

VIRGINIA.

*Inhabitants of Buckingham County—Free Negroes.*

FEBRUARY 7, 1831.

Read, and referred to the Committee of the Whole House to which is committed the bill (H. H. No. 412) to amend the act entitled "*An act in addition to the acts prohibiting the slave trade,*" passed March 3, 1819.

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled:*

Your petitioners, citizens of the county of Buckingham, and State of Virginia, respectfully represent, that we cordially unite in the plan of colonizing the free negroes in Africa. As we consider the free colored population a national disease, we believe you have constitutionally the power to apply the remedy.

We find that the General Government has uniformly passed laws which sanction the principle of colonizing the free negroes, and that these laws have received the approbation of the party which has been most rigid in their constructions of the powers of Congress granted by the constitution, by the purchases of Louisiana and Florida, by the erection of fortifications, &c., on Key West, and by the removal of the Indians. We are unable to draw the distinction between the constitutional power of making purchases in America and making purchases in Africa; between settling Key West and settling Liberia, (neither of which can ever form an integral part of our Union,) and between removing the Indians and removing the free negroes.

The expediency of removing this class of our population must be admitted by all who will seriously take the subject into consideration. "At a moderate expense, we shall relieve our country from a growing pest; we shall make room for a better population, and secure the continuance of domestic peace and prosperity." If the patronage of the General Government be extended to the Colonization Society, it will cause thousands of humane slaveholders to emancipate their slaves; for we are persuaded that but few genuine philanthropists would consent to hold slaves, if they found that their condition would be benefitted by emancipation. This would prevent the rapid increase of that class of our population, which threatens ruin to the southern country; that diabolical traffic, the slave trade, which has heretofore bid defiance to the measures adopted by the United States and the Governments of Europe, would be abolished; and we are persuaded that the commerce of the United States would receive benefits equivalent to the expenditure, by the lucrative traffic with the colony.

We forbear to enlarge on any of these important subjects, but leave them to your consideration, where we believe they will receive that mature and deliberate attention which their importance merits. We therefore entreat that aid be given the American Colonization Society, either by a donation, or by employing a portion of the Navy of the United States in transporting the free negroes to Africa, or both, or in any other manner that to you may seem best; and, as in duty bound, will ever pray.