Native agency in British West Africa: the development of an idea 1835-65, with special reference to Sierra Leone

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ABSTRACT

The failure of the Niger Expedition of 1841 and renewed consciousness of the health hazards of West Africa led, in the early 1840's, to a revival of the concept of native agency - that is, the idea that Africans should be trained to undertake responsibility for their own affairs, so that European lives could be spared. The development of this concept, discussed by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton in 'The Slave Trade' in 1840, was carried out most vigorously by the major British missionary societies in Sierra Leone, the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) and the Wesleyan Missionary Society (W.M.S.), and, to a lesser extent, by succeeding governments.

Henry Venn, at C.M.S., put emphasis on education and, while the Fourah Bay Institution was remodelled, a new Grammar School was opened in Freetown. In the next decade, a Normal School was founded, experiments took place in cotton growing and boys were sent for naval training, to learn various trades, and into medical training in Britain. In the 1850's and early 1860's, Venn turned to the organisation of the Native Pastorate, an African-run Anglican church, inaugurated in 1861.

The Wesleyans, working throughout British West Africa, had continued to encourage primary education and had set up their own college at King Tom's Point in Sierra Leone. A few Africans came

to England for training, but most learnt the job of teaching or preaching in Africa and, throughout this period, a vigorous African church and education system thrived, sometimes to the dismay of individual missionaries.

The government's contribution to education was smaller and concentrated more on formulating policy and encouraging existing mission-based work than on setting up institutions of their own. The Select Committee of 1865 made clear the unwillingness of many officials to spend money on West Africa and pointed out the advances made over the preceding thirty years. Their conclusion was that native agency should soon make it possible for Britain to abandon responsibility for most of West Africa altogether.

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INTRODUCTION

If there is one common denominator amongst the many attitudes towards African enterprise in the nineteenth century, it can probably be summed up in Dr. Johnson's epigram on women preaching; it was not so much amazing that they could do a thing well as that they could do it at all. For those, like Henry Venn at C.M.S., who longed to see Africans developing their potential, this was a source of pleasure and encouragement: to the denigrators of the African, like Sir Richard Burton, it was a cause for cynical amusement.

The attitude of almost everyone was paternalistic, whether they delighted in what they saw or not. Much of this paternalism sprang from the sense of superiority engendered in Britain by the growth of industry and, with it, the increase in wealth and trade. The possession of a vast network of trading stations and the steady growth of informal empire brought a self-confidence which made it easy to assume that Africans could not develop without European - and preferably British - help. The fact that much of this power and wealth was based on the slave trade, even though Britain had abandoned it in 1808, lent the added impulse of guilt to the cause of aiding Africans and settling them on the road to ordered self-government and prosperity.[1]

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[1] For more general discussion of British attitudes see J.Gallagher and R.Robinson: "Africa and the Victorians". Chapter I.

Another source of paternalism lay in the failure of Europeans to appreciate the nature of the tribal societies with which they were dealing. West Africa had no clearly documented history in the sense in which European historians understood the term: hearsay evidence was mistrusted largely because it was not understood and this can be said too of most archaeological and topographical data. Too many Europeans, both those who visited the coast and those who merely pontificated at home, failed to appreciate the complexity of African tribal government. They assumed that African society was 'simple' because they knew little about it and could not describe what they knew in terms of European parliamentary traditions. Since most tribal groups indulged in slavery, they could claim that African government was wicked and corrupt. The organization involved in running the slave trade or maintaining power over scattered tribal areas was negated in their minds by the fact that this organization involved death and cruel punishments and even wars.

It was thus clear that Africans needed to learn from Europeans how to be orderly and law abiding: they needed the civilising influence of European culture and the economic boost which would come from combining to run model farms and learning trades. This could best be done, in an area of Africa where few Europeans wanted to settle, by training Africans to train each other - that is, by the use of

African or native agency. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the development of this idea on the thirty years or so between the preparations for the Niger Expedition of 1841 and the Select Committee on West Africa of 1865. Most attention will be given to Sierra Leone, since it was here that native agency, as Europeans saw it, could best be expected to flourish. By 1835, Sierra Leone had been in existence for over forty-five years; the steady influx of freed slaves after 1808 provided a disorientated and grateful population who should be malleable in the hands of their British benefactors.[1]

It was, however, to Africans outside British territory that Sir Thomas Powell Buxton turned his attention when, freed from the demands of parliament in 1837, he began to work on the apparent failure of British efforts to stop the slave trade. His ideas were expressed in a series of privately printed pamphlets and published books between August 1838 and 1840, the two sections eventually forming one volume, 'The Slave Trade: A Remedy'. His concern was with slaving in the area of the River Niger and the failure of the naval squadron, set up to waylay slave ships setting out on the Middle Passage, to do its job. "No-one possessing any knowledge or anxiety

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[1] See P.Curtin: "The Image of Africa" (1965) for a most stimulating description of nineteenth century attitudes towards W. Africa.

on the subject of the Negro race, can fail to lament most deeply the present state of Africa", he wrote in 1838.[1] His remedy involved the diversion of British energies to the establishment of legitimate trade in these areas to undercut the slave trade. Like so many writers on Africa, he produced extensive and enthusiastic evidence of its great resources. Europeans could confidently expect to find a wide range of animals, many species of timber, and such sundries as iron, sugar cane, cotton, tea, indigo, gold dust and coffee. He described Africa as the future "emporium of the world for most, if not all of these articles."[2]

Africa must not, in Buxton's opinion, rely for salvation from the slave trade solely on the efforts of British naval ships, but on the development of its own resources and its resources consisted not only of minerals and foodstuffs, but of people who should be educated and trained to run an orderly society, marked by culture and civilisation. "You will do little," he said in 1838, "unless you elevate the native mind."[3] Once Africans had been thoroughly civilised, Europeans could safely withdraw knowing that the slave trade would not revive and that a stable and orderly society would remain. The old methods, devoted to persuading European powers to refrain from the

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[1] T.F.Buxton: "The Slave Trade" 1838. Preface.

[2] Ibid. p.131.

[3] Ibid. p.199.

slave trade for moral reasons, were merely scratching the surface of a problem which was deeply rooted in African culture.

These ideas were, of course, not new, but they provoked the publication of a series of pamphlets by those who disagreed with Buxton's approach. Not everyone was as willing as the Humanitarians to accept the burden of guilt for the slave trade. "The miseries and wrongs of Africa are strictly speaking almost wholly her own"[1] was the opinion of James M'Queen. He agreed, as did almost everyone, that Africa needed European intelligence, capital and industry, but he looked to agriculture as the main hope in any movement to help Africa. Commerce must follow agriculture and be based on goods which require hard work - and not just on natural products which would grow without cultivation and merely needed to be gathered by 'lazy' Africans. M'Queen of course supported the Niger Expedition and contributed to it some of his own ideas,[2] but since he asserted that "Great Britain has done much and accomplished nothing for Africa"[3] it seemed unlikely that he would support expensive philanthropic schemes of the Exeter Hall variety. Robert Jamieson, writing in 1840, questioned the basic premise of Buxton's argument, namely that there

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[1] James M'Queen: "A Geographical Survey of Africa". 1840 p.xlvii.

[2] For details of the incorporation of these ideas see C.H.J. Vol. x. No.1 J.Gallagher. "Fowell Buxton and the New Africa Policy".

[3] James M'Queen op. cit. p.lxiv.

was any slave trade on the Niger anyway. He claimed that legitimate trade was growing there already, presumably without official governmental interference. He contended that commerce should precede agriculture and that no benefit would accrue from the settlement of areas in the interior. The stagnation of Sierra Leone and the growth of the Liverpool-Biafra trade served to show that British settlement did not necessarily bring economic prosperity and that trade often thrived where the British had no settlement at all. Private individuals should therefore be left to trade without government interference. In any case, tribal society was far more complicated than most Europeans realised and it would be impossible for a small team of white administrators to stamp out all the varying shades of slavery and serfdom in any area they settled. As far as Jamieson was concerned, any philanthropic ventures should concentrate on territory further south than Biafra and Benin, in areaa south of the equator where the slave trade was still rife.[1]

In 1841, Jamieson made a further appeal against the expedition by now basing his argument on the ignorance amongst the organisers of the area to which they were going. Once again, he questioned the statistical evidence on which Buxton had based his plea, likening the whole thing to a Quixotic tilting at windmills.[2] W.R.Greg, appeared

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[1] R.Jamieson. "An appeal to the Government." (1840).

[2] R.Jamieson. "A further appeal." (1841).

to be more charitable towards the Humanitarians in his contribution to the controversey in 1840, but nevertheless referred to Buxton's "warm heart and cloudy understanding"[1] and made it clear that while Buxton's ideas came from the best of motives, they would bring results very different from those he envisaged. "Governments," he claimed, "are notoriously the worst merchants in the world"[2] and should keep out of trade. The hurry being displayed by Buxton and his supporters in the Cabinet, referred to as a "frantic spirit" was summed up in Lord John Russell's ignorance "of all moral fear; there is nothing he would not undertake".[3] To Greg, the root of the problem of slavery was the continuing demand for slaves in the Americas. No amount of warm-hearted philanthropy was going to overcome the problem by concentrating on the African end of the trade.

Much of this was of course retracing well-worn arguments, but Buxton can claim not only to have brought them to the attention of a generally sympathetic Colonial Office, but to have popularised for the general public the idea that "the Bible and the plough" could civilise Africa and end the slave trade. It is doubtful whether any of the previous developments in the recent history of West Africa or the ideas of those who wrote about Africa received the attention to which

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[1] W.R.Greg: "Past and present efforts for the extinction of the Slave Trade." (1840) p.18.

[2] Ibid. p.24.

[3] Ibid. footnote p.46.

those of Buxton were treated in the late 1830's. The use of these ideas - plus some of those of M'Queen - in the 1841 Niger Expedition, the publicity given to them by the Humanitarians and the great meetings at Exeter Hall all turned attention to Africa. Even the failure of the expedition, which was such a blow to Buxton himself and which ended the brief enthusiasm of the Cabinet for such schemes, underlined in the European death toll the very point which Buxton had made - that African advancement must come through its own people.[1]

To none were these facts more obvious than to those actually working in Africa in these years of the nineteenth century. The European community in the settled areas like Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast forts consisted of colonial administrators, missionaries and a few traders. It is probable that in the mid-thirties most administrators saw themselves as indispensable, though the founders of Sierra Leone had not thought so: the missionaries, however, had always hoped to see an African run church emerging and even if their vision had faded somewhat as they compared their own standards with what appeared to them to be lower ones in the purely African Free churches, most of them were willing to concede that their own task

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[1]For discussion on some prevalent attitudes see H.Temperley: British Antislavery. 1833-70 (1972) chap. 3.

was to fit the church to organise its own affairs. Since, because of their particular position in African society, they probably did most to forward native agency, it is to these missionary societies that we shall turn first.

CHAPTER I

In December, 1838, Frederick Bultmann, a missionary with C.M.S. sent in the obligatory quarterly journal of his work in the village of Charlotte. In it he raised the question of extending the work of C.M.S. to other states without hampering the efforts already being made in the small settlement which then comprised Sierra Leone. Using the expression 'native agency' which had been almost absent from C.M.S. West African correspondence for several years, he suggested that native schoolmasters should be given sole charge of their schools, with a few Europeans superintending the work but doing no more than that. He calculated that if Fourah Bay and Freetown were to have one catechist and one clergyman each, only ten Europeans would be required to forward the whole missionary enterprise in the colony. The problem of Sunday services would naturally be raised, but, as Bultmann pointed out, these were irregular anyway because of the frequent illness of the European missionaries. Reliable natives could surely instruct the people. Bultmann admitted doubts about the extension of any work done by Europeans too far outside the colony - supposing that native agency made this possible - because this would place them even further from medical aid than many of them already were, but perhaps Africans could be used here too. He advised an increase in the numbers at the Fourah Bay Institution as well as the

highest possible standards for those being accepted to train there.[1]

This journal would probably have been received in London by May, 1839. In the previous month, Dandeson Coates, the Lay Secretary at C.M.S., had sent to the Rev. G.Kissling in Sierra Leone a copy of Buxton's book on the slave trade which had recently been published and which contained the ideas behind the Niger Expedition on which C.M.S. was to set its hopes for expansion in West Africa. Kissling was told to read the book and pass it on to four other missionaries, Young, Weeks, Schön and Warburton first, and then to the whole missionary community.[2] On July 1st, Coates wrote to Kissling, commenting on Bultmann's ideas . He agreed that native agency was vital if extension was to take place and saw too the importance of Fourah Bay as a source of native agents.[3] Neither of these was a particularly original idea, but they had been allowed to lapse and Coates wanted further discussion on the subject. The local committee in Sierra Leone considered Bultmann's ideas in August and decided that the greatest obstacle to immediate expansion was the lack of native teachers, a problem first stated, as far as anyone could remember, by the Rev. C.Haensel in 1829.

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[1] Church Missionary Society papers (C.M.S.) CA1/M8 25.12.38 Bultmann's Journal.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L3 12.4.39 Coates to Kissling.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L3 1.7.39 Coates to Kissling.

They proposed to increase the responsibilities of the more advanced native schoolmasters and encourage the District Visitor system, begun in Hastings in the spring of that year to encourage lay Africans to help in the visiting of the parish.[1] The minutes of this meeting were read to the Parent Committee in November[2] and, a week later, Coates wrote to Kissling to pass on their opinions. They considered that extension could not take place until,"through the Divine blessing, a body of pious, intelligent, well-taught, steady Native Teachers" could be found and trained. However, it was a good time for expansion. The number of missionaries in Sierra Leone was quite high: the idea of a native agency and the intended despatch of the Niger Expedition would make further extension possible.[3]

This revival of interest in the concept of native agency had sprung partly out of a desire to see missionary work extended, but also out of the increasingly difficult situation in which the missionaries in Sierra Leone felt themselves to be working. They were living under pressures of poor health, lack of money and inadequate numbers and it is worth examining these before going

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M8 21.8.39 Minutes of Special Meeting.
C.M.S. CA1/M8 25.3.39 Graf's Journal
21.8.39 Minutes of Special Meeting.

[2] C.M.S. Minutes No.18 13.11.39.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L3 20.11.39 Coates to Kissling.

on to look at the development of the idea of an educated native agency as a possible answer to these problems.

Poor health was certainly the difficulty of which the missionaries complained most.[1] Their quarterly journals almost always reported some period of sickness or a general feeling of lassitude which made work difficult. If the missionary was not ill himself, his wife's poor health might still limit his ability to get on with his work. Between 1837 and 1843, twelve of the C.M.S. community died and almost everyone was forced to come home for a time because of ill health. In July, 1838, William Thomsom, the C.M.S. linguist, complained in a letter to the secretaries, "What removals by death and what changes have taken place in this mission since I joined it in twenty-nine,[2] "but there was worse to come in the following years. It seemed that, no matter how many fresh recruits the society sent out to Sierra Leone, the number of missionaries fit enough to carry out their work would remain the same. In the summer of 1840, James Beale summed up the situation in his journal - "A little while ago, we were all exhilerated with seeing so many come to the help of the Lord, but alas, how painfully has the scale been turned.[3]" In the preceding six months, four

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[1] For a helpful discussion on disease in West Africa see P.Curtin: "The image of Africa". Chapters 7 and 14.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M8 23.7.38 Thomson to Secretaries of C.M.S.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M9 24.6.40 Beale's Journal.

missionaries had died, three had gone home and almost everyone had been ill.[1]

Between the spring of 1838 and the summer of 1840, the sickness reached its peak and in some villages, European missionary work was brought to a standstill. Yellow fever had reappeared in the colony in 1837 and this added to the wide variety of diseases to which Europeans were liable. They complained of 'intermittent fever', presumably malaria, which might continue in recurrent form for several months, or from such troubles as rheumatism, stomach disorders, heat-stroke and mental illness. It was assumed that new arrivals would go down with 'acclimatizing fever' soon after reaching the colony and this was correctly presumed to build up some resistance to later attacks of sickness. However, this was not the case with Mr and Mrs Reynolds who died of their first fever within three weeks of arriving in Sierra Leone in December, 1841.[2]

Medical supplies were not always adequate. In February, 1838, Henry Stedman who was suffering from yellow fever had to write home to ask for a medicine chest as he had no supplies of his own[3] and in

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[1] Numerous letters but see C.M.S. CA1/M9 6.6.40 Smith to Secretaries.

[2] Numerous letters and journals but see
C.M.S. CA1/M8 13.7.38 Townsend to Secretaries
8.3.39 Medical certificate
CA1/M9 7.4.40 Schön to Secretaries
CA1/M10 1.1.42 Peyton to Reynolds

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M8 10.2.38 Stedman to the Lay Secretary.

September, 1839, the local committee asked the parent committee if a doctor could be employed to attend all missionaries, including those who lived at a distance from Freetown.[1] As it took three and a half hours to travel the fourteen miles from the village of Hastings to Freetown, it is not surprising that many missionaries felt themselves to be beyond medical aid and hoped for a doctor who would travel round the colony, rather than relying on the West Indian, Dr William Fergusson, who stayed in Freetown and expected new missionaries to be stationed nearby while they became acclimatised.[2]

The missionaries did not give up under the situation in which they found themselves and tried to find answers to their problems within the confines of the colony. Kent was used as a place for recovery because it was thought to be more healthy than inland areas and was visited by several missionaries in an effort to avoid the long, expensive journey home to Europe. Others went beyond Kent, to the Bananas Islands, though this failed to save the life of Mrs Weeks early in 1839.[3] Life seemed to be precarious, to say the least, and Nathaniel Denton who saw four of those who had accompanied him to Sierra Leone die, stated gloomily, after a visit to the grave of

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M8 28.9.39 Minutes of Special Meeting.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M8 6.3.38 Fergusson to Kissling.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M8 27.12.38 Kissling to Secretaries.
15.1.39 Kissling to Secretaries.

Mrs Kissling, "I fear that the probability is almost as great that by another quarter I may be numbered among the dead as among the living."[1]

That morale was generally low was shown by some of the petty arguments which broke out amongst the missionaries. Areas of work and authority do not seem to have been clearly defined and there were bitter arguments about the division of duties, some even reaching the parent committee at home for arbitration. For a few missionaries, financial pressures were added to those of health. In the mid-thirties, a married missionary received £300 a year and a catechist £200. Single men could expect between £150 and £250.[2] This was apparently adequate as long as there were no unusual expenses, but visits home could put the missionary in real difficulty. The term of service was four to six years and almost everyone had to pay at least one visit home during this time, at his own expense. William Young, who was forced to go home in 1836, was still in debt as a result of this visit some three years later and, despite loans from the society, continued to find it impossible to support his family. He claimed that the pressures of this situation had "so far operated on my mind that both my health and usefulness have suffered materially."[3]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M9 25.6.40 Denton's Journal.

[2] C.M.S. Minutes No.14. 23.6.35 Expenditure on the W.Africa Mission.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M8 25.12.38 Young's Journal.

As a result of the problems facing the missionary community, church activity was severely limited. Work begun was not always sure to be continued and would almost certainly suffer from frequent changes of personnel. Periods of less than a year in one place were common. The ideal pattern would have been to have an ordained missionary and a catechist in each C.M.S. village, but this was impossible to maintain and, even if men were present in a village, they might be prevented from carrying out their duties by recurrent ill health. In 1835, the parent committee suggested that missionaries should be resident in one village, but responsible for more than one, travelling round to conduct services and inspect schools.[1] This became the accepted pattern in times of emergency, with Sunday services sometimes worked on a rota system. However, this in itself put a strain on those remaining and increased the likelihood of ill health. Since men were going home for ordination and to marry, as well as for reasons of health, the only solution seemed to be constantly to reshuffle workers, despite the distress this caused. It might mean removing a man like James Schön from a piece of specialist work on the Sherbro language or putting great strain on one missionary in order to keep as many places open as possible, but there seemed to be no alternative as long as Europeans were seen as indispensable.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M7 13.5.35 Minutes of Special Meeting.

Even when this was done, some villages had to be abandoned. Althrough three of the inhabitants of Kent wrote to ask for a missionary in 1835, they remained without one until Schön and Croley went there in December, 1837.[1] By then, Ebenezer Collins had had to leave Wellington and there was no-one to replace him there. By the summer of 1840, when sickness had decimated the mission, there was no-one resident at Gloucester or Charlotte and it looked as though Bultmann, who was now in Kent, might have to leave to take Mrs Bultmann home.[2] Those remaining at these times of crisis felt decidedly vulnerable. "What sickness and death may do during another rainy season we cannot tell," Weeks had written in February, 1839.[3]

Certain posts had to be staffed, but there was no guarantee of continuity and one of the complaints about Fourah Bay voiced by Kissling in 1841 was that there had been twelve different principals in thirteen years.[4] While Fourah Bay was kept open at all costs, however, the mission had had to close Freetown School in June, 1835,

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M7 8.5.35 Three men of Kent to Raban.
18.5.35 Raban to Secretaries
CA1/M8 10.1.38 Kissling to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M9 14.7.40 Weeks to Secretaries.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M8 22.2.39 Weeks, Minutes of Missionary Committee.

[4] C.M.S. CA1/M9 12.5.41 Kissling to Secretaries.

because they had not the staff to carry it on. As preparations for the Niger Expedition began, the staffing of the rest of the mission became more difficult and this was made worse by the beginning of the Temne Mission under the erratic leadership of William Thomson. Warburton was so concerned about this problem in February, 1841, that he wrote "earnestly and respectfully" to entreat his superiors in London to take action. He pointed out that Schön, Samuel Crowther, Christian Schlenker and Nathaniel Denton were already preoccupied with new work. Three others, Haastrup, Schmid and Jones were being prepared for the hoped-for Niger Mission and four others were expecting to go home in the next year.[1] In the event, they had to wait ten months for reinforcements and these included the Reynolds, who died within a month of arrival.

Another problem which taxed the missionaries was the lack of Christian women to teach African girls and set standards for African women. Of the twelve Europeans who died between 1837 and 1843, eleven were women and though some missionaries remarried, most remained alone at their stations. Mrs Kissling viewed with enthusiasm the prospect of having Samuel Crowther's daughter to work in the mission schools, but the problem remained that many village Africans did not

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M9 5.2.41 Warburton to Secretaries.

see missionary families. Most children had to be left behind in Europe when they were two or three years of age and in many villages the missionary lived a solitary and, in African eyes, an abnormal life.

