

bleeding humanity—the destruction of villages and of rapine and murder.

It was after this fashion that M. Chevalier proceeded to collect his ~~free~~ laborers. It may be asked where was the French Marine Officer at the times; this outrageous wrong and injustice were being perpetrated? He was on board M. Chevalier's ship, and if any part of his time was spent on the deck of that vessel, he must have known that the poor Africans were carried on board strongly secured with cords, and that their fearful countenances bespoke every thing but satisfaction.

It is left to the humane and christian world to review and make up a verdict upon the character of this conscientious French Officer. M. Chavalier as before intimated did not return to Monrovia, and consequently complied with none of the requisitions of the law, but immediately after filling his vessel with a dissatisfied, oppressed and enslaved number of poor unfortunate inoffensive natives, left the coast.

From all parts between Monrovia and Cape Palmas, complaints poured in to the Government of the wrongs and injustices of Mr. Chevalier, and the natives of the country looked and expected protection from the laws of Liberia.

Under these circumstances—so painful and revolting to the feelings of the people of Liberia, the Government issued a Proclamation, copy of which here follows, as the only course then to pursue, that presented a possibility of preventing a repetition of the wrongs of M. Chevalier.

“PROCLAMATION.”

“Whereas Mr. Chevalier, in behalf of His Imperial Majesty,”  
 “Government of France has recently come to this coast for the”  
 “ostensible purpose of procuring Labourers for French Guyana,”  
 “by offering, as inducements, the sum of seven French Dollars,”  
 “to each Labourer that will emigrate in his ships, a promise of”  
 “kind treatment, and a free passage back to his original home,”  
 “which inducements have created considerable dissatisfaction”  
 “and disquietude among the natives tribes along the coast, where”  
 “the majority of said labourers so emigrating are taken, giving rise”  
 “to multifarious complaints which have been presented to this”  
 “Government, and which have awakened on its part no ordinary”  
 “concern and interest; and whereas this Government is desirous”  
 “of maintaining inviolate its principles of law and justice, of pro-”  
 “tecting the rights of its citizens and promoting in every possible”  
 “manner their interest, peace and tranquility; Therefore—”  
 “Be it known to all whom it may concern that ‘masters of’  
 “vessels are prohibited from taking on board or giving passage to”  
 “any individual residing within this Republic without a passport.”

“from the Secretary of State, unless to be landed within this”  
 “Republic, under a penalty of not less than one hundred dollars”  
 “nor more than five hundred dollars; and that vessels car-”  
 “rying or intending to carry away emigrants must come to”  
 “this port with their emigrants on board to obtain passports, in”  
 “order that an opportunity may be afforded this Government of”  
 “ascertaining whether the emigration be free or constrained.”  
 “All violations of the above law regulating passports will be”  
 “visited with the utmost penalty thereunto annexed.”

“Done at Monrovia this twenty fourth”

“day of May, in the year of our Lord,”

[L. S.] “One Thousand Eight Hundred and fif-”

“ty six and of the Republic the Ninth.”

[Signed] STEPHEN A. BENSON.

By the President,

[Signed] D. B. WARNER.

Secretary of State.

After M. Chevalier's departure from the Coast, time and opportunity were afforded to ascertain the precise condition of matters among the aborigines of the country, after the excitement among them, growing out of the kidnapping measures of the chiefs to supply his demand for laborers. The excitement apparently, had in a measure, subsided. The natives had received assurances from the Government, that steps would be taken to prevent a repetition of the deplorable scenes they had passed through. Tho' their minds became somewhat relieved, they were still suspicious of each other. They looked for the villages they had lived in—searched for the missing portions of their families who had fled to the Liberian settlements, or been carried off by M. Chevalier—their property squandered—indeed destruction had come upon them, and they feared every one, and every man's hand was raised to strike his neighbor. Repeated assurances of the Government of Liberia, somewhat gave confidence to them, and their attention was turned to their ordinary avocations. But for the ready interest and interference of the Liberian authorities, the countries of New Cesters and Trade town would have become theaters of the most deadly strife; which it would have required an expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars to quell, to say nothing of the utter destruction of legitimate trade in those parts. This is but a sketch of the actual condition of affairs at those places at the time.

The plan adopted by the French for the procurement of emigrants on our coast having become a matter of much serious importance, involving even the very existence of the Republic as a free state, and all that the people thereof hold most sacred—it became a matter of most earnest consideration with the Government, as to the best course to pursue, to obviate, in future such lamentable occurrences.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XIII. Colonization Pamphlets

6. Message of the President of Liberia,  
 ...January 6, 1859 Monrovia, 1859