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MR. CLAY'S ADDRESS
ON AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

Delivered at Frankfort, Ky. before the Colonization Society.

The occasion of the following Address will be most readily understood by the publication of the following resolution:

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Society are due to the Hon. Henry Clay for the very able and eloquent Address delivered by him this day, and that His Excellency Thomas Metcalfe, Wm. P. Fleming, Esq. and Rev. John Bryce, be a Committee to request a copy of the same for publication.

This request Mr. Clay could not well refuse, had he been so disposed, and the following report of his Address has been published in consequence of it.

THE ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Colonization Society of Kentucky:

I most sincerely wish that the task of addressing you, on this occasion, had been assigned, by the Board of Managers, to some individual more competent than I am to explain and illustrate and enforce the claims of the Society to the friendly and favourable consideration of the public. I yield to none in a thorough persuasion of the utility of the scheme of the Society in a profound conviction of its practicability, and in an ardent desire for its complete success. But, I am sensible that there are many others who could, more happily than I can, throw around the subject those embellishments which are best calculated to secure attention, and engage the cordial and energetic co-operation of the community. When the application was first made to me to deliver this address, I hesitated to comply with it, because I apprehended that my motives would be misconceived, and my language be misrepresented. Subsequent reflection determined me to adhere to the maxim of my whole life, to endeavor to render all the good in my power, without being restrained by the misconceptions to which I might expose myself. In entering upon the duty which has devolved upon me, I ask only the exercise of ordinary liberality in judging the imperfections which will doubtless mark its performance.

In surveying the United States of North America and their Territories, the beholder perceives, among their inhabitants, three separate and distinct races of men, originally appertaining to three different continents of the globe, each race varying from the others in colour, physical properties, and moral and intellectual endowments. The European is the most numerous; and, as well from that fact, as from its far greater advance in civilization and in the arts, has the decided ascendancy over the other two, giving the law to them, controlling their condition, and responsible for their fate to the Great Father of all, and to the enlightened world. The next most numerous and most intelligent race, is that which sprung from Africa, the larger portion of which is held in bondage by their brethren descendants of the European. The aborigines, or Indian race, are the least numerous, and, with the exception of some tribes, have but partially emerged from the state of barbarism in which they were found on the first discovery of America. Whence, or how they came hither, are speculations for the research of the curious, on which authentic history affords no certain light.

Their future fortunes, or condition, form no part of the subject of this address. I shall, I hope, nevertheless, be excused for the digression of dedicating a few passing observations of the interesting remnant of these primitive possessors of the new world. I have never been able to agree in the expediency of employing any extraordinary exertions to blend the white and copper colored races together by the ceremony of marriage. There would be a motive for it if the Indians were equal or superior to their white brethern, in physical or intellectual powers. But the fact is believed to be otherwise. The mixture improves the Indian, but deteriorates the European element. Invariably, it is remarked that those of the mixed blood, among the Indians, are their superiors in war, in council, and in the progress of the useful arts, whilst they remain in the rear of the pure white race still farther than they are in advance of the pure Indian. In those instances, (chiefly among the French) during the progress of the settlement of this continent, in which the settlers have had most intercourse with the Indians, they have rather sunk to the level of their state, than contributed essentially to their civilization.

But if there be no adequate recommendation to the white race, of an union by intermarriage, with the Indian, we are enjoined by every duty of religion, humanity, and magnanimity, to treat them with kindness and justice, and to recall them, if we can, from their savage to a better condition. The United States stand charged with the fate of these poor children of the woods in the face of their common Maker, and in presence of the world. And, as certain as the guardian is answerable for the education of his infant ward, and the management of his estate, will they be responsible here and hereafter, for the manner in which they shall perform the duties of the high trust which is committed to their hands by the force of circumstances. Hitherto, since the United States became an Independent power among the nations of the earth, they have generally treated the Indians with justice, and performed towards them all the offices of humanity. Their policy, in this respect was vindicated during the negociations at Ghent, and the principles which guided them in their relations with the Indians, were then promulgated to all Christendom. On that occasion, their representatives holding up their conduct in advantageous contrast with that of Great Britain, and the other powers of Europe, said: 'From the rigor of this system, however, as practised by Great Britain and all the European powers in America, the humane and liberal policy of the United States has voluntarily relaxed.' A celebrated writer on the laws of nations, to whose authority British jurists have taken particular satisfaction in appealing, after stating, in the most explicit manner, the legitimacy of colonial settlements in America, to the exclusion of all rights of uncivilized Indian tribes, has taken occasion to praise the first settlers of New England, and the founder of Pennsylvania, in having purchased of the Indians the lands they resolved to cultivate, notwithstanding their being provided with a charter from their sovereign. It is this example which the United States, since they became by their independence, the sovereigns of the territory, have adopted and organized into a 'political system.'