All these problems appeared to combine in the late 1830's to put great pressure on the C.M.S. community, but it must be emphasised that none of these problems was new. The death rate amongst missionaries and their wives had always been high. There had been regular epidemics in the colony and it was well known that Europeans were particularly vulnerable. Of those who expressed their fears of illness in the late thirties a remarkably high proportion survived and were still alive and working in Sierra Leone some fifteen years later. Most of the senior missionaries of the early 1850's had arrived in the colony during this period of apparent crisis between 1838 and 1840. Many had been seriously ill themselves and seen their wives die and they clearly felt themselves to be under almost intolerable pressures and ready to grasp at any solution which would save the lives of Europeans.

This can probably only be explained in terms of an infectious sense of hysteria. Many of the missionaries were very young, most only in their twenties. Many lost young wives during this period of epidemic and suffered from severe illness, perhaps for the first time in their lives. The publication of Judge Rankin's book, 'The White

Man's Grave', in 1836, may have had its effect, for it would surely have been read by many young men training at Islington to come out to Sierra Leone. The discovery that much of what he said was true may well have contributed to the sense of panic evident in so many letters and journals, the feeling that Sierra Leone was no more than a "land of sickness and death." As Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton had written in 1838, "Africa has a bad name: its climate is represented as pestilential and destructive of human life."[1] If missionary work was to continue and expand, there seemed little hope that Europeans could ever make a large numerical contribution to the task.

It would be wrong to suggest that the missionaries in Sierra Leone or the parent committee at home turned immediately to native agency as a solution in the late 1830's. To a surprising extent in a colony where Africans were already holding responsibility, the missionaries had appeared at times to be trying every other avenue. One of them pointed out in 1835 that "At the present moment, it is true, no principle but that of faith seems to yield us any encouragement in devising any new plan however limited in extent."[2] William Jowett sympathised with the missionaries in their frequent illnesses and reminded them of the value of sickness in keeping them dependent

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[1] T.F. Buxton "The Slave Trade" (1838) p.117.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M7 18.5.35 Raban to Secretaries.

on God, but he saw no practical solution to the annual bouts of fever. It was Dandeson Coates, the Lay Secretary since 1830 and a man with "first-rate powers of business"[1], who approached the question in a more dynamic fashion and was responsible for much of the development of ideas, both in Sierra Leone and at home.

Despite a reduction in tours of service from six years to four - agreed after long discussion in 1836 - European health and mortality did not improve. Even four years in the West African climate was more than most Europeans could stand. By 1838, when the period of epidemic was beginning, individual missionaries were starting to try their own experiments in persuading Africans to take more responsibility and showing that they themselves were turning back to the old idea of using the resources available to them in their own African congregations. John Weeks saw the children in the mission schools as "little auxilliary missionaries", reading their Bibles to their parents and thus doing some of the work attempted by Europeans. Some of the more experienced missionaries who knew the Africans well called on them to speak briefly at meetings. In 1838, Kissling appointed the senior student at Fourah Bay as a teaching monitor a practice fairly common in England, so that Kissling himself could manage all his duties, which seem to have included the colonial chaplaincy. As Bultmann was making his suggestions about native agency

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[1] Henry Venn quoted in E.Stock "History of the C.M.S." (1899) p.252.

in his journal in December, 1838, Graf was about to initiate his District Visitor system in Hastings, "all to render the labour of Europeans more extended."[1] The parish was to be divided into sections and reliable natives allocated areas for visiting. However, as Weeks had admitted in 1835 - and many missionaries were to state in the next few years - there was no question of the church in any village being left to run its own affairs. The Africans still relied on European presence and did not want the missionaries to go. Any concept of native agency in missionary minds at this stage was hedged about with many conditions.

This concept was of course already implicit in much of the development of the mission in Sierra Leone, even if discussion on the subject had lapsed. The combination of a strong desire for extension beyond the colony and a sense of deep concern at the high casualty rate amongst Europeans in such an unhealthy climate was sufficient to revive interest in native agency both in London and in Sierra Leone. When these factors combined with official interest in Africa and the lengthy preparations for the Niger Expedition of 1841, it is not surprising that native agency appeared to be almost a universal panacea and went forward with added impetus.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M8 25.3.39 Graf's Journal.

CHAPTER II

It was not, of course, just a case of introducing native agency in Sierra Leone, but also of extending it and developing principles on which the work could be based in the future. Questions of the status of African workers, their pay and their position within C.M.S. needed to be clarified, many of them by trial and error. The parent committee at home and those in Sierra Leone were enthusiastic and generally determined to make this a successful means of solving their own problems, though they probably failed to see the long-term effects it would have on the new class of Africans they were training.

The source of native assistants was the Christian Institution at Fourah Bay. Moved to Fourah Bay in 1827 to train African youths as mission teachers, by 1835 it had eleven students. It sent out workers into the mission schools as assistants to the Europeans and, as its numbers grew in the years after 1837, C.M.S. could hope for increasing help. Among its past students were John Attarra and Samuel Crowther, both of whom showed powers of leadership in the church, but it also supplied a number of educated Africans who went out into other jobs in the colony, many of them making a good living and forming a new educated class.

Once the initial impetus had been given by the discussions in the parent committee and in Sierra Leone in 1839, the idea of

native agency became increasingly popular amongst the missionaries. Fourah Bay would of course be expected to expand. Its numbers were already rising steadily, despite the lack of accommodation, and successive principals hammered out their ideas as to what its functions should be. There were no school regulations when Graf suggested the idea in August, 1840. In the following May, Kissling, who was at home, discussed with the secretaries some of the difficulties Fourah Bay was facing and put forward his own suggestions, adding more ideas two months later which might help the Institution to be more useful.[1] When Graf's ideas were received at home, Kissling recorded his opinion on these too. Coates and Henry Venn, by now working with C.M.S., added their opinions to those of the missionaries and two years later in 1843 a set of regulations was produced.[2] The proposal by the secretaries at home to put up further the number of students was greeted with enthusiasm by the missionaries, since they themselves had discussed the idea. "It is absolutely necessary to do so before it will answer the ends for which it is established, "Schön had written as he was about to set out on the Niger Expedition in June, 1841.[3].

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M9 4.8.40 Graf to Secretaries.
12.5.41 Kissling to
20.7.41 Lay Secretary.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L3 12.4.43 Secretaries to Warburton.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M9 26.6.41 Schon to Lay Secretary.

Increased numbers would mean at least one more European on the staff: it would also make it imperative to build a bigger school. An African Native Agency Committee was formed in England, with the idea of working through existing missionary societies and putting up money for some of the extra students at Fourah Bay. Plans and estimates were prepared and, in June, 1844, the committee instructed that building should begin at the end of the rainy season.[1]

Despite the enthusiasm for Fourah Bay as the main source of native assistants, developments there were not really moving very fast. This was due to a number of causes, some practical and some concerned with the whole question of what native agency meant and what precedents should be established for the future. Initially, the missionaries were not at all sure that the Christian Institution should remain in Sierra Leone at all. Frequent changes of principal, occassioned by ill health, made steady discipline and consistant development difficult. C.M.S. was thinking of opening a training school in Malta for its agents in Egypt. Kissling suggested that the mission should take ten to fifteen "well-behaved and promising African youths" into such a school and train them, well away from the temptations of home. The secretaries at home did not accept

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[1] C.M.S. Minutes No.23 11.6.44.

this suggestion, but hoped that the appointment of the Rev. Edward Jones, with his African heritage and experience in the West Indies, would solve the health problem.[1] For this reason, C.M.S. decided to keep the Institution at Fourah Bay.

The impetus to provide new buildings was given by this decision in December, 1841. If the institution was to remain in Sierra Leone, something must be done about the buildings. The fact that the schoolroom had just had to be abandoned and that the students were suffering much discomfort made rebuilding urgent. In March, 1842, Coates and Davies, another of the C.M.S. secretaries, wrote to Warburton to say that entire new buildings would have to be erected if C.M.S. plans were to be carried out.[2] These new buildings were bound to be expensive and, since the mission could not raise the £2,000 they thought necessary from their regular funds, they took advantage of the current wave of interest in Africa and launched an appeal, including a copy of it in Schön's journal of the Niger Expedition. This was a time when the mission was trying to raise money for its new mission in China and was facing severe financial difficulties. It was not a moment to regard lightly expenditure on a costly building.

As a result, the parent committee were not likely to accept uncritically the first plan and estimates presented to them. In fact,

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M9 12.5.41 Kissling to Lay Secretary
CA1/L3 22.12.41 Venn and Coates to Warburton.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L3 23.3.42 Coates and Davies to Warburton.

they spent two years considering the question, listening to ideas both from Sierra Leone and from experts at home. From both came the suggestion of a cast iron building, but this was rejected on the advice of a merchant who traded regularly with West Africa.[1] Late in 1843, the local committee in Sierra Leone formed a sub-committee to prepare estimates, but it was another year before the money was put into the hands of Thomas Peyton and John Weeks and instructions were given to go ahead. Even then, the committee told the missionaries that the plans drawn up for Fourah Bay were to be abandoned, because they would cost between five and six thousand pounds to carry out. Instead, they were to erect the buildings planned for a proposed Grammar School, which might be put up for £4,000, and use these for the Christian Institution. The Grammar School would have to be housed elsewhere and since the Chief Justice's house was to be sold in the spring of 1845, the committee offered the suggestion that C.M.S. might try to buy it for a reasonable price.[2]

The expansion of Fourah Bay was also held up by the lack of clarity as to what the Institution was meant to be doing. There were various opinions on the purpose of the education given and on the type of curriculum suitable for Africans. When Schön wrote as early as August, 1836, that "all practicable means should be employed in the

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[1] C.M.S. Minutes No.22 8.8.43.

[2] C.M.S. Minutes No.23 8.10.44.

Christian Institution in training up native youths for the service of the Mission",[1] he was reflecting the hopes of most of the missionaries. The reality, however, was different. There were many other ways of making a living apart from going into a mission school and Fourah Bay was producing merchants and government school teachers, as well as native assistants. This was a desirable result for the colony, but it put a considerable strain on what was a very small college. Fourah Bay even had to watch its ex-students going off to be itinerant preachers with the Dissenters, because they did not require ordination. Newly-qualified men were soon married and then had little chance of further training, so what the Institution could offer them was a matter of some importance.

In August, 1840, Graf had made the suggestion that C.M.S. should establish a Grammar School in Freetown, presumably to leave the Christian Institution free to train mission workers. He had already put forward the idea of a separate boys' school to give practical training.[2] Samuel Crowther and John Attarra wrote in the same month to point out that, grateful as they were for their own education at Fourah Bay, they felt that the next generation needed something better. They offered to send their sons to Europe as guinea pigs in an experiment to see whether Africans could stand the European climate and be educated there.[3]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M7 2.8.36 Schön to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M9 4.8.40 Graf to Secretaries.
CA1/M8 24.6.39 Graf to Secretaries.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M9 17.8.40 Crowther and Attarra to Missionary Committee.

The committee in London thought that Christian children should stay in the colony and promised to "place the Fourah Bay Institution on such a footing as would secure that advantage for them."[1] If this was going to be done, they must decide what were the aims of the Institution and what provision C.M.S. could make for more general education in the colony. This discussion, which was dominated by Kissling, was lengthy. It was, moreover, merely the extension of a dialogue which had been going on amongst the missionaries for some years about the purpose of Fourah Bay.

The main question was the nature of the education required. Should it be "solid" and, presumably, old-fashioned or more up-to-date? Kissling and the Secretaries favoured the traditional type of education and dismissed Graf's ideas about new methods of teaching in favour of the old habit of rote-learning. Graf wanted more give and take between the teacher and his pupil and hoped to end the teaching of subjects which were not relevant to the Africans, for example, the learning of endless names in Geography. Kissling claimed that question-and-answer methods would not work in some subjects, but agreed that written questions might be set at the end of a lesson. He also rejected any idea of combining subjects, such as History and Geography as too complicated for Africans. He considered that regular

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[1] C.M.S. Minutes No.19 12.1.41.

quarterly examinations for the monitors should be continued and that Fourah Bay should be inspected in rather the same way as the Islington Institution at home. The Parent Committee should be more closely connected with Fourah Bay than it was, watching over such details as the curriculum and choice of textbooks. The students should keep journals, just as the missionaries did, for regular despatch to London.

This would not have suited Graf, who had already said that the principal must not only have time to do his job properly, but must also be free of interference and able to set his own standards. Since Kissling was trying to solve the problems of frequent changes of principal by setting objective standards which could be maintained by different personalities, he naturally ignored Graf's ideas and put the ultimate responsibility on the more permanent committee at home.

Kissling also made suggestions about the Institution's curriculum. It made few allowances for African interests. The English language and English classics headed the list of subjects, which included Church History, Arithmetic and Geography, as well as singing, which was apparently popular with the Africans. Graf had wanted more scope for drawing, but this was not evident in Kissling's suggestions. However, Kissling did admit that the recent introduction

of Latin into the course of study had not been too successful, an opinion with which the Parent Committee agreed.[1]

The existing curriculum at Fourah Bay was as irrelevant as that put forward by Kissling. Jones was teaching the history of Rome, giving the students chapters of the textbook to prêcis, a practice which he described as "a profitable study".[2] In Geography, they were studying Europe, and English Grammar included parsing and analysis. All these one might have expected to find in a Victorian schoolroom at home, but it is questionable whether they were suited to rural Africa. As yet, no student learnt or worked in his own language and, while Kissling suggested such books as Park's Travels and Robinson Crusoe as being of interest to Africans, he also proposed to include the works of Gray and Goldsmith.

When the regulations were finally drawn up in 1843, they stated that the aim of the Institution was "to give the native youth of the colony that Christian education which may fit them for stations of usefulness, with an especial reference to the preparation of those

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1 For the whole discussion see C.M.S. CA1/M9
12.5.41 Kissling to Lay Secretary
30.11.41 Kissling's remarks on Graf's plans
22.12.41 Venn and Coates to Warburton.

2 C.M.S. CA1/M10 25.9.42 Jones' Report.

who may be most promising for Christian teachers.[1] "They based the regulations on those of the Islington Institution, but adapted them in some respects to the needs of Sierra Leone. They stipulated that entrants must be over the age of twelve, reasonably proficient in English and Arithmetic and of a "hopeful Christian character". Their course of study was a compromise between the ideas of Graf and Kissling, with the addition of native languages and Greek on the academic side and "useful mechanical arts", agriculture and gardening on the practical side. More advanced students were to be trained in preaching and elementary theology. Students intending to teach should stay until they were eighteen. As at Islington, there was to be a committee of visitors consisting of three missionaries, who should visit once a quarter to hear a report from the principal and address the students.

A few months later, the Africa Native Agency Committee suggested the establishment of several intermediate schools to take children from the schools in the villages and give them a secular education for jobs in the colony.[2] This would free Fourah Bay for the task of purely religious education and allow it to demand higher entrance qualifications. Probably as a result of these suggestions,

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L3 12.4.43 Regulations of the Fourah Bay Institution.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L3 11.8.43 Coates to Warburton.

and those of the local committee, an amended set of regulations for Fourah Bay was published in December, 1844.[1] It raised the age of entry to sixteen and demanded of its entrants sound Biblical knowledge before they began to train. The course of instruction was not changed, except for the addition of Latin as an optional extra. By now the plans for the new building had been accepted and the Rev. Edward Jones on whom, according to Venn, C.M.S. set their "main hope for the education of a Native African ministry",[2] had established himself as principal. The new institution was to have forty students and a Grammar School was also to be founded. It was now over two years since Schön had emphasised the importance of trained native agents in his Journal of the Niger Expedition and six years since the first firm suggestions had been made both in London and Sierra Leone that the development of native agency would only be possible through the development of the Christian Institution at Fourah Bay.

The African Native Agency Committee, which had made contributions to the discussion on the purpose of the Christian Institution, also gave financial help, which must have given some impetus to the final decisions about building and organization. Its first offer was made in May, 1843 and, on the strength of this, C.M.S. planned to educate

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[1] C.M.S. Minutes No.23 31.12.44 Regulations for Fourah Bay.

[2] C.M.S. Venn papers C.31 part 3. 11.11.44 Venn to Elliott.

ten youths at Fourah Bay, and ten boys at the proposed Grammar School at the Committee's expense.[1] They expected the cost of training to be £30 a year at Fourah Bay and £20 at the Grammar School which would have meant a donation of £500. This sum was cut down, however, and, in March, 1844, the Native Agency Committee agreed to give £150 each year for the next three years.[2] C.M.S. allowed the Committee to nominate African or West Indian youths and agreed to send half-yearly reports on their progress, but they reserved the right to make the final choice of students and absolved themselves of any responsibility for arranging employment for them when they left school. The money they gave was not used for Fourah Bay, but to keep six boys at the new Grammar School when it was opened in 1845.[3]

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[1] C.M.S. Minutes No.22 23.5.43.

[2] C.M.S. Minutes No.22 16.4.44.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L3 25.10.45 Coates to Warburton.

CHAPTER III

While Fourah Bay was being prepared to produce the native agents of the future, Africans who had been there already were beginning to take a greater part in the work of the church in West Africa. There were twenty-four native assistants in C.M.S. schools in December, 1838,[1] and, as has been said above, Africans were being encouraged to take some part in the evangelistic work of the church. This work expanded only slowly, despite the revived enthusiasm of the missionaries for the concept of native agency.[2] Meanwhile, in 1841, the desire of C.M.S. to extend its efforts into other parts of West Africa and its hopes for the use of native agency were combined in the Niger Expedition. This was to show a more adventurous use of African talent than C.M.S. had tried before and to bring home to its supporters in Europe the conviction already held in Sierra Leone and Salisbury Square that native agency was vital.

While the Niger Expedition was being prepared in the spring of 1840, Schön, who had just agreed to join the expedition along with Henry Townsend, met the naval officer in charge, Captain Trotter, in London. Captain Trotter suggested that natives from Sierra Leone might be taken on the expedition.[3] Schön agreed with the idea and

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L3 3.12.40 Coates to Schön.

[2] See below, chapter V.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M9 7.4.40 Schön to Secretaries.

passed it onto the Parent Committee. In June, Coates wrote to Schön to convey their approval of the scheme. They set out instructions to be used in the choice of natives, with "piety" at the top of the list, which included intelligence and steadiness, as well as a knowledge of English and their own mother tongue.[1] This last qualification was essential in any work outside Sierra Leone, where English would not be the lingua franca that it was in the multi-lingual area around Freetown, and it was for their ability to act as interpreters that Trotter had first thought of taking Africans.

When, a year later, the three ships of the expedition arrived at Freetown, they found a group of twelve men ready to join them. Many more wanted to go too, though not all, according to Schön, for entirely altruistic reasons.[2] Captain Bird Allen, captain of the "Wilberforce", visited Fourah Bay and chose boys to go with him as engineer apprentices.[3] On the expedition, too, were Samuel Crowther, who had been chosen to replace Townsend when it was decided by the Parent Committee, in October, 1840, that he should not be included in the expedition, and Thomas King, who was chosen at the last minute to stay at the Model Farm.[4] King was a widower, so did not

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L3 12.6.40 Coates to Schön.

[2] "Journal of the Niger Expedition" J.Schön (1842) p.1 and 3.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M9 25.9.41 Bultmann's Journal.

[4] C.M.S.Minutes No.19 6.10.40 , CA1/M9 30.6.41 Minutes of Special Meeting.

have the family responsibilities which made it essential for Crowther to return to Sierra Leone as quickly as possible.

Crowther had spent the months of preparation working on the Hausa and Yoruba languages, the latter being his mother tongue. By the time he left for the Niger, he had prepared a Yoruba vocabulary and impressed Schön with his linguistic ability.[1] As the expedition progressed, Schön showed an increasing conviction that Crowther and men like him would have to be the pioneers in this part of Africa. In his journal, he mentioned a member of the Nufi tribe, Joseph Bartholomew from Sierra Leone, as a potential missionary to his own people in their low-lying, unhealthy area on the banks of the Niger around Egga.[2] "I am confirmed in my opinion," he wrote to Dandeson Coates, "that Sierra Leone, though often despised and called a complete failure, will yet become the Jerusalem of old, from which the word of God will proceed to many a benighted tribe of Africa..... I must be the more earnest in my entreaties for native agency."[3] At the same time, he saw Africans as "deficient for so great an undertaking" without European leadership.[4] He saw that the climate, diet and inaccessibility of this area of West Africa would make it at least as dangerous to European health as Sierra Leone and

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1 C.M.S. CA1/M9 March 1841 Schön's Journal, 24.7.41 Schön to Lay Secretary.

2 Schon op.cit. p.186.

3 C.M.S. CA1/M9 30.8.41 Schon to Lay Secretary.

4 C.M.S. CA1/M9 18.9.41 Schon to Lay Secretary

the increasing sickness on the expedition's ships only served to emphasise this. The fact that the local chiefs and their people listened to the native assistants who had come on the expedition and even wanted some of them to stay helped to impress on Schön the potential value of trained African evangelists,[1] but Europeans would have to take the lead. Crowther, who Schön suggested should be ordained,[2] was of the same opinion. While he was "reluctantly led to adopt the opinion that Africa can chiefly be benefited by her own children"[3] he saw no more likelihood than Schön of African leadership.

Meanwhile, Thomas King had been left at the Model Farm at Sterling Hill. His powers of leadership proved to be inadequate to deal with the twelve natives left in his care. His authority, which was not clearly defined, was shared with Ralph Moore, another African of dubious moral standards, who whipped the men to get his orders carried out and whose clerk helped himself to the Farm's supplies. The natives under King tried to do the same, as well as refusing to sleep on the ship provided for them and bringing their wives to the farm. When King tried to assert his authority, the natives threatened

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M9 16.10.41 Schön to Lay Secretary.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M9 18.9.41 Schön to Lay Secretary.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M9 2.11.41 Crowther to Secretary.

to kill him.[1] While the missionaries back in Sierra Leone thought that King had done his best, the incident showed that Africans who were going to be given responsibility would have to be chosen more carefully and strengthened the hand of those who believed that Africans could not be left to work alone.

