

## DR THOMAS HODGKIN, DR MARTIN DELANY, AND THE “RETURN TO AFRICA”

by

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I have determined to leave to my children the inheritance of a country, the possession of territorial domain, the blessings of national education, and the indisputable right of self-government; that they may not succeed to the servility and degeneration bequeathed to us by our fathers.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Martin R. Delany

It cannot fail to give pleasure to Englishmen to learn that the descendants of those Africans who have been removed from their native country by the iniquitous system of slavery are . . . seeking to raise themselves by their own energies from the unhappy position in which they have been so cruelly placed.<sup>2</sup>

Dr Thomas Hodgkin

The medical accomplishments of Thomas Hodgkin (1798–1866) are well known. The introduction of the stethoscope and creation of the pathological museum at Guy’s Hospital, London, his lectures on morbid anatomy, and his description of the disease that bears his name have earned him an acknowledged place in nineteenth-century British medical history. Not as well known are Hodgkin’s non-medical interests and activities, yet in his own time he was famous as a philanthropist and humanitarian. Indeed, his obituary in the *British Medical Journal* characterized him as “a sincere and judicious promoter of the good of his fellow men”.<sup>3</sup> Among these non-medical concerns were a life-long opposition to slavery and support for the colonization of American blacks in Africa. In pursuit of these causes, Hodgkin became involved with a black American doctor, Martin R. Delany (1812–1885), whose racial pride and separatist beliefs led him to seek a homeland for his people in Africa. From 1858 to 1861, Delany was busily engaged on three continents promoting his plans; throughout this period Hodgkin was similarly involved. The following study, based largely on

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<sup>1</sup> M. R. Delany, ‘Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party’, in *Search for a place. Black Separatism and Africa, 1860*, M. R. Delany and Robert Campbell, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1969, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hodgkin, ‘Report for the Council of the Geographical Society’, n.d. [1858], 13: 112. Papers of Thomas Hodgkin, MD, have been microfilmed and are on deposit at the Countway Library, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass., USA. The citations refer to the reel and item as catalogued under the direction of Dr Edward H. Kass, Channing Laboratory, Harvard Medical School. The first nineteen reels of the Hodgkin papers in the same order are also on deposit at Friends’ House Library, London, where they are numbered MSS 178 to MSS 196. ‘A cursory index to the Thomas Hodgkin Microfilms in the Library of the Society of Friends, London’ was compiled by L. D. Pedersen, November 1980.

<sup>3</sup> *Br. med. J.*, 1866, i: 447.

letters and other documents in the Thomas Hodgkin papers, illuminates facets of each doctor's career and personality as he worked for the "return" to Africa and demonstrates the problems they encountered in these efforts.

Martin Robison Delany's grandparents and father had been slaves, but he was born free in Charles Town, Virginia (now Charleston, West Virginia), in 1812.<sup>4</sup> He traced his ancestry on both sides to African chiefs and early manifested pride in his colour and heritage. When he was a young boy the family left slave-holding Virginia for Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where he began his education. In 1831, he moved to Pittsburgh, home of an active black community involved with many intellectual and reform activities. In this environment Delany founded the Theban Literary Society and the Young Men's Literary and Moral Reform Society. He joined the Temperance Society of the People of Color and the Philanthropic Society. The latter operated the "underground railroad", helping fugitive slaves reach freedom in Canada. In addition to participation in these black organizations, Delany was elected to the Board of Managers of the Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Society, an interracial group which promoted abolitionism throughout western Pennsylvania.

Aspiring to a medical career at a time when few blacks dared to dream of one, he became apprenticed to Andrew McDowell, a white physician who encouraged his efforts. In 1836, Delany opened his own office as a cupper, leecher, and bleeder. He also performed dentistry.<sup>5</sup> This practice provided the minimal economic security that enabled him to pursue other, more compelling interests. He journeyed down the Mississippi River and into Texas to witness the reality of slavery. As a result of an episode in which he bandaged the wounds of a soldier stabbed in a drunken brawl, Delany was offered a post as surgeon to a company of soldier-adventurers planning an invasion of Mexico, a post he declined.<sup>6</sup>

In 1843, Delany started publication of the *Mystery*, a newspaper which stressed black pride and self-help while pointing out the oppressiveness of whites and the hypocrisy of many white abolitionists.<sup>7</sup> He ceased publishing his paper after he became acquainted with Frederick Douglass, whom he joined to start the *North Star*, soon to be one of the foremost abolitionist journals. Delany began to travel throughout the states west of the Alleghenies and eastward to New England seeking subscriptions, writing for the *North Star*, and lecturing on behalf of abolitionism and black rights.

During these years, Delany was opposed to emigration as a solution to the oppression of free blacks living in the United States. Like most black leaders, he insisted that his people were entitled to equal rights in the land where they were born. To abandon

<sup>4</sup> Biographies of Delany include Victor Ullman, *Martin R. Delany, the beginnings of Black Nationalism*, Boston, Mass., Beacon Press, 1971; Dorothy Sterling, *The making of an Afro-American: Martin Robison Delany, 1812-1885*, New York, Doubleday, 1971; Frank A. Rollin [Frances E. Rollin Whipper], *Life and services of Martin R. Delany*, New York, Kraus Reprint, 1969. See also, Curtis Ellison and E. W. Metcalf Jr., *William Wells Brown and Martin R. Delany: a reference guide*, Boston, G. K. Hall, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> Ullman, op. cit., note 4 above, pp. 32-34; Sterling, op. cit., note 4 above, pp. 48-55; W. Montague Cobb, 'Martin Robison Delany', *J. Nat. Med. Ass.*, 1952, 44: 232-234.

<sup>6</sup> Ullman, op. cit., note 4 above, pp. 38-39; Sterling, op. cit., note 4 above, pp. 70-71.

<sup>7</sup> Ullman, op. cit., note 4 above, pp. 49-50.

the struggle for those rights and to abandon more than three million people still in slavery was totally unacceptable. The activities of the American Colonization Society were especially abhorrent. It had been founded in 1816 on the assumption that the problems of slavery and race could be ameliorated by the return of ex-slaves and free blacks to Africa. During the 1820s, land was purchased on the West African coast and small groups of potential settlers were sent out to establish the colony of Liberia. Advocates of the American Colonization Society hoped that a successful Liberia would encourage slave-holders to emancipate or sell their slaves on condition that they emigrated. The society also expected free blacks to take advantage of the chance to escape racism and discrimination. Opponents of the American Colonization Society saw it either as a plot by slave-holders eager to get rid of the potential threat of free blacks who might encourage antislavery activities or as a scheme by racist Northerners unwilling to allow blacks their full freedom and equality. Delany used the pages of the *Mystery* and the *North Star* to lambaste the Colonization Society and to denounce officials in Liberia for their subservience to white interests.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1850s, Delany began to change his attitude toward emigration, although not toward the Colonization Society. Perhaps the change can be attributed at least in part to his experience at the Harvard Medical School. Delany had continued to "read medicine" under the direction of Pittsburgh doctors. At the time, most doctors trained in such an apprenticeship system. Increasingly, however, some were attending medical schools where they received MD degrees as evidence of their more formal education. In 1850, Delany decided to obtain a medical degree. Initially, four medical schools rejected him, but he persevered. With recommendations from prominent Pittsburgh physicians and clergymen, he sought admission to Harvard and was enrolled.<sup>9</sup> Delany thus became one of the three original black students at Harvard. However, unlike Delany, whose matriculation was due entirely to his own initiative and his desire to provide medical service to his people in the United States, the other two blacks had been sponsored by the Massachusetts Colonization Society on the assumption that they would use their medical skills in Liberia.

Lectures began in November 1850, but in December, the three were asked to with-

<sup>8</sup> Floyd J. Miller, *The search for a black nationality, black emigration and colonization 1787-1863*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1975, pp. 119-120; Ullman, op. cit., note 4 above, pp. 100-101.