Under that system, the Indians residing within the United States are 'so far independent,' that they live under 'their own customs and not under the laws of the United States;' that their rights upon the lands where they inhabit or hunt, are secured to them by boundaries defined in amicable treaties between the United States and themselves; and that whenever those boundaries are varied, it is also by amicable and voluntary treaties, by which they receive from the U. States ample compensation for every right they have to the land ceded by them — They are so far dependent as not to have the right to dispose of their lands to any private person, nor to any power other than the United States, and to be under their protection alone, and not under that of any other power. Whether called subjects, or by whatever name designated, such is the relation between them and the United States. That relation is neither asserted now for the first time, nor did it originate with the treaty of Greenville. These principles have been uniformly recognized by the Indians themselves, not only by that treaty, but in 'all the other previous as well as the subsequent treaties' between them and the United States.' Such was the solemn annunciation to the whole world; of the principles and of the system, regulating our relations with the Indians, as admitted by us and recognized by them. There can be no violation of either, to the disadvantage of the weaker party, which will not subject us, as a nation, to the just reproaches of all good men, and which may not bring down upon us the maledictions of a more exalted and powerful tribunal.

Whether the Indian portion of the inhabitants of the United States will survive, or become extinct, in the progress of population which the European race is rapidly making from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific ocean, 'provided they are treated with justice and humanity,' is a problem of less importance. The two races are not promiscuously mingled together, but are generally separate and distinct communities. There is no danger to the whites or to their purity, from the power or from the vices of the Indians. The case is widely different with those who form the immediate object of this address.

The African part of our population, or their ancestors, were brought hither forcibly and by violence, in the prosecution of the most abominable traffic that ever disgraced the annals of the human race. They were chiefly procured in their native country, as captives in war, taken, and subsequently sold by the conqueror as slaves to the slave trader. Sometimes the most atrocious practices of kidnapping were employed to obtain possession of the victims. Wars were frequent between numerous and barbarous neighboring tribes scattered along the coasts or stretched upon the margin of large rivers of Africa. These wars were often enkindled and prosecuted for no other object than to obtain a supply of subjects for this most shocking commerce. In these modes, husbands were torn from their wives, parents from their children, brethren from each other, and every tie cherished and respected among men was violated. Upon the arrival, at the African coast of the unfortunate beings thus reduced to slavery, they were embarked on board of ships carefully constructed and arranged to contain the greatest amount of human beings.—Here they were ironed and fastened in parallel rows, and crowded together so closely, in loathsome holds, as not to have room for action or for breathing wholesome air.

The great aim was to transport the largest possible number, at the least possible charge, from their native land to the markets for which they were destined. The greediness of cupidity was frequently disappointed and punished in its purposes, by the loss of moieties of whole cargoes of the subjects of this infamous commerce, from want and suffering and disease on the voyage. How much happier were they who thus expired than their miserable survivors!