While C.M.S. looked to the Rev. Edward Jones to forward the training of native agents at Fourah Bay, their hopes for leadership within the church centred on Samuel Crowther. During the Niger Expedition, he had taken little or no part in the signing of treaties with the chiefs since these were essentially political, but the short journal he sent back to London was regarded with almost as much interest as Schön's much more informative one. While he waited alone at Ascencion in the winter and spring of 1842 for a boat to take him home to Freetown, he opened a school on the lower deck of the "Albert". This school, which eventually attracted thirty children and young men, included seven Europeans, the sons of sailors, and Crowther later opened a Sunday School as well. In true Victorian fashion, probably copying the example of Fourah Bay, he held examinations and gave prizes.[2] These signs of African initiative pleased the local committee who wrote home in July, 1842: "Mr Crowther has conducted himself in the Mission with great propriety of conduct; diligence in the

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M10 31.5.43 Warburton to Lay Secretary.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M10 9.3.42 Crowther to Warburton.

acquirement of knowledge; and usefulness in the departments of labour in which he has been placed."[1]

Schön's suggestion that Crowther should be ordained was now taken up and he was sent to England. The ordination by the Bishop of London took place in June, 1843, and Crowther then returned to Sierra Leone in order to gain some further experience before setting out on the proposed mission to Abeokuta. As soon as he reached Sierra Leone in December, 1843, he was asked to preach in Freetown. This he did on December 3rd, the day after his arrival home and the event aroused great interest. "The novelty of seeing a native clergyman performing divine service excited great interest among all who were present," he wrote in his journal.[2]

In January, 1844, he began a service in his native Yoruba in the Kissy Road Church. This was held at four-thirty on Tuesday afternoons, just as the market was closing down and people were making their way home past the church on their way to the villages. Some three hundred Africans crowded to the church to hear Crowther speak and he then opened a small Yoruba class on Monday evenings and began visiting in the eastern suburbs of Freetown on Sundays. For three weeks in January he was put into Fourah Bay as temporary principal until the arrival of Nathaniel Denton. He had to return to this post

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M10 23.7.42 Warburton to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M11 25.12.43 Crowther's Journal.

in June, when Denton went to Regent. By this time, numbers at the Yoruba services had gone down to a more manageable hundred or so, largely because the novelty of the idea was wearing off and the pagans and Moslems were offended by Crowther's uncompromising preaching of the Christian gospel.[1]

He was working, as he had been when he arrived home in 1843, on Yoruba translations of the books of Luke and the Acts, a task which cannot have been made easier by the disruption during the year. His period at Fourah Bay was marred by pilfering of mission stores by a small group of students, which eventually had to be investigated by the local committee.[2] Crowther's immediate future was uncertain, though he knew that, when the time came, he and his family would be joining Townsend and Gollmer on the mission to Badagry and Abeokuta. By the end of 1844, they were ready and Crowther had to leave the Yoruba service in the hands of Thomas King and the work of Fourah Bay to Thomas Peyton.[3] The previous four years had shown him to be adaptable and possessed of powers of leadership. Two of the four years had been spent out of the colony, one in England

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M11
25.3.44 Crowther's Journal.
26.2.44 Crowther to Honorary Secretary.
25.6.44 Crowther's Journal.
26.6.44 Minutes of Special Meeting.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M11 10.9.44 Minutes of Special Meeting.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M11 10.12.44 Minutes of Special Meeting.

and one on the Niger. Since his return, he had worked in partnership with Europeans and shown himself able to command the attention and respect of his fellow Africans. It is not surprising that C.M.S. began to expect him to bear increasing responsibility.

Although he was the only ordained African in Sierra Leone, he was not alone in his ability to lead the local church. Individual assistants in the villages were showing themselves able to carry responsibility and C.M.S. was keen to draw out the abilities of as many of these as possible. Thomas Maxwell and George Nicholl, who had been a monitor at Fourah Bay, came to England with Jones in 1844 to study at the Islington Institution for a year. They made good progress, making a particularly good impression on Henry Venn, and set out for Freetown in October, 1845. Nicholl was to work at Fourah Bay under Jones and Peyton was to have Maxwell working with him at the new Freetown Grammar School.[1] There, they were both under European supervision, a state of affairs which most of the missionaries still regarded as almost permanent. However, in 1843, Andrew Wilhelm, an Aku or Yoruba from Hastings, was sent alone to Badagry as the vanguard of the proposed mission to Abeokuta which was not yet ready to go. The area had already been visited by Townsend, along with Wilhelm and another African from Hastings, John McCormak, in the previous year and the party had met with much enthusiasm for all

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L3
25.10.44 Coates to Warburton.
25.10.45 Coates to Warburton.

things European.[1] Townsend was sure that there was "a wide field opened by Providence for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ" in the area and advised the despatch of four missionaries to take over one of the "quarters" of Abeokuta for their work.[2]

Meanwhile in Sierra Leone, Townsend's departure for their native country had excited the Aku people and they petitioned C.M.S. for a religious teacher to take with them as they began to return to their homeland. C.M.S. could not yet send the missionary team which Townsend had recommended and were short of money, so, in December, 1843, Wilhelm was allowed to go, with the promise that Europeans would follow him in a year's time.[3] Following the pattern of the Parent Committee in London, the local committee gave Wilhelm a set of written instructions. They began with spiritual advice - "Let private prayer, reading and meditation of the Sacred Scriptures occupy a good portion of your time, every morning and evening." On the more practical side, Wilhelm was to "cultivate the favour of the chief in whose town you may take up your abode," to visit the people in their homes and hold church services twice on Sundays as well as starting a Sunday school. The instructions even advised him on a form

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[1] S.Tucker: "Abeokuta" Ch.7.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M10
31.5.43 Townsend to Local Committee in Sierra Leone.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M10
1.10.42 Aku Christians to Local Committee in Sierra Leone.
CA1/M11 1.12.43 Missionaries to King Sodeke
CA1/L3 24.12.42 Venn and Coates to Warburton.

of service and included the request that, like all C.M.S. missionaries, he should keep a journal.[1] He travelled to Yorubaland, reaching Badagry in December, 1843 and Abeokuta in January 1844, where he went to see Chief Sodeke as he had been advised. The chief had already shown interest in a combination of Christianity and trade, so Wilhelm was made welcome and was able to settle down to do his work until Townsend and his fellow missionaries arrived in July, 1846.[2]

In this party of new workers were two African catechists, William Marsh and Edward Phillips, and an interpreter, Mark Willoughby.[3] Back in Sierra Leone, the Nufi people had petitioned C.M.S. to ask if they could take one of their tribe, Joseph Bartholomew, back with them to the Niger.[4] This had, of course, been suggested by Schön in his journal of the Niger Expedition and the Nufi were probably acting on this suggestion. The Mission's objection to this idea was based, not on any doubts about Bartholomew's abilities as a worker in the colony, but on the impossibility, as they saw it, of ever opening a European-led mission in such an unhealthy area. No African, not even Crowther, was considered able to do pioneer work alone. Even Wilhelm,

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M11 N.D. Instructions to Andrew Wilhelm.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M11 4.7.44 Warburton to Secretaries.
S.Tucker: "Abeokuta" Ch.9.

[3] Ibid. Ch.7.

[4] C.M.S. CA1/M11 19.9.43 Nufi people to C.M.S.

alone in Abeokuta for two and a half years, was merely accompanying a group of well-taught Aku Christians. There is no suggestion in the instructions given to him that he was to be the pioneer builder of a new church in Abeokuta, but was simply there to keep the Aku Christians stable in their faith until the Europeans arrived to begin the real work of expansion.

That the missionaries were less than enthusiastic about an immediate abdication of their responsibilities to Africans is obvious. They would have produced many reasons for this. While the Parent Committee saw only the most hopeful Christian characters, men like Nicholl and Maxwell, coming to England for instruction, the missionary saw a less encouraging picture within the church in Sierra Leone. There were instances of bad behaviour amongst those training at Fourah Bay, where discipline was a recurring problem, no doubt made worse by cramped living conditions. Native assistants in the villages were not always reliable. While Crowther was known for his humility and readiness to take second place to the Europeans, others saw their position merely as an opportunity to increase their status in native society. Some were insubordinate to their missionary supervisors. In 1837, Joseph Sandy was moved from his position as an assistant schoolmaster and put under Schön at Hastings for three months to see if he would behave better. This clearly had little effect as Schön was forced to turn him out of his house during the following year.

Charles Moore, an African working alone at Charlotte, moved to Hastings in 1839 to work with Graf, but he refused to obey the missionary's orders. In 1843, the mission had to dismiss two African assistants for bad conduct.[1] There were no doubt other instances of disappointing behaviour which were not reported back to London and all these gave force to the argument that Africans could not work alone or take positions of unsupervised leadership.

The missionaries in Sierra Leone saw a great many practical difficulties which would have to be resolved before a viable native agency could develop. Probably more clearly than those at home, they understood that the status of these trained Africans was a matter to be thought out carefully. It is unlikely that they really understood that the type of European-orientated education they were giving would produce an élite in West Africa, often quite separated from their uneducated fellow-Africans. They did, however, realise that the new class would hold a position in the colony which needed thinking out and defining.

There would have been general agreement to the fact that "there is a great danger of their being raised higher than their minds can bear."[2] Africans were thought to be vain and fond of showing off;

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M8
31.5.37 Minutes of Special Meeting.
15.12.38 Schön to Kissling.
23.10.39 Kissling to Secretaries.
CA1/M11 21.10.43 Warburton to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M8 23.10.39 Kissling to Secretaries.

their wives would waste any money they had on elaborate dress. Since there were other Africans in the colony making good money in trade and displaying the trappings of their new wealth, it is not surprising that the educated agents of the church should also wish to acquire some status and respect. The missionaries, however, took a different view. They saw it as part of their responsibility to argue out and decide for the Africans the right position for the native agents and expected them to accept that position.

This involved, primarily, decisions on pay. While the lowest stipend for a single European catechist was £150 in 1835, the highest annual salary of a married native assistant at that time was £36 and he had to work for C.M.S. for six years to achieve this. If he was just beginning, he would have to make do with £19. 7. 0. or only £12 if he was single.[1] While it is of course easy to argue that the African had far fewer expenses than the European and was accustomed to a simpler standard of living, there is evidence that these salaries were not always adequate. By February, 1838, the local committee had to review the salaries of native assistants, because so many were having to farm as well as

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M7 5.4.36 Minutes of Special Meeting.

teach in order to feed their families.[1] This would, of course, have been a normal sideline for many Africans, but C.M.S. probably expected them to concentrate on their teaching. They certainly disapproved of one agent, Thomas Lefevre, who was adding to his income by taking on extra singing lessons at the government school in the Bananas, though their main objection was apparently that he might be earning too much.[2] Here again was the basic anxiety of the missionaries - that Africans might be "raised" too high before they were ready for it.

Salaries had to be raised again in 1842, this time because agents were being tempted into outside jobs. The local committee addressed the native assistants at length, pointing out the generosity of C.M.S. in allowing an increase at a time when it was itself hard pressed financially. It was made clear that future rises would depend on good conduct.[3] At the same time, Dandeson Coates and Richard Davies were writing to Sierra Leone to say that, while C.M.S. could not afford to increase its expenditure too much, native agents must receive pay comparable with that allowed for other native jobs in the colony. In 1844, the discussion was still going on. The Parent Committee asked that native salaries should be settled,

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M8 22.2.38 Kissling to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L3 12.4.39 Coates to Kissling.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M10 24.2.42 Address of the Secretaries to the Local Committee.

adding that natives "should not be too highly raised above their countrymen in habits and mode of living."[1] This was the usual argument, but they added to it the idea that the missionary and his native assistant should be setting an example of civilised living to their community and this apparently meant the enjoyment of some of the material benefits which only a reasonable salary would allow. There was still to be a gap between the European and his assistant. When Samuel Crowther was appointed as principal of Fourah Bay early in 1844, his salary was set at £100 a year, an exceptionally high sum for an African, but still well below that of a European missionary of comparable age and status.[2]

It is clear that the general problem of the position of the native agents was solved only by trial and error over the coming years. As opportunities for other employment in the colony grew, C.M.S. was forced to make adequate provision for its workers. Some missionaries were genuinely afraid that increased wealth and status would corrupt the native agents and they would have been right to say that there was a danger of creating a new élite who had no more genuine contact with their fellow-Africans than the missionaries.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L3 23.3.44 Secretaries to Warburton
and see CA1/M10 11.2.42 Resolution by correspondence
24.2.42 Address to Native Assistants
CA1/L3 23.2.42 Davies and Coates to Warburton

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M11 20.12.43 Minutes of Special Meeting.

Since, in Sierra Leone, the problem of the English Language as a divisive influence in education was less serious than elsewhere, the biggest immediate cause of division was likely to be money and social status. The very fact of Europeans with their growing prosperity and nineteenth century views of the benefits of material civilisation, employing rural Africans and setting them up as leaders was bound to lead to a continuing dilemma. If one adds to this the fact that the Europeans, in this case, were conscientious missionaries who felt their responsibility for the Africans in their charge, it is no surprise that they were slow to hand over to these Africans more influence than they thought they could use wisely and that the discussions continued for many years. Such a situation encouraged the sort of cautious paternalism that would have, in any case, been held in their own home countries towards the poor and uneducated.

CHAPTER IV

By the late 1840's, then, C.M.S. had provided two places of higher education, the Grammar School and Fourah Bay, both offering an essentially literary curriculum, both exercising a fairly rigorous selection system. The majority of the missionaries had been through such a system themselves and few would have been competent to offer the industrial and agricultural training that was needed.

The Committee at home, and particularly Henry Venn, became increasingly concerned at the lack of practical education in Sierra Leone. In Freetown there was employment in the merchants' offices and government establishments for those from the Grammar School. In the villages, where nearly three-quarters of the population lived, there was nothing. Sierra Leone needed model farms, savings banks, reading rooms and libraries. There should be loan clubs, benefit clubs and a free warehouse where native merchants could store their goods rather than selling at a low price to the first bidder. There were a great many semi-skilled jobs which Africans could be trained to do, both in Freetown and the villages, creating an artisan class of Africans, educated by the missionary societies and ultimately taking their place below the Grammar School-educated Africans in a well-ordered native society. A committee to oversee all this, sending out agents and encouraging both farming and industry, would unite all

those interested in Africa. They would supply farming implements, pay for libraries, organise the English side of a local savings bank and give general financial support.

Many of these ideas were expressed in pamphlets, written at the time, almost certainly by Venn himself.[1] He saw clearly, perhaps because he received the opinions of so many in Sierra Leone, that the continuation of a purely academic education as the focal point of C.M.S. educational policy would lead ultimately to a 'top-heavy' society, with too many Africans considering themselves above manual work and too few prepared or trained to do the more menial jobs in the developing colony.

A great many Europeans who knew Sierra Leone in the nineteenth century, would, of course, have seen his aims as hopelessly idealistic. The African was lazy. "Idleness is the highest ambition of the African",[2] was a commonly held view. Some blamed C.M.S. for spoiling the African for manual work by offering him an education in the first place. Caroline Norton, who published her views on Sierra Leone under the pseudonym 'A Lady' in 1849, believed that " a striking error in the judgment of the negroes is the opinion that anything in

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[1] See C.M.S. G AZ/1 No.70 Ascribed to Venn by Dr Max Warren.

[2] J.Hewett: "European Settlements on the West Coast of Africa". (1862) p.152.

the shape of work is not compatible with even the slightest degree of education".[1] As far back as 1798, Governor Macauley had referred to the "long-acquired habit of indolence by going to school".[2] It was a common complaint that C.M.S. education was too narrow and that it afforded status only to those who went into white-collar jobs with the government, merchants or C.M.S. itself. There is no doubt that the mission had created a problem for itself in the founding of the Grammar School, for its popularity and success made it the goal of Africans who might otherwise have gone straight into the C.M.S. industrial schemes. The only answer appeared to be to set out an energetic practical training programme, in co-operation with others in the colony, and hope that initial successes would attract more Africans to this type of work.

Essential to the development of industrial training was an industrial committee such as Venn suggested. In 1848, the Africa Native Agency Committee (A.N.A.C.) decided to stop supporting the school education of children in Sierra Leone because C.M.S. had enough support from other sources. The members agreed to continue their subscriptions for three years and to devote the money to the development of native industry and agriculture in West Africa. By

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1 ed. C.Norton: "A residence in Sierra Leone .. by a lady." (1849) p.253.

2 C.George: "The rise of British West Africa" (1904) p.408.

the early 1850's they had paid part of the passage money for instructors to teach carpentry to youths in Abeokuta and Lagos, supplied a cotton gin to Accra and made grants for farming implements.[1]

To encourage such developments specifically in Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Africa Improvement Committee (A.I.C.) was set up in 1848, holding its inaugural meeting at C.M.House in Freetown and working initially to encourage the cotton trade. The Committee included a wide range of local leaders, including the Chief Justice, John Carr, the Spanish consul, the superintendent for W.M.S. and four African merchants, Ezzidio, Pratt, Will and Wilhelm, as well as Graf and John McCormack.

The new organization was sent an inaugural grant of £50 from the A.N.A.C., but from the beginning it faced financial problems. When a meeting was held in June, 1849, to debate the question of founding a model farm, the members soon realised that an initial capital of £200 would have to be raised. They proposed raising the money on £1 shares, allowing shareholders the incentive of a place on the committee and hoping for some corresponding members in England. They were rightly pessimistic however. Private model

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[1] C.M.S. Africa Miscellaneous Papers. Vol. 3. No. 5.

farms had failed in the past and it was unlikely that a venture promising low profits would attract much capital.[1]

Apart from its support of a cotton venture,[2] the A.I.C. set itself to encourage other types of development in the colony. Lectures on scientific subjects were begun in August 1848, with Thomas Peyton giving the first to an audience of over three hundred sixpenny ticket holders. The meeting was a great success, with the only disturbance coming from the numbers of people who were unable to squeeze in.[3] But, as with other ventures in Sierra Leone, initial enthusiasm for this novel form of "entertainment" died away and, eighteen months later, Graf reported that the lectures had been given up because "only first-rate, well-practised men, who can give a variety of shapes and fancy to their subjects will do."[4] An attempt was made to restart the lectures in the following year but this does not appear to have been successful.[5] Meanwhile, an agricultural exhibition was organised in February, 1849, but this was disappointing too. Only fifty people competed and Graf

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M13 25.5.48 Minutes of Inaugural Meeting.
CA1/M14 20.11.49 Graf to Secretaries.

[2] See below, pp.59 ff.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M14 31.8.48 Warburton to Secretaries.

[4] C.M.S. CA1/M14 19.1.50 Graf to Venn.

[5] C.M.S. CA1/M14 15.7.51 Peyton to Venn.

admitted that it was "difficult to make the native farmer believe that any European will give them money for nothing and without getting some equivalent in exchange".[1]

Perhaps the most appropriate contribution which could be made by the A.I;C., with its committee drawn from all areas of educated Freetown society, was an assessment of the long-term needs of Sierra Leone. On 11th August, 1851, the A.I.C. sent a memorial for the attention of the governor, Norman MacDonald, "having taken into consideration the present state of the colony". They suggested that a number of intelligent African youths should be sent to England, after a short education in Sierra Leone, to be taught trades such as brick and tile making, brazing, cabinet making, house painting and so on. In all, they recommended that eighteen youths should be sent, supported by an annual grant from the colony since they themselves could not, of course, afford it.[2] All the occupations would have been of some use in a developing colony and guaranteed a good living to those receiving such a training.

Almost as this memorial was being despatched to him, the Governor would have been writing his own annual report for 1850 (dated 18th August 1851). In his report, he criticised the

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14 20.11.49 Graf to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14 11.8.51 Memorial of the Secretaries of the A.I.C. to the Governor.

missionaries for their preoccupation with literary education and made sweeping and optimistic statements about the agricultural possibilities of the colony. Yet it does not appear that he took a great deal of notice of the practical recommendations the A.I.C. had made. The development of education was still a matter for private, humanitarian enterprise and, although MacDonald was clearly interested in local employment opportunities, he was more inclined to recommend that "the native population should be required to contribute something towards the aid of .. Government" (in this case, a house and land tax) than that substantial grants-in-aid should be made by the government towards native education - a fact emphasised a few months later when MacDonald declined an invitation to act as patron to the A.I.C.[1]

Fortunately, their scheme did not collapse completely. As it happened, the A.N.A.C. in England had just allocated £100 to C.M.S. in July, 1851, to bring one boy to England for a trade education. Venn thought the money might stretch to two boys and suggested printing and agricultural training as possible ideas.[2] The A.I.C. was left to raise any further money it could manage and the grandiose scheme of 1851 was modified to provide education for three boys,

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[1] Parliamentary Papers (P.P.) 1851 XXXIV
Report for Sierra Leone 1850.
C.M.S. CA1/M14 6.12.51 Peyton to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L4 14.7.51 Venn to Peyton.

none of them in any of the trades they had originally suggested. Three youths, one of them Thomas King's brother-in-law, came to England in July, 1853. Henry Robbin went to Manchester, to learn the iron trade. Henry Johnson, who farmed at Hastings, spent a short while on an English Farm, moved to Kew and then came home because of the cold climate, bringing specimens thought to be suitable for growth in Sierra Leone and planted in the Chief Justice's garden. Moses Davies stayed for about eighteen months, learning printing and bookbinding, and returned early in 1855 to work for C.M.S. and the government. He had been supplied with all the necessary tools and clearly found plenty of work to do since, by the next year, he was ordering more equipment from an English firm.[1]

It is not surprising that one of the commodities to which C.M.S. turned its closest attention was cotton.[2] A staple resource of British industry, it could have become the backbone of Sierra Leone's economy if the attempts to grow it had been more successful. For several years before Henry Venn began to encourage experiments in the 1850's, men acquainted with Sierra Leone had been speculating about the possibility of success. In 1842, Thomas Whitfield, a naturalist working for Lord Derby, familiar with West Africa for some fourteen years, gave it as his opinion that, while cocoa and coffee

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1 C.M.S. Africa Miscellaneous Papers. Vol. 3. No. 5.
CA1/L5 21.10.53 Venn to Merchant.
CA1/L6 23.1.55 Venn to Graf.

2 For an account of C.M.S. efforts elsewhere in West Africa, see S.Biobaku "The Egba and their neighbours." Chapter V.

would take four years to make a profit, cotton could be expected to pay for itself straight away. He admitted that it would need more experienced superintendents than Sierra Leone could raise at present, but it was certainly a venture worth trying.[1] The Rev. David Morgan, giving evidence before the same Select Committee as Whitfield, told of an experiment which he had carried out with cotton plants a few years previously, employing forty to fifty workers at 4d a day. Hundreds of local people had wanted to work for him and were prepared to put in a nine hour day, but the soil was not suited to the growth of cotton and the experiment was clearly not repeated.[2] As far back as the Select Committee of 1826, there had been discussions as to whether it would be possible to get Africans to work hard enough on plantations - a factor as important to the growth of cotton as the suitability of the soil - but no clear conclusions had ever been reached.[3] The opinions varied with the optimism of the speaker and few were founded on any real experience. In 1851, for example, Governor Norman MacDonald, while admitting his ignorance of trading matters, claimed that cotton could be produced without capital outlay and that the fecundity of the soil of Sierra Leone proved that cotton would grow there,[4] both of which ideas turned out to be fallacies.

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[1] P.P. 1842 XI q.9707-9708.

[2] Ibid. q.6413-6421.

[3] P.P. 1826-7 VII Part II Section II.

[4] P.P. 1851 XXXIV Report for Sierra Leone 1850.

