

Pamphlet: Account of the African Institution

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ACCOUNT
OF THE
AFRICAN INSTITUTION.

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Right Honourable Lord Teignmouth

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Right Honourable George Canning

William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.

? 1833

the judicious prosecution of such endeavours, it may be fairly hoped that, in the room of that traffic, by which Africa has been so long degraded, a legitimate and far more extended commerce will ultimately be established, beneficial alike to the natives of Africa, and to the manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland. The present period, it may further be remarked, is eminently fitted for prosecuting these benevolent designs; since the suspension, during the war, of that large share of the Slave Trade, which has commonly been carried on by France, Spain, and Holland, will, when combined with the effect of the Abolition Laws of Great Britain, America, and Denmark, produce nearly the entire cessation of that traffic, along a line of coast extending between two and three thousand miles in length, and thereby afford a peculiarly favourable opportunity for giving a new direction to the industry and commerce of Africa.

To prevent misconception concerning the views and measures of the African Institution, it may be proper to state, that it is the Society's fixed determination not to undertake any religious missions, and not to engage in commercial speculations. The Society is aware that there already exist several most respectable Institutions, formed for the diffusion of Christianity, and means not to encroach on their province. It will be the duty and care of the Society, in

the first instance, to watch over the execution of the laws, recently enacted in this and other countries, for abolishing the African Slave Trade; to endeavour to prevent the infraction of those laws, and from time to time to suggest any means by which they may be rendered more effectual to their objects; and likewise to do all in their power, by communicating information, and by other appropriate methods, to promote the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by Foreign nations.

The farther means which it is proposed to employ for the purpose of promoting civilization and improvement in Africa are of the following kind.

1. To collect and diffuse, throughout this country, accurate information, respecting the natural productions of Africa, and, in general, respecting the agricultural and commercial capacities of the African Continent, and the intellectual, moral, and political condition of its inhabitants.

2. To promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, and to cultivate a friendly connection with the natives of that Continent.

3. To endeavour to enlighten the minds of the Africans with respect to their true interests; and to diffuse information amongst them, respecting the means whereby they may improve

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ment of Africa, to which their present funds are barely adequate; and without a very considerable enlargement of them, they will be obliged to forego many opportunities of attempting to advance the happiness and civilization of Africa.

Nor ought the benefits to be overlooked, which are likely to accrue to this country, should the Institution succeed in their endeavours to develop the capabilities of the African Continent. While France is employing her utmost efforts to prevent our commerce from flowing in its ancient channels, surely it becomes us to cherish every reasonable prospect of finding other outlets. We have achieved a great and splendid act of national justice, in abolishing the Slave Trade. Let our benevolence also interpose to repair the ruin and degradation which we have contributed to bring upon Africa, and to teach her the use of her liberated faculties; and we may soon discover, by our own happy experience, that in exercising justice and benevolence towards her, whatever may be the apparent sacrifice, we have only been laying a more solid foundation for the enlargement of our own national prosperity.

A subscription of Sixty Guineas or upwards, at one time, constitutes a hereditary Governor.—Of Thirty Guineas at one time, a Governor for life.—Of Three Guineas Annually, an annual

the present opportunity of substituting a beneficial commerce in place of the Slave Trade.

4. To introduce amongst them such of the improvements and useful arts of Europe as are suited to their condition.

5. To promote the cultivation of the African soil, not only by exciting and directing the industry of the natives, but by furnishing, where it may appear advantageous to do so, useful seeds and plants, and implements of husbandry.

6. To introduce amongst the inhabitants beneficial medical discoveries.

7. To obtain a knowledge of the principal languages of Africa, and, as has already been found to be practicable, to reduce them to writing, with a view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country.

8. To employ suitable agents and establish correspondences as shall appear advisable, and to encourage individual enterprize and exertion in promoting any of the purposes of the Institution.

The benefits to be conferred on Africa by the efforts of this Institution, must so obviously depend on the extent of the pecuniary funds which may be obtained, that it seems hardly necessary to urge on those who feel the force of what has been already said, the importance of an early contribution. The Society has already engaged in measures with a view to the improve-

A NUMBER of Individuals deeply impressed with a sense of the enormous wrongs which the natives of Africa have suffered in their intercourse with Europe; and actuated by a desire to repair those wrongs, as well as by general feelings of benevolence, have been anxious to adopt such measures as may seem best calculated to promote their civilization and happiness. They have therefore formed themselves into a Society for that purpose, called the AFRICAN INSTITUTION; and they earnestly solicit the aid of the humane and benevolent in every part of the kingdom, in furtherance of their design.

The Abolition of the Slave Trade hitherto carried on by Great Britain, America, and Denmark, will, in a considerable degree, remove the barrier which has so long obstructed the natural course of social improvement in Africa; and thus open a way for introducing the comforts and arts of a more civilized state of society. The happiest effects may also be reasonably anticipated from diffusing useful knowledge, and exciting industry among the inhabitants of Africa; and from obtaining and circulating throughout this country, more ample and authentic information concerning the agricultural and commercial faculties of that vast Continent: and through

Governor.—Of Ten Guineas at one time, a Member for life.—Of One Guinea Annually, an annual Member.

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N. B. The first Report of the Institution, containing a full exposition of its design; a copy of the Laws and Regulations adopted for its management; and a List of Subscribers, may be obtained from Mr. CRISP, as above.

W. Phillips, Printer, George-yard, Lombard-street.