These African slaves were brought to the continent of America, and the Islands adjacent to it, and formed the parent stock of the race now amongst us They were brought to the Colonies now constituting the U. States, under the sanction, and by the authority of the British laws, which at an early period of our colonial existence, admitted and tolerated the trade. It is due to our colonial ancestors, to say, that they frequently and earnestly, but unsuccessfully remonstrated to the British Crown against the continuance of the practice. The introduction of slavery into this country is not, therefore, chargeable to them, but to a Government in which they had no voice, and over which they had no control. It is equally due to our parent State to advert to the honorable fact, that in the midst of the Revolutionary war, when contending for her own independence and liberty, she evinced the sincerity of the spirit, in which those remonstrances had been addressed to the British throne, by denouncing, under the severest penalties, the further prosecutoin of the slave trade, within her jurisdiction. And I add, with great satisfaction, that the Congress of the U. States, passed an act, abolishing the trade as early as by their constitution it was authorised to do. On the second day of March, 1807, the act was passed, for which it was my happy lot to vote, the first section of which enacts, 'That from and after the first day of January, 1808, it shall not be lawful to import or bring into the United States, or the territories thereof, from any foreign kingdom, place, or country, any negro, mulatto, or person of color, with intent to hold sell or dispose of such negro, mulatto, or person of color, as a slave, or to be held to service or labor.' Thus terminated, we hope forever, in the U. S. a disgraceful traffic, which drew after it a train of enormities surpassing in magnitude, darkness, and duration, any that ever sprang from any trade pushed by the enterprise or cupidity of man.

The United States, as a nation, are not responsible for the original introduction, or the subsequent continuance of the slave trade. Whenever, as has often happened, their character has been assailed, in foreign countries and by foreign writers, on account of the institution of slavery among us, the justness of that vindication has been admitted by the candid, which transfers to a foreign government the origin of the evil. Nor are the U. States, as a sovereign power, responsible for the continuance of slavery within their limits, posterior to the establishment of their Independence; because by neither the articles of confederation, nor by the present constitution, had they power to put an end to it by the adoption of any system of emancipation. But from that epoch the responsibility of the several states in which slavery was tolerated, commenced, and on them devolved the momentous duty of considering whether the evil of African slavery is incurable, or admits of a safe and practical remedy.

In performing it, they ought to reflect that if when a given remedy is presented to their acceptance, instead of a due examination and deliberate consideration of it, they promptly reject it, and manifest an impatience whenever a suggestion is made of any plan to remove the evil, they will expose themselves to the reproach of yielding to the allusions of self-interest, and of insincerity in the professions which they so often make of a desire to get rid of slavery. It is a great misfortune, growing out of the actual condition of the several states, some being exempt and others liable to this evil, that they are too prone to misinterpret the views and wishes of each other in respect to it. The North and the South and West, when they understand each other well, must be each convinced, that no other desire is entertained towards the others by any one of them, than for their welfare and prosperity. If the question were submitted whether there should be either immediate or gradual emancipation of all the slaves in the U States, without their removal or colonization, painful as it is to express the opinion, I have no doubt that it would be unwise to emancipate them. For, I believe, that the aggregate of the evils which would be engendered in society upon the supposition of such general amancipation, and of the liberated slaves remaining promiscuously among us, would be greater than all the evils of slavery, great as they unquestionably are.

The several States of the Union were sensible of the responsibility which accrued to them on the establishment of the Independence of the United States, in regard to the subject of slavery. And many of them beginning at a period prior to the termination of the revolutionary war, by successive but distinct acts of legislation, have effectively provided for the abolition of slavery within their respective jurisdictions. More than thirty years ago an attempt was made in this commonwealth to adopt a system of gradual emancipation, similar to that which the illustrious Franklin had mainly contributed to introduce in the year 1779, in the State founded by the benevolent Penn. And, among the acts of my life, which I look back to with most satisfaction, is that of my having co-operated, with other zealous and intelligent friends, to procure the establishment of that system in this State. We believed that the sum of good which would have been attained by the State of Kentucky, in a gradual emancipation of her slaves, at that period, would have far transcended the aggregate of the mischief which might have resulted to herself and the Union together, from the gradual liberation of them, and their dispersion and residence in the United States. We were overpowered by numbers, but submitted to the decision of the majority with the grace which the minority, in a republic, should ever yield to such a decision. I have nevertheless, never ceased, and never shall cease, to regret a decision, the effects of which have been to place us in the rear of our neighbors who are exempt from slavery, in the state of agriculture, the progress of manufactures, the advance of improvement, and the general prosperity of society.

