stroke made for the point at which I stood. I felt that my hour of release had come. On she came, and in ten minutes she rode up handsomely on the beach. My black friend and two sailors jumped out, and we started on at once for my wife and children. To my horror, they were gone from the place where I left them. Overpowered with fear, I supposed they had been found and carried off. There was no time to lose, and the men told me I would have to go alone. Just at the point of despair, however, I stumbled on one of the children. My wife it seemed, alarmed at my long absence, had given up all for lost, and supposed I had fallen into the hands of the enemy. When she heard my voice, mingled with those of the others, she thought my captors were leading me back to make me discover my family, and in the extremity of her terror she had tried to hide herself. I had hard work to satisfy her. Our long habits of concealment and anxiety had rendered her suspicious of every one; and her agitation was so great that for a time she was incapable of understanding what I said, and went on in a sort of paroxysm of distress and fear. This, however, was soon over, and the kindness of my companions did much to facilitate the matter."—Father Henson's Story of his own Life, p. 121.

fugitives would find friends. It was agreed that the vessel should leave the landing and that a small boat should take the fugitives aboard at night, as there were Kentucky spies in Sandusky that might apprehend them. Henson said he watched the vessel leave the landing and then lower a boat for the shore and in a few minutes his black friend and two sailors landed and went with him to get his family. Thinking that he had been captured his wife had grown despondent and had moved from the spot where he left her. With a little difficulty, he found her, but when she saw him approaching with those men, she was still more frightened. She was reassured, however, and soon they were received on board in the midst of hearty cheers. They arrived at Buffalo the next evening too late to cross the river. The following morning they were brought to Burnham and went on the ferry boat to Waterloo. The good Captain Burnham paid the passage money and gave Henson a dollar beside. They arrived in Canada on the 28th day of October, 1830. Describing his exultation Henson said: "I threw myself on the ground, rolled in the sand, seized handfuls of it and kissed them, and danced round till, in the eyes of several who were present, I passed for a madman. 'He's some crazy fellow,' said a Colonel Warren, who happened to be there. 'O, no, master! don't you know? I'm free!' He burst into a shout of laughter. 'Well I never knew freedom make a man roll in the sand in such a fashion,' Still I could not control myself. I hugged and kissed my wife and children, and, until the first exuberant burst of feeling was over, went on as before."

He soon found employment there with one Mr. Hibbard, whom he served three years and was lodged in a cabin better than that in Kentucky. His family, however, had been so exposed that during the first winter they almost died of sickness, but his employer was kind to him. Mr. Hibbard taught Henson's son Tom, then twelve years of age. Tom's achievements were soon such that instead of reading the Bible to his father to assist him in preaching he taught his father to read. Henson then entered the service of one Mr. Risely, who had experienced more elevation of mind than Mr. Hibbard. With this advantage Henson not only realized more fully than ever the ignorance in which he lived, but became interested in the elevation of his people there, who had been content with the mere making a livelihood rather than solving the economic problems of freedom. A good many, thereafter, agreed to invest their savings in land. In this they had the cooperation of Mr. Risely. Henson set out, therefore, in 1834 to explore the country and finally selected a place for a settlement to the east of Lake St. Clair and Detroit river later called Colchester.

Henson thereafter directed his attention to those whom he had left in bondage. If he felt any compunction of conscience for having conducted the party of Maryland slaves through a free State without making an effort to free them, he made up for that in later years. Addressing an audience of Negroes some years later at Fort Erie, Pennsylvania, he took occasion to remind them of their duty to assist in the emancipation of

their fellowmen in the South. In the audience was a young man named James Lightfoot, who had fled from a plantation near Maysville, Kentucky. Seeing his duty as never before, he approached Father Henson to arrange for the rescue of his enslaved kinsmen. Knowing the agony in which he was, Henson undertook the perilous task of bringing them to Canada. Leaving his family alone he traveled on foot through New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio into Kentucky. He had little difficulty in finding the Lightfoots. On presenting them a small token of the loved one, who, they were told, had gone to the land of freedom, they exhibited no little excitement. Unfortunately, however, Lightfoot's parents were so far advanced in years and his sisters had so many children that they could not travel. As the young men, who could have gone, were not anxious to be separated from their loved ones, all declined the invitation to make this effort for freedom at that time, promising to undertake it a year thereafter, if Henson returned for them.

Henson agreed to do so and in the meantime went forty or fifty miles into Bourbon County in the interior of Kentucky in quest of a large party of Negroes who were said to be ready to escape. After a search for about a week he discovered that there were about thirty fugitives collected from various States. With them he started on the return trip to Canada, traveling by night and resting by day. They contrived to cross the Ohio river and reached Cincinnati in three days. There they were assisted and directed to Richmond, Indiana, a settlement of Quakers, who

helped them on their way. After a difficult journey of two weeks they reached Toledo and took passage for Canada, which they reached in safety.

Henson then remained on his farm in Canada some months, but when the appointed time for the delivery of the enslaved kinsmen of James Lightfoot arrived, he set out again for Kentucky. He passed through Lancaster, Ohio, where the people were very much excited over a meteoric shower, thinking that the day of judgment had come. Henson thought so too, but believing that he was promoting a righteous cause, he kept on. On arriving at Portsmouth on the Ohio, he narrowly escaped being detected by Kentuckians in the town. He resorted to the stratagem of binding his head with dried leaves in a cloth and pretended to be so seriously afflicted that he could not speak. Arriving at Maysville, he had little difficulty in finding the slaves whom he was seeking. The second person whom he met was Jefferson Lightfoot, the brother of James Lightfoot for whom Henson was making this trip. Saturday night, as usual, was set as the time for the execution of this affair, for the reason that they would not be missed until Monday and would, therefore, have a day ahead. They started from Maysville in a boat, hoping to reach Cincinnati before daylight, but the boat sprang a leak and the party narrowly escaped being drowned. They procured another boat, however, and got within ten miles of Cincinnati before daylight. To avoid being detected, they abandoned the boat and proceeded to walk to Cincinnati, but faced another difficulty

when they reached the Miami, which at that point was too deep to be forded. But in going up the river seeking a shallow place they were seemingly led providentially by a cow that waded across before them. As the weather was cold and they were in a state of perspiration on wading through, the youngest Lightfoot was seized with serious contractions, but recovered after receiving such ministrations as could be given on the way. They were assisted in Cincinnati and the next day started on their journey to Canada. They had not gone far before the young Lightfoot became so seriously ill that he had to be carried on a litter, and this became so irksome that he himself begged to be left in the wilderness to die alone rather than handicap the whole party with such good prospects for freedom. With considerable reluctance, they acceded to his request, and sad indeed was the parting. But before they had gone more than two miles on their journey one of the brothers of the sick man suddenly decided to return, as he could not suffer to have his brother die thus in the wilderness, and be devoured by wolves. They returned and found the young man seemingly in a dying condition. They at once decided to resume their journey and had not gone far before they saw a Quaker whose *thee* and *thou* led them to believe that he was their friend. They then told him their story, which was sufficient. He immediately returned home, taking them with him. The fugitives remained there for the night and arranged for the boy to remain with the Quaker until he should recover. They were then provided with a sack of biscuit and a supply of meat,

with which they set out again for Canada. After proceeding a little further they met a white man, who became helpful to them in escaping the slave hunters who were then on their trail. This man while working for an employer who undertook to punish him had used violence and had to run off. The party, knowing the increasing danger of capture, walked all night, trying to cover the distance of forty miles. At daybreak they reached a wayside tavern near Lake Erie and ordered breakfast. While the meal was in preparation they quickly fell asleep. Just as the breakfast was ready, however, Henson had the peculiar presentiment that some danger was near and that he should at once leave the house. After experiencing some difficulty in persuading the fugitives to leave the tavern quickly they agreed to follow his orders. They had hardly left the tavern when they heard the tramping of the horses of the slave hunters. They hid themselves in some bushes nearby which overlooked the road. The Lightfoots quickly recognized the slave hunters and whispered their names to Henson as they passed by. This was the critical moment of their lives. Had they remained in the house a few minutes longer they would have been apprehended. Their white friend proceeded to the door in advance of the landlord and when asked as to whether he had seen any slaves said that he had, that there were six of them and that they had gone toward Detroit. The slave-hunters at once set out in that direction. The fugitives returned to the house, devoured their breakfast immediately and secured the assistance of the landlord, who hearing their piteous story agreed to take

them in his boat to Canada. In the language of Henson, "Their bosoms were swelling with inexpressible joy as they mounted the seats of the boat, ready, eager, to spring forward, that they might touch the soil of the freeman. And when they reached the shore, they danced and wept for joy and kissed the earth on which they first stepped, no longer *slaves* but *freemen*."[5]

Within a short time thereafter the boy whom they had left in dying condition on the way reached them on the free soil of Canada in good health. And Frank Taylor, the master of these fugitives, on recovering from an attack of insanity which apparently resulted from the loss of these slaves was persuaded by his friends to free the remaining members of the Lightfoot family, an act which he finally performed, enabling them after a few years to join their loved ones beyond the borders of the land of the slave. In this way Henson became instrumental in effecting the escape of as many as one hundred and eighteen slaves.[6]

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[5] Henson, "*Uncle Tom's Story of his Life*," p. 162.

[6] Years thereafter when taking dinner with a distinguished gentleman in London the thought of enjoying such privileges while his only brother was in slavery dawned suddenly and impressed itself so forcefully upon him that he immediately arose from the table, unable to eat. He soon returned to America and at once proceeded to devise means to free his brother. Mr. William Chaplain, of New York, had repeatedly urged him to flee by way of the underground railroad, but he was so demoralized and stultified by slavery that he would not make an effort. Mr. Chaplain made a second effort to induce him to escape but he still refused. Henson finally arranged to sell the narrative of his life to secure funds for his liberation. The book sold well in New England and the requisite four hundred dollars being raised his brother was freed and enabled to join him in Canada.—Father Henson's *Story of his own Life*, pp. 209-212.

The next important work was the establishment of the British American Manual Labor Institute in connection with Reverend Hiram Wilson. After working out a tentative plan, Wilson wrote James O. Fuller, residing in the State of New York, and interested him in the free Negroes of Canada West. On a trip to England Mr. Fuller raised $1,500 for this purpose. A convention of the leading refugees in Canada West was then called to decide exactly how this money should be spent. Henson urged that it be appropriated to the establishment of a manual labor school, where children could be taught the elements of knowledge which are usually the courses of a grammar school; and where the boys could be given, in addition, the practice of some mechanic art and the girls could be instructed in those domestic arts which are the proper occupations of their sex. Such a school he though would so equip the Negro youth as to enable him to take over much of the work then being done by white teachers. This was then necessary, owing to the prejudice arising against the coeducation of the whites and blacks and the stigma attached to teachers of Negroes. For this purpose two hundred acres of land were bought on the river Sydenham. In 1842 the school was established at Dawn, to which Henson moved with his family. Henson traveled in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine in the interest of the institution and obtained many gifts, especially from Boston, the liberal people of which gave him sufficient funds to maintain it some time.

In connection with this school there was established a saw-

mill, the building and the equipment of which was secured by Henson also from philanthropists in Boston. These gentlemen were Rev. Ephraim Peabody, Amos Lawrence, H. Ingersoll Bowditch, and Samuel Elliot. Henson then proceeded to have walnut sawed in Canada and shipped to Boston. He sold his first eighty thousand feet to Jonas Chickering, at forty-five dollars a thousand. The second cargo was shipped to Boston via the St. Lawrence and brought Henson a handsome profit. This business not only became profitable to the persons directly interested in it but proved to be an asset of the whole section.

In the course of time, however, the institution became heavily indebted and some means of relief had to be found. At a meeting of the trustees it was decided to separate the management of the mill from that of the school. It was easy to find some one to take over the school, but few dared to think of assuming the management of the mill, which was indebted to the amount of seven thousand five hundred dollars. Henson accepted the management of the latter on the condition that Peter B. Smith would assume an equal share of the responsibility. Henson then proceeded to England to raise funds to pay the debts of the mill. Well supplied with letters of recommendation from some of the most prominent men in the United States, he easily connected with men of the same class in England. But before he could raise more than seventeen hundred dollars, an enemy, jealous of his success, circulated through the press the report that he was an imposter and was not authorized to solicit funds for any such

purpose.[7] This, of course, frustrated his plans, but the English people were kind to him. They sent an agent, John Scobell, to Canada to inquire into the matter, Henson accompanying him. A thorough investigation of the affairs of the institution was made and the charges were repudiated. The person who circulated them even denied that he had done so. Upon returning to England Mr. Scobell informed Henson that should he ever desire to return to England, he would find in the hands of Amos Lawrence, of Boston, a draft to cover his expenses. Henson did return in 1851 and raised sufficient money to cancel the entire indebtedness of the institution. He was compelled to return to Canada soon after his arrival, however, on account of the fatal illness of his wife, who passed away in 1852.

How Father Henson claimed to be the original Uncle Tom of Mrs. Stowe's immortal story is more than interesting. Laboring in the anti-slavery cause, Henson traveled in Canada and New England, where he was welcomed to the pulpits of ministers of all denominations. Once when he was in the vicinity of Andover, Massachusetts, Mrs. Stowe sent for him and his traveling companion, Mr. George Clarke, a white gentleman promoting the abolition of slavery by singing at anti-slavery meetings. Mrs. Stowe became deeply interested in Henson's story and had him narrate in detail the many varied experiences of his eventful life. He told her, moreover, about the life of the slave in several sections and the peculiarities of many slaveholders.

[7] *Liberator*, April 11, 1851.

Soon thereafter appeared "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Henson said that the white slaves, George and Eliza Harris, were his particular friends. Harris's real name was Lewis Clark, who traveled and lectured with Henson in New England. Clark and his wife lived in Canada and finally moved to Oberlin to educate their children. Furthermore, Henson says there was on his plantation a clear-minded, sharp Negro girl, Dinah, who was almost like Mrs. Stowe's Topsy and that a gentleman Mr. St. Clair lived in his neighborhood. Bryce Litton, who broke Henson's arms and so maimed him for life that he could never thereafter touch the top of his head, he thought, would well represent Mrs. Stowe's cruel Legree. It has been denied that he was this hero.

When Henson was in England he had the good fortune to exhibit at the World's Fair there some of his beautifully polished walnut lumber, which Mr. Jonas Chickering sent over for him. The only exhibitor of color, he attracted attention from many, among whom was Queen Victoria, who in passing by was saluted by Henson, which salutation was returned. She inquired as to whether the exhibit he had charge of was his work. At the close of the exhibition Henson received a large quarto bound volume describing the exhibits and listing the exhibitors, among whom was found Josiah Henson. In addition he was awarded a bronze medal, a beautiful picture of the Queen and royal family of life size and several other objects of interest.

While in England Henson had the privilege of meeting some of its most distinguished citizens. He introduced himself to

the thinkers of the country when, upon hearing an eminent man from Pennsylvania tell the Sabbath-School Union that all classes in the United States indiscriminately enjoyed religious instruction. Henson demanded a hearing and successfully refuted the misrepresentation. Having a standing invitation, he dined alternately with Samuel Morley and George Hitchcock, Esq., of St. Paul's Church Yard. Upon meeting Lord Grey, Henson was asked by the gentleman to go to India to introduce the culture of cotton, promising him an appointment to an office paying a handsome salary. Through Samuel Guerney, Henson had a long interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was so impressed with Henson's bearing and culture that he inquired as to the university from which he was graduated. Henson replied, *The University of Adversity*. After listening to Henson's experiences for more than an hour he followed him to the door and begged him to come to see him again. He then attended a large picnic of Sabbath-School teachers on the grounds of Lord John Russell, then Prime Minister of England. Sitting down to dinner, Henson was given the seat of honor at the head of the table with such guests as Reverend William Brock, Honorable Samuel M. Peto and Mr. Bess.

Near the end of his career Henson had many things to trouble him. The divided management of the British American Manual Labor Institute and the saw-mill proved a failure. The trustees who got control of it promised to make something new of it but did not administer the affairs successfully and they were involved

in law suits there with the Negroes, who endeavored to obtain control of it. It finally failed, despite the fact that the court of chancery appointed a new board of trustees and granted a bill to incorporate the institution as Wilberforce University, which existed a few years.

Henson showed his patriotism in serving as captain to the second Essex company of colored volunteers in the Canadian Rebellion, going to the aid of the government which gave them asylum from slavery. His company held Fort Maiden from Christmas until the following May and also took the schooner *Ann* with three hundred arms and two cannons, musketry and provisions for the rebel troops. They held the fort until they were relieved by the colonel of the 44th regiment from England. Then came the Civil War. Henson was too old to go, but his relatives enlisted. He was charged with having violated the foreign enlistment act and was arrested and acquitted after some harrowing experiences.

Henson made a third trip to England near the close of his career. Many of his friends had passed away, but he met his old supporter, Samuel Morley. He made the acquaintance also of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton Hart, R. C. L. Bevan, and Professor Fowler. But he was then the hero of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The English people had read of him. They then wanted to see him. He spoke at the Victoria Park Tabernacle and held in London a farewell meeting in Spurgeon's Tabernacle. The buildings were thronged to their utmost capacity and eager crowds on the outside

made desperate efforts to see him. He was then called to Scotland that the people farther north might also see this hero. Just as Henson reached Edinburgh the crowning honor of his life was to come. He received a telegram from Queen Victoria inviting him to visit her the following day. After addressing an unusually large audience, Henson proceeded immediately to London. The next day he and his wife were dined by a group of distinguished gentlemen and were then taken to Windsor Castle, where they were presented to Queen Victoria. Her majesty informed him that he had known of him ever since she was a little girl. She expressed her surprise at seeing him look so different from what she had imagined he would. She briefly discussed with him the state of affairs in Canada, and in bidding him and his wife farewell expressed her wish for his continued prosperity, gave him a token of her respect and esteem, consisting of a full length cabinet photograph of herself in an elegant easel frame of gold.

On his return to the United States Henson visited the old plantation in Montgomery County near Rockville, Maryland, finding his old master's wife still living. He then proceeded to Washington to see again the old haunts which he frequented when serving as the market man of his plantation. While in the National Capital he went to the White House to call on his Excellency President Hayes, who chatted with him about his trip across the sea while Mrs. Hayes showed Henson's wife through the executive mansion. When he left the President extended him a cordial invitation to call to see him again. This was the last

thing of note in his life. He returned to his home in Canada and resumed the best he could the work he was prosecuting, but old age and sickness overtook him and he passed away in 1881 in the ninety-second year of his life.

W. B. Hartgrove

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING AND THE NEGRO

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a poetic artist who was intensely concerned with the large human movements of the world and the age into which she was thrown. Her whole life was one great heart-throb. While the condition of her health and the nature of her early training were such as to cultivate her rather bookish and romantic temperament, she followed with eagerness the great social reforms in England in the reign of William IV and the early years of Victoria; and *The Cry of the Children* and *The Cry of the Human* indicated what was to be one of her chief lines of interest. In her later years she threw herself heart and soul into the cause of Italian independence and unity, welcoming Napoleon III as a benefactor. Her political judgment was not always sound: her distinguished husband could not possibly follow her in her admiration for Napoleon, whom he regarded as to some extent at least a charlatan, and Cavour simply represented his countrymen in his amazement and chagrin at the terms of the Peace of Villafranca; nevertheless the great heart of Elizabeth Barrett Browning was ever moved by the demands of liberty, whether the immediate impulse was a child in the sweatshops of England, an Italian wishing to be free of Austria, or the exiled Victor Hugo, and there was no exaggeration in the tribute placed on the wall of Casa Guidi after her death:

Qui scrisse e morì

Elizabetta Barrett Browning

che in cuore di donna conciliava

scienza di dotto e spirito di poeta

e fece del suo verso aureo anello

fra Italia e Inghilterra

pone questa lapide

Firenze grata

[8] For the inscription we are indebted to the Cambridge edition of the poems of Mrs. Browning, edited by Harriet Waters Preston, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, p. xii. Translation: Here wrote and died Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who united to a woman's heart the learning of a savant and the inspiration of a poet, and made her verse a golden link between Italy and England. This tablet was set by grateful Florence in 1861.

republic, made a ready appeal. The first concrete connection, however, was one directly affecting the fortunes of the Barrett family. For some years Mr. Barrett had made his home at a beautiful estate in Herefordshire known as Hope End. He had inherited from his maternal grandfather a large estate in Jamaica, where the families of both his parents had been established for two or three generations. The abolition of slavery in the British colonies in 1833 inflicted great financial embarrassment upon him, as a result of which he was forced to sell Hope End and to remove his family, first to Sidmouth in Devonshire, and subsequently to London. Elizabeth Barrett foreshadowed this change of fortunes in a letter to her friend Mrs. Martin dated Sidmouth, May 27, 1833:

> The West Indians are irreparably ruined if the Bill passes. Papa says that in the case of its passing, nobody in his senses would think of even attempting the culture of sugar, and that they had better hang weights to the sides of the island of Jamaica and sink it at once.[9]

In September of the same year she wrote from Sidmouth to the same friend as follows:

> Of course you know that the late Bill has ruined the West Indians. That is settled. The consternation here is very great. Nevertheless I am glad, and always shall be, that the Negroes

[9] *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, edited by Frederic G. Kenton, 2 vols., Macmillan, New York and London, 1898. Vol. I, p. 21.

are—virtually—free.[10]

It is some years before we find another reference so definite. Miss Barrett in the meantime became Mrs. Browning and under the inspiration of love and Italy gave herself anew to her work. The feeling for liberty was constantly with her, as was to be seen from *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Poems before Congress*. About 1855, when she was on a visit to England, through the work of Daniel D. Home, a notorious American exponent of spiritualism, Mrs. Browning became interested in the current fad, and gave to it vastly more serious attention than most other initiates. Browning himself, while patient, was intolerably irritated with those whom he regarded as imposing on his wife's credulity, and delivered himself on the subject in *Mr. Sludge, 'the Medium*.' Spiritualism, however, was a topic of never-failing interest between Mrs. Browning and her American friend, Harriet Beecher Stowe, whom she entertained in Italy. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made a profound impression upon her. In 1853 this book was still in the great flush of its first success. On April 12, 1853, Mrs. Browning wrote from Florence to Mrs. Jameson as follows:

> Not read Mrs. Stowe's book! *But you must*. Her book is quite a sign of the times, and has otherwise and intrinsically considerable power. For myself, I rejoice in the success, both as a woman and a human being. Oh, and is it possible that you think a woman has no business with questions like

[10] *Letters*, I, 23.

the question of slavery? Then she had better use a pen no more. She had better subside into slavery and concubinage herself, I think, as in the times of old, shut herself up with the Penelopes in the "women's apartment," and take no rank among thinkers and speakers. Certainly you are not in earnest in these things. A difficult question—yes! All virtue is difficult. England found it difficult. France found it difficult. But we did not make ourselves an armchair of our sins. As for America, I honor America in much; but I would not be an American for the world while she wears that shameful scar upon her brow. The address of the new president[11] exasperates me. Observe, I am an abolitionist, not to the fanatical degree, because I hold that compensation should be given by the North to the South, as in England. The states should unite in buying off this national disgrace.[12]

Under date Florence, December 11, 1854, Mrs. Browning wrote to Miss Mitford as follows:

> I am reading now Mrs. Stowe's *Sunny Memories*, and like the naturalness and simplicity of the book much, in spite of the provincialism of the tone of mind and education, and the really wretched writing. It's quite wonderful that a woman who has written a book to make the world ring should write so abominably.[13]

More and more as the Civil War approached was Mrs.