In November, 1849, the first practical suggestions began to be made by C.M.S. missionaries when Ulrich Graf wrote home asking for a few cotton gins.[1] By this time, the Africa Improvement Committee (A.I.C.), had been set up in Sierra Leone, with Graf as secretary. The real impetus to experiment in cotton growing came when Thomas Peyton returned from furlough in January, 1851. In the instructions given to him by C.M.S. before he set out for West Africa, Peyton was reminded that the slave trade and emigration to the West Indies might stop if only cotton could be grown profitably in Africa. The additional suggestion that,"The eyes of Manchester are fixed on Africa"[2] suggested that Britain stood to prosper too and Peyton was encouraged to turn the energies of his Grammar School students towards cotton by letting them read the history of cotton manufacture. Inspired by the enthusiasm of his superiors, Peyton arrived in Sierra Leone with cotton cleaning machines and a supply of cotton seeds.

Depite the apathy of the local missionary committee, Peyton immediately set about buying cotton and contacting the chiefs in the interior. Beale had recently acquired a plot of land by the Grammar School and this was set aside for cotton cultivation, with the boys

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14 20.11.49 Graf to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L4 22.10.50 "Instructions to Returning missionaries" and see 12.11.50 Straith to Johnson.

of the school working four hours a day. Peyton proposed to carry out experiments in twelve villages, where lectures would be given to inform the local people of the benefits of cotton production. All profits would go to the endowment of native churches. Chief Justice Carr, who was President of the A.I.C., accompanied Peyton to the village of Wilberforce to look for a suitable piece of land and they soon found a twenty acre site near the local C.M.S. mission house. Peyton also found 10 acres at Regent and a hundred acre site for a model farm, where twenty acres could be devoted to cotton experiments, and tried to get permission to use other C.M.S. land, but the committee was still not really interested.[1]

C.M.S. had already received £50 from Thomas Clegg, a Manchester merchant who was to act as agent for C.M.S. in England. By February, 1851, Peyton was buying forty to fifty pounds weight of cotton a day and making optimistic forecasts of success. In April, Venn went to visit Clegg and arranged for more machinery to be shipped to Sierra Leone. By now the chiefs in the interior were beginning to send cotton to Freetown and Peyton had bought some of this to send home to Clegg. Since his arrival in Freetown in January, he had bought two thousand pounds of seeded cotton at a cost

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14
20.1.51 Peyton to Secretaries.
14.1.51 Peyton to General Committee.
12.2.51 Johnson to Lay Secretary.
25.1.51 Peyton to Secretaries.

of £21.12.6 and the island cotton he had planted in his own garden in mid-January was a foot high.[1]

In the summer of 1851, seven acres were set aside at King Tom's Point and Peyton spent £20 on twenty men who began cotton planting there. The boys at the Grammar School were soon employed in cleaning the cotton which Peyton had bought. Towards the end of 1851, the Dowager Lady Buxton, widow of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, sent £50 towards the cotton experiment and this was sent on by Venn, with the suggestion that there might be prizes for the best samples sent home. At the same time, Venn wrote enthusiastically to Peyton that African cotton was already becoming known in Manchester and that Clegg was looking for an agent to come out to Sierra Leone and relieve Peyton of the time-consuming responsibility for the cotton experiment and to set up schools.[2] In only nine months, the cotton venture seemed to have established itself as a success. The annual report on the proceedings of C.M.S. could report that fourteen

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L4
12.11.50 Secretaries to Graf.
14.11.50 Secretaries to Graf.
14. 4.51 Venn to Peyton.
CA1/M14
20. 2.51 Peyton to Venn
April 1851 Peyton to Clegg.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L4
25. 9.51 Venn to Graf.
23. 9.51 Venn to Peyton.
CA1/M14
15. 7.51 Peyton to Venn.
15.8.51 Peyton to Secretaries.

hundred pounds of cotton had been cleaned and a plantation of six acres - probably a mistaken reckoning of the size of the site at King Tom's Point - had been started.[1] What it failed to report was that apparently few of the proposed village plantations had been started and that no-one yet knew whether they would be successful or how much profit the year's experiment would produce.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice Carr had contacted two merchants, Charles Heddle and a Mr Oldfield, and persuaded both to trade in cotton without advance payments, an important fact in view of the relative lack of capital from which the A.I.C. suffered. Peyton continued to buy cotton, another five hundred pounds on Clegg's account and six hundred pounds on Lady Buxton's, and to employ the Grammar School boys to plant seed during the wet season. The first summer planting at King Tom's Point and at Regent had failed, largely because the seed was of poor quality or the soil too shallow, but elsewhere the crop was doing well. Despite the failure at Regent, twenty acres were now to be worked by Liberated Africans and a site was found at Wellington early in 1852. Peyton continued to spend money on tools and to ask for more machinery.[2]

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[1] Proceedings of C.M.S. 1852 p.29.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14
18.11.51 Carr to Venn.
24.1.52 Peyton to Venn.
16.2.52 Brown to Peyton.

Clegg's promise of an industrial agent came to nothing and Peyton continued to be involved in both the Grammar School and the cotton trade. The new schoolroom, built in 1851, was soon nearly full of cotton waiting to be shipped and Peyton managed to find Liberated African boys from Gloucester to join the boys of the Grammar School in cleaning cotton ready for shipment. Liberated Africans were still going to the West Indies soon after landing in Sierra Leone and Peyton hoped that some of them might be employed instead of waiting idly about the harbour.[1] Peyton must have found his time full, with shipments of cotton to Liverpool for Clegg and a school to run as well. He was still optimistic about the likelihood of a good profit and considered that the quality of the seed was improving. He was relieved to hear in October, 1852, that a C.M.S. agent was at last coming out to superintend the cotton venture and the local committee began to show some belated interest by agreeing that twenty more boys might go permanently from Gloucester to the Grammar School which would guarantee more help in cleaning cotton.[2]

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[1] See - J.Asiegbu: "Slavery and the Politics of Liberation 1787-1861." Chapter 4 for general discussion on this voluntary emigration.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14
17. 5.52 Peyton to Venn.
13. 7.52 Peyton to Venn.
16.10.52 Peyton to Venn.

At the end of the year, Allan, the industrial agent, arrived. He was supplied with an hydraulic press to help in the packing process and with goods to barter for cotton with the chiefs, all of these paid for by Clegg. In the event, Allan was able to be of little use, since his house was a mile out of Freetown and he argued endlessly with the missionaries.[1] Peyton continued to be the driving force behind the experiment. By the beginning of 1853, some of the earlier troubles had been overcome and Chief Justice Carr wrote optimistically: "I believe there is no doubt that large quantities of cotton may with little encouragement be produced on this part of the African coast."[2] In that season, over eight thousand pounds was bought and two native merchants, Lewis and Dicker, now began to take part in the trade, "the very object we have been aiming to bring about"[3] according to Peyton. It is clear, however, that most of this cotton was being bought from the chiefs and not grown on C.M.S. plantations.

Allan maintained that the most that would come from the experiment would be the establishment of Sierra Leone as an entrepôt for cotton from the Sherbro and Temne peoples. He even suggested

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L5 2.12.52 Venn to Carr
1.12.52 Venn and Straith to Allan

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15 29.1.53 Carr to Venn.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M15 12.5.53 Peyton to Venn.

that C.M.S. missionaries on the new station at Port Lokoh should buy cotton there too. Meanwhile, the job of cleaning, packing and despatching the cotton which had been bought was being streamlined under Peyton's guidance, with the help of the A.I.C. A store was hired near the Grammar School and Peyton took on a young man to weigh and pay for the cotton as it came in. In their free time, the boys at the Grammar School were still expected to work at cotton cleaning.[1]

The main burden, Nathaniel Denton complained, still fell on the missionaries. They knew little of tropical agriculture and, in Allan's opinion, even less about business.[2] They complained in return that he did nothing to help them and were glad to see him go home after only six months in the colony. Just before he went, though, in June, 1853, Thomas Peyton died. For two and a half years he had been acting as a businessman, encouraging others and doing a great deal of work himself and it is no surprise that he succumbed to an attack of fever. His death, removed from Sierra Leone the one man with the enthusiasm to keep the experiment going. Although cotton continued to be planted and bought, the initial impetus was gone. A few more troubles and failures and the apparently hopeful experiment might well be abandoned.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15
21.4.54 Allan to Venn.
12.5.53 Peyton to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15
23.5.53 Denton to Venn.
21.4.54 Allan to Venn.

C.M.S. replaced Allan with another industrial agent, C.M. Hammond. He was not optimistic about cotton either, but he did his best to encourage the plantations in such villages as Kissy, Regent and Wellington.[1] The A.I.C., whose only really enthusiastic member was John Carr, continued to hold meetings and ask for financial help. They even solicited the Manchester Commercial Association for an industrial agent of their own, plus £150 a year to pay him,[2] but the businessmen of Manchester needed much more evidence of success before they committed themselves to such an outlay. Early in 1854, the A.I.C. decided to put up a building to house the hydraulic press, but even this simple job took over two years. They had to raise a special appeal for money for the building and then, when the work began, in July, 1855, the Colonial Surveyor died before finishing it and it was eventually completed by an African on his return to Sierra Leone from training in England[3] in 1856. By then, the cotton experiment was nearly over. No wonder James Beale referred to the society as "the ill-fated A.I.C." when he took over as secretary.[4]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15 16.1.54 Hammond to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15 10.2.54 Dicker to Venn.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M15 31.7.55 Beale to Venn.
8.4.56 Robbin to Venn.

[4] C.M.S. CA1/M15 31.7.55 Beale to Venn.

Not surprisingly, by 1855, the A.I.C. was becoming progressively more discouraged. They were continuing to buy cotton, along with C.M.Hammond, on the account of C.M.S., but until the press was set up, no cotton could be despatched and no profit could be made. They were paying out extensively - or persuading other people to do so - and getting no return. As the cotton venture began to fade out, the A.I.C. faded with it. When the Chief Justice returned from a trip abroad in February, 1857, he complained that nothing had been done about cotton in his absence and, although he proposed to call a meeting of the Committee, it seems unlikely that he would have met with much enthusiasm from its members. A letter had just reached him from Venn, telling him that, for all Peyton's enthusiasm, he had not been a shrewd businessman. Venn had been to examine Clegg's accounts and found that Peyton had paid too much for the cotton bought in Sierra Leone and, far from making any profit, sales in Manchester had resulted in a substantial loss.[1]

Quite apart from the capital outlay on machinery, twice as much money had been spent on buying cotton as had been made in selling it. Venn still encouraged Carr to keep the A.I.C. going and to grow more cotton, but it would have been impossible to

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15 19.3.57 Carr to Venn.
22.1.57 Venn to Carr.

persuade the A.I.C. that such a loss, sustained over six years, could be turned into profit and there was no hope of raising further capital. Although small shipments of cotton continued, Venn sent instructions to Carr to have the hydraulic press removed to Lagos where it could earn some money.[1]

It was clear that, as Allan had suspected, Sierra Leone would not be more than an entrepot for the cotton of inland areas and that even this would have to be put on a more efficient business footing if it were to contribute significantly to the colony's economy. The initial capital outlay had been too small to survive the continuous failure to make any profit, which any new venture might be expected to encounter: after the death of Peyton, there was no-one with his force of personality and the personal encouragement of Henry Venn behind him to keep the experiment going: the A.I.C. consisted of too few enthusiastic businessmen and was limited by lack of capital and, almost certainly, lack of experience. The hope that an indigenous cotton-growing business would provide employment, outside Freetown, create a stable artisan class, keep up Sierra Leone's trade and increase its prosperity had clearly failed.

Fortunately, there were other potential avenues of employment apart from the cotton business. In the early fifties C.M.S. tried

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L6 22.7.58 Venn to Carr.

to send boys to sea as naval apprentices. Two young men, James and Samuel Davies, aged nineteen and twenty-one, who had learnt navigation at the Grammar School, were given permission to join H.M.S. Volcano. They did well and the A.I.C. was soon being asked to supply them with navigational instruments. For four days a week, they helped the captain with his classes on board for the younger sailors, leading a singing class themselves on Saturday mornings, as well as doing two hours study each day under the captain's supervision. They were too old to risk the duties of the sailors aloft, but the experiment was generally such a success that, in the following year, five boys went from the School at Gloucester to H.M.Steamer Penelope and another captain was asking for three or four boys to take onto his ship too.[1]

The two boys on the Volcano seemed to have a bright future before them. Peyton reckoned that they might find employment as supercargoes or even as masters of vessels trading locally. Their training was cut short, however, when they both announced, in the autumn of 1852, that they wanted to return home. They received an excellent testimonial from Captain Coote, praising them for their good example and practical abilities, but they were insistent and the

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14
19. 4.51 Peyton to Secretaries.
14. 7.51 Graf to Secretaries.
17.11.51 Peyton to Venn.
9.10.51 J. and S.Davies to Peyton.
3. 2.52 Coote to Venn.
14. 4.52 Peyton to Secretaries.

captain had no alternative but to put them on board a passing ship which took them to Ascencion where they waited for a passage to Freetown.[1]

The five boys on the Penelope were also returned home because the authorities in England would not sanction their training, despite the fact that the ship's captain was satisfied with them and more boys were preparing at the Grammar School for a naval career. It is not certain what happened to these young sailors, but it seems very likely that they would have found steady employment on one or other of the many ships trading along the West African coast. Naval training continued at the Grammar School and one, at least, of the boys in the initial experiment found himself a good career. In 1853 James Davies went back to sea as first mate on a local vessel and was soon able to take charge of a small boat on the Freetown-Lagos run.[2]

For a few intelligent boys, C.M.S. saw a medical career as a possibility. For most of this period, Sierra Leone was sadly deficient in doctors, African or European, and it was, therefore, a career where Africans would be welcome and find little competition.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15
17. 5.52 Peyton to Venn.
23.10.52 Coote to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15
19.1.53 Graf to Secretaries.
5.8.53 Minutes of Financial Committee.

At first, the experiments were not particularly successful. One of the earliest Africans to receive simple medical training was Samuel Crowther Junior, who with one Thomas Smith, was taught the rudiments of pharmacy - apparently rather badly - by Dr John Ashwood. Ashwood was elderly and infirm and, when he died in 1850, the local committee had already decided to send Smith and Crowther to England for further training in pharmacy. This decision was at first vetoed by Venn, because some of the recent experience of C.M.S. in bringing young men to England had been unsuccessful. The secretaries relented however, about Samuel Crowther Junior and let him come for his father's sake. He began at King's College London, but did not finish. Two years later, the local committee were still pressing for an English training for Smith, but it seems likely that they simply wanted to get him out of the colony since he was using his privileged position to spy on missionary meetings and then spreading embroidered versions of their discussions round the villages. His behaviour was ultimately so bad that he had to be dismissed from C.M.S. service altogether.[1]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14
31. 5.50 Graf to Secretaries.
23.10.49 Minutes of Special Meeting.
25. 7.51 Minutes of Special Meeting.
CA1/L4
30.10.49 Venn to Warburton.
4. 1.50 Secretaries to Warburton.

So it was not until 1855 that a successful attempt was made at getting a full medical training for Africans in England. The War Office needed doctors for its African troops and in 1853 had authorised the choice of three men from Sierra Leone. C.M.S. chose Samuel Campbell, W.B.Davies and J.A.Horton,[1] all in their early twenties. They made an excellent impression and Venn even suggested that another four or six more might be sent. Campbell was forced through illness to return home, but Davies and Horton passed the exams of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1858 and went on to Scotland for further training. On the strength of this success, the War Office authorised the bishop of Sierra Leone to send more men.[2]

While an expensive education in England was possible for an intelligent minority, the majority of training would have to take place in Sierra Leone. A situation in which the resources for training lay only in Europe could never lead to a viable native agency. The Grammar School had contributed a good deal to the colony's education but, with the exception of its navigation course,

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[1] See C.Fyfe: "Africanus Horton. 1835-1883" (1972) for details of his education and career.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L6
23.7.55 Venn to Jones.
23.4.58 Secretary to Finance Committee.

its curriculum was far too literary to fit into the industrial programme. C.M.S. therefore suggested the opening of a normal school for industrial and practical training. A site was found at Kissy in 1852, but little was done while Allan was the C.M.S. industrial agent. With the arrival of Hammond in 1853 a start was made on planning. Hammond had trained at Highbury Training College and taught in the West Indies before coming to Sierra Leone. A somewhat rough and ready man, he believed that a simple native building would do, since that was what the natives of this class would eventually live in. The Parent Committee was pleased to accept his ideas since it could not afford the planned European-style building anyway. There were to be native huts for the boarders and, for once, the pupils were to precede the building, since they were to put most of it up themselves as part of their practical training.[1]

As a result, in April 1854, the school was opened, with an incomplete building, but over a hundred scholars and three masters, one for carpentry, one for tailoring and one to teach writing. Only a small number, twenty-eight, were allowed to start on the practical subjects, as most of them could presumably neither read nor write. A few boys came from the Grammar School, but the majority were newly

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L5
23.9.53 Venn and Straith to Graf.
23.9.53 Venn to Bishop Vidal.

Liberated Africans and their standards of education and behaviour were correspondingly low. They were not even accustomed to eating regular meals and Hammond had to employ an old soldier to drill them in the afternoons when they fell into a stupor after forcing down all their rations for the day at one sitting. The younger boys wandered away from the school grounds in the evening and Hammond had a difficult time persuading them to wear any clothes. They were occupied at first in putting up huts, but in Hammond's enthusiasm to get the school opened, he had left himself with nowhere to live and he had to set up house a short distance away, a situation which did nothing to improve the school's discipline.[1]

Within a few months of its opening, he moved into the upper story of the school and behaviour improved. The boys continued to work on the buildings, cutting up oak from an old ship's cargo and, although Hammond's general opinion of the natives was not high, he admitted that, in carpentry at least, they were making progress.[2] After a time, he divided the boys who could write into three specialist groups with twenty-four in each. There were to be carpenters, tailors and farmers.[3] On the farm, arrowroot and ginger

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1 C.M.S. CA1/M15
20.6.54 Hammond to Venn.
1.6.54 Graf to Secretaries.

2 C.M.S. CA1/M15
13.9.54 Minutes of Finance Committee.
17.4.55 Hammond to Straith.
17.4.55 Hammond to Secretaries.

3 C.M.S. CA1/M15
13.5.56 Bickersteth to Venn.

were grown and were sent to England to be sold by C.M.S. at a small profit. Although Hammond was, of course, involved in the cotton experiment elsewhere in Sierra Leone, it appears that he maintained his opinion that it would not succeed as a crop in the colony and therefore did not even try to grow it on the Normal School farm.

Only a year after the school opened, it suffered its first change of principal. Hammond was sent home in the summer of 1855 and Frey took over until the arrival of the next industrial agent, W.Charpentier, in the spring of 1856. Charpentier was not a success, irritating European missionaries and African assistant teachers alike and eventually being called to the local Police Office on charges of painting one of his pupils with white lead. To everyone's obvious relief, he returned home at the end of the year, leaving the Normal School without a principal.[1] It had an efficient native assistant in Edward Bickersteth and there was no suggestion that the school should close. Venn had always intended that the school should be under native leadership and he hoped that it would expand, adding a larger industrial department than it had at present. Until a new industrial agent could arrive in 1858, Bickersteth and the other

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15
29.5.55 Minutes of Special Committee.
5.8.56 Minutes of Special Finance Committee.
13.8.56 Beale to Secretaries.
18.9.56 Jones to Secretaries.

native teachers were left to run the school themselves. By this time, as a result of an unexpected influx of boys from slave ships, the school had been divided and the younger, more difficult boys had been sent to Gloucester, so the African teachers were left with boys of an age more suitable for the training they had to offer.[1]

In 1865, Venn summed up the progress made in Sierra Leone in a pamphlet, "Notices of the British colonies on the West Coast of Africa."[2] Much of it criticised the government for its paltry contribution to education and claimed that West Africa compared poorly with other colonies where the government had established schools. Yet, by 1842, one fifth of the population was in school, a figure which had even risen slightly by the 1860's. He complained that insufficient support had been given to industrial and agricultural ventures, recommended by Buxton thirty years before and by the Select Committee of 1842. The only progress made had been due to the efforts of the A.N.A.C. and its off-shoots, plus a handful of Manchester merchants. How ludicrous that Sierra Leone had to import much of the rice its people ate, when the government could have set up model farms. The African squadron should have been allowed to take on Africans for navigational training and encourage more widespread

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L6
23.1.57 Secretaries to Jones
CA1/M15
16.8.55 Jones to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. Africa Miscellaneous Papers. Vol.III, No.7.

medical training than it had done. Instead of bringing Africans to England for administrative training, thus producing a cheaper class of administrators than Europeans, the government had contented itself with running one school in Freetown for native education. Yet, as early as 1853, Governor Kennedy had reported that many natives were already in safe, profitable jobs, competing with Europeans in business, living in greater comfort and investing their capital, showing a combination of "propriety and progress".[1] Education had created the God-fearing sabbath-keeping élite to form the backbone of the colony.

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[1] P.P. 1852-3 LXII Report on Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER V

By far the most complex question faced by Henry Venn in his dealings with West Africa was the establishment of an African-run church. For ten years, from 1851-1861, he and the missionaries in Sierra Leone worked on the practical details of the idea. Much of the difficulty sprang from the very organisation of the Anglican church; but some, too, was caused by the personalities involved. Many complicated questions had to be answered before the Native Pastorate could be begun in 1861 and much prejudice had to be overcome. A great deal of the credit must go to Venn for his patient pressing of the question over the years, when some of the missionaries would clearly have been happy to abandon the whole idea.

By the late 1840's, the training of natives had progressed to a point where the gradual phasing out of European influence in the church might be begun. True, C.M.S. had only two ordained natives, but there were sixty African teachers and catechists and the hope of more leaders to come from Fourah Bay. Venn began to suggest that the twelve European missionaries should be getting out to do pioneer work in the interior, an activity from which Africans were still barred, except as interpreters.[1] As the number of Europeans

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L4
5.10.49 Instruction to Missionaries.

decreased, those left behind would still form the policy-making committee in the colony, but a general committee, including some catechists, would meet twice a year, and there would be monthly gatherings of native district committees.[1]

This idea may have appeared excellent in the cosy, Victorian comfort of Salisbury Square, but it was unlikely to appeal to some of the missionaries. It appeared to be a contradiction of the original intention of developing a native agency and of Buxton's ideas too. Native agency according to Buxton was surely to be developed to allow the missionary to leave 'the white man's grave' and go home or to some less deadly climate. As some missionaries began to realise that a native-run church would leave them, in Venn's eyes, available to be sent instead to even more unattractive places, leaving the country to which some had devoted fifteen years of effort, they began to view the scheme with less enthusiasm.

