importation into the United States, without making any provision for the disposal of them when taken; nor even any provision for the expense of their maintenance. The evil of these defects was soon experienced, for in June, 1817, the Legislature of the State of Georgia, in pursuance of the power granted to the States, enacted a law, authorizing and instructing the Governor of the State, to demand and receive all slaves, who being condemned under the act of Congress aforesaid, should be introduced into any of the ports of that State; "*and to cause the said negroes, mulattoes, or coloured persons to be sold, after giving sixty days' notice, in a public gazette.*" This law, however, contained one saving clause, by which it was provided, "That if previous to any sale of any such persons of colour, the Society for the Colonization of the free people of colour, within the United States, will undertake to transport them to Africa, or any other foreign place which they may procure as a colony for free persons of colour, at the sole expense of said society, and shall likewise pay all expenses incurred by the State since they have been captured and condemned, his excellency the Governor is authorized and requested to aid in promoting the benevolent views of said society in such manner as he may deem expedient." It was not long after the passing of this law, before a case occurred to which it was applicable. Thirty-four African slaves, captured by a vessel of the United States, were brought into Georgia, and the Governor, according to the directions of the law, advertised the sale of these captured slaves. This advertisement, published in a gazette of Milledgeville, was communicated to the Board of Managers of the Colonization Society, by the Hon. William H. Crawford, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society. The Board considered it a matter of high importance to prevent these unhappy Africans from being sold into perpetual slavery in this country; and that after the slave trade was entirely abolished by law. They needed a person of intelligence and character to proceed to Georgia; and in this emergency, that early and cordial friend of colonization, the Rev. Mr. (now Bishop) Mead, of Virginia, offered his services. A more competent and fit agent for this special business, could not have been found in the United States. As the sale was to take place at an early day, it was necessary for the agent to use much expedition. He was able by diligence, however, to reach Milledgeville in time to arrest the sale, and enjoyed the peculiar pleasure of witnessing the joy of these unfortunate Africans, upon receiving a deliverance so little expected. Indeed, he felt that the instrumentality which he was permitted to have in this rescue, was an ample reward for the time and labour of his long journey. The managers also, though by this means they incurred a heavy expense, were greatly delighted by the successful accomplishment of this desirable object.

As this whole difficulty had arisen from the defects of the law of Congress, it became now an object of deep interest to get Congress to pass a supplementary act, providing against the recurrence of such an event. This was accomplished on the 3d of March, 1819, when Congress passed a law which provided, that when any vessel containing slaves should be captured by a vessel of the United States and brought into any of our ports, the President should be authorized "to make such regulations and arrangements as he may deem expedient, for the safe-keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States of all such negroes, mulattoes, and coloured persons, as should be brought within their jurisdiction; and to appoint a proper person or persons to reside on the coast of Africa, as agent or agents, for receiving the negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour delivered from on board vessels seized in prosecution of the slave trade, by the United States armed vessels." This act also provided, "That a bounty of twenty-five dollars be paid to the officers and crews of the commissioned vessels of the United States, or revenue cutters, for each and every negro, mulatto, or person of colour, who should be delivered to the marshal, or agent duly appointed to receive them."

This act gave great pleasure to the friends of African colonization. The managers of the Colonization Society, in their Third Report, say, "This act, by supplying the defects of pre-existing laws, and imposing new restraints upon a cruel and disgraceful traffic, shed a ray of light, dear to humanity, on the expiring moments of the Fifteenth Congress, and elevated the American character, in the view of the world." It was also a favourable circumstance, that President Monroe put a construction on this act, entirely conformable to the wishes of the managers; and immediately appointed agents

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

-0-