CHAPTER VIII.

STATE OF THE COLONY AFTER THE DEATH OF THE AGENTS.

The Board at Washington had been greatly encouraged by the communications from their Agent, after the arrival of the Elizabeth; but this bright prospect was soon clouded by the melancholy accounts of the death of all the agents, and of a considerable number of the best of the colonists sent out. They were also deeply affected with the unhappy fate of the officer and boat's-crew of the Cyane. But though discouraged, they could not see in any or all these circumstances, the total failure of their attempt. They concluded, that the sickness and deaths which had occurred, did not prove that a fatal and inevitable disease rendered the whole coast of Africa uninhabitable to strangers; for out of the whole number of eighty-eight emigrants, about seventy who had been exposed, had survived and recovered; and many instances of a much greater mortality had occurred in various places, owing to other causes than a pernicious peculiarity of climate. The Board seem to have cherished some degree of delusion in regard to the climate of the western coast of Africa, especially as it relates to white persons. They were disposed to attribute the sickness and mortality which had taken place, almost entirely to local causes, and unfavourable circumstances in the situation of the colonists, and the unfortunate period of the Elizabeth's arrival; it being near the commencement of the rainy season. The want of preparation and accommodation for their reception, and the early death of Dr. Crozer, which left them without medical aid or advice, were also among the unfavourable circumstances. That the sickness and mortality were not owing only or chiefly to the peculiar unhealthiness of the Island of Sherbro, is evident from the fact, that Lieutenant Townsend, Mr. Bankson, and Dr. Crozer, together with the whole crew of the boat, took the fever and died, although they had not resided on the island. And recent facts abundantly show, that all foreigners coming on this coast, are liable to a fever, which is more or less dangerous, according to the constitutions and circumstances of the

patients; it being, in general, much more fatal to white than to black men.

The Board encouraged themselves by the ultimate success of Sierra Leone, and the other colonies in this country, although many disasters attended their first settlement; and the patrons of the enterprise appeared generally unwilling that the colonization of the free people of colour on the western coast of Africa, should be abandoned, and manifested still a willingness to contribute to the funds of the society. It was, therefore, determined by the Board to persevere in their efforts in this benevolent cause. Much credit is due to them for their fortitude and zeal; and it is believed that their misapprehension of the true causes of the sickness and mortality, was overruled for good.

The early death of the agents, had prevented the acquisition of a territory for the colony. Mr. Bacon, as we have related, exerted himself to the utmost to effect this object, but died before it could be accomplished; and Kizell, who, they trusted, would, by his influence with the native kings, greatly facilitate their negotiations, fell under a suspicion of unfaithfulness, and even by Mr. Bacon was judged to have failed in zeal and promptitude, in promoting this object.

Dr. Crozer, the agent of the Colonization Society, when near his end, having solemnly committed the agency with which he had been entrusted, to the Rev. Daniel Coker, a coloured preacher, of the Methodist Episcopal denomination, and both the government agents being dead, the whole burden and responsibility of providing for the welfare of the colony devolved on this man. In his communications to the society he informed them, that the sick were gradually recovering, and that the whole number of the emigrants who had died, did not exceed twenty-five. In his letter, he says, "Although we have met with such trials, and are here a small handful, and our provisions running low, and we in a strange and heathen land, and have not heard from America, and know not whether any more people or provisions will be sent out—and though we know not what is to become of us, far distant from our families and our friends; yet thank the Lord, my confidence is strong in the veracity of his promises, and in the honour of your society, and the government. Last Lord's day, I preached in the King's town, and administered the Lord's supper to our little

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