Colonization concerns itself with the free alone. Their condition has long been appreciated. As early as 1788, "Brissot, hight de Warville, friend of the blacks," as Carlyle calls him, travelling in this country, says of them, that "deprived of the hope of rising to places of honor or trust, they seem condemned to drag out their days in a state of servility.* Finley dwelt on their "increasing numbers and increasing wretchedness," in 1815.† The Society's first memorial to Congress, in 1817, signed by its great and good President, Judge Washington, refers to their condition as "low and hopeless." It was worse than it had been; for La Fayette, when here in 1824, is reported to have remarked upon its deterioration as compared with what it was at the Revolution. That it was universally recognized as bad, and that the hope of improving it was a leading motive with the earlier Colonizationists, in 1816, is unquestionable.

And yet, in 1816, and for years afterwards, the days were halcyon days, comparatively, for the free people of color. No strife with the whites for employment then. There was work for all. No feeling of antagonism between the races. The foreign immigration immaterial, to the colored man's great relief. Certain kinds of labor his, by prescription. In competition with the whites, he most frequently the favored one.

Societies to protect him from imposition, every where. Affections born at the breasts of slave nurses, fostered when playing with slave children, still lingered around the race made free.

But what is their condition now? In individual cases, the free man of color is wondrously improved. Better educated is he; more refined; with appreciative tastes, an elevated ambition, comfortable means, wealth, often. It would seem, indeed, that while Liberia was being built up, the race that were to rule it had been vindicating, in anticipation, their capacity to conduct affairs with intelligence and success. And yet, the condition of the free colored population, as a class, is inferior, far, to what it was in 1816.

They have been the victims of riots in more than one Northern and Western City. Excluded from many an accustomed calling, practically if not legally, in New York; no longer stevedores, caulkers or coal heavers in Baltimore, or firemen on the South Western waters, or levee laborers in New Orleans; crowded out of employment in the great hotels; disappearing as domestics in private families, they find, by sad experience,

*The entire passage is as follows. Brissot is speaking of Dr. Thornton. "This ardent friend of the blacks, says he, is persuaded, that we cannot hope to see a sincere union between them and the whites, as long as they differ so much in color and in their rights as citizens. He attributes to no other cause the apathy perceivable in many blacks, even in Massachusetts where they are free. Deprived of the hope of electing or being elected, or of rising to places of honor and trust, the negroes seemed condemned to drag out their days in a state of servility, or to languish in shops of retail. The whites reproach them with a want of cleanliness, indolence and inattention. But how can they be industrious and active, while an insurmountable barrier separates them from other citizens?"—*Brissot's Travels, in Mavor's Compilation of Voyages and Travels, vol.* 19, *pp.* 260, 261.

†The following extract from a letter from Mr. Finley to Mr. John P. Mumford of New York, affords the earliest evidence we have of his views in regard to Colonization.

DEAR SIR, BASKING RIDGE, *Feb.* 14, 1815.

The longer I live to see the wretchedness of man, the more I admire the nature of those, who desire, and with patience, labor to execute plans for the relief of the wretched. On this subject, the state of the *free blacks*, has very much occupied my mind. Their number increases greatly and their wretchedness too, as appears to me. Everything connected with their condition, including their color, is against them; nor is there much prospect that their state can ever greatly be meliorated while they remain among us. *Could not the rich and benevolent devise means to form a colony on some part of the Coast of Africa, similar to the one at Sierra Leone, which might gradually induce many free blacks to go and settle, devising for them the means of getting there, and of protection and support till hey were established,* &c.—African Repository, vol. 1, p. 2.

how irresistible is a white competition in a strife for bread. Legislation, too, has been invoked to straighten their condition. To prevent their increase, emancipations have been prohibited. Strenuous and continuous efforts, made under favorable circumstances, to put them on a footing of social equality with the whites, have resulted only in increasing public prejudice.* Courts of justice have recognized the existence of this feeling,† and even in those States, which boast peculiar sympathies in their behalf, the distinction of caste pervades practically, so far as they are concerned, the entire community, both socially and politically.

And why should all this be? Why, at least, have the free colored people not been permitted to maintain the kindlier relations, indifferent as they were, of half a century ago? Personally, they have not deteriorated in the interval. They voted in Maryland up to 1809; and the popular almanac, at the beginning of the present century, in the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, was the work of Benjamin Banneker, an individual of unmixed African descent. Why then the change in question?

There is but one cause to which it can be attributed,—the increase of our aggregate population. The two races are coming, day by day, into closer contract. Collisions, of old unknown, are beginning to occur between the masses of the respective populations. The old story of the Spaniard and the Moor is being re-enacted in our midst. We are but illustrating the law that invariably prevails, where two races that cannot amalgamate by intermarriage occupy the same land.

"This it is, and nothing more."

In the State of Maryland, for example, there is already a redundant free colored population, amounting to thirteen per cent. of the aggregate! In Pennsylvania, the proportion is but two and three-tenths per cent. In Massachusetts, less than one per cent. In Connecticut, less than two per cent. In Ohio, one and three-tenths per cent. In New York, one and six-tenths per cent. There are more free people of color in the slave State of Maryland than in the great free States of Ohio and New York put together.‡ To Maryland, therefore, rather than to any other State, may we look for the consequences of that increase in the aggregate of population, to which we have attributed the change for the worse, which, in fifty years, has taken place in the condition of the free people of color.

And what is the experience of Maryland? Of Maryland, whose kindness, practically, to the class in question, is to be inferred from the crowd that has collected within her borders. Of Maryland—which has expended more than a quarter of a million in promoting Colonization, and

*A resolution, introduced in the Board of Education of Newark, N. J., to grant the colored population the same privileges and benefits in the public schools as the whites enjoy, was, after a warm discussion, negatived by a vote of 12 to 5.—*Colonization Herald, Philadelphia, March*, 1859.

†In the case of McCrea (colored) *vs.* Marsh, lessee of the Howard Athenæum, Boston, the Supreme Court, on the 4th inst. sustained the verdict for the Defendant. The Plaintiff, in face of the regulation excluding colored people, purchased a ticket for the "dress circle," and when he was refused admission at the entrance he attempted to crowd in, and was put out of the building, no more force having been used than was necessary to eject him from the premises.—*Colonization Herald, March*, 1859.

‡Extract from Table XII. of the Census of 1850.—*Quarto Edition, page xxxiii.*

	White	Free Colored.	Slaves.	Total.
Maryland,	417,943	74,723	90,368	583,034
Pennsylvania,	2,258,160	53,626	——	2,311,786
Massachusetts,	985,450	9,064	——	994,514
Connecticut,	363,099	7,693	——	370,792
Ohio,	1,955,050	25,279	——	1,980,329
New York,	3,048,325	49,669	——	3,097,394

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

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

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