For the American Colonization Society, see Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Manuscript Division, *The records of the American Colonization Society*, (microfilm); *The African Repository*, monthly journal of the American Colonization Society, Washington, D.C., 1825 and following; William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African colonization, an impartial exhibition of the doctrines, principles and purposes of the American Colonization Society together with the resolutions, addresses and remonstrances of the free people of colour*, Boston, Garrison & Knapp, 1832; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1961.

For the early history of Liberia, see Archibald Alexander, *A history of colonization on the West Coast of Africa*, reprint, New York, Negro Universities Press, 1969 (originally published Philadelphia, William S. Martien, 1846); C. Abayoni Cassell, *Liberia, history of the first African republic*, New York, Fountainhead Publishers, 1970; J. D. Hargreaves, 'African colonization in the nineteenth century: Liberia and Sierra Leone', *Sierra Leone Studies*, 1962, 16 (n.s.): 189-203; Charles H. Huberich, *The political and legislative history of Liberia*, 2 vols., New York, Central Book, 1947; Abeodu Bowen Jones, 'The Republic of Liberia', in J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (editors), *History of West Africa*, London, Longman Group, 1974, vol. 2, pp. 308-343.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Cash, 'Pride, prejudice and politics', *Harv. Med. Alum. Bull.*, December 1980, 54: 20-25.

draw. Their presence was offensive to some of the white men in the class who had sent a written protest to the faculty. Some even threatened to leave Harvard if the blacks remained. Bowing to this pressure, the medical faculty considered it "inexpedient, after the present course, to admit colored students to attendance on the medical lectures".<sup>10</sup> This personal experience and the continual frustrations of second-class citizenship confirmed for Delany the reality that a black man in the United States could not and would not receive equal treatment regardless of ability and achievement. Increasingly threatening events on the national scene, especially the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, added to the hopelessness which he and others felt. Emigration became acceptable.

In 1852, Delany published *The condition, elevation, emigration and destiny of the colored people of the United States* to arouse racial pride and encourage support for separatist movements.<sup>11</sup> Emigration was proposed as the necessary alternative to permanent inferiority and degradation, but it was to be entirely a black enterprise. Delany adamantly renounced white interference, insisting on black self-help and leadership.<sup>12</sup> He characterized the American Colonization Society as "one of the most arrant enemies of the colored man, ever seeking to discomfit him . . . We believe it to be anti-Christian in its character and misanthropic in its pretended sympathies".<sup>13</sup> He was careful to allay concern for the plight of those still in bondage.

It is true that our enslaved brethren are here, and we have been led to believe it is necessary for us to remain, on that account . . . We believe no such thing. We believe it to be the duty of the Free, to elevate themselves in the most speedy and effective manner possible; as the redemption of the bondman depends entirely upon the elevation of the freeman; therefore, to elevate the free colored people of America, anywhere on this continent; forbodes the speedy redemption of the slaves.<sup>14</sup>

Locations outside the United States but within the Western Hemisphere were advocated, especially Central and South America. Nicaragua and New Granada were selected as the most favourable.<sup>15</sup> Liberia was dismissed because, among other reasons, it was "a poor *miserable mockery* – a *burlesque* on government – a pitiful dependency on the American Colonizationists".<sup>16</sup> However, in an Appendix to the book, Delany proposed a clandestine expedition to the Eastern Coast of Africa where, he predicted, the construction of a transcontinental railroad would "make the GREAT THOROUGHFARE for all the trade with the East Indies and Eastern Coast of Africa, and the Continent of America. All the world would pass through Africa upon this rail road, which would yield a revenue infinitely greater than any other investment in the world."<sup>17</sup>

Other black intelligentsia also became more receptive to emigrationism than heretofore, although Frederick Douglass and the mainstream abolitionists remained

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Robison Delany, *The condition, elevation, emigration and destiny of the colored people of the United States*, New York, Arno Press Reprint, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169. See also the Introduction by Delany in William Nesbit, 'Four months in Liberia or African colonization exposed', in *Two black views of Liberia*, New York, Arno Press Reprint, 1969.

<sup>17</sup> Delany, *op. cit.*, note 11 above, p. 213.

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opposed.<sup>18</sup> Beginning in 1854, a series of national conventions were held in which demands for separation from the United States were aired and various proposals considered; Delany was among the most prominent spokesmen. A National Board of Commissioners was created to aid those willing to leave the United States. Delany was its first president.<sup>19</sup> Abortive efforts were made to establish settlements in Haiti and Central America, but by the spring of 1858, Delany had turned his full attention to Africa.<sup>20</sup> The writings of African missionaries and explorers, especially the Rev. Thomas Bowen and Dr David Livingstone, had further stimulated Delany's interest in that continent.<sup>21</sup> Bowen, a Baptist missionary who spent seven years in Africa, had published glowing reports of the potential for commerce and Christianity in the Yoruba (Niger) region and by 1857, seven thousand copies of his book had been printed.<sup>22</sup> In 1858, Delany made contact with a small group of potential emigrants in Madison, Wisconsin, who were also interested in an African settlement. In May, they addressed an inquiry to the Royal Geographical Society of London, posing a series of questions about the feasibility of various locations in Africa. The letter was signed on behalf of the group by J. J. Myers, Ambrose Dudley, and Martin Delany\*.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Hodgkin wrote the reply.

Hodgkin was born in 1798 to a Quaker family and was reared according to the values and tenets of that religious society with its concern on behalf of the oppressed.<sup>24</sup> The Quakers had been among the earliest opponents of slavery and Hodgkin was imbued with this from childhood. He was well acquainted with Luke Howard who, in addition to being a pioneer meteorologist, was one of the leading humanitarians among the Friends. In 1817, Hodgkin served for several months as personal secretary to the Quaker chemist William Allen, who had long been active in the anti-slavery movement and had supported the British colony of ex-slaves in Sierra Leone. Hodgkin was present late in 1817, when Allen and Thomas Clarkson, another anti-slavery leader

<sup>18</sup> Howard Holman Bell, *A survey of the Negro convention movement 1830-1861*, New York, Arno Press, 1969, pp. 162-163.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 169; Ullman, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, p. 216.

<sup>21</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Jefferson Bowen, *Central Africa: adventures and missionary labors*, Charleston, Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1857. Large portions of Bowen's book and other communications from him were published in the *African Repository*, 1857, 33; 1858, 34; 1859, 35.

\*In the "Official Report", p. 46, Delany stated that the letter was written without his knowledge by the sixteen-year-old son of J. J. Myers. This raises questions, however, since the letter to the Geographical Society was accompanied by a cover letter from Professor Hobbins at Wisconsin State University, Madison, Wisconsin, attesting to the probity and financial condition of the authors. The three signatures on the original letter do appear to be in the same hand and Delany's name is misspelled, so it is possible that Delany did know about it. See *Mercantile Line of the Free Coloured People*, 31 May 1858, and Joseph Hobbins, MD, 7 June 1858, both at the Royal Geographical Society, London, Correspondence Files.

<sup>23</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 36; Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 175-176; *Mercantile Line of the Free Coloured people of North America*, 31 May 1858, Royal Geographical Society, London, Correspondence Files.

