from a life of wretchedness, to civilization and humanity, and convert the blind idolater from gross and abject superstitions, to the holy charities, the sublime morality and humanizing discipline of the gospel; the nation or the individual that shall have taken the most conspicuous lead in achieving the enterprise, will secure imperishable glory, founded in the moral approbation and gratitude of the human race, unapproachable to all but the elected instruments of Divine beneficence—a glory, with which the most splendid achievements of human force or power must sink in the competition, and appear insignificant and vulgar in the comparison. And above all, should it be considered that the nation or the individual whose energies have been faithfully given to this august work, will have secured, by this exalted beneficence, the favour of that Being whose compassion is over all his works, and whose unspeakable rewards will never fail to bless the humblest efforts to do good to his creatures.

Your memorialists do not presume to determine, that the views of Congress will be necessarily directed to the country to which they have just alluded. They hope to be excused for intimating some of the reasons which would bring that portion of the world before us, when engaged in discovering a place the most proper to be selected, leaving it, with perfect confidence, to the better information and better judgment of your honourable body to make the choice.

Your memorialists, without presuming to mark out, in detail, the measures which it may be proper to adopt in furtherance of the object in view; but implicitly relying upon the wisdom of Congress to devise the most effectual measures, will only pray, that the subject may be recommended to their serious consideration, and that, as an humble auxiliary in this great work, the association, represented by your memorialists, may be permitted to aspire to the hope of contributing to its labours and resources."

In the House of Representatives, the memorial was referred to a respectable committee, consisting of Messrs. Pickering, Comstock, Condict, Tucker, Taggart, Cilley, and Hooks, who brought in the following report.

"The committee to whom was referred the memorial of the President and Board of Managers of the 'American Society for colonizing the free people of colour of the United States,'

have had the same under their deliberate consideration. The subject is of such magnitude, and attended with so many difficulties, it is with much diffidence they present their views of it to the House.

Were it simply a question of founding a colony, numerous and well known precedents show with what facility the work might be accomplished. Every new territory established by our government, constitutes, indeed, a colony, formed with great ease; because it is only an extension of homogeneous settlements. But in contemplating the colonization of the free people of colour, it seemed obviously necessary to take a different course. Their distinct character and relative condition, render an entire separation from our own states and territories indispensable. And the separation must be such as to admit of an indefinite continuance. Hence it seems manifest that these people cannot be colonized within the limits of the United States. If they were not far distant, the rapidly extending settlements of our white population would soon reach them, and the evil now felt would be renewed, probably with aggravated mischief. Were the colony to be remote, it must be planted on lands now occupied by the native tribes of the country. And could a territory be purchased, the transporting of the colonists thither, would be vastly expensive, their subsistence for a time difficult, and a body of troops would be required for their protection. And after all, should these difficulties be overcome, the original evil would at length recur, by the extension of our white population. In the meantime, should the colony so increase as to become a nation, it is not difficult to foresee the quarrels and destructive wars which would ensue, especially if the slavery of people of colour should continue, and accompany the whites in their migrations.

Turning our eyes from our own country, no other, adapted to the colony in contemplation, presented itself to our view, nearer than Africa, the native land of negroes; and probably that is the only country on the globe to which it would be practicable to transfer our free people of colour with safety, and advantage to themselves and the civilized world. It is the country which, in the order of Providence, seems to have been appropriated to that distinct family of mankind. And while it presents the fittest asylum for the free people of colour, it opens a wide field for their improvement in civilization, morals and

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XIV. Books
3.
A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa
by Archibald Alexander, Philadelphia, 1846