mentions the suspicions and revengeful feelings of the natives, occasioned by seizing them for slaves, as a cause of the danger. He, too, witnessed human sacrifices.

Such was the character of what is now Liberia, after 268 years of intercourse with slave traders and pirates.

Meanwhile, nations were treating with each other for the extension of the slave trade. The Genoese at first had the privilege of furnishing the Spanish Colonies with negro slaves. The French next obtained it, and kept it till, according to Spanish official returns, it had yielded them $204,000,000. In 1713, the British government, by the famous Assiento treaty, secured it for the South Sea Company for thirty years. In 1739, Spain was desirous to take the business into her own hands, and England sold out the remaining four years for £100,000, to be paid in London in three months.*

From this time to 1791, when the British Parliament began to collect testimony concerning the slave trade, there seems to have been no important change in the influences operating on the coast, or in the character of its inhabitants. The collection and publication of testimony was continued till the passage, in 1807, of the act abolishing the trade. From this testimony, it appeared that nearly all the masters of English ships engaged in that trade, were of the most abandoned character, none too good to be pirates. Their cruelty to their own men was so excessive and so notorious, that crews could never be obtained without great difficulty, and seldom without fraud. Exciting the native tribes to make war on each other for the purpose of obtaining slaves, was a common practice. The Windward Coast, especially, was fast becoming depopulated. The Bassa country, and that on the Mesurado and Junk rivers, were particularly mentioned, as regions which had suffered in these wars; where the witnesses had seen the ruins of villages, lately surprised and burned in the night, and rice fields unharvested, because their owners had been seized and sold. On other parts of the coast, the slaves were collected and kept for embarkation in factories; but on the Windward Coast, "every tree was a factory;" and when the negroes had any thing to sell, they signified it by kindling a fire. Here, also, was the principal scene of "panyaring;" that is, of enticing a negro into a canoe, or other defenceless situation, and then seizing him. The extent of this practice may be inferred from the fact, that it had a name, by which it was universally known. A negro was hired to panyar a fine girl, whom an English captain desired to possess. A few days after, he was panyared himself, and sold to the same captain. "What!" he exclaimed,—"buy me, a great trader?" "Yes," was the reply,—"we will buy any of you, if any body will sell you." It was given in evidence, that business could not be transacted, if the buyer were to inquire into the title of those from whom he bought. Piracy, too, added its horrors whenever the state of the world permitted, and, as we shall have occasion to show, was rampant when Liberia was founded.

Factories, however, were gradually re-established and fortified; but not till the slave trade had nearly depopulated the coast, and thus diminished the danger. Two British subjects, Bostock and McQuinn, had one at Cape Mesurado. In June, 1813, His Majesty's ship Thais sent forty men on shore, who, after a battle in which one of their number was killed, entered the factory and captured its owners. French, and especially Spanish factories had become numerous.

*Rees' Cyclopedia, Art. Assiento. The statement may be slightly inaccurate. The treaty, or "convention" with Spain in 1739, stipulated for the payment of £95,000, and the settlement of certain other claims, the amount of which was still to be ascertained.

A large proportion, both of the slave ships and factories, were piratical. By the laws of several nations, the trade was prohibited, and ships engaged in it liable to capture. They therefore prepared to defend themselves. The general peace which followed the downfall of Napoleon, left many privateers and their crews out of employment, and they engaged at once in piracy and the slave trade. In 1818, Lord Castlereagh communicated to the ambassadors of the leading powers of Europe, a list of eighteen armed slavers lately on the coast, of five vessels taken and destroyed by them, and of several battles with others; and these were mentioned only as specimens.

The natives, notwithstanding the evils which the slave trade inflicted upon them, were infatuated with it. In 1821, the agents of the Colonization Society attempted to purchase a tract for their first settlement at Grand Bassa. The only obstacle was, the refusal of the people to make any concession towards an abandonment of that traffic. In December of that year, a contract with that indispensable condition was made for Cape Mesurado. The first colonists took possession, January 7, 1822. In November of the same year, and again in December, the natives attacked the Colony in great numbers, and with an obstinate determination to exterminate the settlers and renew the trade at that accustomed spot. In April and May, 1823, Mr. Ashmun, governor of the Colony, went on business along the coast about 150 miles, to Settra Kroo. "One century ago," he remarks, "a great part of this line of coast was populous, cleared of trees, and under cultivation. It is now covered with a dense and almost continuous forest. This is almost wholly a second growth; commonly distinguished from the original by the profusion of brambles and brushwood, which abounds amongst the larger trees, and renders the woods entirely impervious, even to the natives, until paths are opened by the bill-hook."

In May, 1825, Mr. Ashmun purchased for the colony a fine tract on the St. Paul's. Of this he says: "Along this beautiful river were formerly scattered, in Africa's better days, innumerable native hamlets; and till within the last twenty years, nearly the whole river board, for one or two miles back, was under that slight culture which obtains among the natives of this country. But the population has been wasted by the rage for trading in slaves, with which the constant presence of slaving vessels and the introduction of foreign luxuries have inspired them. The south bank of this river, and all the intervening country between it and the Mesurado, have been from this cause nearly desolated of inhabitants. A few detached and solitary plantations, scattered at long intervals through the tract, just serve to interrupt the silence and relieve the gloom which reigns over the whole region."

The moral desolation, he found to be still more complete. He writes:—"The two slaving stations of Cape Mount and Cape Mesurado have, for several ages, desolated of every thing valuable, the intervening very fertile and beautiful tract of country. The forests have remained untouched, all moral virtue has been extinguished in the people, and their industry annihilated, by this one ruinous cause." "Polygamy and domestic slavery, it is well known, are as universal as the scanty means of the people will permit. And a licentiousness of practice which none—not the worst part of any civilized community on earth—can parallel, gives a hellish consummation to the frightful deformity imparted by sin to the moral aspect of these tribes." "The emigrants, from the hour of their arrival in Africa, are acted upon by the vitiating example of the natives of this country. The amount and effects of this influence, I fear, are generally and egregiously underrated. It is not known to every one, how little difference can be perceived

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)--May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

1845