<sup>24</sup> For Hodgkin's life and career, see Edward H. Kass and Anne H. Bartlett, 'Thomas Hodgkin, MD (1793-1866): An annotated bibliography', *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1969, 63: 138-175; Edward H. Kass, 'Thomas Hodgkin, Physician and social scientist', *Guy's Hosp. Rep.*, 1966, 115: 269-280; Michael Rose, *Curator of the dead, Thomas Hodgkin (1798-1866)*, London, Peter Owen, 1981.



and friend of the Hodgkin family, were visited by emissaries from the American Colonization Society who were seeking information about settlement sites on the west coast of Africa. He acted as Clarkson's amanuensis when a reply to the American inquiries was prepared.<sup>25</sup>

After serving a two-year apprenticeship to a Brighton apothecary, Hodgkin decided to make medicine his profession. He spent a year "walking the floors" at Guy's Hospital, then pursued his medical studies at the University of Edinburgh and in Paris, receiving the MD from Edinburgh in 1823. After further travel and study abroad, he obtained an appointment at Guy's where, as pathologist and clinician, he described many diseases including, of course, the disorder of the lymph glands that bears his name. Though disappointed by failure to receive a coveted promotion to Assistant Physician at Guy's in 1837, Hodgkin continued to practise medicine throughout his life, providing care to the underprivileged, working for reform of the medical curriculum, and publishing medical treatises.<sup>26</sup> For a brief time he was on the staff of St Thomas's Hospital. He was a member of numerous professional societies in Britain and overseas.

Hodgkin was equally devoted to social causes. As a youth of nineteen, he wrote an extensive 'Essay on the promotion of Civilization' in which he urged creation of an organization that would spread Western culture among "uncivilized" people without the deleterious effects that might destroy them.<sup>27</sup> He corresponded with Hannah Kilham, another Quaker whose efforts to educate African children in their own tongue led to the publication of basic works in African languages and establishment of schools in Sierra Leone and the Gambia.<sup>28</sup> Later, as a founder and officer of the Aborigines Protection Society, Hodgkin worked tirelessly for the welfare of native races throughout the world; the fate of the Indians of North America especially concerned him. He was appointed to the original Senate of the University of London, the first English university to grant degrees to Dissenters. His scientific proclivities brought him into active membership in the Ethnological Society, the Royal Geographical Society, and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. He was also personal physician to Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore on travels to the Continent, Morocco, and the Near East, journeys made for the benefit or relief of oppressed Jews.

Once roused by his experiences with Allen and Clarkson, Hodgkin's interest in Africa never waned. He became a steadfast advocate of colonization as a means of promoting civilization in that continent. When Elliott Cresson came to England in 1831 seeking British support for the American Colonization Society and its projects in Liberia, Hodgkin was one of his most loyal allies. Cresson's visit was badly timed, coinciding as it did with the culmination of the drive for the end of slavery in the

<sup>25</sup> Hodgkin to Elliott Cresson, 24 April 1848, 13: 5.

<sup>26</sup> Edward H. Kass, Anne B. Carey, Amalie M. Kass, 'Thomas Hodgkin and Benjamin Harrison: crisis and promotion in academia', *Med. Hist.*, 1980, 24: 197–208.

<sup>27</sup> Hodgkin, 1817–1818, 11: 152.

<sup>28</sup> A *Letter from Dr Hodgkins [sic] to Hannah Kilham on the State of the Colony of Sierra Leone*, Lindfield, 1827, 10: 229; Mora Dickson, *The powerful bond, Hannah Kilham 1774–1832*, London, Dennis Dobson, 1980.

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British Empire. He was thoroughly rejected by British anti-slavery leaders, who were persuaded by American abolitionists, especially William Lloyd Garrison, that colonization was merely a scheme to export unwanted blacks and was not genuinely opposed to slavery.<sup>29</sup> Cresson did find a small group of men in addition to Hodgkin who were favourable to colonization and he managed to organize a British African Colonization Society as a counterpart to the American Colonization Society. The British African Colonization Society intended to establish its own colony of American blacks in Liberia but the plan was never realized.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, Hodgkin remained a staunch colonizationist and did all he could to promote the cause despite the chilly reception he received. Although he fully realized the implausibility of ending slavery in the United States by removing the slave population to Africa, he feared the effects of abolitionist extremism: increased repression by slave-owners, a possible slave insurrection, and the polarization of slave and non-slave owning states. Hodgkin believed that a successful black nation on the coast of Africa would prove the ability of its citizens, thereby dispelling notions of racial inferiority and promoting the end of discrimination which he knew existed even in the free states. He corresponded regularly with the leaders of the American Colonization Society, urging them to avoid any appearance of sympathy to slavery and encouraging their efforts in Liberia. He became a vice-president of the American Colonization Society in 1841 and remained one for the rest of his life.<sup>31</sup>

Hodgkin also tried to further Liberia's interests, first as a colony and, after 1847, as an independent nation. In fact, he was among the first to urge Liberian independence, introduced President J. J. Roberts to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, when the new nation was seeking British recognition, and acted as the representative of Liberia when treaties between the two nations were exchanged.<sup>32</sup> It was his firmly held conviction that the presence of suitably educated American blacks on the west coast of Africa was the best way to promote Christianity and civilization on that continent. He was certain that a nation founded and led by American emigrants would provide an example of republican government that other Africans would eventually imitate. He expected the introduction of Western agricultural and commercial methods to lead to

<sup>29</sup> For Cresson's letters from England see American Colonization Society, note 8 above, Series I, vol. 29A, reel 10 through vol. 56, reel 19; *African Repository*, 1831, 7; 1832, 8; 1833, 9; 1834, 10.

For British opposition to Cresson, see Walter M. Merrill (editor), *I will be heard. The letters of William Lloyd Garrison, 1822–1835*, Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971, esp. pp. 211, 235, 238–239, 252, 263–264, 267–271; *British opinions of the American Colonization Society*, Boston, Garrison & Knapp, 1833; *Speeches delivered at the anti-colonization meeting in Exeter Hall, London, July 13, 1833*, Boston, Garrison & Knapp, 1833; C. Stuart, *A letter to Thomas Clarkson by James Cropper and Prejudice invincible; or the practicability of conquering prejudice by better means than by slavery and exile; in relation to the American Colonization Society*, Liverpool, Egerton Smith, 1832.

<sup>30</sup> Dr Hodgkin, *On Negro Emancipation and American Colonization*, London, Richard Watts, 1832, 10: 233; Thomas Hodgkin, MD, *An inquiry into the merits of the American Colonization Society and a reply to the charges brought against it with an account of the British African Colonization Society*, London, J. & A. Arch, 1833, 10: 239; *On the British African Colonization Society, to which are added some particulars respecting the American Colonization Society*, London, Printed for Dr Hodgkin by R. Watts, 1834, 10: 235; *African Repository*, 1834, 9: 360–361; 1839, 15: 272.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1841, 17: 57–59; Hodgkin to James Fortune, 17 November 1840, 7: 67.

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Benedict to Hodgkin, 4 April 1848, 11: 47; J. J. Roberts to Hodgkin, 8 May 1849, Rhodes House, MSS. Brit. Emp. 518, C 122/57, 122/58; Hodgkin to Stephen Benson, n.d. [1861], 13: 183.

economic prosperity and the eventual elimination of the slave trade.