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[11] *I. e.*, Franklin Pierce.

[12] *Letters*, II, 110.

[13] *Letters*, II, 183.

Browning depressed by the thought of the impending conflict. Between June 7, 1860, and July 25, 1861, she contributed to the recently established *Independent* eleven poems, chiefly on subjects of Italian liberty. Sometimes, however, especially in the letters accompanying her poems, she touched on themes somewhat closer to the American people. For the issue of March 21, 1861, she wrote to the editor as follows:

> My partiality for frenzies is not so absorbing, believe me, as to exclude very painful consideration on the dissolution of your great Union. But my serious fear has been, and is, not for the dissolution of the body but the death of the soul—not of a rupture of states and civil war, but at reconciliation and peace at the expense of a deadly compromise of principle. Nothing will destroy the Republic but what corrupts its conscience and disturbs its fame—for the stain upon the honor must come off upon the flag. *If, on the other hand, the North stands fast on the moral ground, no glory will be like your glory....* What surprises me is that the slaves don't rise.

On this great subject Mrs. Browning found her husband in full sympathy with her. Browning himself declared in a letter to an American, September 11, 1861:

> I have lost the explanation of American affairs, but I assure you of my belief in the justice and my confidence in the triumph of the great cause. For the righteousness of the principle I want no information. God prosper it and its

defenders.[14]

Two poems by Mrs. Browning at least have to do directly with the Negro and American affairs. One was *A Curse for a Nation* contributed to the *Poems before Congress* volume. The poet begins somewhat self-consciously:

> I heard an angel speak last night,
> And he said "Write!
> Write a Nation's curse for me,
> And send it over the Western Sea."

She protests her unwillingness to execute such a commission, for, she says,

> I am bound by gratitude
> By love and blood,
> To brothers of mine across the sea,
> Who stretch out kindly hands to me.

The angel, however, beats down this unwillingness and the curse follows, the second stanza reading:

> Because yourselves are standing straight
> In the state
> Of Freedom's foremost acolyte,

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[14] Quoted from *Browning Society Papers*, Part XII, by Elizabeth Porter Gould in *The Brownings and America*, p. 55.

Yet keep calm footing all the time
On writhing bond-slaves,—for this crime
This is the curse. Write.

At best, however, *A Curse for a Nation* can hardly help impressing one as a little forced. In rather higher poetic vein is the other poem, *The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point*. This was contributed to *The Liberty Bell*, a publication issued by the Boston Anti-Slavery Bazar in 1848. Mrs. Browning feared that the poem might be "too ferocious for the Americans to publish." The composition is undoubtedly a strong one. It undertakes to give the story of a young Negro woman who was bound in slavery, whose lover was crushed before her face, who was forced to submit to personal violation, who killed her child that so much reminded her of her white master's face, and who at last at Pilgrim's Point defied her pursuers. With unusual earnestness the poet has entered sympathetically into the subject. The following stanzas are typical:

But *we* who are dark, we are dark
Ah God, we have no stars!
About our souls in care and cark
Our blackness shuts like prison-bars;
The poor souls crouch so far behind
That never a comfort can they find
By reaching through the prison-bars.

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Why, in that single glance I had
Of my child's face, … I tell you all,
I saw a look that made me mad
The *master's* look, that used to fall
On my soul like his lash … or worse
And so, to save it from my curse,
I twisted it round in my shawl.

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From the white man's house, and the black man's hut,
I carried the little body on;
The forest's arm did round us shut,
And silence through the trees did run:
They asked no question as I went,
They stood too high for astonishment,
They could see God sit on his throne.

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(Man, drop that stone you dared to lift!—)
I wish you who stand there five abreast,
Each, for his own wife's joy and gift,
A little corpse as safely at rest
As mine in the mangoes: Yes, but *she*
My keep live babies on her knee,
And sing the song she likes the best.

In such a review as this of the connections between Mrs. Browning and the Negro one can not help coming face to face

with the question whether her famous husband was not himself connected by blood with the Negro race. The strain is hardly so pronounced as in men like Alexandre Dumas or Leigh Hunt, and as in the case of Alexander Hamilton, the point still seems to be waiting for final proof. The assertion is persistent, however, and there can be little doubt that such is the case. The standard life of Browning,[15] after wrestling in vain with the problem, dismisses it as follows:

> Dr. Furnivall has originated a theory, and maintains it as a conviction, that Mr. Browning's grandmother was more than a Creole in the strict sense of the term, that of a person born of white parents in the West Indies, and that an unmistakable dash of dark blood passed from her to her son and grandson. Such an occurrence was, on the face of it, not impossible, and would be absolutely unimportant to my mind, and, I think I may add, to that of Mr. Browning's sister and son. The poet and his father were what we know them, and if Negro blood had any part in their composition, it was no worse for them, and so much the better for the Negro.

Aside from this last point, from the evidence that has been given, while this of course has its limitations, we may safely assert that with her large humanity and her enthusiasm for liberty, Elizabeth Barrett Browning was one of the sturdiest defenders in England of the cause of the American Negro at the

[15] Mrs. Sutherland Orr, *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*. 2 vols. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1891. Vol. I, p. 8.

time of the beginning of the Civil War. It is to be regretted that she did not live to read the Emancipation Proclamation and to see the Negro started on an era of self-reliance and progress.

Benjamin Brawley

PALMARES: THE NEGRO NUMANTIA

One of the most glorious achievements in the history of the Iberian Peninsula was the long and desperate defence of Numantia against the Roman legionaries sent to effect the destruction of the city. When the beleaguered inhabitants could no longer maintain themselves, owing to the shortage of food supplies, they burned the city, and those who were not killed in battle with the Romans committed suicide. Scipio Æmilianus, the Roman leader, entered Numantia to find nothing but burning embers and piles of corpses.

This incident has an almost exact parallel in the history of Brazil—only this time the heroes were Negroes, defending the capital of one of the earliest and one of the strangest Negro republics in the history of the world. The Portuguese, who were the first to introduce Negro slavery into Europe, did not long delay in carrying the institution to their colony of Brazil. It was in 1574 that the first slave ship reached there. Thereafter, great numbers of Negroes were brought, especially to northern Brazil, in the equatorial belt, to work in the profitable sugar fields. No region of the Americas was so accessible to the slave trade, for the Brazilian coast juts out into the Atlantic Ocean directly opposite the Gulf of Guinea in Africa, whence most of the slaves were procured. It is profitless here to go into the question of the

treatment of the slaves by their Portuguese masters. Some were badly treated, and took the chance of flight to the interior forest lands, rather than submit any longer. Various causes prompted yet others to escape from the colonial plantations. Thus many a *quilombo*, or Negro village of the forest, was formed. By far the most famous of these was the *quilombo* of Palmares, whose history is the subject of this article.

In 1650, forty determined Negroes of the province of Pernambuco, all of them natives of Guinea, rose against their masters, taking as much as they could in the way of arms and provisions, and fled to the neighboring forest. There they founded a *quilombo* on the site of a well-known Negro village of earlier days, which the Dutch had destroyed. The tale of their escape was told throughout the province, with the result that it was not long before the population of the new *quilombo* was greatly increased. Slaves and freemen were eager to join their brethren in the forest. It seemed prudent, however, to go farther away from the white settlements, lest the very strength of the Negro town should invite annihilation or re-enslavement by the planters. Thus it was that the inland site of Palmares, not far from present-day Anadia, was chosen. A town was founded, and all seemed well except for one thing—an essential to permanence was lacking, for there were no women. A detachment of Negroes was sent on the romantic mission of procuring wives for the colony. This party marched to the nearest plantations, and, without stopping to discriminate, took all the women it could find, black, mulatto, and white.

Palmares was now on a secure footing indeed.

At first, the inhabitants lived by a species of banditry, robbing the whites whenever they could. Gradually, a more settled type of life developed. The Negroes began to engage in agriculture, and at length entered into something approximating peaceful relations with the Portuguese settlements. Trade took the place of warfare, although fear of the overgrown *quilombo* was perhaps as much the motive on the part of the whites as the desire for profits. A rustic republic of an admirable type was formed for the maintenance of internal order and external safety. Combining republican and monarchical features, they elected a chief, or king, called the *Zombe*, who ruled with absolute authority during the term of his life. The right of candidacy was restricted to a group recognized as composing the bravest men of the community. Any man in the state might aspire to this dignity, provided he had Negro blood in his veins. There were other officials, both of a military and of a civil character. In the interests of good order, the *Zombes* made laws imposing the death penalty for murder, adultery, and robbery. Slavery existed, and in this respect there was a curious custom. Every Negro who had won his freedom from the white man, by whatever method, as for example by a successful flight to Palmares, remained a free man. Those who were captured while in a state of slavery, however, became slaves in Palmares. Thus the reward of freedom was offered to those who should escape from the planters, and a punishment was held out to those who would not, or could not,

do so. In course of time, the Negro republic expanded until it included a number of towns. Palmares alone is said to have had a population of 20,000, and the number of fighting men in the whole republic was some 10,000. The capital city, Palmares, was surrounded by wooden walls, made of the trunks of large trees. The city was entered by means of three huge gates, on the tops of which were great platforms, always well guarded.

For nearly half a century the little republic prospered. It was perhaps only natural that the Portuguese settlers should wish to destroy it, for it represented an alien force and an ever present danger, certainly so far as their profits from the use of slave labor went. At any rate, in the year 1696, Governor Caetano de Mello of Pernambuco decided upon an expedition against Palmares. A strong force was sent, but it was met by the Negroes and totally defeated. A veritable army of some 7,000 men was now gathered, and placed under the command of a competent soldier named Bernardo Vieira. This time, the Portuguese troops were well provided with artillery, with which the Negro republic could not be expected to cope. Palmares was reached, but it was in no mood for surrender, and it was necessary to begin a regular siege of the city. The defence was desperate. After the Portuguese artillery had breached the walls in three places, their infantry attacked in force. They entered the city, but had to take it, foot by foot. At last, the defenders came to the center of Palmares, where a high cliff impeded further retreat. Death or surrender were now the only alternatives. Seeing that his cause was lost beyond repair, the

Zombe hurled himself over the cliff, and his action was followed by the most distinguished of his fighting men. Some prisoners were indeed taken, but it is perhaps a tribute to Palmares, though a gruesome one, that they were all put to death; it was not safe to enslave these men, despite the value of their labor. Thus passed Palmares, the Negro Numantia, most famous and greatest of the Brazilian *qui-lombos*.

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SLAVERY IN CALIFORNIA

Slavery in California prior to the Mexican War was slavery in the Spanish possessions. The Spaniards began with the enslavement of Indians and later at the advice of De las Casas changed to that of Negroes.[16] This system was first used in the West Indies and later extended to other colonies. It is said that about the year 1537, Cortes fitted out at the port of Tehuantepec, several small vessels, provided with everything required for planting a colony and sailed north to the head of the Gulf of California, transporting four hundred Spaniards and three hundred Negro slaves, that he had assembled for that purpose.[17] This is the first mention of Negro slavery in California. After the founding of the Mission of San Carlos by the president, Father Junipero Serra, with a community of twenty-three friars, we read that the first interment in the cemetery was that of Ignacio Ramirez, a former mulatto slave from San Antonio, who had money to purchase his freedom.[18] There were too a number of Negro slaves brought to California between these periods. They came on trading ships and with various expeditions, which they usually deserted after reaching the State. Hittell is wrong, therefore, in saying that the first slave in California was brought

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[16] Bourne, "*Spain in America*," 271.

[17] *California Miscellany*, I, 9.

[18] Bancroft, "*History of California*," I, 175; *Place Notices*, I, 151.

there in 1825 when the wife of Antonio José de Cot, a Spaniard, brought with her a slave girl named Juana, fourteen years of age, from Lima to San Francisco. He doubted even that this was the first slave in California for the lady expressed her intention to avail herself of the first opportunity to leave.[19]

Spain did not especially bother about Negro slavery in her Pacific coast territory for nearly two hundred years before the coming of the Americans. She promised by the treaty of September 30, 1817, to abolish the slave trade October 31, 1820, in all Spanish territory. In 1821, however, certain of the northern colonies of Spain in America established their independence as the United States of Mexico.[5] Three years later the importation of slaves from foreign countries was prohibited and children of slave parents were declared free. Notwithstanding this there set in considerable emigration from the Southern States followed by an agitation for the acquisition of Texas. In 1827, therefore, Coahuila and Texas were organized as a State with a law prohibiting slavery. As this, however, did not check the immigration, President Guerro issued a decree[20] in 1829 abolishing slavery in Mexico on the occasion of the celebration of the independence of Mexico and in 1830 ordered a military occupation of the State to enforce the anti-slavery measure.[4] But the aggressive southerner ever endeavoring to extend the territory of slavery had all but won the day in Texas. In 1836

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[19] Hittell, "*History of California*," II, 115.

[20] Garrison, "*Westward Extension*," 26.

Texas declared itself a republic with a constitution permitting the introduction of slavery and forbidding the residence of free Negroes without the consent of its Congress. Then came the Mexican War resulting in the defeat of Mexico and the cession to the United States of a vast territory of which California was the most valuable part.

It is clear, therefore, that at the time the United States government acquired the territory of California from Mexico, slavery had been abolished there nearly twenty years. The pro-slavery party, however, did not consider this action of Mexico a finality in the settlement of the slavery question in the new possessions. When a bill providing for the purchase of this territory was laid before the house, David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, after consultation with other northern democrats, offered the following amendment:

> "Provided that an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime whereof the party shall first be duly convicted."[21]

This proviso was adopted by a vote of 83 to 64. The bill carrying this proviso was then reported to the Senate where

[21] *Cong. Globe*, 29 Cong., 2 Sess., 509.

followed a heated debate which lasted until adjournment, the proviso being killed in the midst of stormy scenes in Congress.[22] This discussion showed that few statesmen believed that slavery would be profitable in California. They were not unlike Daniel Webster who, while speaking on the admission of the State of Texas, said that slavery was effectually excluded from California and New Mexico by a law even superior to that which admits and sanctions it in Texas. He meant the law of nature. The physiographic conditions of the country would forever exclude African slavery there; and it needed not the application of a proviso. If the question was then before the Senate he would not vote "to add a prohibition—to reaffirm an ordinance of nature, nor reenact the will of God."[23]

The coming and going of the Negro in California did not especially interest any one until the beginning of the immigration of the forties. The subject of slavery in California was officially called to the attention of the inhabitants through the issuance of a proclamation by the Commander in Chief of the District in regard to the unlawful enslaving of the Indians. He was endeavoring to protect them, but they were enslaved[24] in spite of

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[22] Garrison, "*Westward Extension*," 254-268, 284-314. *Cong. Globe*, 29 Cong., 2d Sess., 178, 453, 455; 30 Cong., 1st Sess., 875, 989, 910, 1002-1005, 1062, 1081; 2d Sess., 216, 381.

[23] Tuthill, "*Hist. of California*," 312, 316.

[24] Proclamation To the Inhabitants of California.It having come to the knowledge of the Commander in Chief of the District that certain persons have been and still are imprisoning and holding to service Indians against their will and without any legal

his efforts. The legislature undertook to perpetuate this system by enacting a law permitting the enslavement of Indians, the only condition upon the master being a bond of a small sum, that he would not abuse or cruelly treat the slaves. Under the provision of the same law, Indians could be arrested as vagrants and sold to the highest bidder within twenty-four hours after the arrest, and the buyer had the privilege of the labor for a period not exceeding four months.[25] An Indian arrested for a violation of a law could demand a jury trial, but could not testify in his own behalf against a white person. If found guilty of any crime, he could either be imprisoned or whipped, the whipping not to exceed twenty-four lashes.[26]

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contract for service. It is thereby ordered that all persons so holding or detaining Indians shall release them, and permit them to return to their own homes. Unless they can make a contract with them which shall be binding upon both parties. The Indian population must not be regarded in the light of slaves, but it is deemed necessary that the Indians within the settlement shall have employment, with the right of choosing their own master and employment. Having made such a choice they must abide by it, unless they can obtain permission in writing to leave, or the Justice in their complaint shall consider they have just cause to annull the contract and permit them to obtain another employee. All Indians must be required to obtain service and not be permitted to wander about the country in idleness in a dissolute manner. If found doing so they will be liable to arrest and punishment by labor on the public works at the direction of the Magistrate. All officers, Civil or Military under my command are required to execute the terms of this order and take notice of every violation thereof.—Given at headquarters in Yerba Buena.—Signed, John Montgomery. Sept. 15, 1846. Published for the Government of all concerned. Washington A. Bartlett, Magistrate of San Francisco, Sept. 15, 1846.—*California Star*, Sept. 15, 1846.

[25] California Laws, 1849-50, p. 408.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 408.

Later there was a steady influx of southerners and their Negro slaves into the territory of California, after the country was taken over by the United States. Then came the question as to the enslavement of the Negro. The situation became serious after the Congress of the United States appropriated three millions of dollars for the purchase of the new territory, and still more so after gold was discovered there. Mexican rule ended with the cession of the territory to the United States; and yet session after session of Congress adjourned without giving California a territorial form of government. The question of slavery in the newly acquired territory divided Congress so that they could not decide the issue. Southern newspapers were advertising for slave-owners to send names and the number of slaves they were taking to California to found a *New Colony*.[27]

The settlers were divided. Some came because they either disliked slavery, or were too poor to own slaves. They recognized the possibilities for making California a free State and did not care to be designated *Poor White Trash* by masters who were being allowed to fill the State with Negro slaves to constitute the basis of an aristocracy like that in the South. There were other inhabitants in California at the time who, being slave-owners, were southern sympathizers. They were determined either to have slavery in California or make a desperate effort before seeing the territory given up as a free State.[28] It did not require

[27] Bancroft, "*History of California*," VI, p. 313.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 313.

very much investigation, however, to show that the pro-slavery party was in the minority. The editor of the *Californian* said in May, 1848, that he voiced the sentiments of the people in California in saying that slavery was neither needed nor desired there. A correspondent of this paper hoping to hold that section for free labor said: "If white labor is too high for agriculture, laborers on contract may be brought from China." Referring to the proposal to make the commonwealth a slave State Buckelew said: "We have not heard one of our acquaintance in this country advocate this measure and we are almost certain that 97-100 of the present population are opposed to it." Again it is remarked in this paper: "We left the slave states because we did not like to bring up a family in a miserable, can't-help-one's-self condition," and dearly as he loved the union, he would prefer California independent to seeing her a slave State.[29]

The lack of law and order and fear of the southern slave-owners with their herds of Negro slaves finally led to the call of the Constitutional Convention. The question of slavery there was not so much debated in that body as was expected. Some excited pro-slavery leaders were talking of an independent *Pacific Republic*. The southern faction in the convention was led by a Mr. Gwyn, who afterwards became a United States Senator from California, and the northern element was ably represented by a Mr. Broderick, who later was chosen State Senator.[30] The

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[29] *The Californian*, March 16 and Nov. 4, 1848.

[30] Bancroft, "*History of California*," p. 287.

convention finally drafted their constitution with a section which provided that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude unless for the punishment of crime shall ever be tolerated in this state."

The pro-slavery faction in the convention was determined to have slavery somewhere and had managed to have the eastern boundary of California so designated that it extended as far as the Rocky Mountains. This would have resulted in rejection by Congress, or a division of the territory into a Northern and a Southern California, giving the pro-slavery element a new State. The unwieldy boundary, however, was discovered in time to have it changed, but not until after much debate, which almost wrecked the constitution. The California representatives elected by the convention left for Washington, where they presented to Congress the constitution and the petition of the California settlers asking for admission as a State. There had never been a precedent for their act. Yet the settlers in California felt perfectly justified, since it was their only safeguard against the pro-slavery leaders who were bringing their slaves into the territory.

Leaders at the national capital naturally hesitated, not knowing whether or not the admission of California under the conditions thus obtaining would aggravate or improve the national situation. California, however, cared little about the national situation, as is attested by the resolutions of 1850 to the effect: "That any attempts by congress to interfere with the institution of slavery in any of the territories of the United States would create just grounds of alarm in many of the States of the union; and that

such interference is unnecessary, inexpedient, and in violation of good faith; since, when any such territory applies for admission into the union as a state, the people thereof alone have the right, and should be left free and unrestrained, to decide such question for themselves." Broderick moved the insertion of the following: "That opposition to the admission of a state into the union with a constitution prohibiting slavery, on account of such prohibition, is a policy wholly unjustifiable and unstatesmanlike, and in violation of that spirit of concession and compromise by which alone the federal constitution was adopted, and by which alone it can be perpetuated." This amendment was adopted.[31]

After a debate of four months Congress admitted California as a free State as one of five compromises. Jefferson Davis, however, repudiated the idea of advantage to his section. He said: "Where is the concession to the South? Is it in the admission, as a state, of California, from which we have been excluded by congressional agitation? Is it in the announcement that slavery does not and is not to exist in the remaining territories of New Mexico and California? Is it in denying the title of Texas to one half of her territory?" He held that gold washing and mining was particularly adapted to slave labor, as was agriculture that depended on irrigation.[32] The day after the admission certain southern senators sent to that body a *Protest* against the injustice of the act of Congress, admitting California as a free State.

