

TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

- 1st. Shall the free States be Colonized by runaway Negroes. 2d. Shall the elective franchise be taken from Naturalized Citizens and give to Negroes.

The Underground Railroad for Fugitive Slaves—A British and Yankee Speculation—Condition of the Fugitive and the Canadian—Effect of a Repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law on the Free States.

BY C. H. MITCHELL.

Mr. Editor: Having been instructed as well as interested in a narrative published in the N. Y. Herald, of eight columns, touching the fugitive slaves in Canada, I make the following extracts inasmuch as the narrative is of such length. The writer gives the result of his observations, after having been at all the settlements and conversed with the most intelligent among them.

He says the Runaway Negroes in Canada are located in two counties—Essex and Kent—in the South West corner of the Province, near Lake Erie. He says the Underground Railroad is a regular organization of Abolitionists, extending through every free State, for the running off from their masters the slaves into Canada.

It has regular subscribers to the Capital Stock, and amongst them are to be found the most distinguished Abolition leaders. It has its committees and agents on the borders of every slave State and along the principal railroads and other routes travelled by fugitive slaves.

Wherever practicable, colored men are used as agents to collect subscriptions because they can do it with a better grace, and in every city and town along the borders, both of Canada and of the slave States, a gang of white Abolitionists live in idleness off the profits of the business.

In carrying on their operations the most consummate Yankee ingenuity is evinced in turning the whole thing into a money-making institution. For instance a half dozen runaway slaves are got together, say at Philadelphia, who have been enticed away from their masters in Virginia under the delusive idea that they are sure of bettering their condition. They are rigged out with half clothing, a story is got up of their sufferings and they are exhibited to charitable persons with a strong appeal for money to help them to Canada. The money is raised to carry them through. At New York they are lodged with an agent, and went out to the charitable, the same story is told of their escapes and sufferings, and the appeal brings out money sufficient to pay the fare to Canada. At Albany the same process is gone through and the money again raised, and so on until they are finally lodged on British soil, when they are turned loose or handed over to the British abolitionists agent. In this way it is averred, three, four, and often five times as much money is needed to clear them along, but the most of which is pocketed by the wily and money making Yankee abolitionists on the route. And it is stated that often when the agents will hire free negroes to represent themselves as runaway slaves, and by going through the motions in the different cities, large sums of money are raised from the unwary and charitable citizens, all of which goes in to the pockets of the scheming and lawless abolition agents, and is used to live and get rich on. As it is in the Eastern States—and the most of those negroes who are sent to Canada, are made the victims of designing money making scamps who are lining their own pockets and getting rich by keeping up the agitation about slavery, while the poor nigger is enticed away from a good home and set down in the wilds of Canada penniless and has not had to choose between starvation and stealing.

But let us look at the situation and condition of the negro in Canada, and after he has been used to fleece philanthropists out of their money. I make the following extracts from the narrative of the writer as to the condition of the negro in Canada, and after he has been used to fleece philanthropists out of their money. I make the following extracts from the narrative of the writer as to the condition of the negro in Canada, and after he has been used to fleece philanthropists out of their money.

Some years ago a tract of land, about twelve miles from Amherstburg, was purchased by some benevolent Quakers for the purpose of supporting fugitive slaves upon it, and is known as the Colchester settlement. The object was to raise contributions to build a school, and to support the negroes, partly by their labor and partly by charity. But it was soon found that the blacks preferred the charity to the labor, and they sank into a colony of lazy, worthless thieves. The settlement has now gone to pieces.

THE ELGIN ASSOCIATION. The settlement of Buxton, in the township of Raleigh and county of Kent, about twelve miles from Chatham, is the most important negro settlement in this part probably in any part of the province of Canada. It is under the direction of a regularly incorporated association, called the Elgin Association, and by the title of the act of incorporation its object is "the settlement and moral improvement of the colored population of Canada."

When the project of the Elgin settlement was first broached, it met the earnest opposition and aroused the indignation of the people of Chatham. The name of the association would appear to identify the party by their color and act by their movement, and its projectors were not unwilling to suffer the impression to go forth that Lord Elgin actually was a patron of their scheme.

The professed object of the experiment was to ascertain by trial whether the negro race could be made self-supporting as their owners and proprietors of farms, without any person to guide or control them. The association of Stockholders was formally made at Toronto in 1840. The stock was divided into shares of ten pounds each, to the amount of five thousand pounds, and the act of incorporation, passed on the 10th of August, 1840, gave them power to purchase nine thousand acres of the Crown or Clergy Reserve Lands, in the township of Raleigh, in the county of Kent, and to sell the same in lots to "colored families resident in Canada of good moral character."

There is a provision in the act which requires that the price fixed by the Directors of the Society for the lands "shall not exceed the price paid the government to any greater amount than is sufficient for the expense of said corporation, and six per cent interest per annum upon the stock subscribed. As, however, the amount sufficient for the expenses of the corporation is an indefinite sum, it can readily be seen that quite a snug speculation might lie at the bottom of this grand scheme of philanthropy. Indeed, the sale of the land at the settled rate (two dollars and a half per acre), which is, I believe, just double the price paid by the government, would alone realize the same surplus of \$11250, without taking into the calculation of the "reversions" of lots by the directors of the purchaser, his failure to fulfill his contract or his removal from the settlement after making improvements which add considerably to the prospective profits of the speculation.