The continuation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade was deeply troubling to another Englishman, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who had successfully led the anti-slavery forces during the Parliamentary debates on emancipation. Buxton, too, came to view the development of legitimate trade as the best means of defeating the slave trade, and in 1840, he began to make plans to send an expedition to Africa to establish agricultural and commercial stations. Hodgkin and the American Colonization Society saw the similarity of Buxton's scheme to their own and tried to persuade him to use Liberia, or if he preferred a different area, to include black Americans in his group. Buxton, still subject to the earlier anti-colonization, anti-Liberia prejudice, was unwilling to co-operate with them.<sup>33</sup> Instead, he pursued his plan to send white men to the Niger River region. Despite the rebuff, Hodgkin's overwhelming interest in Africa caused him to become a member of Buxton's African Civilization Society and to support the Niger Expedition though he was not overly optimistic about the outcome. Unfortunately, the Niger Expedition was a dismal failure, doomed by fever and death among its members and the lack of permanent interest among the African tribes. Hodgkin feared "the unhappy expedition" would be "a great damper upon further efforts for the good of Africa".<sup>34</sup>

Hodgkin's broad interests, including geography and geology, and his skills as an observer when travelling led to lively participation in the Royal Geographical Society. In 1851, he was elected Honorary Secretary and it was in that capacity, seven years later, that he received the Inquiry sent by the Wisconsin group of prospective emigrants. With great satisfaction he pointed out that "amongst the numerous enterprises submitted to the Royal Geographical Society few can be more gratifying to it than that which is presented by the little company at Madison . . . since it proves that the sympathies and efforts of this country on behalf of the oppressed are known and appreciated." He was pleased to add that the enterprise was to be "entirely in the hands of persons of African descent and to be if possible altogether independent of any government for protection".<sup>35</sup>

In response to the questions posed by the Wisconsin group, Hodgkin discouraged interest in the Zambezi region despite the attention Livingstone's recent discoveries had excited. The Niger area received more favourable commentary. Although there might be difficulties of climate and navigation, "energetic sons of Africa returning to their mother country must not be induced to regard [these] as insurmountable." He assured the men that they would be better received and more likely to succeed than the previous white-led expeditions, which had been unable to establish farms and factories in the Niger area. Hodgkin urged them to consider a visit to Liberia, where they could be acclimatized before reaching a final destination. He also suggested that South Africa might be more suitable for people who had been living in the northern states.

<sup>33</sup> Hodgkin to Samuel Gurney, 13 August 1840, 17: 32; Hodgkin to Gov. Buchanan, 13 August 1840, 17: 31; Hodgkin to T. F. Buxton, 14 September 1840, 17: 41; Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African slave trade and its remedy*, 2nd ed., London, John Murray, 1840. See also, Howard Temperly, *British anti-slavery 1833-1870*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1972, pp. 42-61.

<sup>34</sup> Hodgkin to Robert Knox, 4 January 1844, 18: 164.

<sup>35</sup> 13: 112, note 2 above.



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Hoping that the group were the precursors of increased Afro-American emigration but mindful of past problems, Hodgkin advised them to remain independent of the American Colonization Society.

It was the Niger region that Delany chose to investigate, but it is not possible to know what, if any, influence Hodgkin's advice had. Delany's relationship with Myers and Dudley was never formalized, Delany claiming only that "it was agreed and understood that I was to embody their cause and interests in my mission to Africa, they accepting the policy of my scheme".<sup>36\*</sup> However, the General Board of the Convention of Colored Persons held in Chatham, West Canada\*\* named Delany Chief Commissioner of the Niger Exploring Party on 30 August 1858. This was the third convention Delany had organized in four years, but since the Board provided no funds or personnel, the burden was on him to secure both. Four other men tentatively joined with him, but only Robert Campbell, a Jamaican-born science teacher residing in Philadelphia, actually went overseas.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time that Delany was organizing his African expedition, another emigrationist group emerged, the African Civilization Society†.<sup>38</sup> Its leader was the Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, also a black abolitionist, who had abandoned expectation of equality and begun to consider the African alternative. The African Civilization Society received and accepted encouragement from whites, some of whom had been prominent colonizationists. One, the Rev. Theodore Bourne, became corresponding secretary.

The African Civilization Society was eager to co-operate with Delany's Niger Valley Exploring Party.<sup>39</sup> Delany was less willing to compromise his independence and loath to be associated with whites, but financial exigencies eventually prevailed, and with the assistance of the Civilization Society and at least the encouragement of the American Colonization Society, he sailed for Africa in May 1859.<sup>40</sup> His plan was to locate a place in the Niger (Yoruba) area where a carefully selected group of blacks from Canada and the United States might establish the beginnings of a nation which would provide economic opportunity and political freedom for its heretofore degraded people. Delany, like Hodgkin, expected that the success of such an enterprise would encourage African chiefs to abandon the slave trade in favour of legitimate trade and commerce and would eventually demonstrate the ability and achievements of blacks. The cultivation and sale of African cotton was an important part of the scheme. Bowen had emphasized the potential for cotton production, which could successfully

<sup>36</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 36.

\*J. J. Myers subsequently travelled to England and then to South Africa with his son. Hodgkin's correspondence reveals his support for Myers throughout these journeys and after his return to Wisconsin. See Hodgkin to Sir George Grey, 10 October 1859, 18: 238; Hodgkin to Myers, 4 November 1859, 18: 243; 30 June 1860, 18: 255.

\*\*Now the province of Ontario. Delany and his family had moved to Canada two years earlier.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38–42.

†Not to be confused with Buxton's African Civilization Society, 1840–1843.

<sup>38</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 183–193.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195–198; *African Repository*, 1859, 35: 27; Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, pp. 45–46.

compete with slave-grown cotton and thereby threaten the economic base of slavery in the American South.

The proposed expedition to the Niger had already attracted attention in England. Robert Campbell, Delany's only partner for the journey, had arrived there in April 1859, seeking funds from cotton manufacturers whose desire to find new sources of raw cotton would make them natural allies of an Afro-American settlement in West Africa.<sup>41\*</sup> Campbell also met with British abolitionists and philanthropists. Thomas Hodgkin was among the group credited for providing "his outfit and free passage to the coast of Africa".<sup>42</sup> Campbell raised five or six hundred dollars during two months in England, then departed for the Niger with free passage as indicated above and a letter of introduction to the British consul at Lagos from Lord Malmesbury, recently Foreign Secretary.<sup>43</sup>

Shortly after, Theodore Bourne, the corresponding secretary of the African Civilization Society, arrived in England asking for assistance for the emigration projects of his organization and implying that Delany and Campbell's expedition was intimately connected with it. A meeting was held at Hodgkin's home on 18 August 1859, where interested "friends of Africa" had the opportunity to hear Bourne's message.<sup>44</sup> Hodgkin also supplied Bourne with letters of introduction, presenting him as an advocate of the African Civilization Society. "I think the officers and others connected with the Niger and other expeditions are the most likely to be useful and I take the liberty of addressing him to thee to aid him".<sup>45</sup> At this time, Hodgkin seems to have assumed that the Wisconsin group, Delany's expedition, and the African Civilization Society represented a unified emigrationist movement. Bourne, like Campbell a few months earlier, made appeals to the cotton manufacturing interests and the members of the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>46</sup>

Delany spent nine months in Africa. In his negotiations with the American Colonization Society and the African Civilization Society he had committed himself to stop first in Liberia.<sup>47</sup> He landed at Monrovia, the capital city, on 10 July. After an initial reprimand from Liberians who were mindful of his earlier disparaging remarks about their country, he received an enthusiastic welcome. A letter from Liberia to the New York Colonization Society dated 29 July 1859 asked, "Is Dr. Delany to be the Moses to lead in the exodus of his people from the house of bondage to a land flowing with milk and honey? He seems to have many qualifications for the task. Let him be encouraged and supported."<sup>48</sup> He was invited to give lectures and responded willingly,

<sup>41</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1859, 7: 136-138.

\*Delany strongly criticized Campbell for this action which he claimed was taken without his knowledge or his approval. 'Official Report', pp. 42-45.

<sup>42</sup> Royal Geographical Society of London, *Proceedings*, 1859-60, 4: 186.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Campbell, 'A pilgrimage to my Motherland: an account of a journey among the Egbas and Yorubas of Central Africa, in 1859-60', in *Search for a place*, note 1 above, p. 162.

<sup>44</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1859, 7: 224-225; Hodgkin to Dr N. Shaw, 10 August 1859, Royal Geographical Society, London, Correspondence Files.

<sup>45</sup> Hodgkin to Shaw, *Ibid.*; 'To the Friends of the African Negro Race', n.d. [1859], 13: 135.

<sup>46</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1859, 7: 185-189, 224-225, 262; 1860, 8: 74-75.

<sup>47</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 197.

<sup>48</sup> C. W. Blyden to J. B. Pinney, *African Repository*, 1859, 35: 299.