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[31] *Jour. Cal. Leg.*, 1850, 372-373.

[32] *Cong. Globe*, 1849-50, App., pt. I, 149-157.

The Senate refused the clerk permission either to read or record it. Whereupon the newspapers began publishing articles of severe criticism and talked of dividing the Union. Jefferson Davis went before the United States Senate and, addressing it, called attention to these comments, adding that so much outside criticism was doing more to divide the Union than the *Protest* would possibly do. Congress finally voted that the *Protest* be recorded.[33]

Was this to be a free State in every sense of the word? This was the day when the slave power "was covertly grasping at the Spanish-speaking countries beyond the Rio Grande, as it had at the lands beyond the Sabine."[34] At first, it was not, for a good many slaves were brought into the State. On April 1, 1850, an advertisement appeared in the *Jackson Mississippian* referring to *California, the Southern Slave Colony* and inviting citizens of slave-holding States, wishing to go to California, to send their names, number of slaves, time of contemplated departure, etc., to the *Southern Slave Colony*, of Jackson, Mississippi. The design was to settle in the richest parts of the State and to secure an uninterrupted enjoyment of slave property. The colony was to comprise about 5,000 white persons and 10,000 slaves.

Another effort to extend slavery in this section came in the unsuccessful filibustering expedition of the Tennessee lawyer, William Walker, who undertook to establish to the south in

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[33] Tuthill, "*History of California*," p. 320.

[34] Bancroft, "*History of California*," VI, pp. 252-253.

Sonora, a State with a constitution like that of Louisiana, basing his advocacy of slavery on the lofty grounds of civilizing the blacks and liberating the whites from manual labor. To explain the meaning of this expedition Bancroft considers it sufficient to point out that Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War at that time and that the Gadsden purchase was then under consideration.[35] In 1852 Peachy of San Joaquin introduced a resolution to allow fifty southern families to immigrate into California with their slaves. Some of them came without permission but on finding that they could not legally hold their slaves, they sent a part of them back while others became free.

In 1852 the Legislature passed a rigid Fugitive Slave Law intending to bar slavery from the State. The mischievous clause of this measure was that all slaves who had escaped into or were brought to California previous to the admission of the State to the Union were held to be fugitives, and were liable to arrest under the law, although many of them had been in the State several years, during which they had accumulated considerable property. The pro-slavery element not only profited by this, but the interpretation of this law by many of the Judges enabled them to bring their slaves into the State, work them in the mines, and return to the south and back to slavery with their Negroes.[36]

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 595.

[36] Many Negroes were returned to slavery by the Courts. An owner of slaves in Mississippi brought them voluntarily into California before the adoption of the Constitution by the State. The slaves asserted their freedom and for some months were engaged in business for themselves. The owner under the provision of the Fugitive

If they did not wish the trouble of their return passage they auctioned them off to the highest bidder. It also enabled them to make fortunes by selling to the slaves their freedom, charging them twice and often thrice the price he could have possibly

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Slave Act of 1852 brought them before the Justice of Peace, who allowed the claim of the owners and ordered them into his custody. The slaves then petitioned for a writ of habeas corpus which came before the Supreme. Court and after hearing the case the Court ordered that the writ be dismissed and the slaves remanded to their owners. —*California Reports*, II, 424-426.The case of Alvin Coffey is equally as interesting. This account was given by a lifelong friend of the subject.Alvin Coffey was born in 1822, in Saint Louis, Missouri. He came to California with his sick master, a Mr. Duvall, who landed in San Francisco, September 1, 1849. They went to Sacramento, October 13, 1849. During the next eight months the slave earned for his master $5,000, working in the mines, and by washing for the miners and mining for himself after night, he earned $700 of his own. As the master continued in poor health he decided to return with Alvin to Missouri at the expiration of two years. When they reached Kansas City, Missouri, the master sold Alvin to Nelson Tindle, first taking from him the $5,000, earned for the master, and also the $700 earned for himself.Nelson Tindle took a great liking to Alvin and in a short time made him overseer over a number of slaves. Alvin, however, longed to return to California and, in order to earn his freedom, bought his time from his master and took contracts to build railroads. One day Nelson Tindle said to Alvin that he was too smart a man to be a slave and ought to try and purchase his freedom. Whereupon Alvin told him if he would let him return to California, he could easily earn enough money to effect the purchase. Alvin was permitted to return to California, and in a short time sent his master the $1,500 to pay for his freedom. Alvin then undertook to earn the money to pay for the freedom of his wife and daughters, who were slaves of Doctor Bassett, of Missouri. He earned the required sum and returned for his family. After paying for their freedom, he went with them to Canada, where he left his daughters to be educated. He and his wife Mahalia came to California. It cost him for the freedom of himself and family together with the trips to and from California about $7000. See Bancroft, "*History of California*," VI, p. 382.

brought on the other side of the Rocky Mountains.[37] In certain southern counties of the State it was unpopular to speak in behalf of the slaves. In 1855 Chase and Day, two Abolitionists of Alameda County, were ridden on a rail, ducked and otherwise maltreated.[38] That same year expired the Fugitive Slave Law which had been renewed from year to year to enable slave-owners to reclaim fugitives who had sought refuge in that State prior to

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[37] Some of these cases are more than interesting. Daniel Rodgers came across the plains with his master from Little Rock, Arkansas, worked in the mines in Sonora, California, during the day for his master and at night for himself, earning and paying his master $1,100 for his freedom. Soon afterward the master returned with him to Little Rock and sold him. A number of the leading white gentlemen of Little Rock raised a sum of money, paid for his freedom and set him free. William Pollock and wife from North Carolina came to California with their master who located at Cold Springs, Coloma, California. He paid $1,000 for himself and $800 for his wife. The money was earned by washing for the miners at night and making doughnuts. They removed to Placerville, California, and afterward earned their living as caterers. In 1849, a slaveholder brought his slave to California. Not wishing to take the Negro back to his native State, Alabama, he concluded to sell him by auction. An advertisement was put in the papers, the boy was purchased for $1,000, by Caleb T. Fay, a strong abolitionist, who gave the boy his freedom.A Mississippi slaveholder brought several slaves from that State and promised to give them their freedom in two years. They all ran away save one, Charles Bates, when they learned that they were already free. The owner, finding mining did not pay, started east, taking Charles with him. On the Isthmus of Panama, Charles was persuaded to leave his master. He returned to California and to Stockton with his true friend. On the street one day he was recognized by a party who had lent money to Charles's master. The debtor got out an attachment for the former slave as chattel property, and according to the State law, the Negro was put up and sold at auction. A number of anti-slavery men bought the boy for $750 and gave him his freedom.—*California Reports*, I, 424-426.

[38] Bancroft, "*History of California*," VI, p. 716.

its admission to the Union. Fearing that this might be followed by other legislation hostile to their class, the Negroes held a convention in San Francisco that year to discuss their rights, their treatment by the white people, politics, principles and necessity of education. The Fugitive Slave Law was not reenacted.

Many slaves, however, asserted their rights. Such was the case of Archy, a slave brought by one Charles A. Stoval from Mississippi to California in 1857. After hiring Archy out for some time Stoval undertook to return him to Mississippi. Archy escaped and was arrested as a fugitive. Stoval sued out a writ of habeas corpus for his possession and the case came before the Supreme Court for adjudication. Peter Burnett, formerly Governor, who had been appointed justice of that court by Governor Johnson in 1857 and filled the office until 1858, presided. As Burnett was a southern man, his decision was foreshadowed. He decided that although Stoval could not sustain the character of either a transient traveler or a visitor and under the general law was not entitled to Archy, but he yet held that there were circumstances connected with the particular case that might exempt him from the operation of the rules laid down. One of the circumstances was that Stoval was traveling for his health; another, that he was short of means upon arrival in California; and still another, that this was the first case of the kind. He, therefore, ordered Archy to be turned over to Stoval. Joseph G. Baldwin, who succeeded Burnett, characterized the decision as "giving the law to the North and the Negro to the

South."[39] After being delivered to Stoval, Archy was taken to San Francisco, but his friends there sued out a writ of habeas corpus for his liberation before Judge Thomas W. Freelon, of the County of San Francisco. While this case was pending, however, Stoval swore to a new affidavit that Archy escaped from him in Mississippi and procured a warrant from George Pen Johnston, United States Commissioner, for his arrest as a fugitive slave from Mississippi. Archy was then discharged by Judge Freelon. He was immediately rearrested and taken before George Pen Johnston, who decided that Archy was in no sense a fugitive from Mississippi and discharged him.[40]

The tendency to free the Negroes brought there checked the importation of that class. The rights of the master to his slave, however, were not easily relinquished and the institution of slavery in California did not come to an end until 1872. Freedom, however, had to win and the pro-slavery element had to change its policy. In 1856 and 1857 efforts were made to call a convention to change the constitution so as to permit the importation of slaves, for with the expiration of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1855, slave-owners who held minors had to return them to slave States or let them go free. Since the Negroes brought into the State could in most cases become free the pro-slavery party then sought to get rid of the free Negro.

In his message to the legislature in 1850, Governor Burnett

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[39] Bancroft, "*History of California*," VI, p. 716.

[40] *Ibid.*, VI, p. 716.

recommended the exclusion of free Negroes. This was always Burnett's hobby. He incorporated this into the laws of Oregon when he revised them in 1844. Burnett had been brought up in the South and although he had ceased to be a slaveholder, he could not think of living with Negroes as freemen. The exclusion of the blacks too had a sort of popular appeal in it. The legislature, however, was divided on the question as to what should be done with the free Negro. A bill in compliance with the wishes of the Governor was introduced but defeated. Undaunted by this, however, the enemy of the free Negroes won a victory in another quarter in enacting a law that no black or mulatto person or Indian should be permitted to give evidence in any action to which a white person was a party. The leaders of the Negroes held another convention in 1856 to protest against this law. Another bill providing for the prohibition of the immigration of free persons of color into the State was introduced in 1858 and after much debate put through both houses, but it never became a law. The black code, of course, was abrogated after the Civil War.

Delilah L. Beasley

DOCUMENTS
CALIFORNIA FREEDOM PAPERS [41]

To determine the sources of the Negroes first brought into California their treatment by the whites and the methods employed to obtain their freedom no documents are more valuable than the manumission papers found in the archives of that State. These throw much light also on the personal history of Negroes, many of whom later became useful citizens of that State.

E. H. Taylor
to
Dennis Aviery

Slave Release

To all whom it may concern; This is to certify that Dennis Aviery has been my Slave in the State of Georgia for about the term of eight years but by virtue of money to me in hand paid he is free and Liberated from all allegiance to my authority. Coloma Eldorado county California Feb. 8, 1851

Witness George Soall

[41] These Documents were collected by Miss D. L. Beasley and M. N. Work.

State of California
Eldorado Co.

S.S

On this eight day of February, A.D. 1851 personally appeared before me the recorder of said County. E. H. Taylor, satisfactory proved to me to be the person discribed in and who executed the foregoing instrument of liberating his negro slave by the oath of George Scall, a competent witness for that purpose by me duly sworn and the said E. H. Taylor acknowledged that he executed the same freely and voluntarily for the use and purposes therein mentioned. In testimony the thereof, I, John A. Reichart; Recorder for the said county have hereunto signed my name, and affixed the seal of said office at Coloma this day of year first above written

John A. Reichart Recorder of Eldorado county

Filed for Recording February, 8, 1851 at 9, oclock A.M.
J. A. Reichart Recorder's office Record Book[42]
Samuel Granthan
to
Aleck Long
State of California
Eldorado County

[42] *Miscellany*, p. 35.

Deed of Manumission

Know all men by these presents that I Samuel Grantham of the county and state aforesaid, acting by power of Attorney vested in me by S. Oliver Grantham of St Louis, State of Missouri, acting for and in behalf of said S. Oliver Granthan, and in consideration of the sum of four hundred dollars to me in hand paid the same to receive to the benefit of the said Oliver Grantham have this day liberated, set free and fully and effectually manumitted, Aleck Long. Heretofore a slave for life—the lawful property of the said Thomas Granthan. The description of said Aleck Long, being as follows to wit: about fifty-seven years old; five feet, ten inches in height, gray hair dark complexion with a scar on the inside of the left leg above the ankle.—The said Aleck Long to enjoy and possess now and from hence forth the full exercise of all rights, benefits and privileges of a free man of color free of all or any claim to servitude, slavery or service of the said S. A. Granthan, his heirs, Executors, and assigns and all other persons claiming or to claim forever.

In Testimony of this seal of Manumission, I have this day signed my name and affixed my seal this 2nd day of March 1852.

Samuel A. Granthan
Attorney for State of California

County of Eldorado.

Personally appeared before me William Palmer who makes oath and says that Samuel Granthan, whose name appears in the accompanying Seal of Manumission as a party thereto did freely voluntarily and of his own will execute to and subscribe the same for the uses and purpose therein contained.

Witness my hand and seal this day of March, 1852. A.D. at 4. P.M.

J. A. Reichart

Recorder of Eldorado County California

Gaven D. Hall (S.S.)

Judge of Eldorado county

Eldorado county Recorder's office, Record Book.[43]

A. J. Houstis

County Judge of Humboldt County [44]

Free Papers of the Slave

Washington,—from Franklin Stewart

State of California, County of Butte—

Know all men by these presents that Franklin Stewart of the County and State aforesaid do, for and in

[43] *Miscellany*, p. 545.

[44] This paper is from the collection of 105 in the Court House at Eureka. Austin Wiley, whose name appears in the document, was later appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California; and during his term of office did much to bring to a satisfactory termination the trouble then existing between the settlers and the natives.

consideration of seventeen years of faithful service of my slave Washington, rendered by him in the State of Arkansas and Missouri, hereby set free and emancipate him the said slave, his age about thirty-three years, color slight copper and relinquish all rights in the said slave Washington which I might be entitled to in law or equity.

Given under my hand and seal this day 4th of May A.D. 1852 Eldorado county Recorder's office

Record Book, "A"
Taylor Barton
to
Negro BoB
State of California
Eldorado County S.S.

Emancipation

Know all men to whom these presents shall come; That I, Taylor Barton lately a citizen of the State of Missouri and owner of slaves, do here by this instrument under my hand and seal given this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty one set free from bondage to me and all men my slave Bob, and do declare him forever hereafter his own man wherever he may go. Nevertheless I make this condition that the said Bob shall remain with me as my slave faithful and obedient unto me until the twenty-fifth day of December next, commonly known as Christmas.

Witness my hand and seal on the day and date aforesaid this date.
Taylor Barton (S.S.)

William F. EmersonDecember, 25th 1851
I do hereby, declare My Slave Bob, to be forever free from and after this date.
Taylor Barton (S.S.)

In the presence of I. G. Canfield,*Justice of the Peace*.
Filed for Record
January 5th 1852, at 4.p.m.
John A. Reichart, *Recorder of Eldorado County California*.[45]

Eldorado

State of California
County of Mariposa.
Know all men to whom these presents shall come that, I Thomas Thorn of the State and County aforesaid being the rightful owner of the Negro man Peter Green and entitled to his service as a slave during his life have this day released and do by these presents release him from any further service as a slave. And I do by these presents from myself, my heirs, Executors and Administrators declare him, the said Peter Green to be free to act for himself and no longer

[45] *Miscellany*, p. 541.

under bonds as a slave. Provided however that the said Peter Green, shall pay to me the sum of one thousand dollars, good lawful money or work for and serve me from the present time until one year from and after the first day of April next being until the first day of April A.D. 1854

In Testimony whereof, I have here unto affixed my hand and Scroll for Seal at Quartzburge this day 5th of February A.D. one thousand eight hundred and fifty three.

Thomas Thorn (Seal

In the presence of Benjamine F. Ropp. P. Cadell, jr. Joseph A. Tiry I hereby notify that the above obligation has been complied with and that Peter Green was legally discharged.

Given under my hand at Quarzburge this 7th day of August, A.D. 1855.

James Givens
Justice of the Peace. [46]

This indenture made and entered into this 14th day August, A.D. 1860 between A. J. Houstis as county Judge of Humboldt County for and in behalf of a certain Indian boy called and known by the name of "Smoky" of the first part and Austin Wiley, of the said county of the second part. That Whereas the said Austin Wiley had in his possession and under his control a certain Indian boy named "Smoky" And whereas the said Austin Wiley avers that he with

[46] These are freedom papers as recorded in the California County Court records, and as they have been found by the California Archivist, Mr. Owen Coy.

the assistance of James Frint obtained said Indian of their parents in Mattole valley of this county, by and with their consent. And whereas the said Austin Wiley does now apply to me as County Judge to bond and apprentice the said boy "Smoky" to him according to law to learn the art of household duties about his premises and in this respect to hold the relation of an apprentice until he shall arrive at the lawful majority, the age of twenty-five years, or for the term of seventeen years next following this indenture, the boy being now considered eight years of age. And whereas it appears to me that the second party in this agreement has obtained this boy in a lawful manner without fraud or oppression and that the boy "Smoky" therefore comes justly under the first provision of the law providing for apprenticeship approved April, 8th A.D. 1860.

Now therefore I, A. J. Houstis, County Judge Aforesaid, in consideration of the premises and acting for and on behalf of the said Indian boy "Smoky" do by these presents bind and apprentice as above stated the said boy "Smoky" to Austin Wiley for and during the term of seventeen years next following this indenture entitling him according to law to have the care custody, control and earnings of said boy during said period and all other advantages and responsibilities growing out of this indenture and apprenticeship, that the law contemplates. And the said Austin Wiley, the second part in his agreement doth hereby agree, obligate and bind himself that he will truly and faithfully discharge all obligations on his part growing out of this indenture according to law. That he will suitably clothe

and provide the necessaries of life for the said boy during his term of indenture. That he will in all respects treat him in a human manner. That he will not take him out of this state nor transfer him to any party not known in this agreement without the consent of legal authorities endorsed thereon and that in all respects she will carry out every provision of law that contemplates the safety, protection and well being of said boy.

In witness whereof the parties of this indenture hereunto set their hand and seal this date first above written.

A.J.Houstis
County Judge
First party
Austin Wiley,
Second party

State of California
Humboldt County

And now comes Austin Wiley and deposes as follows:

The statement made by me in the preamble to this indenture refering to the age of the Indian boy "Smoky" and the manner in which I obtained him are true to the best of my knowledge and belief

Austin Wiley

Sworn to and subscribed before me on this 14th day of August A.D. 1860

A. J. Houstis
County Judge of Humboldt County.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,	}	ss.
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES.		

Before the Hon. Benjamin Hayes,
Judge of the District Court of

the 1st Judicial District, State
of California, County of Los Angeles.[47]

In the matter of Hannah and her children, Ann (and Mary, child of Ann), Lawrence, Nathaniel, Jane, Charles, Marion, Martha and an infant boy two weeks old, and of Biddy and her children Ellen, Ann and Harriet, on petition for Habeas Corpus.