Other states, in which slavery exists, have not been unmindful of its evils nor indifferent to an adequate remedy for their removal. But most of them have hitherto reluctantly acquiesced in the continuance of these evils, because they thought they saw no practical scheme for their removal, which was free from insuperable objection and difficulty. Is there then really no *such* remedy? Must we endure perpetually all the undoubted mischiefs of the state of slavery, as it affects both the free and bond portions of the population of these States? Already the slaves may be estimated at two millions, and the free population at ten, the former being in the proportion of one to five of the latter. Their respective numbers will probably duplicate in periods of thirty-three years. In the year '63 the number of the whites will probably be twenty, and of the blacks four millions; in in ninety-six, forty and eight, and in the year 1829, about a century, eighty and sixteen millions. What mind is sufficiently extensive in its reach, what nerves sufficiently strong, to contemplate this vast and progressive augmentation, without an awful foreboding of the tremendous consequences? If the two descriptions of population were equally spread and intermingled over the whole surface of the United States, their diffusion might diminish the danger of their action and corrupting influence upon each other. But this is not the state of the fact. The slaves of the U. States are chiefly restricted to one quarter of the Union, which may be described with sufficient general accuracy, by a boundary beginning with the mouth of the Potomac river, extending to its head, thence to the Ohio river and down it and the Mississippi to the Gulph of Mexico, and with that and the Atlantic Ocean, and the Bay of Chesapeake to the beginning. Maryland, Delaware, Missouri, a part of Louisiana, and Arkansas, compose the whole of the residue of the slave district of the United States. Within those limits all our slaves are concentrated, and, within a portion of them, irresistible causes tend inevitably to their further concentration. In one of the States comprised within these limits, the slave stock had at the last census, the superiority in numbers, whilst in several others the enumeration exhibits the two races in nearly equal proportions.

Time alone, which unveils every thing permitted men to see, can disclose the consequences, now wrapt in futurity, of the state of things which I have slightly touched. But without violating his prerogative, we may venture to catch, in anticipation, a glimpse of some of them.

The humanity of the slave States of the Union has prompted them greatly to meliorate the condition of slaves. They are protected in all instances by just law, from injury ending to their lives, and in many, from cruelty applied to their persons. Public opinion has done even more than the laws in elevating their condition in the scale of human existence. In this State as well as in others they are treated with much kindness, and abundantly supplied with substantial food of meat and bread and vegetables, and comfortable clothing, whilst they are moderately tasked in labor. But still they are subject to many civil disabilities, and there is a vast space between them and the race of freemen. Our laws continue to regard them as property, and consequently as instruments of labor, bound to obey the mandate of others. As a mere labourer, the slave feels that he toils for his master and not himself; that the laws do not recognize his capacity to acquire and hold property, which depends altogether upon the pleasure of his proprietor: and that all the fruits of his exertions are reaped by others. He knows that whether sick or well, in times of scarcity or abundance, his master is bound to provide for him by the all powerful influence of the motive of self interest. He is generally therefore, indifferent to the adverse or prosperous fortunes of his master, being contented, if he can escape his displeasure or chastisement, by a careless and slovenly performance of his duties.

This is the state of the relation of master and slave, prescribed by the law of its nature and founded in the reason of things. There are undoubtedly many exceptions, in which the slave dedicates himself to his master with a zealous and generous devotion, and the master to the slave with a parental and affectionate attachment. But it is not my purpose to speak of those particular though endearing instances of mutual regard, but of the general state of the unfortunate relation.

That labour is best, if it can be commanded, in which the laborer knows that he will derive the profits of his industry, that his employment depends upon his diligence, and his reward upon his assiduity. He has then every motive to excite him to exertion and to animate him in perseverance. He knows that if he is treated badly he can exchange his employer for one who will better estimate his service, that he does not entirely depend upon another's beck and nod, and that whatever he earns is *his*, to be distributed by himself as he pleases, among his wife and children and friends, or enjoyed by himself. He feels in a word, that he is a free agent, with rights and privileges and sensibilities.