Venn, however, had no such misgivings. To him fell the task of working out the initial ideas, to be modified by conditions in the colony and the opinions of others in the mission. Most of his ideas were published in pamphlet form in the early 1850's, intended as a general statement of policy, but clearly with Sierra Leone in mind. The first, in 1851, set out to analyse the job of the missionary and

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L4
30.10.49 Venn to Warburton.

the particular abilities of the native agent.[1] In this pamphlet, Venn made the vital distinction which was to govern the discussion of the subsequent ten years - that the missionary's task was evangelistic and that of the native minister, pastoral. Using the phrase,"euthanasia of mission", Venn pointed out that the European's task was to work himself out of a job, leaving a small Christian church to be built up by the native pastor. It was this distinction which simplified an otherwise complicated piece of organisation. If the native pastor was not to be a missionary, in the pioneer church-building sense, he need not be in the employ of the missionary society. The home societies would remain European organisations, financed from Europe, doing pioneer work: as soon as the churches were strong enough and had enough trained pastors, the missionary society would withdraw its financial support and its personnel and start again elsewhere. Since the Africans would be living in their home country, they would be supported by the local church for which they worked. The missionary society would avoid the situation where it was acting as employer to Africans, which would obviate the danger of natives going into the ministry simply for the status of working for a European organisation. Since the money to pay the pastor was to be raised locally, it would be practically impossible for him to live above the local standard of living and,

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[1] The Native Pastorate, 1851. Memoir of Venn. W.Knight (1880) Appendix C.

although C.M.S. would make some grants to help out with stipends, their financial support would be minimal. Only those with a congregation to go to should be ordained in future, presumably to prevent ordination being sought as a useless status symbol, but the European missionaries should be ready to hand over their congregations as soon as they showed sufficient signs of maturity. C.M.S. would obviously have to ordain some of its catechists, if there were to be enough pastors for the dozen or so parishes in the colony, and in future would need a steady supply of men offering for the ordained ministry. If this were to be possible, the training of ministers at Fourah Bay would have to be stepped up.

Venn expanded his ideas further a couple of years later in a 'Minute upon the position of native ministers in a mission'.[1] Here, he pointed out that a purely European ministry was almost harmful to the cause of Christian mission. Missionaries were involved in educational and pastoral duties, teaching their flock and dealing with their problems. This would make no inroads on the heathen. The logical step for Venn was not to exhort the missionaries to encourage their congregations to evangelise their fellow-Africans, but to repeat the need for a native ministry to give pastoral care to already established African Christians, leaving the missionaries free to preach to the heathen.

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[1] C.M.S. GAZ/1 No.71 attributed by M.Warren to Venn. See "To Apply the Gospel".

Venn believed that the European missionary should have this end in view right from the beginning. He should discourage teachers and catechists from developing European tastes and habits, so that they might one day fit into their villages as pastors, living on the same level as their congregations. Only the Parent Committee of C.M.S. at Salisbury Square should be able to designate the rare individual African as an evangelist; the remainder were simply to teach what they had learnt at Fourah Bay to congregations already established by Europeans.

This is less paternalistic than it sounds. Venn did not doubt the ability of Africans to organise the church or to administer an individual congregation, but he did fear a breaking away into heresy and the antinomianism which had been the fate of some of the African Christian free churches.[1] Most Africans did not see the dividing line between orthodox Christianity and their native tribal practices as clearly as did the European missionary or the average Victorian reader of missionary magazines. One fairly constant ingredient of missionary journals and reports is the prevalence of wakes, polygamy and other practices which were anathema to mid-nineteenth century evangelicalism. They feared that, in some of the native congregations,

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[1] For some details of these churches see: Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion.
1959 Vol. 1. No.1. p. 19-31.
1961 Vol. 3. No.1. p. 22-28.
1962 Vol. 4. No.2. p. 53-61
1963 Vol. 5. No.2. p. 55-60
These churches were strict in their approach to moral behaviour, but were still regarded with suspicion by missionaries. See C.Fyfe: "James Africanus Horton" (1972) p.21.

religion would become a hotch-potch of old and new ideas, possibly very satisfying to the worshippers, but regarded with little less than horror by mission committees. Under Venn's suggested scheme, Africans would be evangelised and given their initial teaching by orthodox Europeans, whose very position and influence would help to quell the old beliefs and, when established Christians, they would be handed over to natives who would themselves have been through the European mill of the Grammar School and Fourah Bay. By the time the last missionary left, if that ever happened, the church would be sufficiently strong and its members far enough away from the old tribal life to resist the pull of pagan habits.

The effort involved in thinking out these ideas was to be nothing compared with that of getting the ideas carried out in practice. Venn found himself up against everything from genuine confusion over the implementation of details to hardly veiled hostility as the implications for European status became evident.

When the first practical suggestions were made in 1851, C.M.S. had two ordained native clergy in Sierra Leone, Thomas Maxwell and George Nicol. They had been ordained in 1849 and returned to their jobs at the Grammar School and Fourah Bay. There were some doubts about where they should eventually minister, some saying that they should be in Freetown, presumably under the eye of the missionaries, and

some suggesting the villages where the congregations were smaller. Beale wanted to see Nicol in charge of the old, established Kissy Road Church, where Crowther had preached his first Yoruba sermon, but Venn thought this too heavy a task for a newly-ordained man. Almost everyone had a lower opinion of Maxwell, so that designating him to a church was even more difficult.[1] Nicol and Maxwell themselves showed a healthy desire to direct their own future, which clearly took some missionaries by surprise. They stated preferences for certain churches and reported the proceedings of committee meetings on the subject with alarming frankness in journals sent home to Salisbury Square. Nicol complained to the Lay Secretary when his wife was not invited to join the ladies' visiting committee, as were the wives of all other missionaries.[2] As far as Nicol and Maxwell were concerned, ordination in England had brought equality with the most experienced missionary.

In the summer of 1851, Maxwell got himself involved in a row with the European missionaries over the question of his designation to a church. He had his eye on the front-line Pademba Road Church where he would do pioneer work. Venn's pamphlet had been written

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L4
27.2.51 Venn to Beale.
14.4.51 Venn to Peyton.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L4
15.9.51 Venn to Nicol
CA1/M14
16.7.51 Nicol to Lay Secretary.

just in time and the missionaries were able to invoke it to keep the two new native clergy in their place. "We wish them to increase and are prepared ourselves to decrease" said Graf, "but in decent order."[1] They were supported by Venn, who replied promptly that Nicol and Maxwell had obviously misunderstood their position in the mission. Writing to Nicol himself, Venn pointed out that he was not a missionary because he was in his own home country. He was a native pastor and there was no question of being either above or below the missionaries. One day, the native pastors would be quite separate from C.M.S., supported by their own churches. In the mean time, Nicol must stop presuming that the Europeans looked down on the Africans.[2] Venn wrote, too, to Maxwell. He was clearly in sympathy with African's feelings of patriotism and their desire to run things now that they were so far exalted above the village Africans, but, he pointed out, they must be prepared to remain under the general supervision of Europeans and to practice the virtue of humility.[3]

Towards the end of 1852, Owen Vidal arrived in Sierra Leone as its first bishop. If C.M.S. was to withdraw its authority and

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14
N.D. Received 12.8.51 Graf's remarks on Maxwell's journal.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L4
13.8.51 Venn to Nicol.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L4
15.9.51 Venn to Maxwell.

leave Sierra Leone as a settled church rather than a mission field supervised by missionaries, it was essential to set up the hierarchy of the Anglican church in the colony. Each of the bishops in the 1850's and 1860's kept in close contact with C.M.S. and were the agents for the implementation of much of their policy. Bishop Vidal was to ordain natives after consultation with the Finance Committee, since 1852 the new policy-making inner missionary committee, and to cencentrate on raising enough Africans to the level of ordained clergy to get the Pastorate started. He chose six catechists, and began to prepare them for immediate ordination, leaving two,including Joseph Bartholomew, until money should be available for their salaries.[1] The committee at home continued to remind the bishop that the natives were not to be given the status of missionaries and that the church itself must decide on salaries for the newly-ordained men. They could use part of the £10,000 Jubilee Fund (raised in 1849 to celebrate the first fifty years of C.M.S.), but other mission fields were making demands on it too. As Venn pointed out, no-one should be ordained in Sierra Leone without a specific church to go to and income for his support.[2]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15
16.2.53 Bishop Vidal to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L6
19.9.54 Secretaries to Bishop Vidal.

In 1853, Graf was created an Archdeacon as part of the transition from mission field to native pastorate and told to encourage the church to become self supporting. It was not an easy time for either European or African: local Africans did not always look on the newly-ordained men with great favour and regretted the coming loss of Europeans from their villages. Inevitably, neither European nor African knew quite what their status was to be, nor what was their authority at any given stage in the transition process. Early in 1854, Venn produced a detailed plan of the future organisation of the church,[1] which may have set some European minds at rest and certainly began to clarify the situation. Higher education would stay in the hands of the missionaries, with two at Fourah Bay, one at the Grammar School and one at Kissy Normal School. Four mission stations would have European missionaries with native curates. Four would be under native pastors and three would be catechist stations. With the missionaries going home every four or five years, a permanent complement of ten missionaries would be needed. There would have to be four ordained natives but presumably the four curates could be in deacon's orders. The Europeans at Fourah Bay were to help the native pastor at Kissy Road Church by preaching occasionally.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L5 29.3.54 Venn to Bishop Vidal.

There is no evidence to suggest that Venn had discussed this plan at any length with the missionaries and although Beale welcomed it, it was not received with any noticeable enthusiasm by Bishop Vidal, who had, by this time, taken a closer look at the church in Sierra Leone. He accepted the plan only because it was the best in the circumstances and stated that he did not think the colony was ready to lose its missionaries. He was disappointed with the native teachers he had met and his initial enthusiasm for preparing catechists for ordination had waned.[1] He seems, however, to have been unnecessarily gloomy about the situation. The retention of a team of ten European missionaries could hardly be described as the removal of European leadership: there were hardly more than ten missionaries working in Sierra Leone at the time anyway. Europeans would still be holding all the strategic posts in education, the training of ministers and even the churches themselves. Each area of the colony would be covered by a European clergyman, no doubt encouraged to keep an eye on the new native pastors in his area. Most of the villages to come under native leadership already had native catechists and only minimal European supervision. The whole Mountain District, for example, had been under one European, Nathaniel Denton, for some time, with native catechists in the villages of Regent, Gloucester, Leicester, Bathurst and Charlotte. It is perhaps a good

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15 1.4.54 Bishop Vidal to Venn.

thing that Bishop Vidal did not live to see how much more far-reaching the eventual Native Pastorate plans would be for, although he described Venn's ideas as "an experiment and a bold one",[1] he was pessimistic about its results.

Indeed, the only missionary who gave any enthusiastic and constructive support to a Native Pastorate was Ulrich Graf. In 1850, he had sent home suggestions for a self-supporting church, which must have contributed to the views expressed by Venn in his 1851 pamphlet. He advocated self-government for all congregations which supported their own minister and the idea, unusual for an Anglican church, of leaving the financial support of individual native clergy to the church in which he ministered.[2] A few months later, he wrote home again to reiterate his beliefs that each district or congregation in the colony should govern and support itself, with a small grant from the Parent Committee. He himself was well aware that few missionaries followed his line of thinking.[3]

Over the next seven years, reorganisation went on steadily, but slowly. At the end of 1856, the secretaries wrote to tell the missionaries that though they would continue to contribute to native

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M15 1.4.54 Bishop Vidal to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14 N.D. received 19.8.50 Graf to Secretaries.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M14 25.10.50 Graf to Secretaries.

stipends, they would finance no more church or school building in Sierra Leone.[1] By then, the new Bishop, John Weeks, an old C.M.S. missionary himself, had ordained nine native catechists on Trinity Sunday, refusing several veteran catechists such as John Attarra, Joseph Bartholomew and Joseph Harding because he did not believe them to be suitable for ordination.[2] The new native deacons began well, despite some hostility from their fellow-Africans. Even Graf had to admit that, when the new parochial committees were introduced in the autumn of 1854, the Africans tried to make them unworkable so that C.M.S. would have to continue to look after the churches.[3]

Venn continued to write regularly, encouraging the missionaries to press on with reorganisation and to realise that the difficulties were merely part of the transition stage. By 1857, he thought it was time to separate the native church from C.M.S. and to establish the Native Pastorate. Apart from the Mountain District, where Nathaniel Denton should stay on to give supervision, the future of Europeans would be in higher education and in the setting of an example to the church. "The native church in Sierra Leone may now

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L6 24.11.56 Secretaries to Jones.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15 5.3.56 Bishop Weeks to the Missionaries.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L6
23.7.56 Venn to Jones.
CA1/M15 12.10.54 Graf to Secretaries.

be said to be firmly established upon a principle of self-dependence",[1] he wrote, rather optimistically, to Thomas Maxwell at this time. He even suggested that local congregations might raise enough money to pay for Africans accompanying Europeans on preaching missions in the interior.

When Weeks died in 1857, he was replaced by Bishop Bowen. Some pressure had been put on Venn to nominate Samuel Crowther, in order to save the life of a European bishop, but Venn had already begun to hope for a bishopric in Yorubaland for him.[2] When Bowen died in 1859, he was replaced by Bishop Beckles and it was under his jurisdiction that the Native Pastorate was finally to be inaugurated in 1861.

By 1860, there was enough money available in Sierra Leone to support several native ministers. Before Beckles set out for West Africa, he was given detailed instructions on the administrative changes he must make.[3] He was to form a Church Council, consisting of the Governor, the Chief Justice, two missionaries and two native laymen. He was then to find out just how much money there was in the Native Pastorate fund and which parishes were ready to join the

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L6 25.3.57 Venn to Maxwell and see
16.10.57 Instructions to missionaries.
25.11.57 Venn to Maxwell.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L6 23.6.57 Venn to Jones.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.3.60 Venn to Bishop Beckles.

Pastorate. He should consult the missionaries to find out who were the most suitable natives already ordained, remove them from the employment of C.M.S. and put them directly under his own authority. Details of the administration of individual parishes and their officers were then to be worked out. Venn expected that, when the Bishop arrived in Sierra Leone, the church would be made independent.

This tidy-sounding piece of administrative change disguised a good deal of confusion. Even at this stage, there were arguments about the status of Africans in the church. Native pastors wanted to sit on the Finance Committee of C.M.S., which continued as the decision-making body of European missionaries. Venn insisted that they should see that their responsibility lay in the native church rather than a foreign missionary society. "Their highest ambition should be to become independent of the Society and to carry forward the independence of the native church," he wrote to Jones in 1860.[1] The only people who could count as missionaries should be Africans like Crowther who went out "to a mission at a distance" and they would then "rank as Europeans" and be able to help in the formulating of policy.[2] No native in Sierra Leone was in this class.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.5.60 Venn and Davies to Jones.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.5.60 Venn to Reichardt.

The missionaries themselves continued to stall about the final handover of their parishes. They saw their own work as efficient and effective and were understandably unwilling to give up the fruit of many years of sacrificial work to men whom they saw as less able and experienced than themselves. Venn began to show signs of impatience. "How long are the native ministers to be carried in the arms of the C.M.S.?" he wrote in October, 1860.[1] "The European missionaries should rather aim at making the best use of native agency than at accomplishing the work in a more perfect manner by their own exertions."[2]

When Bishop Beckles arrived in December, 1860, he at once set to work to make the final arrangements for the establishment of the Native Pastorate. "Our dear good bishop seems to be full of the Native Pastorate just now," wrote James Quaker rather quaintly in February, 1861.[3] The bishop toured the parishes with Jones and other older missionaries to appoint men as weekly collectors of the money needed to run the church. By March, the missionaries had agreed that the Native Pastorate should begin with just three or four parishes, two of which, Kissy and Wellington, had been on Venn's list of native parishes in 1854.[4] The bishop was unable to contact the Governor who

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.10.60 Venn to Quaker.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.10.60 Secretaries to Jones.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M16 7.2.61 Quaker to Venn.

[4] C.M.S. CA1/M16 20.3.61 Bishop Beckles to Venn.

was in Gambia, but he met John Carr, still the Chief Justice. In April, he invited John Carr, the Rev. J.Hamilton, Mr A.H. Farrah and the Rev. E.Jones to meet him at Jones' house, where they formed themselves into the Sierra Leone Church Council and arranged the transfer of Kissy, Wellington and Hastings to native pastors.[1] He expressed the opinion, by now commonplace from those on the spot, that European supervision of some sort must be retained. Venn argued that the missionaries in Sierra Leone at the time were not very experienced and that European supervision would probably lead to even greater difficulties. Nicol, Maxwell and Jones were men of great ability and this was an excellent time to transfer the church to them and men like them.[2] He continued to write to Sierra Leone, putting as much pressure as he could on the missionaries to get the Native Pastorate officially inaugurated. C.M.S. could no longer afford to support any church which could pay for itself.

In November, 1861, the Native Pastorate was finally begun. Six parishes were added to the three already chosen, with Kissy Road, Waterloo and Wilberforce retained for Europeans. Many small details remained to be organised, but essentially a church independent of European jurisdiction had been set up.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M16 20.4.61 Jones to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L7 14.7.61 Venn to Bishop Beckles.

C.M.S. now expected to be relieved of the expense of pastors' salaries and, as soon as possible, the legal problems about the trusteeship of churches, parsonages and schools would be worked out. The C.M.S. quarterly grant of nearly £800 could be reduced: the missionaries now freed from their parishes could begin to look to new regions beyond Sierra Leone and discussion began on new stations in the interior. Waterloo, where the missionaries were still working, would act as a base for the Quiah country, where pioneer work could be done by Europeans and Africans together.[1] The new church settled down initially remarkably well. There were misconceptions about the extent of C.M.S. financial responsibility and some trouble with catechists, but both sides clearly tried to make the experiment work. By 1865, however, the initial euphoria was dying down and difficulties were becoming obvious. Bishop Beckles still took the view that European supervision was essential and that, in a crisis, the right policy was to bring back Europeans rather than increasing the responsibilities of native agents.[2] He wanted Europeans sent to the Sea and River Districts to give the close, continuous supervision which was impossible to him in Freetown and evoked from Venn a characteristic response. Venn suggested putting in native supervisors, perhaps even a native archdeacon, rather than

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7
23.11.61 Venn to Oldham.
22. 8.62 Venn to Jones.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L7
20.1.65 Venn to Bishop Beckles.

increasing European domination of these areas. "If a European bishop cannot properly superintend twelve or fifteen native pastors," Venn wrote acidly in January, 1865, "it is high time to have a native bishop." "Such a retrograde step would injure the cause throughout the world. For the eyes of all are now turned upon the native church in Sierra Leone."[1]

One question closely associated with that of African status was the salary to be allowed to the native pastors and their assistants. This matter had come up regularly as Africans had at intervals asked for higher pay, but now a new stratum was to be introduced, above the old groups of catechists and teachers. In 1852, some African salaries were raised by about £3-£4 a year in one of the last decisions on pay taken by the local committee.[2] By the mid-1850's, Venn was emphasising the responsibility of the local church to decide on pastors' salaries - and then to find the money to pay them.[3] However, in 1853 and 1854, the missionaries did examine the salaries of teachers and catechists and came to the conclusion that they were too high in comparison with those of the pastors. The logical, though probably unpopular answer was to put them down and some even suggested

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.1.65 Venn to Caiger.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14 14.1.52 Minutes of Finance Committee.

[3] Quite frequent references but see C.M.S. CA1/L5
23.12.53 Venn to Bishop Vidal.
19. 9.54 Secretaries to Bishop Vidal.
22. 9.54 Secretaries to Finance Committee.

the abolition of salary scales altogether and the rewarding of natives on merit.[1] It is probably fortunate that such a complicated and highly personal system was never adopted. The reduction in salaries was justified by the old accusation that Africans were too fond of show. Their vanity was "displayed in the form of canes, white gloves, costly clothing, gold and silver chains, watches, costly furniture, glass etc."[2] and one missionary at least reckoned that the younger catechists were hoping for £100 a year. The missionaries then decided to lay on annual examinations for the Mission's schoolteachers, at least partly to justify the reduction in salaries. When the first tests were held in the autumn of 1854, forty of the forty-two native teachers passed, one having refused to come and another having given up part way through and gone off to work for an African merchant. Practically all the teachers, however, returned to their duties on smaller salaries and its hardly surprising that they had viewed the whole proceedings with indignation and had even contemplated boycotting the examination. It does, however, appear that many schoolmasters were by now receiving additions to their salaries from the newly-formed school committees and were not really as poorly treated as they liked to suggest. Their claim that W.M.S. was paying its village schoolmaster £120 a year was almost certainly a myth.[3]

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[1] C.M.S. CA /M15 18.3.53 Graf to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15 18.7.54 Young to Venn.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M15 12.10.54 Graf to Secretaries.
19.6.57 Jones to Secretaries.

In general terms, C.M.S. was keen to reduce its grants to education and the church. In January, 1854, the secretaries at home told the Finance Committee in Sierra Leone that the grants to schools would go down by twenty per cent each year, beginning in September of that year. C.M.S. would continue to finance higher education and hoped that the colonial government would give grants-in-aid to local schools, but in five years time their own financial responsibility would end.[1] At the end of 1858, when the five years was completed, C.M.S. agreed to invest £1200 in England as a schools fund for Sierra Leone, to be at the disposal of a new central schools committee in the colony. This committee consisted of the Governor, the Chief Justice, a few Africans and some missionaries and was to inspect and oversee the schools, as well as allocating money where it was needed.[2]

The Parent Committee at home were also quick to point out that any increase in catechists' salaries after ordination - usually an automatic bonus - would soon have to be borne by the local church. Bishop Bowen decided, in 1858, to pay £50 to anyone he ordained as deacon, raising £5-£10 from the man's new congregation as part of his policy of encouraging self support.[3] Early in 1861, when the Native

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L5 23.1.54 Secretaries to Finance Committee.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L6 22.12.58 Venn to Bishop Bowen.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M16 17.8.58 Bishop Bowen to Secretaries.