Now on this nineteenth day of January in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, the said persons above named are brought before me, in the custody of the Sheriff of said County, all except the said Hannah and infant boy two weeks old, (who are satisfactorily shown to be too infirm to be brought before me,) and except Lawrence (who is necessarily occupied in waiting on his said Mother, Hannah) and Charles (who is absent in San Bernardino County, but within the said Judicial District:) and said Robert Smith, Claimant also appears with his Attorney, Alonzo Thomas, Esq. And after hearing and

[47] This court record was obtained by Mr. W. N. Work.

duly considering the said petition for Habeas Corpus and the return of said Claimant thereto and all the proofs and allegations of the said parties and all the proceedings previously had herein, it appearing satisfactorily to the judge here, that all the said persons so suing in this case, to-wit: Hannah and her said children and Biddy and her said Children are persons of color, and that Charles, aged now six years, was born in the Territory of Utah of the United States, and Marion (aged four years,) Martha (aged two years) Mary, daughter of the said Ann and aged two years and the said infant boy aged two weeks, were born in the State of California and that the said Hannah, Ann, Lawrence, Nathaniel, Jane and Charles, as well as the said Biddy, Ellen, Ann and Harriet, have resided with the said Robert Smith for more than four years and since some time in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, in the State of California; and it further appearing that the said Robert Smith left and removed from the State of Mississippi more than eight years ago with the intention of not returning thereto, but of establishing himself as a resident in Utah Territory, and more than four years ago left and removed from said Utah Territory, with the intention of residing and establishing himself in the State of California and has so resided in said last mentioned State since some time in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one. And it further appearing by satisfactory proof to the Judge here, that all the said persons of color are entitled to their freedom and are free and cannot be held in slavery or involuntary servitude, it is therefore adjudged that they are

entitled to their freedom, and are free forever. And it further appearing to the satisfaction of the Judge here that the said Robert Smith intends and is about to remove from the state of California, where slavery does not exist, to the state of Texas, where slavery of Negroes and persons of color does exist and is established by the municipal laws, and intends to remove said before mentioned persons of color to his own use, without the free will and consent of all or any of the said persons of color, whereby their liberty will be greatly jeopardized, and there is good reason to apprehend and believe that they may be sold into slavery or involuntary servitude, and the said Robert Smith is persuading and enticing and seducing, said persons of color to go out of the State of California and to be taken and removed therefrom with the false promise held out to them that they will be as free in the State of Texas as in the State of California. And it further appearing that none of said persons of color can read and write, and are almost entirely ignorant of the laws of the State of California, as well as those of the State of Texas, and of their rights, and that the said Robert Smith from his past relations to them as members of his family, possesses and exercises over them an undue influence in respect to the matter of their said removal insomuch that they have been in duress and not in possession and exercise of their free will so as to give a binding consent to any engagement or arrangement with him. And it further appearing that the said Hannah, is aged thirty-four years, and her daughter, Ann, seventeen years, and all her other children, to-wit: Lawrence, (aged from twelve to thirteen years) Nathaniel

(aged from ten to eleven years), Jane, (aged eight years) Charles (aged six years) Marion (aged four years) Martha, (aged two years) and said infant boy of Hannah aged two weeks, as well as Mary (aged two years), daughter of said Ann, are under the age of fourteen years and so under the laws of the State of California are not competent to choose a Guardian for themselves; and it further appearing that the said Biddy is aged thirty-eight years, and the said Ellen is aged seventeen years, and the other children of said Biddy, to-wit: Ann (aged from twelve to thirteen) and Harriet (aged eight years) are under the age of fourteen years, and so by the laws of the State of California are not competent to choose a Guardian for themselves. It further appearing that the said infant boy two weeks of age of Hannah is of tender age and must be kept with his said mother Hannah, the same is accordingly ordered, and said infant boy is entrusted to his said mother hereby, and is ordered to appear with him before the Judge here at the Court House in the City of Los Angeles on next Monday January 1, 1856 at 10 o'clock A.M. of said day if her health shall so permit and if not, as soon thereafter as may be practicable of which the Sheriff of Los Angeles is hereby notified to notify her the said Hannah and whereof the said Robert Smith, being now in the Court has notice, it appearing that she resides in his house and is under his control. And the said Mary, child of Ann appearing to be of tender age, is entrusted to the said Ann to be brought before the Judge here at the time and place aforesaid to be dealt with according to law of which the said Ann and the said Robert Smith have notice here,

and the said Martha being of tender years is entrusted to the said Ann, her sister, to be brought before the Judge here at the time and place aforesaid to be dealt with according to law of which the said Ann and the said Robert Smith here have notice and the said Hannah and Ann are appointed Special Guardians respectively of the children so hereby entrusted to them, and notified that it is their duty to obey all lawful orders of the Judge here or of some competent Court touching the premises. And the further hearing of this case as to the said Hannah and infant boy and her child, Lawrence and her children Charles and Mary and Martha is adjourned until said last mentioned time at the Court House of the City of Los Angeles, and it is further ordered that the said Nathaniel (aged from ten to twelve years) Jane (aged eight years) Marion (aged four years) all children of said Hannah, and said child Ann (aged from twelve to thirteen years) and Harriet (aged eight years) are committed to the custody of the Sheriff of Los Angeles County, David W. Alexander, Esq., as especial Guardian until the further order of the Judge here or of other Judge or Court of competent Jurisdiction to appoint General Guardians of aforesaid Children last mentioned, and the said Sheriff will leave in full liberty and discharge the said Biddy and her child Ellen (aged Seventeen years) and the said Ann only being required to obey the said order herinbefore made to appear before the Judge here in manner and form as aforesaid. And it further appearing that the said Charles is absent in San Bernardino County, within said Judicial District. It is ordered that Robert Clift, Esq. Sheriff of said

County be and he is hereby appointed Special Guardian of said Charles and as such duly authorized and required to take said Charles in his custody and him safely keep in such manner that said Charles shall not be removed out of the State of California, but shall abide the further order of the Judge here or other Judge or Court of competent Jurisdiction touching his Guardianship. And it is further ordered and adjudged that all the costs accrued in the case up to the present date and in executing the present order of the Judge here as to the production of the said Hannah and her said infant two weeks old and said Lawrence, Martha and Mary before the Judge here as aforesaid shall be paid by the Said Robert Smith.

Given under my hand as Judge of the first Judicial District of the State of California on this 19th day of January, A. D. 1856, at the City of Los Angeles.

Benjamin Hayes,
District Judge.

On this 19th day of January appears the said Robert Smith by his attorney, Alonzo Thomas, Esq., and moves the Judge hereto the costs in this case which is taken under advisement until Monday next at 10 o'clock, A.M.

Benjamin Hayes,
District Judge.

On this Monday, January 21st, 1856 the said Smith and the said parties so ordered to appear as aforesaid do not appear and this cause is continued until tomorrow at 10

o'clock, A.M.
Benjamin Hayes,
District Judge.

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S THOUGHTS ON THE NEGRO

I

Jefferson, like a number of liberal-minded men of his time, execrated the slave trade and as the following extracts will show held it as a grievance against the British.

> During the regal government we had, at one time, obtained a law which imposed such a duty on the importation of slaves as amounted nearly in a prohibition, when one inconsiderate assembly, placed under a peculiarity of circumstance, repealed the law. This repeal met a joyful sanction from the then reigning sovereign, and no devices, no expedients which could ever be attempted by subsequent assemblies (and they seldom met without attempting them) could succeed in getting the royal assent to a renewal of the duty. In the very first session held under the republican government, the assembly passed a law for the perpetual prohibition of the importation of slaves. This will, in some measure, stop the increase of this great political and moral evil, while the minds of our citizens may be ripening for a complete emancipation of human nature.[48]
>
> The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object

[48] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 102.

> of desire in those Colonies, where it was, unhappily, introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to a prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his Majesty's negative: Thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice.[49]

With the same thought as that of the views expressed above Jefferson incorporated into the original Declaration of Independence an indictment of George III as promoting the ruin of the colonies in encouraging the slave trade. He said:

> He (George III) has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of Infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where Men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce.

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[49] "*Rights of British America*," Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, I, p. 440.

> And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he has obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the Liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.[50]

II

Influenced by the struggle for the rights of man, Jefferson seriously advocated freeing the Negroes, that they too might work out their own destiny on foreign soil. He did not think that it would be wise to leave the freedmen in this country controlled by white men by whom he believed they should not be assimilated.[51] The first time he had an opportunity, therefore, he made an effort in this direction. This was the case of his work in connection with the committee appointed to revise the laws of Virginia, the

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[50] "This clause," says Jefferson, in his Autobiography (I, p. 19), "was struck out in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wished to continue it. Our northern brethren, also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures; for though their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others."

[51] "Their amalgamation with the other color," said he, "produces a degradation to which no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent."—Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IX, p. 478.

report of which he prepared.

Jefferson said:

> The bill reported by the revisers of the whole (Virginia) code does not itself contain the proposition to emancipate all slaves born after the passing the act; but an amendment containing it was prepared, to be offered to the Legislature whenever the bill should be taken up, and further directing, that they should continue with their parents to a certain age, then to be brought up, at the public expense, to tillage, arts or sciences, according to their geniuses, till the females should be eighteen, and the males twenty-one years of age, when they should be colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper, sending them out with arms, implements of household and of the handicraft arts; seeds, pairs of the useful domestic animals, &c., to declare them a free and independent people, and extend to them our alliance and protection, till they shall have acquired strength; and to send vessels at the same time to other parts of the world for an equal number of white inhabitants; to induce them to migrate hither, proper encouragements were to be proposed.[52]

Discussing the serious difficulties of the problem, he compared that of the Romans with the situation in the colonies:

> This unfortunate difference of color, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. Many of their advocates, while they wish to

[52] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 243.

vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious also to preserve its dignity and beauty. Some of these, embarrassed by the question; "What further is to be done with them?" join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only. Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without straining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.[53]

Writing to John Lynch in 1811, Jeff arson gave his ideas as to the possibility of successful African colonization.

You ask my opinion on the proposition of Mrs. Mifflin, to take measures for procuring, on the coast of Africa, an establishment to which the people of color of these States might, from time to time be colonized, under the auspices of different governments. Having long ago made up my mind on this subject, I have no hesitation in saying that I have ever thought it the most desirable measure which could be adopted, for gradually drawing off this part of our population, most advantageously for themselves as well as for us. Going from a country possessing all the useful arts, they might be the means of transplanting them among the inhabitants of Africa, and would thus carry back to the country of their origin, the seeds of civilization which might render their sojournment and sufferings here a blessing in the end to that country.[54]

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[53] *Ibid.*, III, p. 250.

[54] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IX, p. 303.

Nothing is more to be wished than that the United States would themselves undertake to make such an establishment on the coast of Africa. Exclusive of motives of humanity, the commercial advantages to be derived from it might repay all its expenses. But for this, the national mind is not yet prepared. It may perhaps be doubted whether many of these people would voluntarily consent to such an exchange of situation, and very certain that few of those advanced to a certain age in habits of slavery, would be capable of self-government. This should not, however, discourage the experiment, not the early trial of it.[55]

I received in the first year of my coming into the administration of the General Government, a letter from the Governor of Virginia (Colonel Monroe), consulting me, at the request of the Legislature of the State, on the means of procuring some such asylum, to which these people might be occasionally sent. I proposed to him the establishment of Sierra Leone, in which a private company in England had already colonized a number of negroes and particularly the fugitives from these States during the Revolutionary War; and at the same time suggested, if this could be obtained, some of the Portuguese possessions in South America, as next most desirable. The subsequent Legislature approving these ideas, I wrote, the ensuing year, 1802, to Mr. King, our Minister in London, to endeavor to negotiate with the Sierra Leone company a reception of such of these people as might be colonized thither. He opened a correspondence with Mr. Wedderbourne and Mr. Thornton, secretaries of the

[55] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 304.

company, on the subject, and, in 1803, I received through Mr. King the result, which was that the colony was going on, but in a languishing condition; that the funds of the company were likely to fail, as they received no returns of profit to keep them up; that they were, therefore, in treaty with their government to take the establishment off their hands; but that in no event should they be willing to receive more of these people from the United States, as it was exactly that portion of their settlers which had gone from hence, which, by their idleness and turbulence, had kept the settlement in constant danger of dissolution, which could not have been prevented but for the aid of the maroon negroes from the West Indies, who were more industrious and orderly than the others, and supported the authority of the government and its laws … The effort which I made with Portugal, to obtain an establishment for them within their claims in South America, proved also abortive.[56]

In this extract Jefferson goes a step further in presenting a scheme for financing the project, giving even the exact amount which he thought would suffice.

> In the disposition of these unfortunate people, there are two rational objects to be distinctly kept in view. First. The establishment of a colony on the coast of Africa, which may introduce among the aborigines the arts of cultivated life and the blessings of civilization and science. By doing this, we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population.

[56] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IX, p. 303.

And considering that these blessings will descend to the *nati natorum et qui nascentur ab illis*, we shall in the long run have rendered them perhaps more good than evil. To fulfil this object, the colony of Sierra Leone promises well, and that of Mesurado adds to our prospect of success. Under this view the Colonization Society is to be considered as a missionary society, having in view, however, objects more humane, more justifiable, and less aggressive on the peace of other nations than the others of that appelation. The second object, and the most interesting to us, as coming home to our physical and moral characters, to our happiness and safety, is to provide an asylum to which we can, by degrees, send the whole of that population from among us, and establish them under our patronage and protection, as a separate, free and independent people, in some country and climate friendly to human life and happiness. That any place on the coast of Africa should answer the latter purpose, I have ever deemed entirely impossible. And without repeating the other arguments which have been urged by others, I will appeal to figures only, which admit no controversy.[57]

There is, I think, a way in which (the removal of the slaves to another country) can be done; that is by emancipating the after-born, leaving them, on due compensation, with their mothers, until their services are worth their maintenance, and then putting them to industrious occupations until a proper age for deportation. This was the result of my reflections on the subject five and

[57] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, X, p. 290.

forty years ago, and I have never yet been able to conceive any other practicable plan. It was sketched in the *Notes of Virginia*. The estimated value of the new-born infant is so low (say twelve dollars and fifty cents) that it would probably be yielded by the owner gratis, and would thus reduce the six hundred millions of dollars, the first head of expense, to thirty-seven millions and a half; leaving only the expenses of nourishment while with the mother, and of transportation.[58]

From what fund are these expenses to be furnished? Why not from that of the lands which have been ceded by the very States now needing this relief? And ceded on no consideration, for the most part, but that of the general good of the whole. These cessions already constitute one-fourth of the States of the Union. It may be said that these lands have been sold; are not the property of the citizens composing these States; and the money long ago received and expended. But an equivalent of lands in the territories since acquired may be appropriated to that object, or so much, at least, as may be sufficient; and the object, although more important to the slave States, is highly so to the others also, if they were serious in their arguments on the Missouri question. The slave States, too, if more interested, would also contribute more by their gratuitous liberation, thus taking on themselves alone the first and heaviest item of expense.[59]

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[58] Transcriber's Note: Missing footnote text in original.

[59] *Ibid.*, X, p. 291.

As the proper place for the colonization of emancipated blacks seemed quite a problem, almost any seemingly desirable place was recommended. Santo Domingo proved to be attractive after the bloody scenes of the revolution had passed away.

> In the plan sketched in the *Notes on Virginia*, no particular place of asylum was specified; because it was thought possible that in the revolutionary state of America, then commenced, events might open to us some one within practicable distance. This has now happened. Santo Domingo has become independent, and with a population of that color only; and if the public papers are to be credited, their Chief offers to pay their passage, to receive them as free citizens, and to provide them employment. This leaves, then, for the general confederacy, no expense but that of nurture with the mother for a few years, and would call, of course, for a very moderate appropriation of the vacant lands.... In this way no violation of private right is proposed.[60]

III

In his *Notes on Virginia* Jefferson discusses all of the phases of slavery as they appeared to him at that time. He took up the justification of the institution of slavery among the Romans, the enslavement of the Indian and the Negroes, the cause of the increase in slaves, and the effects of the same on both the masters

[60] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, X, p. 292.

and the enslaved.[61]

> An inhuman practice once prevailed in this country, of making slaves of the Indians. This practice commenced with the Spaniards with the first discovery of America.[62]
>
> Under the mild treatment our slaves experience, and their wholesome, though coarse food, this blot in our country increase as fast, or faster than the whites.[63]
>
> We know that among the Romans, about the Augustan age especially, the condition of their slaves was much more deplorable than that of the blacks on the continent of America. The two sexes were confined in separate apartments, because to raise a child cost the master more than to buy one. Cato, for a very restricted indulgence to his slaves in this particular, took from them a certain price. But in this country the slaves multiply as fast as the free inhabitants.... The same Cato, on a principle of economy, always sold his sick and superannuated slaves. He gives it as a standing precept to a master visiting his farm, to sell his old oxen, old wagons, old tools, old and diseased servants, and everything else become useless.... The American slaves

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[61] To General Chastellux, who had proposed to publish in a French scientific paper certain extracts from Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, he wrote the following in 1785:The strictures on slavery (in the Notes on Virginia) … I do not wish to have made public, at least till I know whether their publication would do most harm or good. It is possible, that in my own country, these strictures might produce an irritation, which would indispose the people towards (one of) the two great objects I have in view; that is, the emancipation of their slaves.—Ford edition of the Writings of Jefferson, III, p. 71.

[62] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 154.

[63] *Ibid.*, III, p. 192.

cannot enumerate this among the injuries and insults they receive. It was the common practice to expose in the island Æsculapius, in the Tiber, diseased slaves whose cure was likely to become tedious. The Emperor Claudius, by an edict, gave freedom to such of them as should recover, and first declared that if any person chose to kill rather than expose them, it should be deemed homicide. The exposing them is a crime of which no instance has existed with us; and were it to be followed by death, it would be punished capitally. We are told of a certain Vedius Pollio, who, in the presence of Augustus, would have given a slave as food to his fish for having broken a glass. With the Romans, the regular method of taking the evidence of their slaves was under torture. Here it has been thought better never to resort to their evidence. When a master was murdered, all his slaves, in the same house, or within hearing, were condemned to death. Here punishment falls on the guilty only, and as precise proof is required against his as against a freeman. Yet notwithstanding these and other discouraging circumstances among the Romans, their slaves were often their rarest artists. They excelled, too, in science, insomuch as to be usually employed as tutors to their master's children. Epictetus, Terence, and Phoedrus, were slaves. But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then, but nature which has produced the distinction. Whether further observation will or will not verify the conjecture, that nature has been less bountiful to them in the endowments of the head, I believe that in those of the heart she will be found

to have done them justice.[64]

That disposition to theft with which they have been branded, must be ascribed to their situation, and not to any depravity of the moral sense. The man in whose favor no laws of property exist, probably feels himself less bound to respect those made in favor of others. When arguing for ourselves, we lay it down as a fundamental, that laws, to be just, must give a reciprocation of right; that, without this, they are mere arbitrary rules of conduct, founded in force, and not in conscience; and it is a problem which I give to the master to solve, whether the religious precepts against the violation of property were not framed for him as well as his slave? And whether the slave may not as justifiably take a little from one who has taken all from him, as he may slay one who would slay him? That a change in the relations in which a man is placed should change his ideas of moral right or wrong, is neither new, nor peculiar to the color of the blacks. Homer tells us it was so two thousand six hundred years ago.[65]

The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-

[64] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, II, p. 247.

[65] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, II, p. 249.

love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But, generally, it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execrations should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriae* of the other. For if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute as far as depends on his inhuman race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him.[66]

Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation

[66] *Ibid.*, III, p. 266.

is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest.[67]

With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor.[68]

It is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, or morals, of history, natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into every one's mind.... The way, I hope, is preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.[69]

IV

During the early part of Jefferson's public career he did not have a good opinion of the Negro and his possibilities. This is his attitude as expressed in his *Notes on Virginia* in 1782, whenever he referred to the Negro. Ignorant of the fact that science shows that no race is superior to another, Jefferson considered the

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[67] Transcriber's Note: Missing footnote text in original.

[68] Transcriber's Note: Missing footnote text in original.

[69] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 267.

blacks inferior to the Indians, believed that they lacked literary ability, the finer senses of other races and although exhibiting a little aptitude in music were both physically and mentally inferior to the whites.

> It will probably be asked, why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the State, and thus save the expense of supplying by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race.[70]
>
> To these objections, which are political may be added others, which are physical and moral. Whether the black of the negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf-skin, or in the scarf-skin itself; whether it proceeds from the color of the blood, the color of the bile, or from that of some other secretion, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us. And is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less suffusions of color in the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reign in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race? Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form, their

[70] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 244.

own judgment in favor of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black woman over those of his own species. The circumstance of superior beauty, is thought worthy attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man? Besides those of color, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odor. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less of cold than the whites. Perhaps, too, a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious experimentalist (Crawford) has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it.[71]

They seem to require less sleep. A black, after hard labor through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning.[72]

In general, their existence appears to participate more sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labor. An animal whose body is at rest,

[71] Transcriber's Note: Missing footnote text in original.

[72] Transcriber's Note: Missing footnote text in original.

and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course.[73]

Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether Heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them.[74]

Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous. It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation. We will consider them here, on the same stage with the whites, and where the facts are not apocryphal on which a judgment is to be formed. It will be right to make great allowances for the difference of condition, of education, of conversation, of the sphere in which they move. Many millions of them have been brought to, and born in America. Most of them, indeed, have been confined to tillage, to their own homes, and their own society; yet many of them have been so situated that they might have availed themselves of the conversation of their masters; many of them have been brought up to the handicraft arts, and from that circumstance have always been associated with the whites. Some have been liberally educated, and all have lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated

[73] *Ibid.*, III, p. 245.

[74] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 245.

to a considerable degree, and have had before their eyes samples of the best works from abroad. The Indians, with no advantages of this kind, will often carve figures on their pipes not destitute of design and merit. They will crayon out an animal, a plant, or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation. They astonish you with strokes of the most sublime oratory; such as prove their reason and sentiment strong, their imagination glowing and elevated. But never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw ever an elementary trait of painting or sculpture.[75]

In music they are more generally gifted than the whites, with accurate ears for tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved.[76]

Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed, has produced a Phyllis Wheatley; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism. The heroes of the Dunciad are to her, as Hercules to the author of that poem.[77]

Ignatius Sancho has approached nearer to merit in

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[75] *Ibid.*, III, p. 245.

[76] *Ibid.*, III, p. 246.

[77] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 246.

composition (than Phyllis Wheatley); yet his letters do more honor to the heart than the head. They breathe the purest effusions of friendship and general philanthropy, and show how great a degree of the latter may be compounded with strong religious zeal. He is often happy in the turn of his compliments, and his style is easy and familiar, except when he affects a Shandean fabrication of words. But his imagination is wild and extravagant, escapes incessantly from every restraint of reason and taste, and, in the course of its vagaries, leaves a tract of thought as incoherent and eccentric, as is the course of a meteor through the sky. His subjects should often have led him to a process of sober reasoning; yet we find him always substituting sentiment for demonstration. Upon the whole, though we admit him to the first place among those of his own color who have presented themselves to the public judgment, yet when compare him with the writers of the race among whom he lived and particularly with the epistolary class in which he has taken his own stand, we are compelled to enroll him at the bottom of the column. This criticism supposes the letters published under the name to be genuine, and to have received amendment from no other hand; points which would not be of easy investigation.[78]

The improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by every one, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition in life.[79]

[78] *Ibid.*, III, p. 247.

[79] *Ibid.*, III, p. 247.

The opinion that they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence. To justify a general conclusion, requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the anatomical knife, to optical glasses, to analysis by fire or by solvents. How much more then where it is a faculty, not a substance, we are examining; where it eludes the research of all the senses; where the conditions of its existence are various and variously combined; where the effects of those which are present or absent bid defiance to calculation; let me all too, as a circumstance of great tenderness, where our conclusion would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them. To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and or red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it, therefore, as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. It is not against experience to suppose that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications. Will not a lover of natural history, then, one who views the gradations in all the races of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the department of man as distinct as nature has formed them?[80]

[80] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 249.

He was impressed, however, with the integrity of the Negroes and paid them the following tribute:

> Notwithstanding these considerations which must weaken their respect for the laws of property, we find among them numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their better instructed masters, of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity.[81]

V

In later years it seems that Jefferson changed from his position of certainty as to the inferiority of the Negro to that of doubt. At one time he believed in the possibilities of the Negro and then again he receded from that position to take up the argument that the blacks lack the capacity with which the whites are endowed. Jefferson shows that he was either ill-informed or insincere. Writing to General Chastellux in 1785 concerning the future of the Negro Jefferson remarked:

> I have supposed the black man, in his present state might not be in body and mind equal to the white man; but it would be hazardous to affirm, that, equally cultivated for a few generations, he would not become so.[82]

To Benjamin Banneker, the surveyor and astronomer, who was regarded by some as his friend, he addressed the following

[81] *Ibid.*, III, p. 249.