Wherever the option exists to employ, at an equal hire, free or slave labor, the former will be decidedly preferred, for the reasons already assigned. It is more capable, more diligent, more faithful, and, in every respect, worthy of more confidence. In the first settlement of some countries, or communities, capital may be unable to command the free labor which it wants, and it may therefore purchase that of slaves. Such was and yet is the condition of many parts of the U. States. But there are others, and they are annually increasing in extent, in which the labor of freemen can be commanded at a rate quite as cheap as that of slaves in States which tolerate slavery.

Although in particular States, or parts of States, the increase of the African portion of population would seem to be greater than that of the European stock, this fact is believed to be susceptible of an explanation, from the operation of causes of emigration, which would not assign to it greater prolific powers. On the contrary, all the enumerations of the people of the United States sustain clearly the position that contrasting the whole European race throughout the Union with the whole of the African race, bond and free, also throughout the Union, the former multiplies faster than the latter. As time elapses, our numbers will augment, our deserts become peopled and our country will become as densely populated as its agricultural, manufacturing and commercial faculties will admit. In proportion to the density of population are the supply and the wages of labor. The demand for labor also increases with the augmentation of numbers, though probably not in the same proportion. Assuming our present population at twelve millions, when it shall be increased, as in about thirty years it will be to twenty-four millions, we shall have double the amount of available labor that we can command at present. And there will consequently be a great though probably not proportionate reduction, in the wages of labor. As the supply of laborers increases, a competition will arise between, not only individuals, but classes for employment. The superior qualities which have been attributed to free labor will ensure for that the preference, wherever the alternative is presented of engaging free or slave labor, at an equal price. This competition and the preference for white labour are believed to be already discernible in parts of Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky, and probably existed in Pennsylvania and other states north of Maryland, pryor to the disappearance of slaves from among them. The march of the ascendency of free labor over slaves will proceed from the North to the South, gradually entering first the States nearest to the free region. Its progress would be more rapid, if it were not impeded by the check resulting from the repugnance of the white man to work among slaves, or where slavery is tolerated.

In proportion to the multiplication of the desendants of the European stock, and the consequent diminution of the value of slave labour, by the general diminution of wages, will there be an abatement in the force of motives to rear slaves, The master will not find an adequate indemnity in the price of the adult for the charges of maintaining and bringing up the offspring. His care and attention will relax and he will be indifferent about incuring expenses, when they are sick and in providing for their general comfort, when he knows that he will not be ultimately compensated. There may not be numerous instances of positive violation of the duties of humanity, but every one knows the difference between a negligence which is not criminal, and a watchful vigilance stimulated by interest, which allows no want to be unsupplied. The effect of this relaxed attention to the offspring will be to reduce the rates of general increase of the slave portion of our population; whilst that of the other race, not subject to the same neglect, will increase and fill up the void. A still greater effect, from the diminution of the value of labour, will be that of voluntary emancipation; the master being now anxious to relieve himself from a burthen, without profit, by renouncing his right of property One or two facts will illustrate some of these principles. Prior to the annexation of Louisiana to the United States, the supply of slaves from Africa was abundant. The price of adults was generally about $100, a price less than the cost of raising an infant. Then it was believed that the climate of that province was unfavourable to the rearing of negro children, and comparatively few were raised. After the United States abolished the slave trade the price of adults rose very considerably, greater attention was consequently bestowed on their children, and now no where is the African female more prolific than she is in Louisiana, and the climate of no one of the Southern States is supposed to be more favourable to rearing the offspring. The serfs of Russia possess a market value inferior to that of the African slaves of the United States, and although the lord is not believed to be bound to provide for the support of his dependant as the American master is for his slave, voluntary manumissions of the sort are very frequent, influenced in some degree no doubt by his inconsiderable value.

What has tended to sustain the price of slaves in the U. States has been, that very fact of the acquisition of Louisiana, but especially the increasing demand for cotton, and the consequent increase of its cultivation. The price of cotton, a much more extensive object of culture than sugar cane, regulates the price of slaves as unerringly as any one subject whatever is regulated by any standard. As it rises in price, they rise; as it falls they fall. But the multiplication of slaves, by natural causes, must soon be much greater than the increase of the demand for them, to say nothing of the progressive decline which has taken place, in that great Southern staple, within a few years, and which there is no reason to believe will be permanently arrested. Whenever the demand for the cultivation of sugar and cotton comes to be fully supplied, the price of slaves will begin to decline, and as that demand cannot possibly keep pace with the supply, the price will decline more and more. Farming agriculture cannot sustain it; for it is believed, that no where in the farming portion of the United States would slave labor be generally employed, if the proprietor were not tempted to raise slaves by the high price of the Southern market which keeps it up in his own.