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telling one audience that black people would never achieve significant political power in the United States and would have to emigrate to Africa where their presence would elevate their one hundred and sixty million "degraded" brethren.<sup>49</sup> He stressed the "reflex influence", which would have a powerful effect upon slavery in America, and he lauded the Liberians who held "political intercourse with the nations of the world and the reins of government in their own hands".<sup>50</sup> There is no way to be certain that these remarks reached Hodgkin's attention but he was aware of Delany's fine reception in Liberia. Hodgkin regularly received publications and correspondence from Liberia and from the Colonization Society in America where these speeches were known.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, the emigrationist activity aroused Hodgkin's hopes, for he wrote to J. J. Roberts, by then ex-President of Liberia:

We have here Theodore Bourne from New York advocating the claims of the African race in the States on the generosity and means of this country to convey them to Africa. Though designedly quite distinct from the Colonization Society to avoid injurious collision with the opponents of that Society, its merits nonetheless depend on the same principle the soundness of which thou knowest I have long advocated. I would suggest that although the Col. Soc. [*sic*] will do well to stand aloof it might be well for the Liberian citizens to send an invitation to their persecuted brethren who must now fly from some of the Southern States or lose their freedom.<sup>52</sup>

Delany travelled throughout Liberia, carefully observing the geography, economy, politics, and living conditions. He contracted "*the acclimating fever*" and treated himself with "a dessert spoonful of a solution of the sulphate of *quinia* three times a day, and the night of my arrival two eight grain doses of Dover's Powder".<sup>53</sup> He described the native fever, "which is nothing but the *intermittent fever* of America, known in different parts as *ague, chills and fever, fever and ague*, with its varied forms of *bilious, intermittent, remittent, continued*, and it is [*sic*] worse form of *inflammation*, when it most generally assumes the *congestive* type of the American Southern States," attributing it to the miasma caused by dense vegetable growth and aggravated by "free indulgence in improper food and drink".<sup>54</sup> Settlers coming to Africa with scorbutic, scrofulous, or syphilitic diseases "where the affection has not been fully suppressed" ran an increased risk of becoming "victims to the fever . . . . But any chronic affection – especially lung, liver, kidney, and rheumatic – when not too deeply seated, may, by favourable acclimation, become eliminated, and the ailing person entirely recover from the disease".<sup>55</sup>

Despite Delany's prior antipathy toward Liberia, his visit there produced a very favourable report. He noted successful farming, mining, and commerce, and praised the industriousness of the people. Indeed, his account is overly enthusiastic, but since it was intended to be read by potential emigrants, exaggeration is understandable. Delany did not omit to reiterate his demand for black independence. "Always bear in

<sup>49</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, pp. 47–57; Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 202.

<sup>50</sup> Delany to Pinney, *New York Colonization Journal*, 1859, quoted in Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 202.

<sup>51</sup> Hodgkin to J. J. Myers, 4 November 1859, **18**: 243.

<sup>52</sup> 23 March 1860, **18**: 269.

<sup>53</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 51.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65–66.

mind, that the fundamental principle of every nation is *self-reliance*, with the *ability to create their own ways and means*: without this there is no capacity for *self-government*".<sup>56</sup> Among the Liberians, he again met Dr Daniel Laing,\* one of the two black former students from Harvard Medical School.<sup>57</sup>

Delany left Liberia in mid-September and arrived in Lagos to find that his partner, Robert Campbell, had preceded him and gone inland to Abeokuta, where they finally met on 5 November 1859. They had been led to understand that the Egba people who lived in Abeokuta would welcome a settlement of Afro/Americans in their region. Rev. Bowen had given many favourable details about Abeokuta in his book and other travellers and missionaries had provided similar incentives. At the time there were five missionary stations at Abeokuta and the Saros, an English-speaking group of recaptured slaves repatriated from Sierra Leone, were among the most influential people.<sup>58</sup> Cotton was reported to be an important product. Representatives of several nations and agents of the missionary societies were already engaged in the cotton trade.<sup>59</sup>

The two Americans were assisted and housed in Abeokuta by a Saro family, the Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who later became the first black Anglican bishop and his two sons, both of whom had been trained in England, one in cotton production, the other in medicine and surgery.<sup>60</sup> Delany and Campbell's presence was welcomed by the native cotton traders who sought their advice, as "we knew how things ought to be done".<sup>61</sup> The King or Alake and the Chiefs also received them well and there were many "social, friendly, and official interchanges".<sup>62</sup> On 27 December, a treaty was signed by the Alake and Chiefs and by the Commissioners, Delany and Campbell, acting on "behalf of the African race in the Americas".<sup>63</sup> This treaty which was to become the subject of great controversy, granted "the right and privilege of settling in common with the Egba people, on any part of the territory belonging to Abeokuta, not otherwise occupied." The Commissioners agreed that the "settlers shall bring them . . . Intelligence, Education, a knowledge of the Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and other Mechanical and Industrial Occupations which they shall put into immediate operation, by improving the lands, and in other vocations."<sup>64</sup>

Upon completion of the treaty, Delany and Campbell continued their exploration

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

\* After leaving Harvard, Laing had studied medicine in Paris and received his MD from Dartmouth in 1854. He then emigrated to Liberia. See Cash, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, p. 24. At some point he visited England with a letter of introduction to Hodgkin from Edward Everett, the American politician and colonizationist. Uncatalogued letter, Everett to Hodgkin, [n.d.].

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>58</sup> Campbell, 'Pilgrimage', note 1 above, p. 206. See also Jean Herskovits Kopytoff, *A preface to modern Nigeria, the "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1965; Earl Phillips, 'The Egba at Abeokuta: acculturation and political change, 1830-1870', *J. Af. Hist.*, 1969, 10: 117-131.

<sup>59</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 75; J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891, the making of a new élite*, London, Longmans, Green, 1965, pp. 156, 167-168.

<sup>60</sup> Campbell, 'Pilgrimage', note 1 above, pp. 166-169; Kopytoff, *op. cit.*, note 58 above, pp. 285-286.

<sup>61</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 75.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

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of the region, noting with satisfaction the reception they were accorded by persons who regarded them as "their people" and as agents of "a regeneration of Africa".<sup>65</sup> They were impressed by the size and prosperity of the cities, the activity of the markets, and the potential for commerce in agricultural products of all kinds.<sup>66</sup> "The superior advantage of Africa over all countries in the production of cotton" was emphasized. An end to the slave trade by the substitution of legitimate commerce was predicted.<sup>67</sup>

As he had done in Liberia, Dr Delany paid particular attention to medical and sanitary conditions. Indeed, he devoted an entire chapter in his report to 'Diseases of this part of Africa, treatment, hygiene, aliment', giving descriptions of diarrhoea, dysentery, ophthalmia, umbilical hernia, and Guinea worm and recommending precautions to future settlers.<sup>68</sup> He urged attention to "the laws of health": moderate eating, abstention from alcohol, daily bathing, and suitable clothing. Sanitary measures including cleanliness of residences, proper ventilation, and construction of cesspools were elaborated and suggestions were made for control of ants and termites.

In his observations on missionary activity in Africa, Delany reaffirmed his ardent black pride. He admitted that Protestant missionaries had done much good, but he called for an end to the identification of knowledge, wisdom, wealth, and power with the whites. The future of Africa, he asserted, must depend on the civilizing influence of blacks.

It is clear, then, that essential to the success of civilization, is the establishment of all those social relations and organizations, without which enlightened communities cannot exist. These must be carried out by proper agencies, and these agencies must be a *new element* introduced into their midst. . . . This element must be *homogenous* in all the *natural* characteristics, claims, sentiments and sympathies – the *descendants of Africa* being the only element that can effect it. To that end, then, a part of the most enlightened of that race in America design to carry out these most desirable measures by the establishment of social and industrial settlements among them in order at once to introduce . . . all the well regulated pursuits of civilized life.<sup>69</sup>

In another context, Thomas Hodgkin espoused the same idea.

