

THE PATRIOT.

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GREENSBOROUGH N C WEDNESDAY MAY 10, 1826

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THE PATRIOT,

Is printed and published weekly by
T. EARLY STRANGE,

At Two Dollars per annum, payable within three months from the receipt of the first number, or Three Dollars after the expiration of that time.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Not exceeding 16 lines, neatly inserted three times for one dollar, and 25 cents for every succeeding publication; those of greater length in the same proportion—Letters to the Editor must be post paid.

FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL WHIG.
TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON ESQ
President of the American Colonization Society.

Sir: It is not my purpose, in addressing you to use the language of flattery. But the occasion of this address requires, that some notice should be taken of your claims to the respect of your fellow men.

I do not speak to you as a private citizen, but a public officer. You are the head of a humane and benevolent institution, and the eyes of the civilized world are on you.

Respectability and integrity in private life; great legal learning and ability; habitual moderation of temper, and a mind always under the influence of reason and calm judgment—these are the qualities which have secured you the love, gratitude and veneration of your countrymen. Enjoying a large share of public esteem and confidence, you have been called to preside over an institution, which seeks to better the condition of our own country by checking a great and growing evil; and to benefit the world, by sending the arts and blessings of civilization into a savage and benighted portion of the globe; by restoring to the dignity of humane nature the degraded and oppressed African; and building, on the ruins of idolatry, the Temple of the only, the living and true God.

Permit me to say, that the office of President of the American Colonization Society is far from being the lowest or least, which it has been your fortune to fill. That this Society is the offspring of private benevolence; that it is connected with, or supported by the Government; that it has enemies who denounce its officers, agents and advocates, as political and religious enthusiasts, fanatics, weak and misguided men, who disturb the country with their visionary schemes of impracticable benevolence; that pride, avarice, deep rooted prejudices, the passions and forces are invoked and arrayed in formidable force against this Society, its officers and friends, are circumstances which, in the judgment of sober reason, do not in the smallest degree detract from its character, or lessen the dignity of the high and holy office which you fill. When was it known, that any man, or association of men, made efforts to do good, without meeting opposition? Sometimes, the more humble, unassuming, inoffensive, pacific and rational the means used, the more violent and frantic is the oppo-

sition raised. The history of the world, from the earliest time, to the present verifies this remark. Therefore, we should not be surprised at the denunciation of the Colonization Society; nor should that society be disheartened. They must patiently take their share of the trials and persecutions, which have fallen to the lot of other benefactors of the human race.—Such, however, is the well founded hope and assurance of success in their patriotic and benevolent schemes, that I am forced to believe, they will persevere in its execution with a steady step, unflinching patience, and enlightened zeal.—Whether or no they shall pursue their plan with perseverance and energy; and whether their efforts shall be crowned with success, or they are doomed to disappointment in all their hopes and wishes; the office which you hold is one of real dignity.

Your attention is not called to these few lines, because there exists an apprehension or suspicion that you doubt about the practicability, expediency and extensive beneficence of the scheme of colonization; or because it is believed, that you have become weary of well-doing. My object is to advise you, that thousands of your fellow-citizens of the South, and of your native State, (who rejoice to see you at the head of this association, most heartily wish you success; in the midst approve your plan and proceedings; and wish, not only to excite you to renewed and increased efforts, but others, to greater energy in patronizing and supporting you.

It is too much the fashion, to hear with suspicion, all that is said, respecting the condition of the free people of colour, and the domestic slave, in some of the U States. Yet, there have been found many patriotic and philanthopists, who reside in different and distant parts of the country, who have shown a disposition to change the condition of the first class, and, by so doing, to confer lasting benefits on ourselves, and soften the rigors of slavery. They, some years ago, organized a society at Washington, with officers and agents to make an experiment; which, whether it shall succeed or not will be a lasting monument of glory to the hearts which conceived, and the heads which planned it; to the country which gave it birth, and this age of moral and intellectual improvement, in which the work is begun.

The great object of the society over which you preside, is to send to Liberia, on the coast of Africa, such free people of colour in these United States, as may be willing to go there. When its object is thus presented in plain language, to the mind of any unprejudiced man, it must appear to him strange (passing strange)—that human integrity should have invented so many objections, as have been urged against it.

I have said—that the views of this society are patriotic. They wish, and are striving, to diminish an evil, which has grown to an alarming size, and by rapid advances is overspreading the country. Their object is, to get rid of a population, which has been, and will ever be (so long as we

are cursed with it) annoying and dangerous. To prove that our free people of colour are, not only an unhappy and degraded, but a dangerous class; and that to get rid of them gradually and quietly is an event greatly to be desired, are tasks easy of performance; but which unfortunately, daily experience admonishes us it is unnecessary to perform.—Every man, at a late acquaintance with the internal condition of the non-slave-holding States, as well as the slave-holding States, knows that this anomalous situation—half slave and half free—is mischievous and truly alarming in its character. It is folly in the extreme, to temporize, to speculate upon this evil, and sit with our arms folded, lulled in fatal security, and hoping for the special interposition of Divine Mercy to rescue us from it. It is time to act—and in acting—to exercise all our discretion and call forth all our energies; that, under Providence, we may be restored to safety. The efforts of the American Colonization Society are directed by prudence and necessary self defence; and are truly patriotic. They will be beneficial to us in a moral and political point of view.