[82] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, III, p. 138.

in 1791:

> Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa and America.... I have taken the liberty of sending your Almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and member of the Philanthropic Society, because I considered it as a document to which your color had a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them[83]

Jefferson's letter to the Marquis de Condorcet presented Banneker's attainments as evidence of the mental capacity of Negroes. He said:

> We have now in the United States a Negro, the son of a black man born in Africa and a black woman born in the United States, who is a very respectable mathematician. I procured him to be employed under one of our chief directors in laying out the new Federal City on the Potomac and in the intervals of his leisure, while on that work, he made an almanac for the next year, which he sent me in his own handwriting, and which I enclose to you. I have seen very elegant solutions of geometrical problems by him. Add to this that he is a very worthy and respectable member of

[83] *Ibid.*, V, p. 377.

> society. He is a free man. I shall be delighted to see these instances of moral eminence so multiplied as to prove that the want of talents observed in them, is merely the effect of their degraded condition, and not proceeding from any difference in the structure of the parts on which intellect depends[84]

In a letter to Banneker himself concerning the achievements of this astronomer and mathematician, Jefferson said:

> Nobody wishes more ardently than I do to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body and mind to what it ought to be, as fast as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances which cannot be neglected, will admit.[85]

A generation later he had, as this letter indicates, retained the opinion that the possibilities of the Negroes were not necessarily limited. To Henri Grégoire who had sent Jefferson a copy of his *Litterature des Nègres*, he wrote:

> Be assured that no person living wishes more sincerely than I do to see a complete refutation of the doubts I have myself entertained and expressed on the grade of understanding allotted to the negroes by nature, and to find that in this respect they are on a par with ourselves. My doubts were the result of personal observation on the limited sphere of my own State, where the opportunities for the development of their genius were not favorable, and those

[84] *Ibid.*, V, p. 379.

[85] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, V, p. 377.

of exercising it still less so. I expressed them, therefore, with great hesitation; but whatever be their degree of talent it is no measure of their rights. Because Sir Isaac Newton was superior to others in understanding, he was not therefore lord of the person or property of others. On this subject they are gaining daily in the opinions of nations, and hopeful advances are making towards their reestablishment on an equal footing with the other colors of the human family. I pray you, therefore, to accept my thanks for the many instances you have enabled me to observe of respectable intelligence in that race of men, which cannot fail to have effect in hastening the day of their relief.[86]

Writing to Joel Barlow about the same time Jefferson showed a different attitude. He said:

> Bishop Grégoire wrote to me on the doubts I had expressed five or six and twenty years ago, in the *Notes on Virginia*, as to the grade of understanding of the negroes. His credulity has made him gather up every story he could find of men of color (without distinguishing whether black, or of what degree of mixture), however slight the mention, or light the authority on which they are quoted. The whole do not amount, in point of evidence, to what we know ourselves of Banneker. We know he had spherical trigonometry enough to make almanacs, but not without the suspicion of aid from Ellicot, who was his neighbor and friend, and never missed an opportunity of puffing him. I have a long letter from Banneker, which shows

[86] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 246.

him to have had a mind of very common stature indeed. As to Bishop Grégoire, I wrote him a very soft answer. It was impossible for doubt to have been more tenderly or hesitantingly expressed than that was in the *Notes on Virginia*, and nothing was or is further from my intentions, than to enlist myself as the champion of a fixed opinion, where I have only expressed a doubt. St. Domingo will, in time, throw light on the question.[87]

He did believe, however, in the industry of the Negroes and thought that this virtue of theirs would make their colonization possible. Concerning such a project he wrote Miss Fanny Wright in 1825:

> An opinion is hazarded by some, but proved by none, that moral urgencies are not sufficient to induce the negro to labor; that nothing can do this but physical coercion. But this a problem which the present age alone is prepared to solve by experiment. It would be a solecism to suppose a race or animals created, without sufficient foresight and energy to preserve their own existence. It is disproved, too, by the fact that they exist, and have existed through all the ages of history. We are not sufficiently acquainted with all the nations of Africa, to say that there may not be some in which habits of industry are established, and the arts practiced which are necessary to render life comfortable. The experiment now in progress in St. Domingo, those of Sierra Leone and Cape Mesurado, are but beginning. Your

[87] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IX, p. 261.

proposition has its aspects of promise also; and should it not fully answer to calculations in figures, it may yet, in its developments, lead to happy results.[88]

VI

Jefferson believed that the emancipation of the slaves could be effected by legislation. To this end he made several noteworthy efforts. In 1776 he submitted to the revolutionary convention in Virginia a constitution in which was incorporated the clause prohibiting slavery. He undertook also to induce the legislature of Virginia to take this step in 1783, and as chairman of the committee of the Congress of the Confederation appointed to draw up an ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory, he submitted a plan providing that after the year 1800 neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should exist there. These clauses and some comments thereon follow:

> No person hereafter coming into this country shall be held within the same in slavery under any pretext whatever. —Proposed Va. Constitution.[89]
>
> The General Assembly (of Virginia) shall not have power to … permit the introduction of any more slaves to reside in this State, or the continuance of slavery beyond the generation which shall be living on the 31st

[88] *Ibid.*, X, p. 344.

[89] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, II, p. 26.

day of December, 1800; all persons born after that day being hereby declared free.[90]—Proposed Constitution for Virginia.

After the year 1800 of the Christian era, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted to have been personally guilty.[91]—Proposed Ordinance of 1784.

"The clause respecting slavery," said he "was lost by an individual vote only. Ten States were present. The four Eastern States, New York and Pennsylvania, were for the clause. Jersey would have been for it, but there were but two members, one of whom was sick in his chambers. South Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia! voted against it. North Carolina was divided, as would have been Virginia, had not one of its delegates been sick in bed."[92]

"I congratulate you" said he to a coworker, "on the law of your state (South Carolina) for suspending the importation of slaves, and for the glory you have justly acquired by endeavoring to prevent it forever."[93]

VII

Jefferson seemed to get further from the idea of immediate

[90] *Ibid.*, III, p. 325.

[91] *Ibid.*, III, p. 409.

[92] *Ibid.*, III, p. 471.

[93] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 410

emancipation, looking upon it as a very serious problem. He tended, as the following extracts will show, to advocate lightening the burden of the slave, hoping that in the West Indies, where he thought the Negro would eventually rule absolutely, the blacks might establish governments to which freedmen gradually emancipated in the United States might be sent to shape their own destiny.

Writing to Dr. Price concerning his anti-slavery pamphlet, Jefferson said:

> Southward of the Chesapeake, your pamphlet (against slavery) will find but few readers concurring with it in sentiment on the subject of slavery. From the mouth to the head of the Chesapeake, the bulk of the people will approve it in theory, and it will find a respectable minority ready to adopt it in practice; a minority which for weight and worth of character preponderates against the greater number, who have not the courage to divest their families of a property which, however, keeps their conscience unquiet. Northward of the Chesapeake, you may find here and there an opponent to your doctrine, as you may find here and there a robber and murderer; but in no greater number. In that part of America, there being but few slaves, they can easily disencumber themselves of them; and emancipation is put into such a train that in a few years there will be no slaves northward of Maryland. In Maryland, I do not find such a disposition to begin the redress of this enormity as in Virginia. This is the next State to which we may turn our eyes for the interesting spectacle of justice in conflict

with avarice and oppression; a conflict wherein the sacred side is gaining daily recruits from the influx into office of young men grown, and growing up. These have sucked in the principles of liberty, as it were, with their mother's milk; and it is to them I look with anxiety to turn the fate of this question. Be not therefore discouraged. What you have written will do a great deal of good.[94]

In his report to Congress of a conference with Count Vergennes, Foreign Minister of France, on commerce, Jefferson wrote:

> The British army, after ravaging the State of Virginia, had sent off a very great number of slaves to New York. By the seventh article of the treaty of peace, they stipulated not to carry away any of these. Notwithstanding this, it was known, when they were evacuating New York, that they were carrying away the slaves, General Washington made an official demand of Sir Guy Carleton, that he should cease to send them away. He answered, that these people had come to them under promise of the King's protection, and that that promise should be fulfilled in preference to the stipulation in the treaty. The State of Virginia, to which nearly the whole of these slaves belonged, passed a law to forbid the recovery of debts due to British subjects. They declared, at the same time, they would repeal the law, if Congress were of opinion they ought to do it. But, desirous that their citizens should be discharging their debts, they afterwards permitted British creditors to prosecute their

[94] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IV, p. 82.

suits, and to receive their debts in seven equal and annual payments for reimbursement.[95]

Jefferson's letter here to M. de Meunier on the passage of the Ordinance of 1787 shows how he either shifted from his position of regarding emancipation a serious problem to that of agitating against slavery or that he varied his correspondence to suit the person addressed.

> There were ten States present; six voted unanimously for it, three against it, and one was divided; and seven votes being requisite to decide the proposition affirmatively, it was lost. The voice of a single individual of the State which was divided, or of one of those which were of the negative, would have prevented this abominable crime from spreading itself over the new country. Thus we see the fate of millions unborn hanging on the tongue of one man, and heaven was silent in that awful moment! But it is to be hoped it will not always be silent, and that the friends to the rights of human nature will in the end prevail.
>
> What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and, the next moment, be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to

[95] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IV, p. 127.

oppose.[96]

He seemed to regard it later as a problem to be solved only by miraculous methods.

> We must await with patience the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of these, our suffering brethren. When the measure of their tears shall be full, when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in darkness, doubtless a God of justice will awaken to their distress, and by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or, at length, by His exterminating thunder, manifest His attention to the things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality.[97]

Jefferson, however, seemed to have a kind feeling for the bondmen, as these extracts will show.

> I observe in your letter … that the profits of the whole estate (of Monticello) would be no more than the hire of the few negroes hired out would amount to. Would it be better to hire more where good masters could be got? Would it be better to hire plantations and all, if proper assurance can be provided for the good usage, of everything?[98]
>
> I am miserable till I shall owe not a shilling. The moment that shall be the case, I shall feel myself at liberty to do

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[96] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IV, p. 185.

[97] *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 181-185.

[98] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 342.

something for the comfort of the slaves.[99]

The check on the tenants against abusing my slaves was, by the former lease, that I might discontinue it on a reference to arbitrators. Would it not be well to retain an optional right to sue them for ill-usage of the slaves or to discontinue it by arbitration, whichever you should choose at the time?[100]

As far as I can judge from the experiments which have been made to give liberty to, or rather, to abandon persons whose habits have been formed in slavery is like abandoning children.[101]

I am decided on my final return to America to try this experiment. I shall endeavor to import as many Germans as I have grown slaves. I will settle them and my slaves, on farms of fifty acres each, intermingled, and place all on the footing of the Metayers (Medietaini) of Europe. Their children shall be brought up, as others are, in habits of property and foresight, and I have no doubt but that they will be good citizens. Some of their fathers will be so; others I suppose will need government. With these all that can be done is to oblige them to labor as the laboring poor of Europe do, and to apply to their comfortable subsistence the produce of their labor, retaining such a moderate portion of it as may be a just equivalent for the use of the lands they

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[99] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 343.

[100] *Ibid.*, V, p. 31.

[101] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, V, p. 66.

labor, and the stocks and other necessary advances.[102]

The inculcation (in your book) on the master of the moral duties which he owes to the slave, in return for the benefits of his service, that is to say, of food, clothing, care in sickness, and maintenance under age and disability, so as to make him in fact as comfortable and more secure than the laboring man in most parts of the world, … gives great merit to the work, and will, I have no doubt, produce wholesome impressions.[103]

In the first or second session of the Legislature after I became a member, I drew to this subject the attention of Colonel Bland, one of the oldest, ablest, and most respected members, and he undertook to move for certain moderate extensions of the protection of the laws to these people. I seconded his motion and, as a young member, was more spared in the debate; but he was denounced as an enemy of his country, and was treated with the grossest indecorum.[104]

My opinion has ever been that, until more can be done for them, we should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed and clothe them well, protect them from ill usage, require such reasonable labor only as is performed voluntarily by freemen, and be led by no repugnances to abdicate them, and our duties to them. The laws do not permit us to turn them loose, if that were for their good; and to commute them for other property is

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[102] *Ibid.*, V, p. 67.

[103] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 329.

[104] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 477.

to commit them to those whose usage of them we cannot control.[105]

Jefferson was opposed to slavery, but he hesitated to take certain steps against it because of public opinion.

I am very sensible of the honor you propose to me of becoming a member of the society for the abolition of the slave trade. You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition, not only of the trade, but of the condition of slavery; and certainly nobody will be more willing to encounter every sacrifice for that object. But the influence and information of the friends to this proposition in France will be far above the need of my association. I am here as a public servant, and those whom I serve, having never yet been able to give their voice against this practice, it is decent for me to avoid too public a demonstration of my wishes to see it abolished. Without serving the cause here, it might render me less able to serve it beyond the water. I trust you will be sensible of the prudence of those motives, therefore, which govern my conduct on this occasion.[106]

I have received a letter from Mr. Thomas Brannagan, … Philadelphia, asking my subscription to the work announced in the enclosed paper.[107] The cause in which he embarks is so holy, the sentiments he expresses in his letter

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[105] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 479.

[106] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, V, p. 6.

[107] This refers to "Avenia; or, A Tragical Poem on the Oppression of the Human Species," an antislavery work printed in Philadelphia in 1805.—Note in the Ford edition.

so friendly, that it is highly painful to me to hesitate on a compliance which appears so small. But that is not its true character, and it would be injurious even to his views, for me to commit myself on paper by answering his letter. I have most carefully avoided every public act of manifestation on that subject. Should an occasion ever occur in which I can interpose with decisive effect, I shall certainly know and do my duty with promptitude and zeal. But, in the meantime, it would only be disarming myself of influence to be taking small means. The subscription to a book on this subject is one of those little irritating measures, which, without advancing its end at all, would, by lessening the confidence and good will of a description of friends composing a large body, only lessen my powers of doing them good in the other great relations in which I stand to the public. Yet, I cannot be easy in not answering Mr. Brannagan's letter, unless he can be made sensible that it is better I should not answer it; and I do not know how to effect this, unless you would have the goodness … to enter into an explanation with him.[108]

We have received with great satisfaction notification of the orders of his Catholic Majesty, not to permit that persons, held in slavery within the United States, introduce themselves as free persons into the Province of Florida.... As a consequence of the same principles of justice and friendship, we trust that your Excellency will permit, and aid the recovery of persons of the same description, who

[108] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, VIII, p. 351.

have heretofore taken refuge within your government.[109]

The governor of East Florida informs me that he has received the King's orders, not to permit, under any pretext, that persons held in slavery in the United States introduce themselves as free, into the province of East Florida. I am happy that this grievance, which had been a subject of great complaint from the citizens of Georgia, is to be removed.[110]

Jefferson thought that the Negro republics of the West Indies would become a safety valve for the United States.

I become daily more convinced that all the West India Islands will remain in the hands of the people of color, and a total expulsion of the whites sooner or later take place. It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (south of the Potomac), have to wade through and try to avert them.[111]

If something is not done, and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children. The "*murmura venturos nautis prudentia ventos*" has already reached us (from San Domingo); the revolutionary storm, now sweeping the globe, will be upon us, and happy if we make timely provision to give it an easy passage over our land. From the present state of things in Europe and America, the day which begins our combustion must be near at hand; and only a single spark is wanting to make that day to-morrow. If we had begun sooner, we might probably have been allowed

[109] *Ibid.*, V, p. 296.

[110] *Ibid.*, V, p. 296.

[111] *Ibid.*, VI, p. 349.

a lengthier operation to clear ourselves, but every day's delay lessens the time we may take for emancipation. Some people derive hope from the aid of the confederate States. But this is a delusion. There is but one State in the Union which will aid us sincerely, if an insurrection begins, and that one may, perhaps, have its own fire to quench at the same time.[112]

As to the mode of emancipation, I am satisfied that that must be a matter of compromise between the passions, the prejudices, and the real difficulties which will each have its weight in that operation. Perhaps the first chapter of this history, which has begun in St. Domingo, and the next succeeding ones, will recount how all the whites were driven from all the other islands, may prepare our minds for a peaceable accommodation between justice, policy and necessity; and furnish an answer to the difficult question, whither shall the colored emigrants go? and the sooner we put some plan under way, the greater hope there is that it may be permitted to proceed peaceably to its ultimate effect.[113]

Jefferson finally despaired of seeing his emancipation scheme succeed.

I have long since given up the expectation of any early provision for the extinguishment of slavery among us. There are many virtuous men who would make any sacrifices to effect it, many equally virtuous who persuade themselves

[112] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, VII, p. 168.

[113] *Ibid.*, VII, p. 167.

> either that the thing is not wrong, or that it cannot be remedied, and very many with whom interest is morality. The older we grow, the larger we are disposed to believe the last party to be. But interest is really going over to the side of morality. The value of the slave is every day lessening; his burden on his master daily increasing. Interest is, therefore, preparing the disposition to be just; and this will be goaded from time to time by the insurrectionary spirit of the slaves. This is easily quelled in its first efforts; but from being local it will become general, and whenever it does, it will rise more formidable after every defeat, until we shall be forced, after dreadful scenes and sufferings, to release them in their own way, which, without such sufferings we might now model after our own convenience.[114]

VIII

Because of frequent insurrections in this country and the West Indies there was much talk of establishing a penal colony to which the leaders of such uprisings could be sent. With Gabriel's insurrection in Virginia in 1800 in mind, James Monroe, then Governor of Virginia, wrote Jefferson, asking him to support such a project, a resolution on which had already passed the Virginia House of Delegates. Jefferson wrote him the following:

> Questions would arise whether the establishment of a (negro penal) colony within our limits, and to become a part

[114] *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 340.

of our Union, would be desirable to the State of Virginia itself, or to other States—especially those who would be in its vicinity. Could we procure lands beyond the limits of the United States to form a receptacle for these people? On our northern boundary, the country not occupied by British subjects, is the property of Indian nations, whose title would have to be extinguished, with the consent of Great Britain; and the new settlers would be British subjects. It is hardly to be believed that either Great Britain or the Indian proprietors have so disinterested a regard for us, as to be willing to relieve us, by receiving such a colony themselves.... On our western and southern frontiers, Spain holds an immense country, the occupancy of which, however, is in the Indian natives, except a few insulated spots possessed by Spanish subjects. It is very questionable, indeed, whether the Indians would sell? whether Spain would be willing to receive these people? and nearly certain that she would not alienate the sovereignty. The same question to ourselves would recur here also, as did in the first case: should we be willing to have such a colony in contact with us? However our present interests may restrain us within our own limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits, and cover the whole northern, if not the southern continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws; nor can we contemplate with satisfaction either blot or mixture on that surface. Spain, France, and Portugal hold possessions on the southern continent, as to which I am not

well enough informed to say how far they might meet our views. But either there or in the northern continent, should the constituted authorities ties of Virginia fix their attention, of preference, I will have the dispositions of those powers sounded in the first instance.[115]

Writing to Rufus King in 1802 Jefferson discussed in detail the feasibility of the plan.

> As the expense of so distant a transportation would be very heavy, and might weigh unfavorably in deciding between the modes of punishment, it is very desirable that it should be lessened as much as is practicable. If the regulations of the place would permit these emigrants to dispose of themselves, as the Germans and others do who come to this country poor, by giving their labor for a certain time to some one who will pay their passage; and if the master of the vessel could be permitted to carry articles of commerce from this country and take back others from that, which might yield him a mercantile profit sufficient to cover the expenses of the voyage, a serious difficulty would be removed.[116]
>
> The course of things in the … West Indies appears to have given a considerable impulse to the minds of the slaves in … the United States. A great disposition to insurgency has manifested itself among them, which, in one instance, in the State of Virginia, broke out into actual insurrection. This was easily suppressed; but many

[115] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, VIII, p. 104.

[116] *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 162.

of those concerned (between twenty and thirty, I believe) fell victims to the law. So extensive an execution could not but excite sensibility in the public mind, and beget a regret that the laws had not provided for such cases, some alternative, combining more mildness with equal efficiency. The Legislature of the State … took the subject into consideration, and have communicated to me through the Governor of the State, their wish that some place could be provided, out of the limits of the United States, to which slaves guilty of insurgency might be transported; and they have particularly looked to Africa as offering the most desirable receptacle. We might, for this purpose, enter into negotiations with the natives, on some part of the coast, to obtain a settlement; and, by establishing an African company, combine with it commercial operations, which might not only reimburse expenses, but procure profit also. But there being already such an establishment on that coast by the English Sierra Leone Company, made for the express purpose of colonizing civilized blacks to that country, it would seem better, by incorporating our emigrants with theirs, to make one strong, rather than two weak colonies. This would be the more desirable because the blacks settled at Sierra Leone, having chiefly gone from the States, would often receive among those whom we should send, their acquaintances and relatives. The object of this letter is to ask … you to enter into conference with such persons, private and public, as would be necessary to give us permission to send thither the persons under contemplation.... They are not felons, or common malefactors, but persons guilty

of what the safety of society, under actual circumstances, obliges us to treat as a crime, but which their feelings may represent in a far different shape. They will be a valuable acquisition to the settlement, … and well calculated to cooperate in the plan of civilization.

… The consequences of permitting emancipation to become extensive, unless a condition of emigration be annexed to them, furnish matter of solicitude to the Legislature of Virginia. Although provision for the settlement of emancipated negroes might perhaps be obtained nearer home than Africa, yet it is desirable that we should be free to expatriate this description of people also to the colony of Sierra Leone, if considerations respecting either themselves or us should render it more expedient. I pray you, therefore, to get the same permission extended to the reception of these as well as the (insurgents). Nor will there be a selection of bad subjects; the emancipations, for the most part, being either of the whole slaves of the master, or of such individuals as have particularly deserved well. The latter are most frequent.[117]

IX

He was firm to the end in his effort to abolish the slave trade.

Whatever may have been the circumstances which influenced our forefathers to permit the introduction of personal bondage into any part of these States,

[117] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, VIII, pp. 161, 163.

and to participate in the wrongs committed on an unoffending quarter of the globe, we may rejoice that such circumstances, and such a sense of them, exist no longer. It is honorable to the nation at large that their Legislature availed themselves of the first practicable moment for arresting the progress of this great moral and political error.[118]

I congratulate you (Congress) on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country, have long been eager to proscribe. Although no law you may pass can take prohibitory effect till the first day of the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day.[119]—Sixth Annual Message.