Pastorate was about to be inaugurated, Bishop Beckles calculated the cost of running the new church system. Four missionaries would receive £300 a year; two of the native pastors, probably Nicol and Maxwell, would have £150; two others would have £100 and the remaining pastors £75. This generous allowance would cost £2,150 a year. It was unlikely that the church in Sierra Leone would raise more than £400, though the bishop was exhorting his clergy to try to raise a weekly payment of one penny from each Christian household. He reckoned that C.M.S. would have to pay half the stipends of the native pastors, as well as those of the European missionaries.[1] All this was a far cry from the hopes of Henry Venn that C.M.S. might be able to withdraw all but token support once the Pastorate was established. He made quite clear to the bishop that his financial scheme was too extravagant. Salaries of £100 to £150 were far too high for natives. He suggested £75, a sum later raised to £80 to £90, with the promise of £100 when funds would permit. The Pastorate had better be begun slowly, a few congregations at a time, if the church could not take on its own support all at once. C.M.S. would put £360 into the Native Pastorate fund, but that was all. The Mission was itself in financial difficulties and the money simply must be found in the colony.[2] The

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C.M.S. CA1/M16
12.2.61 Bishop Beckles to Venn.
19.2.61 Bishop Beckles to Venn.

2 C.M.S. CA1/L7
22.2.61 Venn to Bishop Beckles.
24.6.61 Venn to Bishop Beckles.
23.3.61 Venn to Colonel Hill.

bishop managed to raise £41 in Freetown, but the missionaries put less effort into the venture - understandably since there was less money available in the outlying areas. Even Nicol ignored the Native Pastorate fund and devoted his fund-raising energies to providing money to repair his local church, an activity which Venn regarded as unnecessarily partisan.[1]

When the pastorate was inaugurated in November, the fund took on the salaries of native clergy, including Maxwell and Nicol, and C.M.S. could at last reduce its expenditure in Sierra Leone. Missionaries continued to call on the mission for grants to repair and build churches, but did not receive an encouraging reply. Venn was firm in his contention that the church was now independent and must pay for itself, though an occasional grant might come from the Jubilee Fund.[2] In the event, some kind of support from home was essential. At the end of 1863, when the Pastorate was two years old, the Parent Committee allowed £300 for the coming year[3] and it must be remembered that it was still paying the salaries of four missionaries, the costs of all higher education and some of the costs of elementary education. Requests to missionaries to scrutinise

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1 C.M.S. CA1/M16
20.3.61 Bishop Beckles to Venn.

2 C.M.S. CA1/L7
23.12.62 Venn to Caiger.
23. 2.63 Venn to Caiger.

3 C.M.S. CA1/L7
23.12.63 Venn to Jones.

expenditure came as regularly as they had always done and the Parent Committee would have been justified in feeling that they were still supporting the work.

It is worth noting, however, how much progress had been made. In Sierra Leone, the native church was paying nine native pastors, was very largely responsible for the repair of Churches, schools and parsonages and was contributing to a system of wide-spread elementary education. In a predominantly rural society, living still on subsistence farming, where many of the village Christians possessed very little money, such a situation was a considerable step forward. There were, of course, an increasing number of men in Freetown in a position to help the new church financially, but these men were the objects of many charitable appeals in the 1850's and 1860's and the main burden was almost certain to fall on the individual congregations and the men appointed to collect their weekly contributions. It was not a job for corrupt or lazy men, and any measure of success would give the lie to those who claimed that all Africans were both corrupt and idle.

CHAPTER VI

If the native church was to have any hope of survival without European domination, it needed a regular supply of trained native agents. In 1848, the new buildings at Fourah Bay had been opened in the hope that the Christian Institution would continue to be the source of supply for all C.M.S. stations in West Africa. During the 1850's, when so much attention was focussed on the setting up of an independent native church, it was reasonably successful, but it soon went into a state of decline apparently so incurable that it seemed certain that C.M.S. would close it.

Part of the trouble was the success of the Grammar School, set up in 1845 to fit in between the elementary schools and Fourah Bay, but very soon a formidable rival. Not all intelligent Africans saw teaching or catechising as interesting careers and as more openings appeared in government and trading offices, more and more boys wanted a Grammar School rather than a theological training. The Grammar School had the added advantage of being in Freetown itself and, as its popularity grew over the years, C.M.S. was faced with a declining number of Africans offering for service with the mission.

C.M.S. may well have been over-optimistic about the future of education in the late 1840's. In their instructions to Jones on his return to Sierra Leone in June, 1848, the Committee wrote:

"Our machinery is complete. Our day schools, our Grammar School, our college for education, our churches are built; our parochial divisions are all occupied; our native agency is efficient.."[1] Instructions to returning missionaries were marked for their glowing phrases and these words were no doubt meant to inspire Jones to take advantage of the great possibilities before him, but they were certainly an over-confident statement of the situation. True, the current reports from the field were encouraging. The latest one on the village day schools showed that, although some buildings were still dilapidated, real progress had been made in the basic subjects.[2] The initial reports from the Grammar School had been most reassuring. The first set of A.N.A.C. boys had finished in December, 1847, four of them deciding to work for C.M.S. and two going into trade. By March, 1848, there were forty-five pupils including two from Badagry and Abeokuta, a number sufficient to justify the employment of a native assistant, James Quaker, at £1 a month.[3] The Christian Institution had been successful for many years and C.M.S. confidently assumed that, with new buildings, it would attract well-qualified African students, who would supply the needs of the churches both in Sierra Leone and Yorubaland.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L4 12.6.48 Instructions to Jones.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M13 N.D. Report on Day Schools, 1847.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M13
31.12.48 Report on A.N.A.C. Students.
28. 6.48 Minutes of Special Meeting.

Such, however, was not to be the case. While the building at Fourah Bay was being erected, numbers in the old college building began to go down. In September, 1847, Peyton had had to transfer seven pupils from the Grammar School to Fourah Bay to add to the three remaining there. They were not really well enough qualified, but there was little point in running a Christian college for three young men, one of whom wanted to leave anyway.[1] Of course, much of the trouble at this stage was the poor state of the old building and the existence of a new and thriving Grammar School, but this could be expected to change when the new building opened. While Jones was away on furlough in 1847 and 1848, it was in any case more convenient to keep the numbers fairly low. What C.M.S. clearly did not realise was that the pattern for the next twenty years had been set.

The new building opened on November, 1848, three months after Jones' return, with six students. Within six months, Warburton was complaining of the difficulty of getting students for the Institution and Beale was bemoaning their laziness.[2] The Parent Committee, afraid that the missionaries might lower the entrance standards to attract young men, pointed out that the spiritual standard of Fourah Bay was vital and claimed to prefer to see the college empty rather than just

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M13 23.9.47 Peyton's Report.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14
23.5.49 Warburton to Secretaries.
7.6.49 Beale to Venn.

another educational institution. The students, they had recently agreed, must now pay for their own education, both at the Grammar School and at Fourah Bay, a decision which would bring more hardship at the latter where most of the students were boarders and there were fewer bursaries. Some of the older, students had wives, whose support C.M.S. also stopped, and, since less money would be made anyway in a church career, there was not even the incentive of a lucrative job to go to after a few frugal years of training. Not surprisingly, numbers remained low and in 1850 four middle-aged, semi-educated communicants were admitted on a month's trial in a rather desparate attempt to fill the college.[1]

The Grammar School continued to grow and Peyton was soon petitioning Salisbury Square for £100 to enlarge the Regent Square building. By this time - 1851 - there were over fifty boys and navigational training and cotton growing had been added to their activities. The school now had another assistant at £30 a year (plus board), paid directly from the proceeds of the school. In 1852, the school reached seventy three, declining a little after the death of Peyton in the next year, but climbing to seventy in 1858

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14
29.7.50 Graf to Secretaries.
25.10.50 Graf to Secretaries.

when C.M.S. reported with obvious pride that over three hundred boys had been educated there since 1845.[1]

At Fourah Bay, numbers did go up for a few years after 1851, reaching nineteen in one year, but there is some evidence to suggest that entrance standards may have been lowered in order to achieve this. By 1856, suggestions were being made that the Institution might be thrown open to general, fee-paying students.[2] By the late 1850's, numbers were down below ten again and this at a time when the planning of a Native Pastorate assumed a steady supply of native agents.

Not surprisingly, the varying fortunes of the Institution were followed closely by C.M.S. and particularly Henry Venn, who had always regarded it as of more significance than the Grammar School. Much discussion took place between Sierra Leone and London on possible changes in curriculum and the student body, some rather fanciful, but all giving evidence of the changes in attitude taking place. In the early 1840's, a new, remodelled and rebuilt Institution had been seen as the main source of large numbers of native agents to work for C.M.S. All the long discussion at that time had been

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M14
25.1.51 Peyton to Secretaries.
Proceedings of C.M.S.
1851 p.77
1853 p.51
1859 p.8

[2] Proceedings of C.M.S.
1857 p.8

centred on that belief: the curriculum had been chosen with that in mind. While the Grammar School had prospered and industrial education had begun successfully, Fourah Bay, on which so much energy and money had been spent,had simply failed to do what everyone expected.

The time had come to rethink. As early as 1854, Venn was beginning to suggest that Fourah Bay should become a place of general higher education - "a kind of university".[1] Jones agreed with him, though he was not at all sure how this could be brought about. It would affect the Grammar School and Jones wondered if a small colony like Sierra Leone could support two such institutions. Early the next year, regulations were drawn up in London for a new-style college, which would offer much the same subjects as before, but with less theology. Students would stay for four years, must be over the age of fifteen, English speaking and able to pay £20 a year. Those training to work with C.M.S. would remain on a separate course.[2] Venn presumably hoped that such a course would attract boys who had spent some years at the Grammar School, were too intelligent for the clerking jobs available in the colony and not willing to work in the church. Unfortunately, this was one of the many schemes thought out for Sierra Leone which never reached fruition.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L6 23.9.54 Venn to Jones.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15
N.D. Received 6.5.55. Regulations for the opening of the Fourah Bay Institution.

The task of implementing the idea was given to the new bishop, John Weeks. He had no experience of academic institutions, unlike his predecessor, Bishop Vidal. Though Venn pointed out that "the mode of training young men for the ministry is alas! far too secular in its character and gives far too great prominence to head knowledge",[1] the fact remained that his rather amateur intervention was resented. Old stagers like Beale were alarmed at the idea of replacing piety with ability as an entrance qualification for Fourah Bay, fearing that it would produce men with little missionary zeal to go into secular occupations. At the end of 1856, when the Institution was clearly not prospering, Jones wrote home to reiterate his view that two institutions of learning were too much for such a small colony. C.M.S. wanted to fill both with intelligent Africans and there were simply not enough coming up from the village schools. At present, Fourah Bay had only eight students, divided into three classes and this was all it could possibly muster. Jones repeated the old view that Africans were, after all only one generation away from barbarism: one should not be disappointed that so few were of consistent character and able to take advantage of what C.M.S. had to offer.[2] Inevitably, the scheme of 1855 was allowed to die.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L6 17.9.55 Venn to Jones.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M15 31.10.56 Jones' Report.

In 1858 C.M.S. took advantage of the presence in England of both Jones of Fourah Bay and Millward from the Grammar School to discuss the future of the two institutions. They decided that they should merge and form one college. As long as Fourah Bay limited itself to producing future ministers, its numbers would remain low. The missionaries had calculated that the students at the Institution, about eight or ten of them, had cost C.M.S. £800 in 1858. Under the 1855 scheme, most of the students would have had to pay and it would have been almost impossible to find enough young men prepared and able to do this. So the best thing in the circumstances would be to put the two schools together.[1]

It was proposed that the class at present at Fourah Bay should attend the Grammar School for lessons in Classics and Science. Nicol and Reichardt would teach them Divinity and Hebrew and Jones and Nicol would give lessons in Classics and Maths at the Grammar School. Venn, who made these suggestions, saw the new college almost as a university and pointed out that this was not a retrograde step, but a real advance.[2] The new college would mean a larger building at Regent Square, with an upper department open to all who wanted a liberal education, as well as to theological students.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M16
19.11.58 Millward to Venn.
18.12.58 Ehemann to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L6
24.1.59 Venn to Jones.

The Grammar School would remain a stepping stone to this new higher education and the old buildings at Fourah Bay could go to the Female Institution.[1]

These ideas initiated a spirited debate. Almost everyone seemed to have a private scheme worked out. Bishop Bowen thought that Fourah Bay was too far out of Freetown for a girls' school and the present Grammar School unsuitable for both establishments. He wanted to see Fourah Bay doing its original job of training school masters and clergy, with a good fundamental education for the teachers and a separate class for the clergy.[2] Christian Ehemann approved of the scheme to amalgamate the two institutions, but suggested making Fourah Bay "a sort of propaganda college for the nations of Africa",[3] whatever that might have been, rather than a home for the Female Institution. Nicol thought that if an English graduate, preferably a theologian, could come out to be principal, Fourah Bay would revive anyway.[4] Jones objected to moving his students to the Grammar School until extra accommodation was ready.[5]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M16 19.11.58 Millward to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M16 10.12.58 Bishop Bowen to Venn.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M16
18.12.58 Ehemann to Secretaries.
18.12.58 Ehemann to Venn.

[4] C.M.S. CA1/M16 19.2.59 Nicol to Venn.

[5] C.M.S. CA1/M16 17.2.59 Ehemann to Secretaries.

Early in 1859, instructions based on the discussions of the previous year reached Sierra Leone and preparatory steps were taken towards closing Fourah Bay. Jones was to supervise the Regent district and take his handful of students to live with him in the mission house there. Nicol and Reichardt were to live in Freetown and come to the Grammar School to lecture. The local committee recommended that the new college should be under one principal, with the missionaries working as part-time lecturers and doing church work in Freetown as well. New dormitory accommodation would be needed, but Millward reckoned that he could fit in six extra students straight away. Evening lectures were to be inaugurated for the young men of Freetown and Nicol, at least, agreed to help with talks on astronomy and natural philosophy.[1] The Fourah Bay buildings, now considered unsuitable for the Female Institution, would be used as a mission house. When Millward died in 1859, the Finance Committee agreed that Jones should take over as principal of the Grammar School, presumably bringing his pupils with him. The merger appeared to be complete and Fourah Bay was closed, apparently for ever. C.M.S. explained in its report for 1858-60 that "a collegiate system of training youths for the ministry has failed in providing a supply of humble-minded spiritual agents",[2]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M16.
17.2.59 Ehemann to Secretaries.
19.2.59 Nicol to Venn.

[2] C.M.S. Proceedings 1858-9 p. 23.

and implied that, in future, older, more mature men would be chosen from the churches and given in-service training.

In 1862, Venn published his work on the missionary career of Francis Xavier.[1] Writing about the founding of a Jesuit college in Goa, but possibly with experience in Sierra Leone in mind, he wrote these words:

"The idea of such a Mission college, where youths may be removed from their heathen relatives and associations and may receive a European education, has always been a favourite 'first thought' of zealous Missionaries. But experience has shown that the advantages gained by such a system of isolation are counterbalanced by the severance of the tie of sympathy between the native pupils and their countrymen. They return to native society as trained teachers, indeed, but with European habits and tastes, and are, for the most part, unfitted for the work for which they have been trained... A more effectual way of raising up native teachers is that of establishing a theological seminary in the midst of a Mission, selecting for it men of mature and settled character who have proved their 'aptness to teach' as catechists and schoolmasters, who, living with their families while under instruction, may retain their native tastes."[2]

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[1] H.Venn: "Missionary life of Francis Xavier" (1862).

[2] Ibid. p.26.

C.M.S. had obviously found that the old style of college did not work. It had produced a breed of over-Europeanised Africans, separate from their fellow-countrymen; it had not attracted enough students once there was a thriving Grammar School to compete with it. Nicol probably put his finger on the African point of view when he wrote to Venn in 1859. He explained that men did not go to Fourah Bay simply because there was no prospect of a job in view. Of all those who had passed through Fourah Bay, only about a dozen had been ordained and it was only ordination which brought anything like equality with Europeans. As a result, Africans would not let their sons go on to Fourah Bay after the Grammar School.[1] Perhaps, then, the idea of a merged Grammar School and Christian Institution might be the answer for the time being.

Yet, despite all the discussion and planning for the future without the old Christian Institution, the missionaries clearly hoped that it would revive and be reopened. As far as many of them were concerned, a native agent was an African specifically trained for the work of the church and the development of secular education on any large scale was irrelevant if not injurious to the church in Sierra Leone. They still regarded academic achievement as a dubious qualification for their brand of native agent and did not want to

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M16 19.2.59 Nicol to Venn.

rely on a Grammar School-cum-Liberal Arts College as a source of supply. A combination of humility and piety were a good deal more important than advanced knowledge of the Classics or Mathematics.

As the inauguration of the Native Pastorate approached in 1861, Bishop Beckles began to be increasingly anxious to re-open Fourah Bay as a theological seminary. There would be better prospects for employment now that more natives were to be ordained and take charge of churches. Only three students were still studying with Jones by this time, but the Bishop went ahead and began to request money from London for repairs. Jones sent in an estimate for £420, adding that £500 had already been spent on new copper gutters, presumably because the bishop was living in the Fourah Bay buildings and they had to be kept in some sort of repair.[1] He got a rather discouraging reply from home: "The building at present is not performing the work for which it was originally designed: and therefore the committee would not be justified in any expenditure which is not absolutely necessary".[2] A month later, the Parent Committee relented and allowed £200 for repairs and, in August, 1862, Venn wrote to recommend that Fourah Bay should be reopened as a theological seminary and recommended that it should study the local languages.[3]

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.6.62 Venn to Jones.

[2] Ibid.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L7
23.7.62 Straith and Davies to Jones.
22.8.62 Venn to Jones.

More planning now began. They would need a new principal as Jones was now in charge of Kissy Road Church and does not seem to have been regarded as suitable for the post. Almost certainly, C.M.S. were looking for the sort of man Nicol had suggested three years before, a graduate in Theology from one of the English universities. Some attention was given to the sort of preparation given to young men coming to the new college, to avoid the problem of 'unspiritual' men entering on theological training. A class of 'preparandi' was suggested by Venn. These young men would be aged nineteen to twenty, might be attached to the Grammar School and would do practical work like district visiting as well as attending lectures. As they waited for a principal to arrive, Venn suggested the idea of a House Father, a notion borrowed from the missionary training college in Basle. He would gather three or four students and give them preliminary instruction and close supervision.[1]

Late in 1863, a chaplain was sent out for Fourah Bay and given the temporary status of Principal. He was to get the building repaired, find a maximum of six suitably pious and educated students and re-open the Institution as soon as possible. Not content with a simple theology course and afraid that the new college would be as remote as the last, Venn stressed that Fourah Bay must keep in contact

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7
22.5.63 Secretaries to Jones.
23.9.63 Venn to Reichardt.

with the artisan class in Sierra Leone and not retreat to some sort of ivory tower. The workmen repairing the building might well be persuaded to study part time and become catechists. The curriculum, however, was still to be basically literary, though there would be some practical work for the students, who would come from the Grammar School or from the ranks of catechists seeking ordination. Now that the Native Pastorate was responsible for the church, C.M.S. would of course not pledge itself to employ or support students after they had left.[1] It sounded very much like the mixture as before.

In March, 1864, Fourah Bay re-opened under its temporary principal, the Rev. James Hamilton, with six students. Hamilton was doubtful right from the beginning about the future of so small a college, but Venn wrote, rather surprisingly: "I was rather afraid that many would enter with the old notions of a place for life and a life in the old routine."[2] He tried to reassure Hamilton that "as soon as the Lord's blessing is seen to rest upon the work, the tide will turn in its favour."[3] Hamilton must have worked with considerable energy to get the place ready for his new students.

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7 21.10.63 Venn to Hamilton.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.3.64 Venn to Hamilton.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/L7 23.5.64 Venn to Hamilton.

reorganising the library and getting the repairs finished. The bishop was still occupying the principal's house, even though it had been allocated to Hamilton and seems to have spread himself into some of the students' rooms as well. Hamilton drew up a new set of regulations which the Parent Committee accepted in June, 1864.[1]

The numbers, however, did not go up. Venn continued to be doggedly cheerful in the face of anxious letters from Hamilton. He was sure that Fourah Bay would eventually reach thirty to forty students: the dismissal of unsuitable members simply showed the value of the college as a filter; delinquency amongst catechists made clear the importance of Fourah Bay as a place of probation as well as spiritual training. The new Fourah Bay was sure to produce better men for the church.[2]

It was undoubtedly important that there should have been someone with the vision to encourage those on the spot to keep going, but the difficulties must have seemed insuperable. In September, 1864, when Fourah Bay had been open for six months with six students, the Grammar School boasted a record total of one hundred and three boys. "The support given to this institution by the community is a sufficient proof of the value which they set upon an English education", was

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L7 14.6.64 Venn to Hamilton.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/L7 21.9.64) Venn to Hamilton.
23.11.64)
23.12.64 Secretaries to Caiger.

the verdict of the report for 1864-66.[1] It was not only an English education that attracted Africans to the Grammar School, but the real and lucrative opportunities afforded in a fast-developing colony, to those who had such an education. Of course the Native Pastorate had brought greater opportunities to men in the church, but these were nothing compared with those in business and trade and even government. Who wanted to be a George Nicol if he might be a John Ezzidio? The old days, when to stand on an equal footing with the missionaries was almost unimaginable, were now past.

What C.M.S. did not appreciate clearly was just how far Sierra Leone had developed. The society that many had hoped to set up, as much like that of Victorian England as possible had begun to arrive. The middle class merchant, with his stone-built town house and ready supplies of capital, the artisan with his special skills, were now commonplace. Outside Freetown, there were backward rural areas just as there were outside London and Birmingham and Manchester. Into this society, the African clergyman fitted just as he would have done in England. He would face being sent to some small village, such as Charlotte or Hastings, amongst people less well educated than himself: his chances of coming into Freetown or figuring in Sierra Leone society would be few. Now that the church was run by Africans, he

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[1] C.M.S. Proceedings 1864-6 p.41.

would not even have the status of working for a European society. As in England, he might be regarded with respect by his parishioners, but in society as a whole he would be unimportant. The men who mattered in Victorian society, apart from the landed gentry, were the self-made men with capital and plenty of business contacts and, in African society, it was these men, too, whose influence was most firmly felt. Against such progress Fourah Bay could not hope to compete.

CHAPTER VII

The origins of the Methodist church in Sierra Leone set the pattern for much of its later development. Various small Methodist churches had thrived in the colony for many years and some of the earliest settlers from Nova Scotia had brought their church practices with them and established their own chapels. In the 1790's a party of mechanics and Local Preachers had gone on from England to teach the nearby tribes, but they had soon proved unsuitable. In 1811, four Wesleyan missionaries went from England at the request of the hundred or so Methodists in Sierra Leone for teachers. It seems clear that, from the beginning, the understanding was that Europeans were not going to take over the church and that their contribution should be in the field of education. Inevitably, though, they took their part in preaching and their very strangeness probably made them a star attraction on the circuits. Their names soon appeared at the head of the lists of preachers and various misunderstandings arose as to the relationship between the European Wesleyan Missionary Society and what was already a genuinely African-run church, dominated initially by the Maroon settlers.