I have said—that the views of this association are philanthropic. The most skeptical of their opponents will not deny, that they wish and intend to confer lasting benefits on the unhappy beings, whom they are striving to raise to the station of freemen. They may be mistaken; but their aim is to give liberty and happiness to those whom they send to Africa.

By the establishment of a colony of freemen in Africa, they hope to carry there the arts and comforts and blessings of civilization and to christianize the savage. With heaven-directed benevolence, they are exerting themselves to make amends to degraded Africa for all the wrongs done her in the past.

They wish to assist in putting an end to the slave trade, which has long disgraced the civilized world. Their agency in this good work has already been great, and will doubtless become greater. They wish to open an outlet, not only for all the free people of colour now in the United States who may choose to avail themselves of it; but for them who may be hereafter emancipated by their present owners. Thus will another class of our population be diminished, whose numbers are rapidly increasing; who are a standing reproach to our free government, a curse to the country. Good feelings will sometimes excite many, either when they approach the term of earthly existence, or at other times when conscience directs to liberate their slaves. Some are restrained by the fear, that if they who are emancipated remain in the United States they will be less happy in their new and untried state of freedom, (or rather half freedom,) than if subject to humane masters. Could an asylum far distant be provided for such as may be hereafter freed, this difficulty and restraint upon slave holders would be removed; and by gradual and voluntary emancipation, the number of slaves lessened. The colony in Africa will offer this asylum.

Is there any thing in all or any of these objects which considerate and reflecting men will condemn? None, so far as I am informed, have ventured directly and openly to arraign them: but some have found fault with the means used to obtain them.

It is not a valid objection to the association over which you preside, that some of its friends and agents have been indiscreet in their manner of re-

commending its scheme to the public. Like all other human institutions it may be abused; but it is not correct reasoning to say that it should not be rightly used, because it has been or may be abused. It is quite another thing to say—that abuse is essential to it and that more evil than good must naturally and necessarily flow from it. I do not understand that this proposition has been maintained by its worst enemies. Its friends are like other men, liable to err. But if want of discretion in them is an objection to this society, with much greater force may the want of discretion in its opponents be urged as an objection to the opposition raised against it. The language and conduct of these last, have then been indiscreet in the highest degree; intemperate and rash.

It is not a good objection to this society, that they are producing discontent and insubordination among slaves.—They deny that such is the object of their scheme, or the means used to accomplish it. They have nothing to do with slaves, except through their masters. Their moral influence on the proprietors of slaves is happily great; and it is hoped will prepare their minds and consciences for the work of gradual emancipation. Men are sometimes accused of vices directly the opposite of the virtues which shine in their lives. The supporters of the scheme of colonization (regarding slaves as human beings, and in some degree capable of thinking and feeling,) have confidently believed and fondly cherished the hope, that the feelings between the master and slave—humanity in the first, and gratitude and affection in the last.

It is not a valid objection to this society, that some of its members wish to obtain the aid of the Federal Government in performing their work. They, like other citizens, differ from the Government in the construction of the Constitution of the United States. Some are for a strict, others for a free interpretation of that instrument—some for state rights; others for multitudinarians. It is not just, to fix on this society the stigma of violating the Constitution of the United States, or wishing to do so, to effect their purposes. It is true, that some of them seek the assistance of Congress in supporting their colony in Africa; but it is exceedingly unjust, on this account, to cast on the society all the odium of soliciting the money and means of the nation for unconstitutional purposes. The government has, in sundry instances, laid aside these constitutional scruples. It has acquired territory by purchase; witness Louisiana and the Floridas—two established colonies; as in Louisiana and Florida; and in many other instances has planted a colony of free recaptured blacks on the coast of Africa; which is now protected by our navy and supported by the nation. A grand scheme, for the preservation and colonization of the Indians, is at this time the subject of deliberation at Washington, (see a late report of the Secretary of War)—And, with a full knowledge of all these things, the good people of the United States, asked, to brand with their displeasure the American society for the colonization of free people of colour, because some of its friends seek assistance from the government.

The humble individual who addresses you believes that the colonization society are not dependent on Congress; and, perhaps, can do very well without their aid—further than that aid which is unavoidably rendered by the national vessels that visit the coast of Africa, to give protection to the colony of recaptured