X

In his old age Jefferson became decidedly less radical in his advocacy of abolition, contenting himself with the utterances of the nature of an academic deprecation of the evil, expressing the

[118] *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 119.

[119] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, VIII, p. 492.

hope that in some way it might be eradicated, but at the same time despairing of it. Writing to Edward Coles, he said:

> My sentiment on the subject of slavery of negroes have long since been in possession of the public, and time has only served to give them stronger root. The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a moral reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain, and should have produced not a single effort, nay I fear not much serious willingness to relieve them and ourselves from our present condition of moral and political reprobation.... I had always hoped that the younger generation receiving their early impressions after the flame of liberty had been kindled in every breast, and had become, as it were, the vital spirit of every American, that the generous temperament of youth, analogous to the motion of the blood, and above the suggestions of avarice, would have sympathized with oppression wherever found, and proved their love of liberty beyond their own share of it. But my intercourse with them since my return (from Europe) has not been sufficient to ascertain that they had made towards this point the progress I had hoped.[120]
>
> The hour of emancipation is advancing, in the march of time. It will come; and whether brought on by the generous energy of our own minds; or by the bloody process of St. Domingo, excited and conducted by the power of our present enemy (England), if once stationed permanently

[120] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 477.

within our country, and offering asylum and arms to the oppressed, is a leaf of our history not yet turned over.[121]

From those of the former generation who were in the fulness of age when I came into public life, which was while our controversy with England was on paper only, I soon saw that nothing was to be hoped. Nursed and educated in the daily habit of seeing the degraded condition, both bodily and mental, of those unfortunate beings, not reflecting that that degradation was very much the work of themselves and their fathers, few minds have yet doubted but that they were as legitimate subjects of property as their horses and cattle. The quiet and monotonous course of colonial life had been disturbed by no alarm, and little reflection on the value of liberty. And when alarm was taken at an enterprise on their own, it was not easy to carry them to the whole length of the principles which they invoked for themselves.[122]

As to the method by which this difficult work is to be effected, if permitted to be done by ourselves, I have seen no proposition so expedient on the whole, as that of emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation after a given age.[123]

I hope you will reconcile yourself to your country and its unfortunate condition; that you will not lessen its stock of sound disposition by withdrawing your portion from the mass; that, on the contrary, you will come forward in the

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[121] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IX, p. 478.

[122] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 477.

[123] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 478.

public councils, become the missionary of this doctrine truly Christian, insinuate and inculcate it softly but steadily, through the medium of writing and conversation; associate others in your labors, and when the phalanx is formed, bring on the press the proposition perseveringly until its accomplishment.[124]

Writing to David Barrow in 1815 about the preparation of slaves for emancipation, Jefferson said:

> Unhappily it is a case for which both parties require long and difficult preparation. The mind of the master is to be apprized by reflection, and strengthened by the energies of conscience, against the obstacles of self interest to an acquiescence in the rights of others; that of the slave is to be prepared by instruction and habit for self-government, and for the honest pursuits of industry and social duty. Both of these courses of preparation require time, and the former must precede the latter. Some progress is sensibly made in it; yet not so much as I had hoped and expected. But it will yield in time to temperate and steady pursuit, to the enlargement of the human mind, and its advancement in science. We are not in a world ungoverned by the laws and the power of a Superior Agent. Our efforts are in His hand, and directed by it; and He will give them their effect in his own time. Where the disease is most deeply seated, there it will be slowest in eradication. In the Northern States it was merely superficial, and easily corrected. In the Southern it is incorporated with the whole system, and requires time,

[124] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 479.

patience and perseverance in the curative process. That it may finally be effected, and its process hastened, will be my last and fondest prayer.[125]

In a letter to Dr. Thomas Humphreys in 1817, Jefferson expressed fear about the purchase of slaves by the United States.

> The bare proposition of purchase (of the slaves) by the United States generally would excite infinite indignation in all the States north of Maryland. The sacrifice must fall on the States alone which hold them; and the difficult question will be how to lessen this so as to reconcile our fellow citizens to it. Personally, I am ready and desirous to make any sacrifice which shall ensure their gradual but complete retirement from the State, and effectually, at the same time, establish them elsewhere in freedom and safety.[126]
>
> I concur entirely in your leading principles of gradual emancipation, of establishment on the coast of Africa, and the patronage of our nation until the emigrants shall be able to protect themselves.[127]

Jefferson saw in the extension of slavery that which had given the institution a new aspect in lessening the difficulty by dividing it.

> I can say with conscious truth that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach in any *practicable* way. The

[125] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, IX, p. 515.

[126] *Ibid.*, X, p. 76.

[127] *Ibid.*, X, p. 76.

cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and *expatriation* could be effected; and, gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But, as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in the one scale and self-preservation in the other.[128]

Of one thing I am certain, that as the passage of slaves from one State to another, would not make a slave of a single human being who would not be so without it, so their diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier, and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation, by dividing the burden on a greater number of coadjutors. An abstinence, too, from this act of power would remove the jealousy excited by the undertaking of Congress to regulate the condition of the different descriptions of men composing a State, which nothing in the Constitution has taken from them and given to the General Government. Could Congress, for example, say that the non-freemen of Connecticut shall be freemen, or that they shall not emigrate into any other State?[129]

During the closing years of his life he expressed little hope of seeing his plan of gradual emancipation carried out.

It was found that the public mind would not bear the proposition (gradual emancipation), nor will it bear it even

[128] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, X, p. 157.

[129] *Ibid.*, X, p. 158.

at this day (1821). Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people are to be free; nor is it less certain, that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion have drawn indelible lines of distinction between them. It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation, peaceably, and in such slow degree, as that the evil will wear off insensible, and their place be, *pari passu*, filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up. We should in vain look for an example in the Spanish deportation, or deletion of the Moors. This precedent would fall far short of our case.[130]

In 1769, I became a member of the legislature by the choice of the country in which I live (Albemarle), and so continued until it was closed by the Revolution. I made one effort in that body for the permission of the emancipation of slaves, which was rejected; and indeed, during the regal government, nothing liberal could expect success. Our minds were circumscribed within narrow limits, by an habitual belief that it was our duty to be subordinate to the mother country in all matters of government, to direct all our labors in subservience to her interests, and even to observe a bigoted intolerance for all religions but hers. The difficulties with our representatives were of habit and despair, not of reflection and conviction. Experience soon proved that they could bring their minds to rights on the first

[130] Jefferson MSS. Rayner, 164.

summons of their attention. But the King's Council, which acted as another house of legislature, held their places at will, and were in most humble obedience to that will; the Governor, too, who had a negative on our laws, held by the same tenure, and with still greater devotedness to it; and, last of all, the royal negative closed the last door to every hope of ameloration.—Autobiography.[131]

The first establishment (of slavery) in Virginia which became permanent, was made in 1607. I have found no mention of negroes in the Colony until about 1650. The first brought here as slaves were by a Dutch ship; after which the English commenced the trade, and continued it until the Revolutionary war. That suspended, *ipso facto*, their further importation for the present, and the business of the war pressing constantly on the legislature, this subject was not acted on finally until the year '78, when I brought in a bill to prevent their further importation. This passed without opposition, and stopped the increase of the evil by importation, leaving to future efforts its final eradication.—Autobiography.[132]

Our only blot is becoming less offensive by the great improvement in the condition and civilization of that race, who can now more advantageously compare their situation with that of the laborers of Europe. Still it is a hideous blot, as well from the heteromorph peculiarities of the race, as that, with them, physical compulsion to action must be substituted for the moral necessity which constrains the

[131] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, I, p. 5.

[132] *Ibid.*, I, p. 51.

free laborers to work equally hard. We feel and deplore it morally and politically, and we look without entire despair to some redeeming means not yet specifically foreseen. I am happy in believing that the conviction of the necessity of removing this evil gains ground with time. Their emigration to the westward lightens the difficulty by dividing it, and renders it more practicable on the whole. And the neighborhood of a government of their color promises a more accessible asylum than that from whence they came.[133]

Showing the difficulty of purchase in case of the adoption of the policy, Jefferson wrote Jared Sparks in 1824:

Actual property has been lawfully vested in that form (negroes) and who can lawfully take it from the possessors?[134]

Who would estimate its blessed effects? I leave this to those who will live to see their accomplishment, and to enjoy a beatitude forbidden to my age. But I leave it with this admonition,—to rise and be doing. A million and a half are within our control; but six millions (which a majority of those now living will see them attain), and one million of these fighting men, will say, "we will not go."[135]

The separation of infants from their mothers would produce some scruples of humanity. But this would be

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[133] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, VII, p. 310.

[134] *Ibid.*, X, p. 200.

[135] *Ibid.*, X, p. 292.

straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel.[136]

Jefferson became interested in the schemes of Miss Fanny Wright, who was endeavoring to promote gradual emancipation through an Emancipating Labor Society. He wrote her in 1825:

> The abolition of the evil is not impossible; it ought never, therefore, to be despaired of. Every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried, which may do something towards the ultimate object. That which you propose is well worthy of trial. It has succeeded with certain portions of our white brethren, under the care of a Rapp and an Owen; and why may it not succeed with the man of color?
>
> At the age of eighty-two, with one foot in the grave and the other uplifted to follow it, I do not permit myself to take part in any new enterprises, even for bettering the condition of man, not even in the great one which is the subject of your letter, and which has been through life that of my greatest anxieties.[137] The march of events has not been such as to render its completion practicable within the limits of time allotted to me; and I leave its accomplishment as the work

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[136] *Ibid.*, X, p. 293.

[137] In 1817 Jefferson had written Thomas Humphreys:I have not perceived the growth of this disposition (to emancipate the slaves and settle them elsewhere) in the rising generation, of which I once had sanguine hopes. No symptoms inform me that it will take place in my day. I leave it, therefore, to time, and not at all without hope that the day will come, equally desirable and welcome to us as to them. Perhaps the proposition now on the carpet at Washington to provide an establishment on the coast of Africa for voluntary emigrations of people of color may be the corner stone of this future edifice.—Ford edition of Jefferson's Writings, X, p. 77.

of another generation.[138]

Although Jefferson lost hope of seeing his plans carried out, this letter to Edward Everett, written near the close of his career, shows that he had not changed his attitude.

> On the question of the lawfulness of slavery, that is of the right of one man to appropriate to himself the faculties of another without his consent, I certainly retain my early opinions. On that, however, of third persons to interfere between the parties, and the effect of conventional modifications of that pretension, we are probably nearer together.[139]

[138] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, X, p. 344.

[139] *Ibid.*, X, p. 385.

SOME UNDISTINGUISHED NEGROES

A little slave boy was intrusted with a card which he was to bear to a person to whom it was directed and so charmed was he with the beautiful inscription drawn upon it that he was seized with an unconquerable desire to learn the mystery it contained. To this end he persuaded a little boy of his master's to teach him the letters of the alphabet. He was discovered in the act and whipped. His curiosity, however, to learn the secret, which was locked up in those mysterious characters, was only increased, and he was detected in another attempt, and accordingly chastised. By this time he had so far penetrated the secret that nothing could deter him from further effort. A third time he was detected, and whipped almost to death. Still he persevered; and then to keep the matter secret, if possible, he crept into a hogshead, which lay in a rather retired place and leaving just hole enough to let in a little light, he sat there on a little straw, and thus prosecuted his object. He knew he must be whipped for being absent; and he often had to lie to conceal the cause; but such were the strivings of his noble nature, such his irrepressible longings after the hidden treasures of knowledge, that nothing could subdue them, and he accomplished his purpose.[140]

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[140] *The Philanthropist*, July 28, 1837.

Edward Mitchell, a colored man, was brought from the South by President Brown of Dartmouth College. He soon indicated a desire for mental culture on being brought within its influence at college. At first there was some hesitation about admitting him as the children of southerners sometimes attended Dartmouth and one of them had recently instructed his son to withdraw should the institution admit a Negro to his classes. Mitchell was prepared for entering the Freshman class, was received as a regular student and was promoted through all other classes to a full honorable graduation. He was uniformly treated with respect by his fellow students throughout his collegiate career. Upon graduating in 1828 he was settled as a pastor of a Baptist church in the State of Vermont, where he rendered creditable service.[141]

Luke Mulber came to Steubenville, Ohio, in 1802, hired himself to a carpenter during the summer at ten dollars a month, and went to school in the winter. This course he pursued for three years, at the expiration of which he had learned to do rough carpenter work. Industry and economy crowned his labors with success. In 1837 he was a contractor hiring four or five journeymen, two of whom were his sons, having calls for more work than they could do. He lived in a fine brick house which he had built for himself on Fourth Street, valued at two thousand five hundred dollars and owned other property in the city. Persons who came into contact with Mulber found him a quiet, humble, Christian man, possessing those characteristics

[141] *Ibid.*

expected of a useful member of society.[142]

Samuel Martin, a man of color, and the oldest resident of Port Gibson, Mississippi, emancipated six of his slaves in 1844, bringing them to Cincinnati where he believed they would have a better opportunity to start life anew. These were two mulatto women with their four quadroon children, the color of whom well illustrated the moral condition of that State, in that each child had a different father and they retained few marks of their partial African descent. Mr. Martin was himself a slave until 1829. He purchased his freedom for a large sum most of which he earned by taking time from sleep for work. Thereafter he acquired considerable property. He was not a slaveholder in the southern sense of that word. His purpose was to purchase his fellowmen in bondage that he might give them an opportunity to become free.[143]

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[142] *The Philanthropist*, June 2, 1837.

[143] *Cincinnati Morning Herald*, June 1, 1844.

BOOK REVIEWS

Negro Education, A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States. By Thomas Jesse Jones. United States Bureau of Education in Cooperation with the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Issued as Bulletins, 1916, Nos. 38 and 39. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1917. Vol. I, pp. 700. Vol. II, pp. 700.

This report is the result of a survey of Negro education made during the past four years under the direction of Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, specialist in the education of racial groups, United States Bureau of Education. This is the most comprehensive and authoritative report relating to Negro education that has been made. The report covers all Negro private schools above the elementary grades. The total number of schools described is 748, of which 635 are private schools, 28 are state institutions, 68 are public high schools, and 27 are county training schools. Reports are also made on 43 special institutions such as hospitals, orphanages and reformatories.

It appears that no form of education for Negroes is satisfactorily equipped or supported. The striking facts in the study of the financial support of Negro education are, first, the wide divergencies in the per capita of public school expenditures for white and Negro children: $10.06 for each white child and $2.89 for each Negro child, and second, the extent to which

schools for Negroes are dependent upon private aid. It also appears that the private schools provide the greater proportion of all educational opportunities above the elementary grades. They also offer practically all the instruction in agriculture, medicine and religion.

In the discussion of a program for educational development, it is pointed out that the public school authorities are responsible for elementary education and that so long as the elementary school facilities are insufficient, every phase of education above the elementary grades is seriously handicapped. With reference to secondary schools and teacher training, it is suggested that their chief effort should be to supply trained teachers for the public elementary schools. More than fifty per cent. of the teachers now in these schools have an education less than the equivalent of six elementary grades.

In the discussion of the importance of industrial education, it is pointed out that in spite of the striking progress made in the accumulation of property, the Negroes are "still a poor people." The large percentage of women and children who have to earn a living indicates the need of elevating their economic status so that more children may attend school, and the women have a better opportunity to care for the morals and hygiene of the home. Because three fourths of the Negroes live in rural districts, instruction along agricultural lines is one of the most important phases of Negro education. "Preparation for rural life," says the report, "is the greatest problem of the white and colored people

of the South."

The most radical recommendations made in the report are those relating to higher education. These recommendations are along the line of improving the facilities and raising the standards of Negro college work. The schools teaching subjects of college grade, 33 in number, are classified according to the amount of college work done, into three groups: first, colleges; second, those doing secondary and college work; and third, those schools in which some college work is offered. "Only three institutions, Howard, Fisk, and Meharry Medical, have a student body, a teaching force and equipment, and an income sufficient to warrant the characterization of college. Nearly half of the college students and practically all of the professional students are in these three institutions." It is suggested that there should be concentration on the development for Negroes of two institutions of university grade. Howard and Fisk are suggested as these two institutions. It is recommended that three institutions be developed and maintained as first class colleges. One such institution would be located at Richmond, Virginia; one at Atlanta, Georgia, and one at Marshall, Texas. A number of other institutions would be developed into junior colleges or schools doing two years of college work. In these junior colleges, large provision would be made for the training of teachers.

M. N. Work

Los Negros Esclavos, Estudio Sociologico Y de Derecho Publico. By Fernando Ortiz, Professor in the University of

Havana. Revista Bimestere Cubana, Havana, 1916. Pp. 536.

This work, as its title signifies, is a monograph intended to show the working out of the problems of enslaving the blacks in Cuba. The study begins with a description of the life of Cuba as conducive to the introduction of slavery and then that of the blacks themselves. Although acknowledging the difficulty of making an ethnographic study of the imported Africans, the author endeavors to trace the origin of these slaves to their native regions in Africa to determine the traits which entered into the formation of the character of the Cuban slaves. He then connects the institution with the sugar industry, which increased the demand for slaves, gave the institution an economic aspect and made the slave trade an international concern of great moment. The movement for the amelioration of the condition of the slave and the early efforts at abolition are noted only to show that these efforts proved to be insignificant when the traffic became universal and the institution reached the economic stage in the sugar colonies. The atrocities incident to the methods of the victors in the tribal wars of Africa supplying the traders frequenting the coast are duly treated. The author even gives in detail the procedure, prices and numbers.

A considerable portion of the book is concerned with the real life of the slave. Professor Ortiz believes that the punishments inflicted in Cuba were not so severe as in some other countries. He discusses the work done by the men, women and children, their habitations, food, dress and diversions. The diseases of the

slave arising in adjusting themselves to the new world are also noted. Going further into the details of the life of the slaves, the author describes the urban Negroes and distinguishes this class of the bondmen from those of the plantation. He then discusses the free Negroes, who even from an early period constituted a considerable element of the black population and explains why some of them returned to Africa. The rights of all of the elements of the black population at law are mentioned so as to give the reader an idea of the black code as enforced in that island. How these classes thus kept down were moved from time to time to organize insurrections to secure their freedom, constitutes one of the chapters of the book.

On the whole it cannot be said that Professor Ortiz has shown that slavery in Cuba differed widely from what it was in some other large islands of the West Indies. He has, however, made a contribution to scholarship in showing exactly how this institution affected the life and the development of Cuba. The work is well illustrated and has an appendix of valuable documents bearing on slavery in Cuba.

C. G. Woodson.

A Social History of the American Family, from Colonial Times to the Present. By Arthur W. Calhoun, PH.D. Volume I, Colonial Period. The Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, U. S. A., 1917. Pp. 348.

This work is a study in genetic sociology to be completed in three volumes. The purpose of it is to develop an understanding

of the forces that have been operative in the evolution of the family institution in the United States. The author will endeavor to set forth the influences that have shaped marriage, controlled fecundity, determined the respective status of father, mother, child, attracted relative and servant, influenced sexual morality and governed the function of the family as an educational, economic, moral, and spiritual institution as also its relation to state, industry, and society in general in the matter of social control.

In this first volume of the series the effort is to show that the American family is a product of European folkways, of the economic transition to modern capitalism, and of the distinctive environment of a virgin continent. How European customs brought to America underwent modification in the new environment and how differences of population in this country may be traced to geographical differences, constitute an important part of this treatise. The reader is finally directed to see the colonial family as a property institution dominated by middle class standards and operating as an agency of social control in the midst of the social order governed by the interests of a forceful aristocracy, which shaped religion, education, politics, and all else to its own profit.

On the whole this is a valuable work. When one has finished reading this volume, however, he must get the impression that the life of the slave attached to the colonial family has not been adequately treated. Among the early colonists the African slave

was connected with the family after the manner of the bondmen of families in ancient countries. The slaves, being few in number, maintained this relation until the industrial revolution throughout the modern world changed the institution from a patriarchal to an economic one. Prior to this time the slaves were treated almost as well as the children of the family. They lived under the same roof, worshipped at the same altar and in some cases were taught in the same school. Care was taken so to elevate the slave and keep him above corrupting influences as to make him not merely a tool for exploitation but a decided asset in the family economy of life. That the slave of this type had much to do with the development of the colonial family no one will doubt.

In the chapter on servitude and sexuality in the South, the Negro slave gets negative mention. The author says that the presence of African slaves and Indians early gave rise to the problem of miscegenation. He concedes that it took some time to develop in the whites the attitude of race integrity and that the intercourse between men and women of the inferior race was never eliminated. During this period white women of the indentured servant class often yielded to miscegenation with the African male slaves and, as the author states, planters sometimes married white women servants to Negroes in order to transform the women and their offspring into slaves. The author might have added that this was especially true of Maryland.

The Readjuster Movement in Virginia. By Charles Chilton Pearson, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science in Wake Forest

College. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1917. Pp. 191.

The author undertakes here to describe one of the developments in Virginia politics during the period between the Civil War and the first administration of Grover Cleveland. He considers the last fifty years of the history of Virginia the *Dark Age* during which there has been a period of radicalism followed by reaction. The Readjuster Movement was one of the independent waves of thought which characterized the reactionary period. It centered around William Mahone as the leader of an efficient machine endeavoring to readjust the State debt by compelling its creditors to share in the loss caused by the expensive internal improvement policy, the misfortunes of the Civil War and the extravagance of the Reconstruction period. It was in line with the general effort to readjust the economic and social policies of the entire country. It appealed to the people for the reason that unlike radicalism it was not obstructive of "democratic advance" in that it did not alienate the western section of the state through its attitude towards the Negro. Native in its origin, the democracy of the party was primarily intended for the whites, though the Negroes were accepted as desirable supporters. Such an independent movement was impossible until the continued defeat of the Republican party sufficiently removed the fears of the whites as to conduce to development of independent thinking. Citizens were thereafter more easily won to the cause of thus elevating the ruined and indebted classes by transferring to the government their will that the burdens of the

State should be shifted to other shoulders. The author believes that this party found ready support also for the reason that it was not only a party but a social code and a state of mind which bound the whites to united and temperate action. He does not take the position that the work of the party was accomplished without conflict between the aristocratic and democratic forces. It required a long time to remove the differences between the aristocrats composed of the leaders of the old regime and the "soldier cult" on one hand and, on the other, the democratic element composed of the westerners and upstarts whom the Civil War and Reconstruction brought to power in the east, the poor whites and the freedmen.