The missionaries on the spot were hardly aware of their own vulnerability, and of the fact that they were not indispensable. In 1835, the handful of missionaries wrote a set of instructions for the Class Leaders and Local Preachers in the event of all the

missionaries dying and the Africans being left to run the church.[1] The preachers' list for this year, however, showed only two Europeans, Benjamin Crosby and Edward Maer, at the head of a list of twelve fully-fledged preachers.[2] Such African preachers did pioneer work and acted very largely on their own initiative, only coming to the notice of the missionaries and the Home Committee when they did something wrong. To the average village African, the local chapel was an African-run affair, often owned and repaired by the local people. The two or three European missionaries were based in Freetown, until new circuits were formed around Hastings and York in 1838, and can hardly have had a very profound influence on developments in the more distant villages. Yet the missionaries did not always see the situation like this and many of the instances of friction arose from this basic misunderstanding. In the Wesleyan churches, much more than in the Anglican church, Europeans were there on invitation to teach but not to dominate. To the European missionaries, their supervision was seen as the only sure protection against secession, and, with it, heresy.

In 1836, a typical argument broke out in the Congo Town church. Thomas Thorpe, a class leader, was found to have embezzled

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1 Wesleyan Missionary Society (W.M.S.) Sierra Leone papers (S.L.) 11.8.35 Instructions to Class Leaders.

2 W.M.S. S.L. 8.4.35 Maer to Mrs Beecham.

money and materials set aside for the rebuilding of the chapel.[1] He appeared to be trying to lead a secession to exclude the missionaries. This was by no means a rare event in the Wesleyan chapels. Maer claimed that there had been seven similar secessions since 1811,[2] all because of the Africans' desire, understandably enough, to be in charge and their belief that white men were only there for their own benefit. In the case of Congo Town, the chapel had been built by Maroons in about 1818 out of W.M.S. funds on land belonging to the local head man and missionaries had worked there ever since. In 1834, some of the congregation had begun to pull the building down, but had never got as far as erecting a new one. They objected when Maer wanted to finish the rebuilding, but began to build an extension themselves when Maer was ill.[3] The Africans appealed to the authorities in the colony and got the Governor and other officials on their side, much to the alarm of the missionaries. Soon a third of the congregation had seceded under two Africans, John Gray and Mingo Jordan.[4] Despite expressions of

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 16.5.36 Maer to Committee.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 25.7.36 Maer to Beecham.

[3] W.M.S. S.L. March 1836 Maer to the Lieutenant-Governor.

[4] W.M.S. S.L. 28.7.36 Maer, Crosby and Saunders to Secretaries.
1.12.36 Petition to the Governor.
19.9.36 Wesleyans in Congo Town to Lieutenant Governor.

loyalty to the missionaries from other chapels, the trouble at Congo Town did not encourage the Europeans to favour the pushing forward of Africans in the near future. It was, in many ways, a trivial argument, but it indicated clearly that neither side was prepared to stand aside and allow the other to hold a dominant position and, naturally enough, made amicable compromise and co-operation much more difficult.

Such co-operation became much more obviously important as the Europeans were struck by the wave of sickness in the late 1830's. As with the C.M.S. workers, the Wesleyans were caught in the general sense of hysteria and the expression,"this land of sickness and death", soon appeared, cliché-like, in their letters home.[1] At times, almost all the work of the churches and the schools must have been in the hands of Africans and it seems strange to find a questionnaire, obviously sent out in the late 1830's,asking such questions as, "What is the prospect of our having a native agency?" and, "Do the local preachers or any of them appear likely to make good missionaries?".[2] Clearly there was a difference in the mind of the Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, John Beecham, between a native agent and an African who merely got on with the job of preaching or teaching, after an elementary education, presumably

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 17.11.40 Dove to Secretaries.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. N.D. probably 1836 or later.

under another African. David Jehu wrote home in 1840, apparently in reply to this questionnaire, to point out that the Africans generally were making excellent progress. Apart from a few workmen, most villagers gave their time to agriculture, but in Freetown many young Methodists were already in government posts and others were merchants, carpenters, boatbuilders, tailors and shoemakers. He had found that when Africans became Christians, they soon developed an industrious attitude and became "zealous promoters of civilisation in all its branches".[1]

Conference, which was the final authority for missionary as well as home affairs in the Methodist church, was keen to raise up an African church and withdraw its European workers, probably within the next twenty or thirty years. When drawing up the sixty-six year lease for the Maroon Chapel in Freetown in 1835, Maer had reckoned that Europeans would be out of the colony before it had half run its course.[2] Yet, neither the authorities at home nor the missionaries on the spot seem to have been able to view the Methodist church as already African-run or envisage a situation in which they could safely leave it to organise its own affairs. Writing to the Colonial Secretary of Sierra Leone, Thomas Cole, Maer expressed the opinion that,"desirous as we are to raise up a native ministry, we

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. Odd Papers 4.5.40 Jehu to Beecham.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 16.10.35 Maer and Crosby to the Trustees.

are fully convinced that there is neither one of their number who is in any way competent to take the charge of their religious instruction."[1] When two local preachers and an exhorter were suspended in 1836, the immediate reaction of the three missionaries was to ask for more European help. If the work was to be extended, Africans were hardly likely to be the answer.

If native agency meant well-trained natives, a training institution was essential. As early as 1835, missionaries were suggesting a theological college in England for Africans, mainly, it would seem, because the missionaries in Sierra Leone did not feel sufficient confidence in their own competence to give theological training to train natives.[2] By 1840, however, the decision had been made to site the college in Sierra Leone and the missionaries began to hope for a widening of their ministry sending young men throughout Africa. "An Institution would be a most delightful thing as it would enable our choice young men to use the Talents which the Lord has given them," wrote Thomas Dove.[3] Much of their thinking was, of course, influenced by the ideas of Thomas Fowell Buxton and the Niger Expedition of 1841, along with the desire of Africans to return to their tribal homelands. If these Africans could be furnished with proper training, a native agency would result which

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 16.5.36 Maer to Thomas Cole.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 30.1.35 Maer to Beecham.

[3] W.M.S. S.L. 24.11.41 Dove to Beecham.

would spread the Christian gospel to wide areas on the Niger and in Yorubaland.

In March, 1842, the college opened with fourteen "pious and devoted young men who seem admirably well adapted for future usefulness in this part of the world".[1] With the failure of the Niger Expedition, the future importance of the new Institution increased .."the last and greatest effort that can be made on behalf of Africa",[2] according to one impassioned letter. The speed with which W.M.S. had been able to start their training was due to their willingness to begin without a special building and with much less discussion as to the purpose of the college than C.M.S. had found necessary. There were no regulations in 1842 and no full-time principal. They clearly had little equipment and urgent appeals were sent home to friends to contribute to the establishment of a good library. Despite the haphazard organisation, the first students did well. Of course, there were differing opinions on their progress, but a year after the foundation of the Institution, nine students still remained. Thomas Raston, who was temporarily responsible for them in 1843, saw a glowing future as assistants in pioneer locations.[3]

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 19.4.42 Dove to Secretaries.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 23.7.42 Raston to Secretaries.

[3] W.M.S. S.L. 11.2.43 Raston to Secretaries.

If the Institution was to continue, proper buildings would now be an asset. Here again, W.M.S. moved quickly, buying an old naval depot at King Tom's Point for a bargain price and setting about repairs in October, 1843. By now, two of the original students were schoolmasters and a few others almost ready to begin. Around the new building, a small five-acre site was cleared for a farm, growing ginger, indian corn, arrowroot, yams, cassada, oranges and limes, presumably for domestic use.[1]

By the middle of 1844, Henry Badger, who had taken over the Institution, had drawn up the regulations.[2] These regulations were very much like those produced at the same period for Fourah Bay and were probably based on Wesleyan training colleges in England. The age for admission ranged from fifteen to twenty-five years, and entrants had to be convinced Christians of at least moderate education. No student could leave the premises without permission and was, in any case, unlikely to find time in the busy schedule set out for him. Three hours of most days were set aside for work in the grounds, in addition to four hours of lectures and two of private study. The curriculum was in the usual literary tradition, but without the Classics or Hebrew to be introduced at Fourah Bay. Badger was clearly trying to widen the scope of W.M.S. education in including such subjects as History and Geography, for the elementary

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 29.5.44 Amos to Secretaries.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 31.7.44 Regulations for the Wesleyan Theological Institution.

schools confined themselves largely to religious education, and he was proud of the inclusion of some Natural Philosophy in the curriculum. The three hours of gardening were put in as much to wean the youths away from their disdain for manual work as to increase the farm's production. There were even rules about clothes - brown jackets, no shoes or stockings, no fancy shirt fronts - in an attempt to counteract African love of finery.[1]

After the enthusiastic and speedy start, the Institution began to face problems familiar to C.M.S. at Fourah Bay. The number of students was soon down to six and missionaries lamented from the beginning the difficulty of finding sufficiently pious youths.[2] W.M.S. had expected the Institution to have thirty students, but, like Fourah Bay, it was never to reach its full complement. By mid-1844 when the regulations were being drawn up, five had been dismissed for impudence to William Quick, a somewhat irascible temporary principal, and Badger was joining the general complaint that most youths entering the Institution showed little sign of religious conviction.

The Institution was partly financed by a printing press, installed at King Tom's Point and run by Richard Amos with the help of local boys. It was soon handed over to two young Africans and

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 19.9.44 Badger to Beecham.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 31.7.44 Badger to Secretaries.

printed, amongst other things, the 'Sierra Leone Watchman', a local newspaper, little more than a glorified parish magazine, which circulated throughout the colony.

The numbers studying in the Institution remained very much the same as time went on and, each year, a few young men emerged to teach in schools or assist on the circuits. Some went further afield to the Gambia or the Gold Coast. Despite the low numbers and occasional bad behaviour, there was general satisfaction with the training: the missionaries reconciled themselves to the situation and, since they were all busy with their own work, did not give much thought to the nature of the training or to its continued failure to attract large numbers of Africans. For the annual Report for 1847, Thomas Raston wrote: "In all our mission operations in Sierra Leone, there does not exist a more pleasing feature than our Institution."[1] Yet in that year, only six Africans had left to work as preachers and teachers, not a very large number in a mission so much dependent on African help.

The Institition continued to go from hand to hand. Early in 1848, the Badgers went to the Gambia, leaving the position of principal to Thomas Purslow, who had only just arrived in Sierra Leone and bewailed his lack of adequate education in preparation for such a post.[2] Within ten months, he was dead and Thomas Raston took

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[1] W.M.S. Reports 1847. p.97.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 14.1.48 Purslow to Secretaries.

over responsibility for the Institution once again, probably continuing his normal missionary work at the same time. In 1849, Walter Garry, a native of the West Indies, arrived to take up the post of principal, also working on one of the circuits in his spare time. He proved to be an excellent trainer of preachers as well as a Classical scholar and Latin and New Testament Greek soon appeared on the curriculum. During his time as principal, students were entrusted with the responsibility of running services in local chapels. His talents were much appreciated, at least by the other European missionaries, and when he was forced by ill health to return to the West Indies in 1852, a group of African Methodist leaders petitioned the Home Committee for a man of like experience and maturity.[1] After a short period of yet another temporary principal, they were sent Lionel Reay in October, 1852. He approached the job with great energy and enthusiasm and was soon writing home for more books, particularly in such new subjects as Greek and Latin as well as copies of Paradise Lost and Euclid. He visited Fourah Bay, with which he was much impressed and commented on its complement of sixteen students as something which King Tom's Institution might emulate.[2] Money was soon offered to enlarge the college library and Reay listed the two hundred and fifty books

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 18.2.52 Petition to the Committee of W.M.S.

they already had which show a wide range, many of them admittedly in poor condition, probably through being well thumbed. Many of the books he asked for were the inevitable religious classics, but the list included travel books and standard works on the sciences.[1]

At this point, Reay began to insist that the Institution must be in the hands of full-time teachers, with no church responsibilities, pointing out that Fourah Bay had three staff at this time. The custom of removing students as soon as a vacancy appeared on one of the circuits or in the village schools should be replaced with a course of specific length, like the four year one at Fourah Bay. Much more attention should be given to training preachers rather than school-teachers and the Institution might even become the theological college for the Gambia and the Yorubaland.[2]

For four years, Reay continued to work hard to improve the Institution, but, in 1856, he was invalided home and there was now no principal at all for three years. The missionaries petitioned the Home Committee for a man with qualifications in the Classics and Mathematics to carry on the work of Garry and Reay, but no appointment was made. A new principal arrived at last, in 1859, but went home again in 1860. Yet the Institution did not close down. At one point in the three years interregnum, an African, Joseph May, was in charge

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 26.1.53 Reay to Secretaries.
31.3.54 Catalogue of Library.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 1.4.54 Reay to the Rev. G.Osborn.

and other missionaries took their turn to keep an eye on the work.[1] The number of students remained constant. Though the 1864 Report claimed that little progress was being made, the number of students still going out into Sierra Leone and other parts of West Africa suggests that they were taking a pessimistic view. Considering the state of the building - so bad that, in 1866, the students finally had to leave their section and take up residence in the principal's house -[2] the continued ability of the Institution to attract any students at all suggests that Africans were still remarkably keen to take advantage of the possibilities of higher education, which led, in this case, almost without exception, straight into the service of the missionary society.

However the Institution suffered from all the disadvantages faced by Fourah Bay in its distance from Freetown. Its education was, if anything, more narrow than that of the C.M.S. Institution and, while it had no Wesleyan grammar school to compete with, there was still the lure of trade and minor clerking jobs for those who had completed their elementary education. Its persistent failure to reach the originally intended roll of thirty did not occasion the heart searching evident in C.M.S. circles for several reasons. The small number of Europeans, never more than four, could hardly have coped with a college of such a size. Unless the Home Committee

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[1] See below pp. 160-2 for further discussion of his work.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 19.10.66 Waite to Secretaries.

would send out a man to concentrate on the job, they were better able to deal with a small group of not more than a dozen students. When the numbers rose suddenly to twenty-seven in 1848, the first thing the missionaries did was to hold eliminating examinations to bring numbers down.[1] W.M.S. did not allow a great deal of money for Sierra Leone and the cost of educating so large a group of students would have been prohibitive. There was not the interest at home to encourage the Institution to develop. To the Home Committee this was simply another training institution: if it was without a well-qualified, permanent principal, that was unfortunate, but there were many other fields to consider. W.M.S. had no Henry Venn to keep their institution in people's minds.

As a result, within this period no changes were made. The missionaries were well aware that the training was faulty and suggested as much in the 1864 Report. They knew that it was still vital to progress in West Africa. It remained, however, in its poor buildings, with ten or twelve students, sending out three or four students a year. It took the foresight and energy - and the tactless determination - of Benjamin Tregaskis in the late 1860's to close and sell the premises at King Tom's Point and to establish the Grammar School which the Wesleyans had needed for so many years, along with a Training Institution for intending preachers and teachers.

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 19.6.48 Purlow to Secretaries.

CHAPTER VIII

The Methodists were not, of course, only concerned with theological education and teacher training. High on their list of priorities was the organization of elementary schools throughout their mission field in West Africa. Wherever there were converts, a school, as well as a chapel would almost certainly be built. In Sierra Leone, this was sometimes because of fear that the Wesleyan children might otherwise go to the local C.M.S. school where membership of the Anglican church was a requisite for entry and the Methodist chapel would lose members as a result. Elsewhere in West Africa, the school often preceded conversions and it was education which was frequently used by pioneering missionaries, such as Thomas Birch Freeman, to gain entry to a tribal village, with a simple school built by local labour and visited by European missionaries on their travels.

These schools varied enormously in standard, some well run by competent Africans or Europeans, some little more than huts where an ill-educated African taught, by rote, things he had learnt and barely understood himself. As a result, European opinion on these schools varied greatly too, depending on which one any given official might have chanced to visit. The missionaries naturally sent home reports of the more obviously glowing achievements and gave the home committee a sometimes distorted picture of the progress being made.

By the end of the 1830's, W.M.S. had twelve schools in Sierra Leone, of which at least nine had African teachers earning £1. - £4. a month. They were educating nearly a thousand children, over a third of them girls.[1] The curriculum was at least as narrow as that of the C.M.S. schools, writing, arithemetic and Scripture being the only subjects taught in most villages, though singing and geography appeared on the time table in some schools. By 1840, it was worth sending two teachers, Joseph May and Charles Knight, to England to study English teaching methods and their work will be discussed later. By this time, too, the Institution soon to be built at King Tom's Point was being discussed and the possibility of producing a higher calibre of teacher within the colony was apparently not far away.

W.M.S. were, of course, also building schools elsewhere in West Africa. Their work in the Gambia had begun in 1821 and, almost immediately, a school had been founded at St. Mary's where six hours a day were used for the teaching of reading, writing and some English grammar. This school was run by the Rev. John Morgan, who fitted more directly evangelistic work in after school hours and the school appears to have thrived. In 1841, W.M.S. built a school house, presumably for a full-time schoolmaster and turned its attention to the other station run by its missionaries at McCarthy's Island. Here,

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[1] P.P. 1842 (551) Appendix B No. V (12)
W.M.S. S.L. 6.2.39 Badger to Secretaries.

where there was already an African-run school, an institution for the education of the sons of chiefs was set up. One of the local missionaries soon began to travel round to find half a dozen youths who would be able to benefit from this institution and, although two of them left fairly soon, their father, the King of Kataba, was persuaded to return them. These two boys finally left in 1845, by which time the institution had changed its character slightly and, although it still had the son of the King of Ngabantung amongst its pupils, its emphasis has shifted to the training of W.M.S. workers. Five young Africans had passed through its hands and gone into the society's service.[1]

It appears that the establishment of King Tom's Institution in Sierra Leone made even this redundant and the McCarthy's Island building was given over to elementary education of the type given at St. Mary's. Both these schools thrived and both were African run, at first by local Africans who could do little more than give a simple Bible lesson, but soon able to produce literate young men who could get jobs in local warehouses and businesses. In 1849, George Leigh who had trained at King Tom's Institution, came to run a day school at Barra Point which survived into the 1860's, and Joseph May arrived to work on McCarthy's Island.[2] Five years later, he was

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[1] W.M.S. Reports. 1841, Gambia. 1842, Gambia, 1843, Gambia. 1845, Gambia.
and see: G.Findlay & W.Holdsworth: "History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society." p.118-134.

[2] G.Findlay & W.Holdsworth op.cit. p.135.

replaced by Charles Knight, by which time the school had over one hundred and thirty scholars, a number which remained steady until famine struck the area in the mid-sixties. By the mid-1850's there was a school at Bathurst, able to take on a hundred new children from the Jollof tribe with no knowledge of English. Meanwhile, St. Mary's school was also doing well and could boast a total of over four hundred scholars by 1865, with a further four hundred in the Sunday school. The education given in these schools clearly remained very simple - "a good plain education" was the description given.[1] There was some preoccupation with annual, often public examinations, which also characterised so much C.M.S. education and was probably true of Victorian working-class schooling generally.[2]

On the Gold Coast, schools were also widespread and run by Africans. After somewhat abortive attempts to start a mission at Cape Coast Castle back in the 1750's, an Anglican chaplain had returned to England, bringing with him three native boys to a school in Islington. One of these Africans eventually went back to the Gold Coast to preach and, while his efforts did not meet with widespread

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[1] W.M.S. Report 1864 p.99.

[2] For details of these developments see W.M.S. Reports for 1844, 1845, 1849, 1856, 1865. Gambia.

success, it appears that some interest in Christianity was aroused. Some thirty years after his death, a group of boys at the Government school at Cape Coast Castle contacted the missionary societies in England with the help of a merchant asking for New Testaments. They received instead a missionary from W.M.S., Joseph Dunwell, who was received kindly by Governor Maclean and with understandable suspicion by the fetishmen.[1] Both Dunwell and his successor, the Rev. G.O.Wrigley, succumbed to the climate and died soon after arrival, but, in 1838, they were replaced by the indefatigable Thomas Birch Freeman, who was to pioneer further work throughout the Gold Coast and beyond. He found a group of Christians at Cape Coast Castle sufficiently enthusiastic to build their own chapel - and to rebuild it when the walls were washed away in the rains. Freeman, himself half-coloured and of West Indian descent, was able to go off on extensive tours, encouraging chiefs to allow the building of schools and chapels, mostly along the coast, leaving Africans in each place to run their own churches for most of the time and to staff many of the elementary schools. Most missionaries had to work through interpreters and the Fanti and Ashanti languages had not yet been reduced to writing, so that on the Gold Coast Africans were indispensable.

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[1] The details of this story vary, but see J.Beecham: "Ashanti and the Gold Coast" (1841) p.256-273 and G.Findlay and W.Holdsworth: op.cit. p.151-153.

Freeman soon showed a lively and dynamic attitude towards the development of the Africans amongst whom he worked. Hardly had he arrived in Africa before he was addressing the Home Committee on the needs of the Gold Coast. Boarding schools must be started for both boys and girls and teachers must be provided. An African ministry was essential. Freeman already had, living with him, two Africans,William de Graft and John Martin,and it was clear that, as his pioneer journeys took him further and further inland and along the coast, many more Africans would be expected to take responsibility for churches and schools. Freeman was soon taking advantage of the return to Badagry and Abeokuta of Methodists from Sierra Leone, taking William de Graft with him and leaving him at Badagry.[1] With the death rate on the Gold Coast at least as high as in Sierra Leone and Freeman establishing new churches in so many places, African agency was a present- if sometimes inefficient - reality, rather than a future hope.

In 1842, W.M.S. was paying thirteen teachers on the Gold Coast, almost all of them African, and had over three hundred pupils in its ten schools. Teachers earned at least £25 a year, with a few commanding as much as £60.[2] Since most of them had no more than elementary education in the government schools, W.M.S.

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[1] For the beginnings of this energetic ministry see: G.Findlay and W.Holdsworth: op.cit. p.153-163.

[2] P.P. 1842 XI q.3613-3619.

were setting aside money to train them properly. An institution for training native teachers and preachers, set up in 1845 under John Martin, was interrupted by the death of several missionaries, but King Tom's Institution obviously filled the need anyway by the late 1840's.

Most annual reports included glowing news of one school or another, the boys' school at Cape Coast or a girls' school elsewhere. By 1857, W.M.S. could report that, apart from Freeman, all its workers, including schoolteachers, were nationals, some of course from Sierra Leone, but all African born. Because of the intense pioneer work undertaken by Freeman, schools had even been established beyond the limits of British territory well into the interior. Despite jealousy from the local chiefs a school was begun at Kumasi in the interior Ashanti area in 1843 and the number of children coming into the schools increased. In Ashanti territory, too, a successful evening school had begun by 1844 and in the following year the missionaries reported the success of the girls' school at Accra, down on the coast. There had even been an ill-fated attempt to get a school going at Whydah in Dahomey, finally ended by wars and other disturbances in the 1850's. All this of course involved much expense for W.M.S. and contributed to the home committee's impatience with Freeman and his persistent habit of presenting the society with huge bills for building.[1]

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[1] For details of these developments see: W.M.S. Reports for 1843, 1844 and 1857. Gold Coast.