I am not by any means designing to write a tirade against missionaries and I have known and esteemed many of them . . . yet when we look for the results of missionary work how great is our disappointment. . . . I believe that the most effectual Christian missionaries for native Africans are exemplary and zealous Christian negroes.<sup>70</sup>

In all respects, Delany was thoroughly convinced that his mission was a success. He spent five months in the Niger region and what he saw and learned confirmed his expectations. Africa, the fatherland, was indeed the place where black Americans would realize their dreams of freedom and prosperity. Moreover, the advent of emigrants who knew Christianity and civilization would rebound to the improvement of the indigenes. An élite of skilled educated persons of high morals and character would provide the right stimulus. Delany left Lagos confident that he held "the

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78–80.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70–87.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114–119.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87–102.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>70</sup> Hodgkin to R. Arthington Jr., 12 June 1860, 18: 291.



greatest prospect for the regeneration of a people that ever was presented in the history of the world”.<sup>71</sup>

Delany and Campbell were back in London on 16 May 1860. On the 17th, they were welcomed by “a number of noblemen and gentlemen, interested in the progress of African Regeneration, in the parlour of Dr Hodgkin, F.R.G.S.”.<sup>72</sup> Theodore Bourne was also present. The Commissioners gave an account “of the immense extent of the region adapted for cultivation of cotton”.<sup>73</sup> Delany must have realized that confusion existed regarding the relationship between his enterprise and the African Civilization Society. In the ‘Official Report’ he wrote, “I made a statement of our mission to Africa, imparting to the first of their knowledge our true position as independent of all other societies and organizations then in existence.”<sup>74</sup> Whether he did make himself clear on this point and/or whether the audience understood remains questionable. At the Anniversary Meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, 28 May, the President of the Society announced:

The most remarkable, and as to its results that which is likely to prove the most important of the late explorations of coloured travellers, is that from which Dr Delany and his companion Mr Robert Campbell are just returned. . . . It should be stated that these travellers undertook their interesting tour on behalf of an Association of coloured Americans, who are anxious to find in the land of their forefathers a refuge from the slavery which weighs them down in America; and they hope, with justifiable ambition, to become the means of elevating the natives of Africa, while finding a fit scope for their own unrestrained energies and talents. The travellers have well performed their mission, and appear to have found an open door. . . . it must be added that this successful tour of nine months’ duration on the continent of Africa cost them less than 100 l. [*sic*], which forms a striking contrast with our expensive expeditions.<sup>75</sup>

On 11 June, Delany and Campbell read a paper entitled ‘Geographical observations on Western Africa’ at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society.<sup>76</sup> Hodgkin introduced them “as two . . . coloured gentlemen of enterprise – a second Caleb and Joshua, it may be”. He also explained that, “although the company of free American coloured persons looked to England almost exclusively, they have been aided by benevolent persons in America, and a society has been formed there of which the secretary and agent, T. Bowren [*sic*] is now in the country and attending your meeting, watching the interest which his coloured friends will excite . . .” At the end of the talk, Delany mentioned that, “the adventure originated from a large portion of the intelligent and educated descendants of the Africans in the United States and the Canadas, who are anxiously desirous by their own efforts and self-reliance to regenerate their father-land.”

Lord Alfred Churchill, one of the men who had been present at Hodgkin’s home the previous month, remarked to the audience at the conclusion of the paper that, “The Head of the Society which had undertaken this movement was the Rev H. Garnett [*sic*]. . . . Mr Campbell and Dr Delany had been sent over by the society to endeavour to make terms with the native chiefs.”

<sup>71</sup> Delany, ‘Official Report’, note 1 above, p. 122.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1860, 8: 121.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122–123.

<sup>75</sup> *Proceedings*, note 42 above, pp. 186–187.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218–222.

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Thus the confusion persisted. Thomas Hodgkin continued to view the parties together. On 12 June, he responded to an inquiry about the African Civilization Society by recounting as an uninterrupted sequence the story of the Wisconsin letter, his reply on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, the efforts of the African Civilization Society to pursue his suggestions, Delany and Campbell's successful journey, and Bourne's presence in England.<sup>77</sup> "I cordially wish the project success," he concluded. On 30 June, he wrote, "Our friend T. Bourne is still here – so are D. Delaney [*sic*] and R. Campbell. It is uphill work . . . the visit of the two latter to Africa has been very interesting and will I trust have a good effect on their friends in America."<sup>78</sup> On 15 July, he told Dr Shaw of the Royal Geographical Society that it was important for the Society's *Proceedings* to mention the Wisconsin group and Delany as "intimately connected".<sup>79</sup> And in an undated manuscript which seems to have served as notes for later revision, Hodgkin wrote

Dr Delaney stated that the col.<sup>d</sup> people in the U.S. & Canada had many of them learnt by bitter experience that they could not rise in America. The col.<sup>d</sup> people 4,000,000 of whom 700,000 free. Some hold to the old opinion that equality is to be sought in America. Some are satisfied with suffrage. Others think they have a right to share of the high places. This class delegated the Dr & Campbell. The African Civilization was formed of whites & Col.<sup>d</sup> people to promote the object of this to establish themselves where they can rise.<sup>80</sup>

But tension between Bourne and Delany was developing. The former attempted to take advantage of the explorers' successful mission as he solicited funds for the African Civilization Society. Since the ultimate goal of the African Civilization Society was not different from Delany's, this probably seemed sensible to Bourne. Delany, however, was aware that the Niger Expedition vindicated his belief in independence and self-reliance. As the President of the Royal Geographical Society had said, "Dr Delany and Mr Campbell experienced great advantages in their African descent and appearance, and were received as Europeans could not have been".<sup>81</sup> Hodgkin, too, realized Delany's colour was an advantage. He wrote on 30 June to William Coppinger of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society that he had been present on several occasions when "R. Campbell and Delaney . . . have given interesting accounts of their late tour. Though they had opened no new country they appear to have been received more intimately by the inhabitants than white travellers could have been and they seem to have been successful in their mission."<sup>82</sup> But Hodgkin feared Delany and Campbell would prove a hindrance to Bourne.

During the latter part of June and early July, Delany was invited to a series of meetings where plans were discussed for creation of a new organization, the African Aid Society. Earlier in the spring, Bourne had spoken to a group of men, Hodgkin among them, whose concern was the potential threat of the loss of cotton supplies should war break out in the United States.<sup>83</sup> Tentative plans had been made for an organization

<sup>77</sup> Hodgkin to Arthington, 18: 291.

<sup>78</sup> Hodgkin to J. J. Myers, 18: 295.

<sup>79</sup> Hodgkin to Shaw, Royal Geographical Society, London, Correspondence Files.

<sup>80</sup> 2: 249.

<sup>81</sup> *Proceedings*, note 42 above, 186.

<sup>82</sup> 18: 296.

<sup>83</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1860, 8: 74, 98.

that would simultaneously promote Christian civilization and English commercial interests. Hodgkin had always believed that cotton and other staples produced by free labour in Africa could successfully compete with slave-grown products from the southern United States and elsewhere, and he had long advocated development of legitimate trade as a means of ending the slave trade. Thus for Hodgkin, as for Delany, the increasing fear of a cotton shortage and the possibility of developing trade for English commercial interests coincided well with plans for an Afro-American settlement. Who would be better suited to provide the personnel for such an enterprise than blacks returning to their ancestral home from the United States and Canada?

On 19 July, the African Aid Society was officially launched. Its aims were "to develop the material resources of Africa, Madagascar and the adjacent Islands, and to promote the Christian civilization of the African races, as by these means the Society believes that the annihilation of the Slave Trade will ultimately be accomplished."<sup>84</sup> The Society intended to encourage production of cotton, silk, indigo, sugar, palm oil, etc., render loans and other assistance to blacks who wished to emigrate, form industrial missions, supply machinery and tools, promote commerce, and encourage further exploration. The Society proposed at the outset to assist "Dr Delany and Professor Campbell with funds to enable them to continue their labours and to lay before the coloured people of America the reports of the Pioneer Exploration Expedition into Abbeokuta, in West Africa."<sup>85</sup>

Surprisingly, despite the similarity between the stated purposes of the African Aid Society and Thomas Hodgkin's work of nearly three decades, he declined membership on the Committee of the Society. This was probably due to his loyalty to Bourne, who by then had lost his effectiveness as a proponent of African civilization schemes. Hodgkin, however, attempted to reconcile Bourne and his erstwhile friends. At Bourne's request he drafted a lengthy letter to Lord Alfred Churchill, Chairman of the Executive Committee, then submitted it for Bourne's approval, which was refused.<sup>86</sup> Consequently, the letter was never sent, but it does clarify Hodgkin's position. He explained that he did not wish to be on the Committee because of his belief that the society would be more successful if homogeneous in its religious composition. Since the Quaker Hodgkin had not avoided membership in any other organization, this seems an inadequate reason to have given to Lord Churchill. However, Hodgkin used the occasion for a lengthy endorsement of the African Civilization Society on which he continued to rely to promote the emigration movement. He considered them better suited than Delany and his colleagues to select emigrants and handle financial matters. He justified Bourne's mission in England and attempted to explain the apparent feud with Delany. He urged Delany and Campbell's prompt departure for America where they could present their report to their brethren and he offered to contribute to the expense. Fearing that Bourne's continued presence would not further the cause, Hodgkin suggested that Bourne too return to New York where he could assist in the

<sup>84</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 126; *Anti-Slavery reporter*, 1860, 8: 199; African Aid Society, *First Report from July 1860 to the 31st March, 1862*, London, W. J. Johnson.

<sup>85</sup> Delany, 'Official Report', note 1 above, p. 128; *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 8: 247.

<sup>86</sup> Hodgkin to Bourne, 6 August 1860, 13: 155.

selection of emigrants.<sup>87</sup>

To Henry Highland Garnet, President of the African Civilization Society, Hodgkin wrote a more revealing letter.

It will probably not be uninteresting to thee to receive from an old friend of Africa on this side of the Atlantic some account of the interest with which the present movement of those in America of African descent is regarded in this country and of its prospects as regards pecuniary aid from hence. I allude to the effort made by the sons of Africa to settle there for their own good and the common advancement of their brethren. The first hint of this movement came to me through our Geographical Society in an Address signed by our worthy friend, J. J. Myers. . . . The Society of which thou art president is giving the same object larger dimensions and . . . has been made extensively known by our good and zealous friend, Theodore Bourne who met his first English audience on the subject in my house. Campbell was here a little before him on his way out and Campbell and Delaney have been here again on their return and communicated many interesting relations partly new, partly confirmatory, of what has already been said. It is to be regretted that they did not more promptly return to America since not being supported by your Society and yet holding a sort of ostensible connexion with it they proved rather in the way and whilst I acquit all concerned of intentional impropriety, it was very evident that our friend Bourne was not helped by their presence. He has striven to encounter the difficulties which he has met with.

Hodgkin followed this explanation with some advice for Garnet and his associates.

Allow me to make one suggestion as a sincere well wisher to your enterprise in all its ramifications. I believe it would greatly conduce to your success to let the working of it as much as possible be in the hands of coloured people. They will be raised by the business habits given to them and the public interest will be greater. They must however require the help of council, information and money but the less these appear the better. No man can rely more than I do on our friend Bourne's integrity, zeal, knowledge of the subject and perseverance. I think him greatly beyond Delaney and in most respects they will not bear comparison, yet Delaney is courted for his colour and I fear that flattered by this, he may stay to the injury of the cause.<sup>88</sup>

Bourne's mission for the African Civilization Society was terminated by October 1860. Campbell also left England in the autumn.<sup>89</sup> Delany remained until December. He attended the International Statistical Congress where his presence was noted and applauded to the extreme discomfort of the American delegation. In fact, it almost created an international incident.<sup>90</sup> He journeyed to Scotland and the Midlands, where his lectures on African regeneration and the end of the slave trade evoked enthusiastic responses. He emphasized the self-help theme, saying that loans to emigrants would be repaid and that only the élite would be chosen to go to Abeokuta.\* The approaching civil war in the United States and the threat of a cotton famine added to his appeal. The potential of West African cotton was at least as persuasive an argument as the benevolent aspects of his cause.<sup>91</sup> He even made arrangements in Scotland for the sale of the cotton he expected to ship from Africa.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Hodgkin to Lord A. Churchill, 30 July 1860, 13: 154.

<sup>88</sup> Hodgkin to Garnet, 29 August 1860, 18: 306.

<sup>89</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1860, 8: 247, 273.

<sup>90</sup> Rollin, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, pp. 99–133; Richard Blackett, 'In search of international support for African colonization: Martin R. Delany's visit to England, 1860', *Can. J. Hist.*, 1975, 10: 316–319.

\* The African Aid Society published a questionnaire for prospective settlers to guard against enlisting persons who might be "objectionable . . . and detrimental to our scheme". Among other things, enrollees were expected to obtain certificates from their minister and employer as to their respectability, habits, and character. See Delany, 'Official Report', pp. 134–135. Hodgkin too wanted only "the better sort" for Liberia.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 319–322.

<sup>92</sup> Delany, 'Official report', note 1 above, pp. 132–142.

Back on the western side of the Atlantic, Delany continued to labour for emigration. He lectured about his African journey in Canada and the United States, sometimes garbed in the robe of an African chief, displaying other African wares.<sup>93</sup> He sought out persons to return to Africa with him and his family. But events prevented realization of his plan. In Africa, the treaty with the Egba became worthless. For one thing, the Alake and chiefs could not have meant to give land to Delany, or to anyone else for that matter, since Yoruba traditional law precluded alienation of land. Rivalries between missionaries competing for influence in Abeokuta led to loss of the Crowthers' favoured position and renunciation of the treaty by the Alake.<sup>94</sup> And warfare among the Yoruba further clouded the picture, discouraging potential newcomers.<sup>95</sup> In Canada, Delany did organize a small emigrant party and requested financial help for part of their expenses from the African Aid Society. A letter dated 21 August 1861 to Hodgkin, by then a member of the Executive Committee, from the Secretary of the Society, asked his approval for an appropriation of £100 for Dr Delany "who was headed for Lagos with 2 or 3 coloured families, who would settle at Abeokuta".<sup>96</sup> Apparently approval was given; the money was sent to the British consul at Lagos to aid any immigrant who might arrive from Canada.<sup>97</sup>

But the departure did not occur. There was never enough money to provide the passage to Lagos, since Delany had insisted that emigrants themselves must provide a significant portion of their own financial requirements. He made peace with Garnet and the African Civilization Society but they too were unable to fund a party.<sup>98</sup> And as the Civil War developed, more and more blacks in the North turned their attention toward the total emancipation it forecast. Eventually, Delany was completely involved with the war effort. He was a highly successful recruiter of black soldiers for the Union army and was received by President Lincoln at the White House in February 1865. The President commended him to War Secretary Stanton as "this most extraordinary and intelligent black man." In March, he was commissioned a major, the first black with that rank in the Union army.<sup>99</sup>

Although the Civil War diminished the supply of settlers for Africa and distracted Delany's attention, it further heightened the need for cotton in England. The African Aid Society continued to seek agents for the cotton trade and settlements in the Niger region.<sup>100</sup> One at Amba Bay was carefully considered although Thomas Hodgkin thought the location was not sound.<sup>101</sup> Hodgkin realized that the Civil War was an opportunity for Africa although he was opposed to violence in any form. He expected that large numbers of freed men would wish to go to Liberia or other parts of the continent and even requested the Pennsylvania Colonization Society to print his 1858

<sup>93</sup> Ullman, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, pp. 255–256.

