mercy; and behold the graves of fifteen white persons around me, all of whom have died since I landed on the Cape. Help me to praise the Lord, and pray, fervently pray, that I may spend a life thus astonishingly preserved, in some humble way of usefulness to his blessed cause in Africa and in the world."*

On the 5th of March 1823, Mr. Ashmun wrote, "We have all our captives back again. The kings met and agreed to send them without any demand. It was, however, expected that we would make them a present. This I did. The little things were all very much uncivilized. Some had forgotten the English language; some had forgotten their own parents; others had actually gone wild, and to avoid their friends, would scud like fawns into the bushes."

The American ship of war Cyane having arrived on the African coast, Captain Robert Trail Spence, though his health was impaired, and his crew enfeebled by a cruise of twelve months in the West Indies; yet upon hearing of the state of the colony, determined to adopt efficient measures for its relief and safety. He saw the importance of leaving an armed vessel on the coast, and by the most energetic exertion, he fitted up and repaired the old schooner Augusta, bearing six guns, and manned her with twelve men, under the command of Lieutenant Dashiell, to guard the coast, and aid the colony in any exigency.

Captain Spence discovered every disposition to place the colony in a state of safety and comfort before he left the coast, and therefore not only incurred a heavy expense by purchasing at Sierra Leone necessary articles for the settlement, but employed a large part of his crew for twenty days in assisting the people to build a commodious house for the agent, and a stone fortress, which might prove "a tower of strength." But in the midst of his benevolent exertions, he had the affliction to see Dr. Dix, the surgeon of his ship, expire, after a few days' illness, with the fever of the climate. This valuable man had been a warm friend to the colony from the beginning; had visited and administered relief to the emigrants, when at Sherbro; and now the tears of a grateful people fell into his grave. The rapid progress of disease among the seamen on shore, compelled Captain Spence to leave incomplete the works he had commenced; but with all his precautions and exertions, he could

* Gurley's Life of Ashmun, p. 153, 154.

not prevent the loss of a large number of his crew. As many as forty men fell victims to this deleterious climate.

The works which Captain Spence had commenced were all planned and superintended by Mr. Ashmun, who possessed not only undaunted resolution in time of danger, but extraordinary activity and versatility of mind.

Upon leaving the coast of Africa, Captain Spence consented that Mr. Richard Seaton, the first clerk of the Cyane, should remain at the Cape, to assist Mr. Ashmun, who saw, that with impaired health and increasing burthens, it was impossible for him alone to fulfil the numerous and arduous duties of the agency. But having now an assistant to whom he could intrust the affairs of the colony, he determined to make a coasting voyage to convey home about forty Kroomen, who had performed labours in the colony upon this condition, that they should be, without expense, conveyed to Settra Kroo, two hundred miles south of the Cape. He was absent twenty-one days on this expedition, and made accurate observations of every thing which he saw, and returned on the 13th of May, 1823.

In his communications to the Board, he remarks, "that the whole African coast was once populous, and the land cleared and cultivated; and that the present dense forests and entangled jungles, are a second growth; that the native towns are numerous but not large. The people raise their own rice, cassada, and palm oil; and procure their guns, powder, clothes, tobacco, knives, cooking utensils, and luxuries from French slave-traders." "We saw," says he, "at least three vessels of this description."

The chief men of every tribe which he visited, declared it to be their purpose to live in friendship, and trade with the colony. The report of the late war had spread every where among them, and had produced a high opinion of the strength and invincibility of the colony. Although, during his short absence the colonists had plied the work on hand, under the direction of one of their own number; yet he found that Mr. Seaton had been confined with a severe attack of fever. After languishing about two months, Mr Seaton determined on a return to the United States, in the Oswego, which had just come out with Dr. Ayres, and a company of emigrants. But it was determined that he should never see his native country.

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