A drive of two hours from Chatham over the snow, which lay thick enough on the ground to cover the irregularities of an otherwise good road, brought me to the settlement. There are but few houses on the way, and those of a very poor description. The fact that a negro settlement is near is made evident from the appearance of black stragglers all along the roadmen, women and children, many of whom walk clad in shabby and ragged clothing, and with a crowd of about a dozen, and with no other object than to lounge idly in the streets of the town and about the market place, occasionally, perhaps, snapping up any stray trifle that may happen to fall in the way of their fingers. Now and then a black horseman is to be seen making headway for the same place. Once, as I drove along the road, a singular figure appeared in the distance before me and set my imagination puzzling, as it approached, to tell what was his precise character. It was all dark as a black cloud, and looked something like a horse with well filled sack upon its back and a couple of wings flapping away at either side. Upon a nearer approach I found it to be a little black Canadian boy, bearing a big black negress, in a loose, slovenly black dress, with a black shawl tied round her head. As she was riding man fashion, with an entire independence of man's most convenient habitment, her feet nearly touching the ground and flopping up and down, covered only as much as the situation would permit by her skirts, gave her the singular appearance which had at first excited my curiosity.

My first impression on seeing them was that they were a regular organization of Abolitionists, extending through every free State, for the running off from their masters the slaves into Canada. It has regular subscribers to the Capital Stock, and amongst them are to be found the most distinguished Abolition leaders. It has its committees and agents on the borders of every slave State and along the principal railroads and other routes travelled by fugitive slaves.

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It is evident from the character that the American British Land Association is in effect, if not directly, a part and parcel of the Underground Railroad, as charged by the Detroit Free Press; for it offers special inducements to slaves of the United States to escape from the South to the British possessions in Canada. It will be seen also that as a speculation it is not entirely destitute of Yankee shrewdness. Not only are the lands purchased likely to yield eventually a good profit, but year after year the society, in the garb of charity and philanthropy, goes begging about and never returns without well filled pockets. The Rev. C. Foote, of Canada, the General Agent of the society, is a sturdy beggar, and has within a few days past been playing his vocation in Philadelphia and other cities, soliciting aid from the society, and boasting of its connection with old Ossawatimie Brown. As the directors of the "Refugee Home" deny that their association is actually the grand western depot of the underground railroad, it is difficult to tell what they do with the funds, they thus extort from the charitable. They certainly do not spend it on the negroes in Canada, and their society professes to be, and to make the settler, "self-supporting." The really charitable work of the society is actually done by the grand western depot of the underground railroad, it is difficult to tell what they do with the funds, they thus extort from the charitable. They certainly do not spend it on the negroes in Canada, and their society professes to be, and to make the settler, "self-supporting."

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The Rev. Mr. Rennie, with all his desire to see the colony prosper, was compelled to admit that the experiment had not answered the expectations of its projectors as yet, and to express his fear that it would ultimately result in failure. The negroes, he has discovered, are unable to provide for themselves, they seem, as he says, to require a guiding and directing hand, and to be entirely deficient in forethought and settled purpose. The men who are in health no sooner find the warm weather at hand than they leave their homes to "work out," either as barbers, or boot blacks, or waiters, or in some other way, and do not return to their families in the winter. This is the very reason when they could most probably labor on their land; but their sole ambition seems to be to obtain some light employment where no thought of the morrow is needed, and where they can earn a little money without hard work.

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THE REFUGEE HOME SOCIETY. The society bearing this name is the principal association in Essex county for the attempted settlement of escaped slaves. Its professed object is "to assist the refugees from American slavery to obtain permanent homes in Canada, and to promote their moral, social, physical and intellectual elevation."

It is evident from the character that the American British Land Association is in effect, if not directly, a part and parcel of the Underground Railroad, as charged by the Detroit Free Press; for it offers special inducements to slaves of the United States to escape from the South to the British possessions in Canada. It will be seen also that as a speculation it is not entirely destitute of Yankee shrewdness. Not only are the lands purchased likely to yield eventually a good profit, but year after year the society, in the garb of charity and philanthropy, goes begging about and never returns without well filled pockets. The Rev. C. Foote, of Canada, the General Agent of the society, is a sturdy beggar, and has within a few days past been playing his vocation in Philadelphia and other cities, soliciting aid from the society, and boasting of its connection with old Ossawatimie Brown. As the directors of the "Refugee Home" deny that their association is actually the grand western depot of the underground railroad, it is difficult to tell what they do with the funds, they thus extort from the charitable. They certainly do not spend it on the negroes in Canada, and their society professes to be, and to make the settler, "self-supporting."

With Mr. Rennie I went over the settlement, and saw and conversed with some of the residents of the "Refugee Home" and a desolation prevades the whole place. The log houses are all badly constructed and dirty inside. A large chimney occupies one side of each house, and the big logs crackle and blaze cheerfully enough; but the smoke does not add to the cleanliness of the room or its inmates. In a majority of the houses the deficiency of chairs is supplied by logs or boxes, or any article that happens in the way, or is the easiest attainable. The children—of course there is a good supply of them—are badly clothed and slovenly, and the poultry and all dumb animals appear to share the sufferings of their owners. There seems to be very little idea of an economy of work in the little improvements made upon the lots. A patch is half cleared here, and another one commenced there. Now a tree is half cut down and then left, and the destruction of a castor customer commenced. In fact, the lazy, shiftless character of the "free negro" is seen in every direction. There are of course some few exceptions—some instances where the settler shows energy and perseverance—but these cases are not more than three or four out of a collection of over one hundred and fifty families, numbering over one thousand souls.

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