It is interesting to note how he accounts for the fate of the Negro voter. He says that the Negro rising with the tide of democracy was about to be incorporated into the body politic, but that the habit of implicit obedience to overseers and a boss proved too strong. "These results," says he, "seemed to necessitate and to anticipate the elimination of the Negro as a voter." The decline of the political power of the Negro in Virginia is unfortunately considered by many as due to this cause. The author is wrong to leave the reader to infer that the Negro's incapacity to participate intelligently in the affairs of the government actually led to his elimination. The demands of race prejudice impelled all southern States to reduce the Negro to a lower status just as soon as the North loosed its hold on the South.

NOTES

The local club of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History is now making a serious study of Negro American History under the direction of Dr. Carter G. Woodson. The work was begun in November and will be completed in February. The phases of history to be considered are: *The Negro in Africa*, *The Enslavement of the Negro*, *Patriarchal Slavery in America*, *Slavery and the Rights of Man*, *The Reaction against the Negro*, *Slavery as an Economic Institution*, *The Free Negro in the United States*, *The Abolition Movement*, *The Colonization Project*, *Slavery and the Constitution*, *The Negro in the Civil War*, *The Reconstruction of the Southern States*, *The Negro in Freedom*, *The Negro and Social Justice*.

Dodd, Mead and Company will soon publish for Professor Benjamin G. Brawley a work entitled *The Genius of the Negro*. The aim of the book will be to set forth what the Negro has done in literature, art and the like.

Longmans, Green and Company have published *The Education of the African Native*. This will throw light on the much mooted question as to what the Europeans have done to promote the mental development of the native of the dark continent.

In the seventh volume of the *Documentos para la Historia Argentina* are found materials bearing on the *Comercio de Indias,*

Consualdo, Comercio de Negros y Extranjeros, 1791-1809.

The June number of the *Political Science Quarterly* contained an article *The Negro Vote in Old New York* by D. E. Fox.

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BENJAMIN BANNEKER, THE NEGRO MATHEMATICIAN AND ASTRONOMER

The city of Washington very recently celebrated the 125th anniversary of the completion of the survey and laying out of the Federal Territory constituting the District of Columbia. This was executed under the supervision of the famous French civil engineer, Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, as the head of a commission appointed by George Washington, then president of the United States. Serving as one of the commissioners, sitting in conference with them and performing an important part in the mathematical calculations involved in the survey, was the Negro mathematician and astronomer, Benjamin Banneker. As there did not appear to be during this celebration any disposition to give proper recognition to the scientific work done by Banneker, the writer has thought it opportune to present in this form a brief review of Banneker's life so as to revive an interest in him and point out some of this useful man's important achievements.

On a previous occasion the writer undertook to collect some data with the same object in view, and at that time he addressed a letter to the postmaster at Ellicott City, Maryland, asking to be put in touch with some one of the Ellicott family, who might furnish reliable data on the subject. In this way, correspondence was established with the family of Mrs. Martha Ellicott Tyson, of Baltimore. One of her descendants, Mrs. Tyson Manly, kindly came over from Baltimore, and, calling on the writer at the United States Patent Office, presented him with a copy of the life of Banneker, published in Philadelphia in 1884, and compiled from the papers of Martha Ellicott Tyson, who was the daughter of George Ellicott, a member of the noted Maryland family, who established the business that developed the town of Ellicott City.

Between George Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, Mrs. Tyson says, there existed "a special sympathy,"[144] and she further refers to her father as "the warmest friend of that extraordinary man."[145] Her father had many of Banneker's manuscripts, from which he intended to compile a biography of his friend, but his unusually busy commercial life afforded him no leisure in which to carry out this much cherished plan. Mrs. Tyson's account, therefore, can be relied upon as coming directly from those who, personally knowing Banneker, and living in the same community in frequent contact with him, had preserved accurate data from which to publish the true record of his life.

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[144] *The Leisure Hour*, 1853, II, p. 54.

[145] Tyson, *Banneker, The Afric-American Astronomer*, p. 10.

On a farm located near the Patapsco Eiver, within about ten miles of the city of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on the 9th day of November, 1731, Benjamin Banneker was born. Various accounts are given of his ancestry. One of his biographers states that "there was not a drop of white blood in his veins," another asserts with positiveness that his parents and grandparents were all native Africans.[146] In still another sketch of Banneker's life, read before the Maryland Historical Society, on May 1, 1845, it is stated that "Banneker's mother was the child of *natives* of Africa so that to no admixture of the blood of the white man was he indebted for his peculiar and extraordinary abilities."[147] Thomas Jefferson said that Banneker was the "son

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[146] *The Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 80

[147] In another particular this same sketch differs from several others, namely, in locating young Banneker at "an obscure and distant country school" with no mention of the oft-repeated assertion that the school was one attended by both white and colored children. The author of the last-mentioned sketch was evidently not sure of these two statements, and therefore did not include them. In fact, he appears not to have been quite sure of the propriety of submitting any sketch at all of this "free man of color" to the distinguished body constituting the Maryland Historical Society, for there was a clear note of apology in his opening declaration that "A few words may be necessary to explain why a memoir of a free man of color, formerly a resident of Maryland, is deemed of sufficient interest to be presented to the Historical Society." But he justified his effort on the grounds that "no questions relating to our country (are) of more interest than those connected with her colored population"; that that interest had "acquired an absorbing character"; that the presence of the colored population in States where slavery existed "modified their institutions in important particulars," and effected "in a greater or less degree the character of the dominant race"; and "for this reason alone," he said, "the memoir of a colored man, who had distinguished himself in an abstruse science, by birth a Marylander, claims consideration from those who

of a black man born in Africa and a black woman born in the United States."[148]

According to Mrs. Tyson's account Banneker's mother and father were Negroes, but his maternal grandmother was a white woman of English birth, who had been legally married to a native African. The antecedent circumstances of this marriage were so unusual as to justify special mention. Mollie Welsh was an English woman of the servant class, employed on a cattle farm in England where a part of her daily duty was the milking of the cows. She was one day charged with having stolen a pail of milk that had, in fact, been kicked over by a cow. The charge seems to have been taken as proved, and in lieu of a severer punishment she was sentenced to be shipped to America. Being unable to pay for her passage she was sold, on her arrival in America, to a tobacco planter on the Patapsco Eiver to serve a term of seven years to pay the cost of her passage from England. At the end of her period of service, this Mollie Welsh, who is described as "a person of exceedingly fair complexion and moderate mental powers," was able to buy a portion of the farm on which she had worked.[149] In 1692, she purchased two African slaves from a

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have associated to collect and preserve facts and records relating to the men and deeds of the past."—J. H. B. Latrobe in *Maryland Historical Society Publications*, I, p. 8.

[148] Ford edition of *Jefferson's Writings*, V, p. 379.

[149] In the memoir of Banneker, above mentioned, read before the Maryland Historical Society in 1845, and in another memoir of Banneker, read before the same Society by Mr. J. Saurin Norris, in 1854, the estate purchased by Mollie Welsh is referred to as "a small farm near the present site of Baltimore," and "purchased at a

ship in the Chesapeake Bay near Annapolis. One of these slaves named Bannaky, subsequently Anglicized as Banneker, was the son of an African king, and was stolen by slave dealers on the coast of Africa.[150] With these two slaves as her assistants, Mollie Welsh industriously cultivated her farm for a number of years with such gratifying success that she felt impelled afterwards to release her two slaves from bondage. The slave Banneker had gained such favor in the eyes of his owner that she married him directly after releasing him from bondage, notwithstanding the fact that his record for sustained industry had not equalled that of his fellow slave, while serving their owner on her farm—a fact that was perhaps due to Banneker's natural inclination to indulge his royal prerogatives. This Banneker is described as "a man of much intelligence and fine temper, with a very agreeable presence, dignified manner and contemplative habits."[151]

There were born of this marriage four children of whom the eldest daughter, Mary, married a native African who had been purchased from a slave ship by another planter in her neighborhood. This slave was of a devout nature, and early became a member of the Church of England, receiving at his baptism the name of Robert. After baptism, Robert's master set him free. It was, therefore, as a free man that he became the husband of Mary Banneker, whose surname he adopted for his

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merely nominal price." See Norris's *Memoir*, p. 3.

[150] Norris *Memoir*, p. 4; Williams's *History of the Negro Race*, p. 386.

[151] Tyson, *Banneker*, p. 10.

own. Four children were born to Robert and Mary Banneker, one boy and three girls, the eldest being Benjamin, the subject of this sketch.

Robert Banneker had evidently formed some of the habits of thrift evinced by his mother-in-law, Mollie Welsh, for it is on record that in 1737 within a few years after receiving his freedom he purchased a farm of 120 acres from Richard Gist, paying for it 17,000[152] pounds of tobacco, which in those days served as a legal medium of exchange. This farm, located on the Patapsco Eiver, within about ten miles of the town of Baltimore, thus became the Banneker homestead. Here it was that young Benjamin spent his early years and grew to manhood, assisting his father with the general work of the farm.

Banneker very early showed signs of precocity, which made him the special favorite of his maternal grandmother who took delight in teaching him to the extent of her own limited mental endowment. She taught him to study the Bible, and had him read it to her at regular intervals for the purpose of training him along religious lines of thought. He attended a small school in his neighborhood where a few white and colored children were taught by the same white schoolmaster. Until the cotton gin and other mechanical appliances made Negroes too valuable as tools of exploitation to be allowed anything so dangerous as education, there were to be found here and there in the South pioneer educators at the feet of whom even Negroes might sit

[152] It is elsewhere given as 7,000, but the earlier record seems to be the correct one.

and learn.[153]

As a boy at school young Banneker is said to have spent very little, if any, of his time in the games and frolics that constitute so large a part of the school life of the average youth. He was unusually fond of study, devoting by far the larger part of his time to reading, so that it was said of him that "all his delight was to dive into his books." His reading, however, did not take a wide range. His limited resources did not permit him to purchase the many works he desired. What Banneker lost through the lack of a variety of books, however, he tried to make up for in being a close observer of everything around him. He turned everything that he could into a channel of information and drew upon all possible sources to keep himself posted on the general activities of his community and beyond. In this way, "he became gradually possessed of a fund of general knowledge which it was difficult to find even among those who were far more favored by opportunity than he was."[154]

Although Banneker had by this time begun to ingratiate himself into the favor of the very best element in his community solely through his demonstration of mental superiority, he did not permit his unusual popularity and his love of study to render him any less helpful to his father in the cultivation of the farm. He proved himself to be just as industrious in farming as he was diligent in studying. When his father died in 1759, leaving to

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[153] *Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 81.

[154] Latrobe, *Memoir, Maryland Historical Society Publications*, I, p. 7.

Benjamin and his mother, as joint heirs, the dwelling in which they lived, together with 72 acres of land,[155] Benjamin was fully prepared to assume control of affairs on the estate, and make it yield a comfortable living for him and his mother. His father had divided the remaining 28 acres of the original farm among the three daughters who also survived him. His farm was said to be one of the best kept farms in his neighborhood. It was well stocked, containing a select assortment of fruit trees, a fine lot of cattle, and a specially successful apiary.

Young Banneker's diligent reading of the books at his command served to develop his mental powers rapidly, giving him a retentive memory, correct forms of speech and a keen power of analysis. This faculty grew largely out of his special fondness for the study of mathematics, by which he acquired unusual facility in solving difficult problems. He early won the reputation of being the smartest mathematician not only in his immediate neighborhood but for miles around. He was often seen in the midst of a group of neighbors whom he constantly astounded by the rapidity and accuracy with which he would solve the mathematical puzzles put to him. This caused such widespread comment that he frequently received from scholars in different parts of the country, desiring to test his capacity, mathematical questions, to all of which, it is said, he responded promptly and correctly.[156]

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[155] *Ibid.*, I, p. 7.

[156] Banneker would frequently, in answering questions submitted to him, accompany

His close attention to the study of mathematics led him easily into the quest of some practical form by which to give tangible expression to his thought. It is highly probable that this fact can explain the facility with which he planned and completed at the age of thirty a clock which stands as one of the wonders of his day.[157] "It is probable," says one, "that this was the first clock of which every portion was made in America; it is certain that it was as purely his own invention as if none had ever been before. He had seen a watch, but never a clock, such an article not being within fifty miles of him."[158] He completed this clock

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the answers with questions of his own in rhyme. The following is an example of such a question submitted by him to another noted mathematician, his friend and neighbor, Mr. George Ellicott:A cooper and Vintner sat down for a talk,Both being so groggy, that neither could walk,Says Cooper to Vintner, "I'm the first of my trade,There's no kind of vessel, but what I have made,And of any shape, Sir,—just what you will,—And of any size, Sir,—from a ton to a gill!""Then," says the Vintner, "you're the man for me,—Make me a vessel, if we can agree.The top and the bottom diameter define,To bear that proportion as fifteen to nine,Thirty-five inches are just what I crave,No more and no less, in the depth, will I have;Just thirty-nine gallons this vessel must hold,—Then I will reward you with silver or gold,—Give me your promise, my honest old friend?""I'll make it tomorrow, that you may depend!"So the next day the Cooper his work to discharge,Soon made the new vessel, but made it too large;—He took out some staves, which made it too small,And then cursed the vessel, the Vintner and all.He beat on his breast, "By the Powers!"—he swore,He never would work at his trade any more.Now my worthy friend, find out, if you can,The vessel's dimensions and comfort the man!Benjamin Banneker.We are indebted to Benjamin Hallowell, of Alexandria, for the solution of this problem. The greater diameter of Banneker's tub must be 24.745 inches; the less diameter 14.8476 inches. See *Maryland Historical Society Publications*, I, p. 20.

[157] *The Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 81.

[158] *The Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 81.

with no other tools than a pocket knife, and using only wood as his material. It stood as a perfect piece of machinery, and struck the hours with faultless precision for a period of 20 years.

The successful completion of this clock attracted to Banneker the attention of his entire community, serving as the starting point of a more brilliant career. It was this display of mechanical genius which engaged the attention of the Ellicotts, who had lately moved into his neighborhood from Pennsylvania. They had already heard of the unusual accomplishments of this gifted Negro and lost no time in getting in touch with him, especially since one of the Ellicotts was himself a mathematician and astronomer of marked ability.[159]

The meeting with the Ellicotts was of signal advantage to Banneker, and ultimately proved the turning point in his career. They were of Quaker origin and had gone down to Maryland in 1772 in search of a desirable location for the establishment of flour mills. They were evidently persons of foresight. Being progressive, open-minded and comparatively free from the prejudices that were then mostly native to the section into which they had moved, they cordially received Banneker and frankly proclaimed his talents.[160] They did not seem to permit the differences of race to erect a single barrier between Banneker and themselves in the ordinary run of their frequent business intercourse. When the Ellicotts were erecting their mills, the

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[159] *Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 82.

[160] *Southern Literary Messenger*, XXIII, p. 65.

foundation of Ellicott City, they purchased from Banneker's farm a large portion of the provisions needed for the workmen. His mother, Mary Banneker, attended to the marketing, bringing poultry, vegetables, fruit and honey to the Ellicott workmen.[161]

Banneker's mechanical inclination led him to take unusual interest in the building of the Ellicott Mills, and to make frequent visits there to watch the operation of the machinery. In the course of time a store was built near the mills, and it became the meeting place of nearly all the wide-awake and worth while people in the community, who would linger together to talk of the news of the day. This was the ordinary means of news exchanging in those days when there were no dailies nor bulletins nor hourly extras. Banneker was always a welcome participant in these gatherings although he was a man of modest demeanor, never injecting himself into the conversation in an unseemly manner. When, however, he permitted himself to be drawn into discussions, he always expressed his views with such clearness and intelligence that he won the respect of his hearers.[162]

The friendship between George Ellicott and Banneker grew stronger as the years went by, and their common interests in mathematics and natural science led to a fellowship which often brought them together. This interest led George Ellicott to lend Banneker a number of mathematical books and instruments. Among these books were Mayer's *Tables*,

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[161] Tyson's *Banneker*, p. 24.

[162] Tyson, *Banneker*, p. 26.

Ferguson's *Astronomy* and Leadbetter's *Lunar Tables*. When these books and instruments were handed to Banneker it was Ellicott's intention to remain there a while to give Banneker some personal instruction in the use of them, but he was prevented by lack of time from carrying out this intention. On calling again on Banneker shortly afterward, to offer him this instruction, Ellicott was surprised to find that Banneker had already discovered for himself the key to the use of both and was "already absorbed in the contemplation of the new world which was thus opened to his view."[163] They had literally made him fix his gaze on the stars, for the study of astronomy thus became his one absorbing passion.

He had now nearly covered his three score years, and it was no little tribute to his mental vigor that he should have determined at that age to master so abstruse a science as astronomy. But by degrees he gave himself up to its study with unusual zeal. His favorite method of studying this science was to lie out on the ground at night, gazing up at the heavens till the early hours of the morning. He then tried to restore his tired mind and body by sleeping nearly all the next day. This habit nearly caused him to fall into disrepute among his neighbors, who, ignorant of his plans, accused him of becoming lazy in his old days.

In 1789 he had advanced so far with his plan as to project a solar eclipse, the calculation of which he submitted to his friend George Ellicott. In the study of these books Banneker detected several errors of calculation, and, writing to his friend Ellicott,

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[163] J. H. B. Latrobe's *Memoir, Maryland Historical Society Publications*, I, p. 8.

he made mention of two of them. On one occasion he wrote:

> "It appears to me that the wisest men may at times be in error; for instance, Dr. Ferguson informs us that, when the sun is within 12° of either node at the time of full, the moon will be eclipsed; but I find that, according to his method of projecting a lunar eclipse, there will be none by the above elements, and yet the sun is within 11° 46' 11" of the moon's ascending node. But the moon, being in her apogee, prevents the appearance of this eclipse."

And again he wrote Ellicott:

> "Errors that ought to be corrected in my astronomical tables are these: 2d vol. Leadbetter, p. 204, when anomaly is 4^{S} 30° the equation 3° 30' 4" ought to have been 3° 28' 41". In ♂ equation, p. 155, the logarithm of his distance from ☉ ought to have been 6 in the second place from the index, instead of 7, that is, from the time that its anomaly is 3^{S} 24° until it is 4^{S} O°."

Acting upon the suggestion of one of his educated friends, Banneker now undertook to extend his calculations so as to make an Almanac, then the most comprehensive medium of scientific information. Banneker continued the work required to complete his almanac, and finished the first one to cover the year 1792, when he was sixty-one years old. This attracted to him a number of prominent men, among whom was Mr. James McHenry, of Baltimore, a member of John Adams's cabinet. This gentleman, through his high regard for Banneker's

achievements, had his almanac published by the firm of Goddard and Angell of Baltimore. In his letter to this firm McHenry paid a fine tribute to the character of the author, although some of his statements as to Banneker's parentage do not harmonize with what appears to the writer as more reliable information from another source. McHenry laid special stress upon the fact that Banneker's work, in the preparation of his almanac, "was begun and finished without the least information or assistance from any person, or from any other books," than those he had obtained from Mr. Ellicott, "so that whatever merit is attached to his present performance is exclusively and peculiarly his own."[164]

That Mr. McHenry attached a wider significance to Banneker's attainments than is implied in a merely personal achievement is shown in his statement that he considered "this negro as a fresh proof that the powers of the mind are disconnected with the color of the skin, or, in other words, a striking contradiction to Mr. Hume's doctrine, that the negroes are naturally inferior to the whites, and unsusceptible of attainments in arts and sciences?" "In every civilized country," said he, "we shall find thousands of whites, liberally educated and who have enjoyed greater opportunities for instruction than this negro, (who are) his inferiors in those intellectual acquirements and capacities that form the most characteristic features in the human race.[165] But the system that would assign to these

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[164] *Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 82.

[165] Tyson, *Banneker*, p. 51.

degraded blacks *an origin different from the whites*, if it is not ready to be deserted by philosophers, must be relinquished as similar instances multiply; and that such must frequently happen, cannot be doubted, *should no check impede the progress of humanity*, which, ameliorating the conditions of slavery, necessarily leads to its final extinction."[166]

Referring to their attitude, the publishers said in their editorial notice that "they felt gratified in the opportunity of presenting to the public, through their press, an accurate Ephemeris for the year 1792, calculated by a sable descendant of Africa." They flatter themselves "that a philanthropic public, in this enlightened era, will be induced to give their patronage and support to this work, not only on account of its intrinsic merit (it having met the approbation of several of the most distinguished astronomers of America, particularly the celebrated Mr. Rittenhouse), but from similar motives to those which induced the editors to give this calculation the preference, the ardent desire of *drawing modest merit from obscurity* and controverting the long established illiberal prejudice against the blacks."[167]

Banneker had himself not lost sight of the probable effect of his work in reshaping to some extent the public estimate

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[166] Mr. McHenry was not only one of the most prominent men of Baltimore, but was several times honored with positions of trust. He was Senator from Maryland in 1781; and as one of the Commissioners to frame the Constitution of the United States, he signed that instrument in 1787. He was also a member of the cabinet of President John Adams as Secretary of War in 1797.—Tyson, *Banneker*, pp. 50, 51, 52.

[167] *Maryland Historical Society Publications*, I, 1844-48, I, p. 79.

concerning the intellectual capacity of his race. And this was the thought that prompted him to send a manuscript copy of his first almanac to Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State in Washington's cabinet. In his letter to Jefferson, dated August 19, 1791, Banneker made, with characteristic modesty, a polite apology for the "liberty" he took in addressing one of such "distinguished and dignified station," and then proceeded to make a strong appeal for the exercise of a more liberal attitude towards his downtrodden race, using his own achievements as a proof that the "train of absurd and false ideas and opinions which so generally prevails with respect to the Negro should now be eradicated."[168]

Thomas Jefferson took note of the moral courage and the loyalty to race evident throughout the whole of Banneker's remarkable letter and he honored it with the most courteous reply, under date of August 30, 1791. After thanking Banneker for the letter and the almanac accompanying it, Jefferson expressed the pleasure it afforded him to see such proofs "that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing only to the degraded condition of their existence both in Africa and America." He also added that he desired "ardently to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body and mind to what it ought to be." The copy

[168] A copy of Banneker's letter to Thomas Jefferson and the statesman's reply were published in the Journal of Negro History, III, p. 69.

sent to Jefferson was formally transmitted to M. de Condorcet, secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and member of the Philanthropic Society because, as he said, he "considered it a document to which your whole race had a right for its justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them." This recognition of Banneker's merit very naturally added greatly to his rapidly growing reputation at home, and brought to him hundreds of letters of congratulation from scholarly men throughout the civilized world.

The most distinguished honor that came to him from his own countrymen was the invitation to serve with the commission appointed by President Washington to define the boundary line and lay out the streets of the Federal Territory, later called the District of Columbia. This commission, was appointed by Washington, in 1789, and was composed of David Stuart, Daniel Carroll, Thomas Johnson, Andrew Ellicott and Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a famous French engineer. This personnel was given in the article on Benjamin Banneker by John R. Slattery in the *Catholic World* in 1883,[169] but in the *Washington Evening Star* of October 15, 1916, reporting an address by Fred Woodward, the commission was said to consist of "Major L'Enfant, Andrew Ellicott, Count de Graff, Isaac Roberdeau, William King, Nicholas King, and Benjamin Banneker, a free Negro."[170] It is on record that it was at the suggestion of his

[169] *Catholic World*, XXXVIII, December, 1883.

[170] *Washington Star*, October 15, 1916.

friend, Major Andrew Ellicott, who so thoroughly appreciated the value of his scientific attainments, that Thomas Jefferson nominated Banneker and Washington appointed him a member of the commission. In the Georgetown *Weekly Ledger*, of March 12, 1791, reference is made to the arrival at that port of Ellicott and L'Enfant, who were accompanied by "Benjamin Banneker, an Ethiopian whose abilities as surveyor and astronomer already prove that Mr. Jefferson's concluding that that race of men were void of mental endowment was without foundation."[171]

Speaking afterwards of his work with this commission, Banneker referred to the unfailing kindness and courtesy of the distinguished company in which he found himself. One of his biographers says that the deportment of the mathematician during this engagement was such as to secure for him the respect and admiration of the commissioners. His striking superiority over all other men of his race whom they had met led them to disregard all prejudices of caste.[172] During the stay of the commissioners at their official quarters, Banneker was invited, of course, to eat at the same table with them just as he sat with them during the conferences. This invitation, however, he declined, and provision was then, at his request, made for serving his meals at a separate table but in the same dining room and at the same hour as the others were served.

The reasons for Banneker's refusal to accept this invitation,

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[171] *Georgetown Weekly Ledger*, March 12, 1791.

[172] Tyson, *Banneker*, p. 37.

however, are not so clear. Various of his biographers have attributed his action on this occasion to what they seemed pleased to term his "native modesty." Judging it at this distance from the time of its occurrence, it is perhaps difficult to understand fully his motive. But if we view it in the light of the consistent wisdom and high-mindedness that seemed to guide his whole life we can hope that his reasons for the self-imposed coventry on that occasion were sufficient unto himself, and that they fully excluded every element of servility.

Banneker's work with this commission was undertaken while he was still engaged in astronomical investigation, and after his services in Washington were concluded he returned to his home and resumed his work on his almanacs, which regularly appeared until 1802. He was now living alone in the home left him by his parents, and performed for himself nearly all the domestic services required for his health and comfort. Still obliged to rely mainly upon his farm for his livelihood, he tried various expedients with different tenants to rid himself of the necessity for giving so much of his time to the farm. In these efforts he was wholly unsuccessful. He finally decided, therefore, to enter into such an arrangement in the disposition of his effects as would provide him an annuity, relieving himself of all anxiety for his maintenance and at the same time affording him the leisure he wanted for study. This he was enabled to do through a contract with one of the Ellicotts, by the terms of which his friend was to take the title to Banneker's property, making the latter an annual

allowance of 12 pounds for a given period of time calculated by Banneker to be the span of years he could reasonably be expected to live. Banneker was to continue to occupy and use the property during his life, after which the possession was to go to Ellicott.[173] Banneker lived, however, eight years longer than he thought he would, but Ellicott faithfully lived up to this contract. This miscalculation is said to have been the only mistake in mathematics Banneker ever made. With his domestic affairs settled to his satisfaction, and having now the desired leisure to continue his studies, he gave himself up wholly to that object.

His active mind now found time also for occasional diversion to other lines than mathematics. It was about this time that he made the calculations showing that the locust plague was recurrent in cycles of 17 years each. He also wrote a dissertation on bees which has been favorably compared with a similar contribution by Pliny on the same subject written nearly 1800 years earlier. Banneker's nature seemed tuned also to the softer notes in the song of life. He loved music, and often, as a relaxation, he would sit beneath a huge chestnut tree near his house and beguile the hours by playing on his flute or violin.[174]

The disastrous war waged in 1793 so disturbed Banneker that he devoted much time to the study of the best methods to promote peace. To this end he suggested that the United States Government establish a department in the President's cabinet to

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[173] Tyson, *Banneker*, pp. 70-71.

[174] Tyson, *Banneker*, pp. 35-60.

be in charge of a Secretary of Peace. He then made a strong appeal to the authorities of his government to take a broad stand based on humanity and justice and in that spirit to formulate a comprehensive plan by which *A Lasting Peace*[175] might be substituted for the wars that were then disturbing the world.

During these years his home was frequently visited by people who sought him because of his intellectual gifts, and who were in no wise abashed by the fact of his racial connection. To them he was merely an honored citizen in the field of achievement.[176] "During the whole of his long life," says Benjamin Ellicott, "he lived respectably and much esteemed by all who became acquainted with him, but more especially by those who could fully appreciate his genius and the extent of his acquirements. Although his mode of life was regular and extremely retired,—living alone, having never married, cooking his own victuals and washing his own clothes, and scarcely ever being absent from home,—yet there was nothing misanthropic in his character; for a gentleman who knew him thus speaks of him: 'I recollect him well. He was a brave-looking pleasant man, with something very noble in his appearance.' His mind was evidently much engrossed in his calculations; but he was glad to receive the visits which we often paid him."

Another writes: "When I was a boy I became very much interested in him, as his manners were those of a perfect

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[175] *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, XX, pp. 117-119.

[176] *The Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 84.

gentleman: kind, generous, hospitable, humane, dignified, and pleasing, abounding in information on all the various subjects and incidents of the day, very modest and unassuming, and delighting in society at his own house. I have seen him frequently. His head was covered with a thick suit of white hair, which gave him a very dignified and venerable appearance. His dress was uniformly of superfine broadcloth, made in the old style of a plain coat, with straight collar and long waistcoat, and a broad-brimmed hat. His color was not jet-black, but decidedly negro. In size and personal appearance, the statue of Franklin at the Library of Philadelphia, as seen from the street, is a perfect likeness of him. Go to his house when you would, either by day or night, there was constantly standing in the middle of the floor a large table covered with books and papers. As he was an eminent mathematician, he was constantly in correspondence with other mathematicians in this country, with whom there was an interchange of questions of difficult solution."[177]

Mrs. Tyson describes the courtliness of his manner when receiving friendly visits from the ladies of his community, who delighted to call on him in his neat cottage, to have the pleasure of his rare conversation. On these occasions he would sometimes allude to his love of the study of astronomy as quite unsuited to a man of his class.[178]

In the earlier years of his life Banneker is said to have formed

[177] Tyson, *Banneker*, p. 31.

[178] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

the "social drink" habit, which we can imagine was all the easier for a man of his agreeable manners, in an environment where hospitality was general, and in a day when cordiality usually expressed itself in that way. But to the credit of his strength of mind and will, it is also said that he actually overcame that habit by the mere determination that he would do it, and that on his return from his stay with the commission at Washington he is said to have declared rather proudly that he never partook once of the wines that were so freely offered him.[179]

Banneker was not a professing Christian and not an adherent of any church, but "he loved the doctrines and mode of worship of the Society of Friends, and was frequently at their meetings." A contemporary says: "We have seen Banneker in Elkridge meeting house, where he always sat on the form nearest the door, his head uncovered. His ample forehead, white hair and reverent deportment gave him a very venerable appearance, as he leaned on the long staff (which he always carried with him) in quiet contemplation."[180]

There was no blemish in the entire record of his singularly active and useful life. His whole span of years appears to have been spent with a conscience void of offense, and he approached the end with a sereneness of mind well befitting the high ideals set before him. Although his body never wandered far from the place of his birth, his mind was permitted to soar through all

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[179] *Catholic World*, XVIII, p. 354.

[180] Norris's *Memoir, Maryland Historical Society Publications*, II, p. 75.

space and to dwell in the regions of the stars and the planets. We can never know how sorely his finer spirit grieved over the tribulations that beset his blood kinsmen in the days of their bondage in this land of their birth, but we can well believe that in the loftiness of his soul he dreamed the dream of their ultimate release.

As the shadows gathered about him towards the evening of his life he abandoned those pursuits that had brought him merited distinction, and had gained for him the admiration of a host of friends chiefly among people that the world called superior. One beautiful Sabbath afternoon, in the month of October, 1806,[181] while quietly resting in the shade of a tree beside his cottage on the brow of a hill that overlooked the Patapsco Valley he seemed to hear the voices that beckoned him to the other world. And as if stirred by some sudden impulse he rose and made an effort to walk once more along the paths that had so often been his quiet retreat in the moments of his deep reflections. He had not gone far, when his strength gave way, and he sank helpless to the ground. He was assisted back to his home by a friendly neighbor, but the noon of his day having fully merged into the evening, the dark shadows of Eternal Night settled over him.

Directly after Banneker's death, in fact, on that very day, his sisters, Minta Black and Mollie Morton, undertook to carry out his wishes with respect to the disposition to be made of his personal effects. Banneker had, a few years before, directed that

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[181] *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, October 28, 1806.

"all the articles which had been presented to him by George Ellicott, consisting of his books and mathematical instruments, and the table on which he made his calculations should be returned as soon as he should die."[182] He also requested that "as an acknowledgment of a debt of gratitude for Ellicott's long-continued kindness he should be given a volume of the manuscripts containing all his almanacs, his observations on various subjects, his letter to Thomas Jefferson, and the reply of that statesman." All the rest that he possessed was left to the two sisters. It was due to the faithful execution of his wishes on the very day of his death that his valuable manuscripts were preserved at all. They were all carried to George Ellicott, and this circumstance was the first notice that Ellicott received of the passing away of his friend. "Banneker's funeral took place two days afterward, and while the ceremonies were in progress at his grave, his home took fire and burned so rapidly that nothing could be saved."[183]

Some time before his death Banneker gave to one of his sisters the feather bed on which he usually slept, and this she preserved as her only keepsake of him. Years after wards she had occasion to open the bed and, feeling something hard among the feathers, she discovered that it was a purse of money. This circumstance shows that Banneker was not "in the evening of his

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[182] Norris's *Memoir, Maryland Historical Society Publications*, II, p. 64.

[183] *Ibid.*, II, p. 73.

life overshadowed by extreme poverty."[184]

In an excellent paper read on April 18, 1916, before the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, by Mr. P. Lee Phillips, of the Library of Congress, *Banneker's Almanac* was compared with Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's* Almanac. Mr. Phillips also referred to his efforts in behalf of peace and to the friendship that existed between Banneker and such distinguished men of his time as Washington and Jefferson. He closed his article on Banneker with the broad-minded declaration that "Maryland should in some manner honor the memory of this distinguished citizen, who, notwithstanding the race prejudice of the time, rose to eminence in scientific attainments, the study of which at that early date was almost unknown."[185] The recognition of Douglass in Rochester and Boston, Pushkin in Petrograd and Moscow and Dumas in Paris, affords splendid suggestions of what we hope to see of Banneker in Baltimore. It is a sad reflection on the people of this country that practically nothing has been done to honor this distinguished man.

Henry E. Baker
Assistant Examiner, United States Patent Office.

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[184] Tyson, *Banneker*, p. 72.

[185] *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, XX, pp. 119-120.

GEORGE LIELE AND ANDREW BRYAN, PIONEER NEGRO BAPTIST PREACHERS

Without any consideration of the merits or demerits of what is called the exceptional man theory, perhaps no two men stand out more prominently in the early history of the Negro church than George Liele and Andrew Bryan. In the days of darkest forebodings and of the greatest human sufferings these two pioneers of religion went forth to disseminate ideas and mold sentiments which were to shape the inner springs of conduct of their fellow-slaves. Sketches of these heroes must claim the attention of seekers for the truth as to this important phase of our history.

A letter dated September 15, 1790, from the late Reverend Mr. Joseph Cook of Euhaw, upper Indian Land, South Carolina, says: "A poor Negro, commonly called, among his friends, Brother George,[186] has been so highly favored of God, as to plant the first Baptist Church in Savannah, and another in Jamaica." This man was George Liele. He was born in Virginia about 1751. He knew very little of his mother, Nancy, but was informed by

[186] He was sometimes called George Sharp.—See Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, etc., p. 189.[187] The facts of this article for the most part are taken from letters written about the work of Liele and Bryan and from correspondence concerning them published in London in the *Baptist Annual Register*.

white and black that his father was a very devout man. The family moved much during the youth of George, but finally settled in Georgia.

As a youth George Liele had a natural fear of God, holding constantly in mind His condemnation of sin. Liele was converted through the preaching of the Reverend Matthew Moore,[187] who later baptized him. Desiring then to prove the sense of his obligations to God, Liele began to instruct his own people. Crude but firm in purpose, he soon showed ministerial gifts and after a trial sermon before a quarterly meeting of white ministers was licensed as a local preacher. He practiced preaching on different plantations, and in the church to which he belonged, on evenings when there was no regular service. After a short period he began his regular ministerial work, serving about three years at Brunton Land, and at Yamacraw, where developed a number of useful communicants.[188]

Among these early members of the Yamacraw church were Reverend David George, who later labored, with permission from the Governor, in the ministry at Nova Scotia, with sixty communicants, white and black; Reverend Amos, who preached with good results at New Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, to about three hundred members; and Reverend Jesse Gaulsing, who preached near Augusta, in South Carolina to sixty members. Preaching later from Chapter III Saint John, and the clause

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[187] Mr. Moore was an ordained Baptist minister, of Brooke County, Georgia.

[188] The Journal of Negro History, I, p. 71.

of verse 7, "Ye must be born again," George Liele moved to repentance a more useful man, Andrew Bryan, and a noted woman named Hagar.[189] After Liele organized this influential church at Yamacraw, then a suburb of Savannah, Mr. Henry Sharp, his master, encouraged this pioneer by giving him his freedom.

Mr. Sharp was an officer in the war and died from wounds received in the King's service.[190] Soon after the death of Mr. Sharp there arose those who were dissatisfied with George's liberation. He was taken and thrown into prison, but by producing his manumission papers was released. To extricate himself from this unpleasant situation Liele became obligated to a Colonel Kirkland. At the evacuation of Savannah by the British he was partly obliged to come to Jamaica, as an indentured servant for money he owed Colonel Kirkland, who promised to be his friend in that country. Upon landing at Kingston he was upon the recommendation of the Colonel to General Campbell, the Governor of Jamaica, employed by him two years, and, on leaving the island, the governor gave Liele a certificate of his good behavior. As soon as Liele had paid his debt to Colonel Kirkland, he obtained for himself and family a certificate of freedom from the vestry and governor, according

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[189] Under the influence of his preaching Liele's wife was converted and baptized at Brunton Land.

[190] *Ibid.*, p. 336.

to the law of this Island.[191] Thus by force of circumstances George Liele was compelled to leave those among whom he had labored so effectively and thrown into another field where he had opportunity for further service.

Liele's work in Jamaica began in September, 1784. He started in Kingston by preaching in a private house to a small congregation. Next, he organized a church with four other men who had come from America. His message had a telling effect especially on the slaves. The effectiveness of his work is also seen from the fact that persecutions at baptisms and meetings which were, at first, frequent, later became a less serious hindrance. Upon frequent petitions, however, the Jamaica Assembly finally granted free worship of God to all those desiring it. So successfully did Liele work that in a short while he had in the country together with well wishers and followers about fifteen hundred communicants, to whom he preached twice on each Sunday, in the morning and afternoon, and twice in the week.[192]

The work of the church was extended by a few deacons and elders, and by teachers of small congregations in the town and country. Thomas Nichols Swigle became Liele's chief assistant. His particular work was to regulate church matters, serve as deacon, and also to teach a free school opened for the instruction of free and slave children. The work continued to spread through Swigle, who became a minister after the order of Liele. He said:

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[191] *The Baptist Annual Register*, 1790-93, p. 334.

[192] *The Journal of Negro History*, I, pp. 71-72.

"About two months ago, I paid my first visit to a part of our church held at Clinton Mount, Coffee Plantation, in the Parish of Saint Andrew, about sixteen miles distance from Kingston, in the High mountains, where we have a chapel and 254 brethren." About his work in general he said: "I preach, baptize, marry, attend funerals, and go through every work of the ministry without fee or reward."[193]

It was soon evident that there must be some definite place of worship. To this end a piece of land about three acres at the east end of Kingston was purchased for the sum of about 155 pounds and on it a church building fifty-seven by thirty-seven feet was begun. Because the congregation was poor and gifts were small, Liele had a struggle to complete his building. He interested in his cause several gentlemen of influence, among whom was a Mr. Stephen Cooke, a member of the Assembly, who in turn asked help of friends in England. By January 12, 1793, he was able to say that not only was the Kingston church completed but that in Spanish Town also he had purchased land for a cemetery with a house on it which served as a church building. The Kingston church, the first of its kind in Jamaica, under the leadership of Liele had twelve trustees, all of whom were members of the congregation, whose names were specified in the title recorded in the office of the secretary of the island.[194]

While establishing the churches at Savannah and at Jamaica,

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[193] *The Journal of Negro History*, I, p. 72.

[194] *The Baptist Annual Register*, 1790-1793, p. 335.

Liele received nothing for his services. He was on a mission and without charge preached, baptized, administered the Lord's Supper, and travelled from one place to another to settle church affairs. He did this so as not to be misunderstood and not to hinder the progress of the church of Christ. Mr. Stephen Cooke, in giving his opinion of Liele, said that he was "a very industrious man, decent and humble in his manners, and, I think, a good man." His family life was pleasant. He had a wife and four children, three boys and a girl. Liele followed farming for a regular occupation, but because of the uncertain seasons in Jamaica, kept horses and wagons for employment in local transportation for the government by contract. He was business-like and kept the good will of the public. Although busy, Liele found time to read some of the good books which he had in his meager collection and also to write letters explaining the growth of his work in Jamaica and inquiring after the progress of the church at Savannah, then pastored by Andrew Bryan.[195]

In building up the membership of his churches Liele showed great tact. Unlike the Methodists who were rapidly coming forward at this time, he would not receive any slaves who had not permission of their owners. This not only increased the membership of the church but it made friends for their cause among the masters and overseers. So careful was Liele to get the confidence of the masters and overseers that he ordered a bell for his church just a mile and a half out of Spanish Town in

[195] Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, p. 189.

Jamaica, not particularly to give warning to the slaves about the time of meeting, but to the owners of slaves that they might know the time when their slaves should return to the plantations. The church covenant, a collection of certain passages of Scripture, which was used once a month, was shown to members of the legislature, the magistrates and justices to secure their approval that they might give their slaves permission to become members of the congregation.[196]

The effect of the work of Liele is well narrated in a statement of an overseer who sat at breakfast with Swigle at Clinton Mount, sixteen miles from Kingston. He said that he did not need an assistant nor did he make use of the whip, for whether he was at home or away, everything was conducted as it should have been. The slaves were industrious, with a plenty of provision in their ground and a plenty of live stock in their barns; and they, one and all, lived together in unity, brotherly love and peace. With a mission to serve, this man then made his way into the hearts of his fellows.

Andrew Bryan, the other pioneer, was born in 1737 at Goose Creek, South Carolina, about sixteen miles from Charleston. His mother was a slave and died in the service of her master. His father, also a slave, became infirm with years, dying at the age of one hundred and five. Andrew became converted under the preaching of George Liele when the latter served the church in Savannah. Bryan married a woman named Hannah about nine

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[196] *The Baptist Annual Register*, 1798-1801, p. 368.

years after his conversion. His wife remained a slave in the service of Jonathan Bryan for a long time after her marriage, but was finally purchased by her husband.[197]

Andrew Bryan began to preach to congregations of black and a few white people at Savannah just eight or nine months after Liele's departure for Jamaica. Edward Davis encouraged Bryan and his followers to erect a building on his land in Yamacraw for a place of worship, of which they were later artfully dispossessed. In the beginning of their worship, frequent interruptions came from the whites. It was at a time when many Negro slaves had absconded, and some had been taken away by the British. This was an excuse for the wickedness of the whites, who then became more cruel in whipping and imprisoning the worshipers, undertaking to justify their action before the magistrates. When George Liele was preaching in and near Savannah, he did not suffer from such molestation, because the British then ruled the country, but Andrew Bryan began his work under different conditions about the time when Georgia became independent.

For refusing to discontinue his work Andrew Bryan was twice imprisoned. Sampson, his brother, who was converted about one year after Andrew was, remained with him, however, in all of his hard trials. On one occasion about fifty slaves were severely whipped. Among these was Andrew, who was cut and bled abundantly. While he was yet under their lashes,

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[197] *The Baptist Annual Register*, 1798-1801, p. 366.[199] Dow, *History of the Cosmopolite*, p. 124.

Hambleton says he rejoiced, not only to be scourged but would freely suffer death for the cause of Jesus Christ. Jonathan Bryan, their kind master, was much affected and grieved over their punishment and interceded for them. George Walton said "that such treatment would be condemned even among barbarians."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.