Partial causes may retard the decline in the value of slaves. The tendency of slaves is to crowd into those countries or districts, if not obstructed by the policy of States, where their labor is most profitably employed. This is the law of their nature, as it is the general law of all capital and labor. The slave trade has not yet been effectively stopped in the Island of Cuba. Whenever it is, as slaves can be there more profitably employed, on more valuable products than in the United States, and as the supply there is much below the demand which will arise out of the susceptibilities of the island for agricultural produce, they will rise in price much higher there than in the United States.—If the laws do not forbid it, vast numbers will be exported to that island And if they do prohibit it, many will be smuggled in, tempted by the high prices which they will bear.

But neither this, nor any other conceivable cause, can for any length of time, check the fall in the value of slaves to which they are inevitably destined. We have seen that as slaves diminish in price, the motive of the proprietors of them to rear the offspring of them will abate, that consequent neglect in providing for their wants will ensue, and consequent voluntary emancipation will take place. That adult slaves will in process of time, sink in value, even below a hundred dollars each, I have not a doubt. This result may not be brought about by the termination of the first period of their duplication, but that it will come, at some subsequent, and not distant period, I think perfectly clear. Whenever the price of the adult shall be less than the cost of raising him from infancy, what inducement will the proprietor of the parent have to incur that expense? In such a state of things, it will be in vain that the laws prohibit manumission. No laws can be enforced, or will be respected, the effect of which is the ruin of those on whom they operate. In spite of all their penalties, the liberation or abandonment of slaves will take place.

As the two races progressively multiply and augment the source of supply of labour, its wages will diminish, and the preference already noticed will be given of free slave labor. But another effect will also arise. There will be not only a competition between the two races for employment, but a struggle, not perceptible perhaps to the superficial observer, for subsistence. In such a struggle the stronger and more powerful race will prevail. And as the law which regulates the state of population in any given community, is derived from the quantity of its subsistence, the further consequence would be an insensible decline in the increase of the weaker race. Pinched by want and neglected by their masters, who would regard them as a burthen, they would be stimulated to the commission of crimes, and especially those of a petty description.

When we consider the cruelty of the origin of negro slavery, its nature, the character of the free institutions of the whites; and the irresistible progress of public opinion, throughout America as well as in Europe, it is impossible not to anticipate frequent resurrections among the blacks in the United States. They are rational beings like ourselves, capable of feeling, of reflection, and of judging of what naturally belongs to them as a portion of the human race. By the very condition of the relation which subsists between us, we are enemies of each other. They know well the wrongs which their ancestors suffered, at the hands of our ancestors, and the wrongs which they believe they continue to edure, although they may be unable to avenge them. They are kept in subjection only by the superior intelligence and superior power of the predominant race. Their brethren have been liberated in every part of the continent of America, except in the United States and the Brazils. I have just seen an act of the President of the Republic of the United Mexican States, dated no longer ago than the 15th of September last, by which the whole of them in that Republic have been emancipated.

A great effort is now making in Great Britian, which tends to the same ultimate effect, in regard to the negro slaves of the British West Indies.

Happily for us no such insurrection can ever be attended with permanent success as long as our Union endures. It would be speedily suppressed by the all powerful means of the United States, and it would be the madness of despair in the blacks that should attempt it. But if attempted in some parts of the United States, what shocking scenes of carnage, repine, and lawless violence might not be perpetrated before the arrival at the theatre of action of a competent force to quell it? And, after it was put down, what other scenes of military rigor and bloody executions, would not be indispensably necessary to punish the insurgents, and impress their whole race with the influence of a terrible example?

Of all the descriptions of our population, and of either portion of the African race, the free

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