<sup>94</sup> Ajayi, *op. cit.*, note 59 above, pp. 191–193; Kopytoff, *op. cit.*, note 58 above, p. 347; E. A. Ayandele, *The missionary impact on modern Nigeria*, London, Longmans, Green, 1966, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 254–257.

<sup>96</sup> 11: 59.

<sup>97</sup> African Aid Society, *op. cit.*, note 84 above, p. 14.

<sup>98</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 228–231, 257–263.

<sup>99</sup> Ullman, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, pp. 293–300.

<sup>100</sup> African Aid Society, *op. cit.*, note 84 above, *passim*.

<sup>101</sup> Hodgkin to Lord Alfred Churchill, 25 July 1862, 19: 68.



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reply to the "Wisconsin Negro Emigration Society" for their use.<sup>102</sup> He assumed that the desperate need for cotton in England would stimulate the economic development of Africa and benefit its inhabitants. "Africans themselves must be up and doing," he wrote.<sup>103</sup> The natives should keep fields and markets in their own hands and carefully choose the Europeans with whom they would do business.<sup>104</sup> Five months before his death in 1866, he wrote that, "My anticipations as to the increasing emigration thither from the states as the consequences of emancipation seem to be in progress of realization".<sup>105</sup> In this context, of course, he was referring to Liberia.\*

Robert Campbell did manage to return to England and Africa with the help of the African Aid Society.<sup>106</sup> He was present at a meeting of "the native African Association and their Friends" held at Hodgkin's home on 7 November 1861.<sup>107</sup> This was another of Hodgkin's projects, intended to organize native Africans and descendants of Africans present in England, to put them in touch with the needs of their countrymen and to serve as an African public relations conduit. Campbell later lived in Lagos where he started a newspaper.<sup>108</sup>

Delany did not abandon his hopes for a return to Africa. He continued to write of "my possessions in Africa which I intend to enjoy and my children to inherit and possess".<sup>109</sup> While serving the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, he quickly recognized that the end of slavery did not mean the end of inequality. He joined in promotion of a Liberian Exodus Joint Stock Company, which was intended to transport disenchanted blacks to Liberia.<sup>110</sup> The scheme was a total disaster. Twice he sought appointment as US Minister to Liberia. Ironically, it was Henry Highland Garnet who received the post in 1881.<sup>111</sup> Delany died in 1885.

Thus we have two men, each a physician, each a reformer, each deeply committed to the dream that blacks from America would realize their own potential in Africa and at the same time, as "the sons of Africa," bring civilization and Christianity to their ancestral home. Yet they were unable to work together. Perhaps the reason lies in Delany's unwillingness to give more importance to Liberia in his plan, but Hodgkin had shown that he understood the need to try alternative locations and had encouraged settlers to look elsewhere. More likely, the problem was one of personality and emotion. In written and spoken word, Delany could be dogmatic and

<sup>102</sup> Hodgkin to William Coppinger, 4 January 1862, 19: 54.

<sup>103</sup> Hodgkin to J. Smith, 24 November 1862, 19: 88.

<sup>104</sup> Hodgkin to J. Smith, 22 May 1862, 19: 62.

<sup>105</sup> Hodgkin to Coppinger, 11 November 1865, 19: 163.

\* This was not an unreasonable hope. It should be remembered that colonization of freed slaves was seriously proposed by President Lincoln and other government officials during the course of the war. Central America, Haiti, and Liberia were suggested.

<sup>106</sup> African Aid Society, op. cit., note 84 above, p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> Notes by Hodgkin, 7 November 1861, 11: 36; Hodgkin to T. Hughes, 22 June 1859, 6: 143, 23 September 1859, 18: 235; *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1861, 9: 265.

<sup>108</sup> Kopytoff, op. cit., note 58 above, p. 347.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted by Ullman, op. cit., note 4 above, p. 358.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*; Miller, op. cit., note 8 above, p. 266.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

bombastic. He was given to exaggeration and egomania. He could not otherwise have accomplished as much as he did throughout his life, but these qualities would not make him attractive to the more mild mannered Quaker doctor. Moreover, Hodgkin could not escape his deep loyalties to the American Colonization Society, its offshoots, the Pennsylvania and New York Colonization Societies, and its step-child, the African Civilization Society. He had corresponded with its leaders for more than a quarter of a century, hosted them when they visited London, and defended them against calumny from abolitionists in England and the United States. Hodgkin even represented the African Civilization Committee at a meeting of the Aborigines Protection Society.<sup>112</sup> He also advanced sums of money to Bourne on behalf of the Civilization Society from his personal account.<sup>113</sup> He had been helping Bourne and the cause for several months before Delany arrived in England and replaced Bourne in the esteem of most Englishmen. No doubt Hodgkin was pained by Bourne's loss of popularity and effectiveness.

Delany, for his part, was unable to work well with others. His fierce pride and need for independence had led to quarrels with just about all of the other leaders in the anti-slavery and emigration cause including Douglass, Garrison, Holly, Garnet, and even Campbell. He enjoyed the adulation given him by the British public but could not tolerate any direct interference with his activities. Hodgkin, on the other hand, could not support a cause without offering gratuitous advice. His letters to Liberia, for instance, were full of suggestions for improvement on every possible matter – taxes, trade, education, transportation, expansion into the interior, even personal conduct. Though well intentioned, this paternalism would not have pleased Delany.

Neither Delany nor Hodgkin saw the realization of his dreams. But the ideas they held and promulgated were not wasted. The emigrationist movement among American blacks had a profound influence during the decade of its strength, "a very effective means of uplift for the free negro" as well as a "legitimate anti-slavery endeavour".<sup>114</sup> Delany's expression of black pride and his demand of "Africa for Africans" entitle him to recognition as one of the earliest of the black nationalists. Thomas Hodgkin more quietly but just as consistently had long enunciated these same principles. In this respect, each physician endeavoured to further the well-being of black Americans and to promote the development of Africa.<sup>115</sup>

#### SUMMARY

Dr Martin R. Delany was one of the earliest black nationalists and Africanists. Initially opposed to the colonization of American blacks in other lands, he became an ardent separatist during the 1850s partly because of the indignities he experienced while seeking formal medical education. As the leader of an emigrationist group he asked for information about Africa from the Royal Geographical Society of London.

<sup>112</sup> Hodgkin to Shaw, 27 June 1860, Royal Geographical Society, London, Correspondence Files.

<sup>113</sup> Hodgkin to Bourne, 15 July 1865, 19: 138; 29 July 1865, 19: 143.

<sup>114</sup> Bell, *op. cit.*, note 18 above, Introduction.

<sup>115</sup> An abbreviated version of the Hodgkin-Delany relationship has been published (Amalie M. Kass and Edward H. Kass, 'Martin Delany, Thomas Hodgkin, and the Black Nationalist Movement', *New Engl. J. Med.*, 1981, 305, 682–684).

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The honorary secretary of that society was Dr Thomas Hodgkin, the noted pathologist, clinician, and philanthropist, who had long been a vociferous advocate of the colonization of American blacks in Liberia. Hodgkin responded to Delany's inquiry on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society. In 1859, Delany went to Africa to find a place where black Americans could settle and he made a treaty with the Egba chiefs. During his African travels, he devoted much attention to native diseases and related health problems. From Africa he went to London where he became personally acquainted with Hodgkin. The two men worked together to promote Delany's cause but tensions developed between them as Delany insisted on demonstrating his independence of white-supported organizations while Hodgkin remained loyal to his earlier pro-colonization associations. Delany's scheme never reached fruition, although he maintained his strong sense of black pride and his interest in an African homeland. Hodgkin continued to hope a successful Liberia would bring civilization and Christianity to Africa and encourage emigration from the United States.