In Sierra Leone, W.M.S. was employing twenty-three teachers in thirteen schools by 1842 and the number of scholars had risen by about five hundred in the previous three years.[1] It was to rise by a further five hundred by 1844 and, in such a period of expansion, the sort of expensive foreign training given to Charles Knight was out of the question and the Wesleyans were learning the same lesson as C.M.S. had done, that Africa would have to train its own leaders. By 1844, the new Institution had managed to produce three young assistant teachers, surely sorely needed. By the mid-forties, the Freetown schools alone were educating seven hundred and there were four schools even in the more distant villages of the Hastings circuit. King Tom's Institution continued to produce numbers of young men to staff these schools and the new ones elsewhere in West Africa. In 1847, five joined the society's work, four of them in Sierra Leone and one in the Gambia. Probably some of the scholars counted for the annual reports included adults, for Sabbath schools for those who worked during the week were a prominent feature of most missionary education.[2]

By the time numbers in the Freetown schools had reached nearly a thousand in 1848, W.M.S. was beginning to wonder if its monitors were being given sufficient incentive to do their job

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[1] P.P. 1842 XI q.7697.

[2] W.M.S. Reports: 1844, 1846 and 1847, Sierra Leone.

really well - as well, for example, as C.M.S., in whose shadow the Wesleyans seem to have felt much of their efforts to have been carried out. They were the first to declare that C.M.S. education was superb and there were certainly individuals pressing for a wider curriculum, to include some science, and for more efficient equipment.[1] Others, of course, blamed the shortcomings of W.M.S. schools on lack of European superintendence, but this was rare. The occasional box of equipment arrived in Freetown, but it was more likely to assist in such basic skills as writing, grammar and Bible reading than to make possible more adventurous teaching. The society claimed, when challenged, that teaching methods and curriculum were limited by the simple conditions in which both children and adults worked.[2] Most Europeans realised that the majority of Africans needed a good deal of basic teaching if they were to read and write the English language well enough to be efficient clerks or school-teachers themselves. Since Bible teaching was also, understandably a priority, little time was left for what most people regarded as educational extras. The methods being used were easy for all to understand and W.M.S. saw itself as doing a good job in arousing the children's interests and overcoming heathen superstition. A few apologists blamed the school's shortcomings

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 19.9.44 Badger to Beecham.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 1848. Reply to Statements made by the Acting Govenor.

on lack of parental interest and claimed that education was too cheap.

Generally speaking, however, education would appear to have been developing steadily all the time, with hundreds of young men coming through the schools and able to take on jobs, with W.M.S. or in the Freetown shops and offices. In fact, the number of Africans in whom there was any desire to learn more than they had done at school was probably no smaller than anywhere else in the world. Moses Renner, who had been at King Tom's Institution, wrote to W.M.S. in 1850, asking for some books, since his schoolmaster's salary did not allow him to buy any for himself and he wished to continue his studies.[1] This would be a reasonable request from a man doing such a job as teaching, but most men with a few years of elementary education would surely be more interested in the job their schooling could buy them in the expanding world of Freetown than with any further quest for knowledge.

The missionaries continued to report with pride the numbers in their schools - nearly three thousand in Sierra Leone by 1854 - and it is undoubtedly true that large numbers of Africans availed themselves of an education which was not, after all, free and whose emphasis on English grammar must have made it an arduous task for many. The fact that quite a large proportion of those in school were girls suggests that Africans did not necessarily see

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† W.M.S. S.L. 24.12.50 Renner to Secretaries.

education only as a passport to a better job. Some Liberated Africans, who had had no education as children, showed a considerable and consistent desire for education in the Sabbath schools and even went on to widen their learning by doing some History and Geography, if they could find someone to teach it. Even in the poorer, less populated areas of the colony, children made progress in the basic subjects and could hope that education might be the way to King Tom's Institution or into the more affluent and lively world of Freetown.

Looking back over the period in 1865, W.M.S. considered that it had at least some cause for satisfaction. In Freetown, it now had twelve schools and King Tom's Institution could boast a curriculum including Greek and Latin. The Rev. J.Berrie, reporting to the 1865 Select Committee, believed that Africans were now a good deal more able to govern themselves than they had been at the turn of the nineteenth century, when W.M.S. first came to Africa. Some occupied good positions; Africans were now showing greater intelligence and W.M.S. looked forward to handing over its affairs to them. The Rev. George Sharpe, also reporting to the same committee, was able to point out that the new British Settlement at Lagos already had a W.M.S. school, run by three native teachers under the superintendence of a missionary. Badagry, too had its

own Wesleyan school by now, presumably also African run.[1] The general opinion seems to have been that, with each successive generation, Africans showed more ability and initiative. An African run church and education system were in sight.

It seems a somewhat strange and disappointing assessment at this point, when, for thirty years at least, the vast majority of Wesleyan education had been in African hands. It is not easy to explain why Europeans were so unwilling to concede to public inquiries the enormous success that Africans had made in the field of education and the fact that most schools in West Africa would simply never have been opened without African help. It seems only too obvious that native agency, in this sphere as in others, was a subject to talk about, to see as some vague hope for the future, but not something that anyone cared to recognise as a present reality.

In one area, dear to the hearts of nineteenth century philanthropists, W.M.S. declared itself simply not responsible. "We consider our duty to preach the Gospel"[2] was the reason stated for the failure of the Methodists to take any active initiative in encouraging agricultural or industrial training. James Berrie admitted in 1865 that some individuals might undertake such work

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[1] P.P. 1865 V q.7143-7343.

[2] Ibid. q.7151.

privately, but was convinced that it was no part of the task of a missionary to train men for specific manual jobs outside the church. This bald statement, however, belies a good deal of individual interest in the 'worldly' question of jobs and the structure of society throughout British West Africa. All around them in the villages and in such towns as Freetown were Africans involved in agriculture or trade and many missionaries could not fail to take an interest in the day-to-day lives of their congregations and to be concerned for their improvement.

John Beecham, Secretary of W.M.S. from 1831 to 1856, was himself interested in the ideas of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and was an honorary vice-president of a French society for the improvement of Africa. He does not seem to have had the forceful personality of Henry Venn and he faced a difficulty which Venn did not face, namely his inevitable subordination to the opinions of Conference. The Methodist church in England was willing to spend quite large sums on its West African mission field, £5,000 in a year on the scattered Gold Coast stations for example, but that expenditure must be justified in spiritual return. So many children or adults learning to read meant that many able to read their bibles. Extra subjects might be added as long as they were no more than extras and did not demand further expensive equipment. Unfortunately, industrial education meant just that and, to many

in England, the return in terms of spiritual development was not merely nil but even a minus quantity. For all those who might become a John Ezzidio or a Pratt, there were many more who would abandon the faith and look no further than cheap finery and the chance to cut a dash in society.

When this has been said, it must still be conceded that the Methodist missionaries did make a contribution to practical and industrial education, even though it was overshadowed by the more energetic activities of C.M.S. As has been mentioned, when King Tom's Institution was opened, it included an extensive kitchen garden, where the first students were given the job of clearing five acres and, of course, some of them worked on the college printing press as well. When challenged by the government of Sierra Leone in 1848 on the relevance of their education system, they pointed, not only to the numbers of Africans working for the Society, but to the fact that Africans were increasingly to the fore in improvement societies and literary institutions and were doing well as merchants.[1]

In an A.I.C. competition, held in 1850, for an essay on the best means of improving the social and industrial condition of Sierra Leone, Moses Renner, an African teacher with W.M.S.,

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 1848 Reply to Statements made by the Acting Governor.

submitted the prize-winning assessment. He emphasised the moral and spiritual shortcomings of the colony, denouncing polygamy, concubinage and idolatry as demoralising influences, but he turned his attention as well to the practical question of industry. The best occupation, he believed, would be farming, for England's greatness was based on its industrious people and a sound agricultural system. Tropical crops, like coffee and sugar, should be tried and Africans encouraged to stay in West Africa rather than emigrating to the supposedly more fertile West Indies.[1] Admittedly, he put the onus of responsibility on the government to set up plantations, but his views were well accepted by the missionaries, one of whom, Raston, was a judge in the competition and a founder member of the A.I.C. Another wrote, when mentioning Renner's success, "Africa can never be claimed by European instrumentality".[2]

As far as other parts of British West Africa were concerned, John Beecham had already shown quite a detailed knowledge of the agricultural possibilities. He believed that coffee and cotton would grow on the Gold Coast and knew about previous experiments by the Governor of Christiansborg Castle and the Danish government in setting up plantations inland and near its forts on the Volta River and about the fisheries on that river. While he admitted that these hopeful experiments had been brought to an end by

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. N.D.Essay by Renner. 1850?

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 31.1.50 Hart to Secretaries.

local unrest in the 1830's he felt that it showed what could be done on this coast.[1]

The only W.M.S. missionary to act with any real energy in the realm of industrial education was Thomas Birch Freeman. His father had been a gardener and Freeman himself worked as head gardener on an estate near Ipswich before going to Africa. It is not clear how far he had the blessing of the Society, but there is little to suggest that he received any active encouragement, particularly if extra expenditure was involved. He established a wholly Christian village eight miles inland from Cape Coast Castle, which he called Beulah, a Hebrew name suggesting fruitfulness. He had already seen hundreds of children receive a "plain English education", which he discovered seemed to do them little good. He therefore established a few small agricultural schools, which would, he hoped, instil habits of industry and piety. Then, in 1850, he set up the plantation which he referred to as an Industrial Garden, at Beulah itself. He started by growing grapes which were surprisingly successful, as well as cotton, coffee, arrowroot and olives. Attached to the plantation was a school and here children under the age of twelve boarded and spent half the year in the classroom and half in the fields, where they worked a ten-hour day. Boys over the age of twelve worked for four hours on the plantation

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[1] See J.Beecham: "Ashanti and the Gold Coast." (1841) p.135-143.

and three in school each day, some living in the school and others at home in the village. Freeman did not particularly want to prepare boys for trade, which he saw as morally inferior to agriculture, so he concentrated on the latter.[1]

Further inland, at Domonasi, a model farm had been begun under the supervision, first of a Mr Thackwray and then of the Rev. William Allen. Freeman had been planning such a farm ever since his first journey north from the coast in 1839, when he had realised the fertility of the soil. Virgin forest was cut down in the early 1840's and coffee was soon being planted by William Allen, all at some expense. A similar plantation was established at a place called Napoleon, bought from an English planter. Here, presumably, the initial work of clearing the ground was already done.[2] When he left the service of W.M.S. in 1857, after continuous arguments over book-keeping and expenditure, Freeman spent a few years as civil commandant of Accra, but he was soon turning his hand to cultivation once again, running a market garden and a model farm, as well as sending specimens home to Kew Gardens.

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[1] W.M.S. Report for 1846, Gold Coast., P.P. 1852 XXXI Governor's Report for Gold Coast.

[2] J.Beecham: op.cit. p.303-309.
W.M.S. Report for 1846, Gold Coast.
J.Birtwhistle: "Thomas Birch Freeman": p.54, 206.
Deauville Walker: "Thomas Birch Freeman": p.186.

It is unfortunate that so few details exist about these ventures. Beulah was still in existence in 1859, when Acting-Governor Bird wrote his report.[1] It had been reported as a thriving concern some four years earlier. Yet, almost nothing is known about the results of this work. It was not of sufficient interest to the Home Committee for Freeman to report on it in any detail and how far any of the plantations raised up Africans of initiative is impossible to tell.

There were, of course, missionaries who opposed such industrial education and colonial governors who criticised W.M.S. for failing to provide more than they did. Examples of plantations in Sierra Leone which had failed were excellent ammunition for those who believed that agricultural education was no business of missionaries. They criticised the government for its failure to provide adequate openings in government offices for boys with booklearning, and governors, in turn, criticised them for not changing the direction of their education to provide more boys with manual skills and a willingness to work at the more menial jobs. Arguments abounded as to whether or not Sierra Leone was fertile and what it might be possible to grow there. Governor MacDonnell of the Gambia complained that the missionaries there had failed to produce a class of men able to be merchants and advocated more industrial

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[1] P.P. 1860 XLIV Report for 1858.

education, but this may well have been the result of his opinion that the Liberated Africans in the Gambia had little intelligence and would be better off in manual occupations.[1] It cannot be denied that such reports as that from Henry Badger in the Gambia in 1849 added fuel to the flame. The education which he was offering was clearly literary and Badger's pride appeared to be that his pupils could sing the Hallelujah chorus "with surprising correctness".[2] It was not so much that no W.M.S. missionary except Freeman was interested in the more useful realms of industrial education, but that they were too preoccupied with the evangelistic job they had gone to Africa to do to be able to initiate or take a leading part in the improvement societies which sprang up. While a Methodist missionary and several laymen sat on the committee of the A.I.C., its secretary was always from C.M.S.and much of its impetus came from Henry Venn at home in London and the exertions of Thomas Peyton in Freetown. Individual Methodists, such as John Ezzidio, were wealthy and powerful men, but W.M.S. stuck to its principles and did not get actively involved in cotton growing, the establishment of plantations or the setting up of any sort of industrial training school as C.M.S. did at Kissy. It should be noted that in the one W.M.S. area where C.M.S. also worked and where they so often outpaced and overshadowed them, Sierra Leone,

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[1] P.P. 1850 XXXVI Report for Gambia.

[2] Ibid.

the Methodists had fewer European Missionaries and even C.M.S. did not attempt to begin its industrial work without a lot of European help. Even in this field, the enthusiasm generated by C.M.S. can be traced to one or two individuals, especially Peyton and to the fact that C.M.S. was able to send out specially trained industrial agents. Elsewhere in British West Africa, W.M.S. was up against other problems. The Gambia attracted less attention than Sierra Leone, despite its scattering of Liberated Africans and was, in any case, even less fertile. The Gold Coast consisted of a scattered line of forts: all land beyond these was the property of local chiefs and their permission would have to be obtained before a plantation could be laid out or an industrial school built. Being beyond the range of the fort, these places might well be attacked without any assurance of British protection. If W.M.S. had been going to establish industrial education anywhere, it would almost certainly have had to have been Sierra Leone if large-scale success was to be seen.

From the ranks of Methodists, three native agents arose in this period about whom there is reasonable documentary evidence, Charles Knight, Joseph Wright and Joseph May. Knight, an Ibo, started his work with W.M.S. as a teacher in the village of Wilberforce, earning £1. 50 a month. Because of the shortage of good African preachers, the missionaries were keen that he should

change roles, but he stayed in teaching, working successfully at Bathurst, but doing some preaching in his spare time.[1] In the early 1840's, all three men went to England, Knight and May to Borough Road School and Wright to Richmond College. Knight came back with a good idea of the principles of English education and it was hoped that he would make improvements in all the W.M.S. schools, by now educating some fifteen hundred children. He was now in Freetown itself at the school in Bathurst Street, teaching boys up to fifteen years of age reading, writing, English grammar, History and Geography. He was an enthusiastic teacher, sending home to England for equipment to help his pupils.[2]

In 1844, both he and Joseph Wright, a Yorùba, were made assistant missionaries and Knight gave up teaching to work with Wright on the Hastings circuit, one of the two outside Freetown.[3] The missionaries were nervous about this promotion and hastened to point out to the authorities at home that Europeans would always be needed to supervise on the circuits if heresy was to be avoided. Wright certainly showed some desire for self-aggrandizement on hearing

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 1.4.37 Sanders to Committee, 6.2.39 Badger to Secretaries.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 10.1.41 Dove to Hoole, 12.1.42 Knight to Beecham, 5.11.42 Knight to Dove.

[3] W.M.S. S.L. 29.5.44 Amos to Secretaries.

that the newly-ordained Crowther had been preaching in Yoruba in Freetown. Undoubtedly thrilled by reports of large crowds of enthusiastic Africans coming to listen, Wright announced that he, too, would preach in Yoruba.[1] However, there is nothing to suggest that he ever did this. In 1848, both men were ordained at Zion Chapel and Wright went to work on the York circuit.

As ordained men, they were now on an equal footing with the European missionaries, or so they assumed. On the annual lists of preachers in Sierra Leone, the names of missionaries and natives appeared in order of importance, with the Superintendent first, European missionaries next and natives - so far, none of them ordained - at the bottom. The list for 1849 showed Knight and Wright below European missionaries only just out from England. Neither they nor the other local preachers and exhorters were prepared for this. They wrote a joint letter to the missionaries, stating that they wondered "whether it is right to put a young man, just entering on his probation before those who have been received into full connexion".[2] He quoted Dr Beecham's address at the last meeting of Conference, pointing out that ordained native agents were no different from Europeans. At the native Local Preachers' meeting in July, 1849, an African, Thomas Macfoy, was bold enough to ask

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 1.7.44 Wright to Beecham.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 5.7.49 Knight and Wright to Missionaries.

why Walter Garry's name was higher on the list than those of Knight and Wright, a question which, not surprisingly, sent the meeting into a state of uproar. The European missionaries were clearly very much disturbed by the whole incident, unable to understand why Knight and Wright had allowed such a protest on their behalf and even more upset when the two men raised the question themselves at the missionaries' own Quarterly Meeting. Unable to answer the question themselves they referred the native agents to the Home Committee, assuming that their side of the argument would be supported.[1]

As far as the four Europeans were concerned the whole affair was part of an African design to get everything into their own hands, with a few troublemakers urging on the rank and file to even more outrageous efforts. The missionaries might just as well come home if ordained natives were going to be placed before Englishmen. The Superintendent, Thomas Raston, claimed that another schism was imminent, with Knight and Wright leading a breakaway church under native leadership. The only thing which would prevent this, according to Raston, would be the thought of losing their stipends of £130 a year.[2]

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 11.7.49 Raston, Lewis, Hart and Garry to Secretaries.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 30.7.49 Raston to Secretaries.

Eventually the argument subsided and, though Knight complained eighteen months later that he was still being designated an assistant missionary on official lists,[1] both men ingratiated themselves with the missionaries by working hard on their circuits and causing no more trouble. In 1851, Knight undertook the demolition and rebuilding of one of the circuit chapels, raising over £80 locally towards expenses. In 1852, he married Catherine Nicol, matron of Kissy Hospital and two years later they went to the Gambia to replace Joseph May.[2] Here, Knight was able to return to teaching, taking over the school at McCarthy's Island. There he found one hundred and thirty-six children and a small adult Sunday school and both prospered under his leadership. In 1858, he handed the work on to another African, Phillip Wilson, and returned to the Hastings circuit.[3]

Joseph Wright, meanwhile, had been asking regularly for permission to return to Abeokuta, first to visit his parents and then to work as a missionary. Neither of these requests was granted by the Home Committee, but, in 1855 he borrowed the money for the passage and set off, hoping that funds would be raised to pay off the debt. In Abeokuta, he contracted dysentery and died in Lagos, on his way home again to Sierra Leone.[4] By this time his eldest son, Joseph,

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 2.2.51 Knight to Hoole.

[2] W.M.S. S.L. 16.8.51 Knight to Secretaries, 30.6.52 Knight to Secretaries.
W.M.S. Report 1854, Gambia.

[3] W.M.S. Reports 1855, 1858, Gambia.

[4] W.M.S. S.L. 9.2.55 Wright to Secretaries, 22.6.55 Dillon to Osborne.

who had been to King Tom's Institution and worked as a teacher, had been sent to England. Once again, hoping that the money would be raised, Joseph Wright had sent him to Westminster College which he had read about in a Methodist magazine. He had misread the section on college fees and found himself with a bill for £35, a sum which had to be paid by friends. In any case, Joseph Wright junior died of consumption a few months after his father, on his way back home to the colony. W.M.S. set what was probably regarded as a precedent by allowing the bereaved Hannah Wright a pension of £25 a year.[1]

The third of the agents was Joseph May. He was a most energetic worker and seems to have avoided many of the wrangles over African status, largely because as a layman he posed less of a threat to the position of the Europeans. Trained at Borough Road School in 1842, he came back to work as a teacher in Freetown. The school, at New Town West, appears to have been large, with over two hundred children admitted in one year, yet May had no desks and the children were, at first, forced to write kneeling on the floor. Despite the strain of working in such poor conditions, May found time to give extra training to his monitors and even ran a Sunday School for three

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 4.10.54 Wright to Secretaries.
2.5.54 Wright to Beecham.
17.10.56 May to Secretaries.
19.2.57 Hannah Wright to Secretaries.

hundred adults, helped by students from King Tom's Institution.[1]

In 1849, he was sent to the Gambia as an assistant missionary. Here the school had fewer than a hundred pupils when May arrived. He soon got materials sent out from England by the British and Foreign Schools Society and clothes for the children to wear from interested friends in England and was able to leave a thriving work for Knight to take over in 1854.[2] Back in Sierra Leone, he worked on the York circuit, taking charge of all its educational work. There were four Sunday Schools for Liberated African adults who had had no education and four day schools with eight African teachers. Including the adults, about six hundred were attending the schools. May soon formed classes to teach the more advanced Sunday School scholars such subjects as History, Geography and Scripture and ran evening classes for others. For two or three days each week, he taught in the day schools. Public examinations of the type popular in Sierra Leone were impossible, as York was too far from Freetown to attract a public diginitary or even a missionary, so May held his own examinations. His energies even extended to organizing New Year processions through the village streets and picnic treats for the children.[3]

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[1] W.M.S. Reports, 1846, Sierra Leone.

[2] W.M.S. Report 1854, Gambia.

[3] W.M.S. Report 1855, Sierra Leone.
W.M.S. S.L. 28.6.56 May to Secretaries, 20.12.55 May to Secretaries.

When the 1857 Niger Expedition was in preparation, May was asked to join the group of Africans being sent by W.M.S. Perhaps dismayed by the death of Joseph Wright in the previous year or preoccupied with his own absorbing work, May refused. The missionaries were saddened by this, largely because no C.M.S. agent had turned the challenge of the expedition down, but May could hardly be forced to accept. After a short spell at King Tom's Institution, he took charge of the Hastings circuit for a few years and then moved, in 1863, to Freetown.[1]

It may well be that these three agents attracted attention because of their early education in England. They would be known to the leaders of W.M.S. and therefore able to write freely to them. Their names appeared more frequently in letters home because the recipients would be more interested in Africans they had met. The many other African agents were often passed over almost unnoticed on the assumption that their work would be of less interest. