

that Dr. Hopkins was the first who conceived the idea of sending converted Africans to their native land, for the sake of communicating the knowledge of Christianity to their benighted countrymen.

After the revolutionary war was terminated, by the acknowledgment, on the part of Britain, of the independence of these United States, Dr. Hopkins and his flock returned again to Newport; and although the prospect of sending to Africa the persons who had been prepared for that mission was rendered impossible, by reason of the decease of one of the young men, and by the total want of adequate funds for the execution of that enterprise, yet his zeal in behalf of the African race was in no degree diminished. He wrote and published a pamphlet in favour of the emancipation of the Africans held in bondage in this country, which was, probably, the first treatise on that subject from any pen. He also reorganized the society which had been scattered during the war, to the funds of which, though poor, he was by far the largest contributor. Having received nine hundred dollars for the copy-right of his *System of Theology*, he gave one hundred to promote the objects of this society, and he still encouraged himself and his friends to proceed in their benevolent enterprise. "The way," said he "to the proposed mission still lies open, and the encouragements in it are as great as ever. All that is wanting is money, exertion, and missionaries to undertake it. There are religious blacks to be found who understand the language of the nations in those parts, who might be employed if they were properly encouraged; and if they were brought to embrace Christianity, and to be civilized, it would put an end to the slave trade and render them happy; and it would open a door for trade which would be to the temporal interest both of the Africans and Americans. As attention to the propagation of the gospel appears to be now spreading and increasing in America, it is hoped that the eyes of many will now be opened to see the peculiar obligations they are under to attempt to send the gospel to the Africans, whom we have injured and abused so greatly, more than any other people under heaven, it being the best and only compensation which we can make them." It is truly wonderful how just and mature were the sentiments of this wise man, respecting the advantages which would accrue from the civilization and christianization of Africa. The very

reasons which are now urged by the friends of African colonization, namely, the suppression of the slave trade, the promotion of a trade mutually profitable to the parties, and the establishment of peace and prosperity among the natives of that continent, are here distinctly referred to. The preceding citation is from Dr. Hopkins's 'Life of Susannah Osborn.'

But, although Dr. Hopkins was disappointed in the hope which he had so fondly entertained of sending missionaries to Africa, it is a remarkable fact, that two of those young Africans instructed by him with a view to this mission, in extreme old age went to Liberia, when the colony was planted there. One of these was Deacon Gardner, a man well known throughout New England, and especially in Boston. The history of this man is not only remarkable but somewhat romantic. He was a native of Africa, but was brought to this country in the year 1760, when only fourteen years old. He very soon manifested extraordinary talents, and after receiving a few elementary lessons, he quickly learned to read by his own unaided efforts. In the same way he learned music, in which art he became such an adept that he composed a large number of tunes, some of which have been highly approved by good judges. He was long a highly esteemed teacher of vocal music in Newport, where many resorted to his school for improvement in this delightful art. One of the most extraordinary things in the history of this man, was his ability to speak his vernacular tongue with ease and fluency at the age of thirty, when he had been absent from his country for sixteen years, having been brought away when only fourteen years of age. His uncommon talents attracted the attention of Dr. Hopkins, and his ardent piety gained his high esteem. He, therefore, marked him out as a suitable person to be sent as a missionary to Africa, and set himself to work to obtain his freedom, in which, after some time, he was successful. But there is a circumstance connected with his emancipation which is so extraordinary, that if it were not so well authenticated we should hesitate to mention it; as to some of our readers it may probably savour too much of enthusiasm. But in fact it is nothing else than an evident and somewhat extraordinary answer to prayer. Gardner was the slave of Captain Gardner, whose name he assumed. By the indulgence of his master he was allowed to labour for his own profit, in whatever scraps of time he could save from his daily

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XIV. Books

3.

A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa
by Archibald Alexander, Philadelphia, 1846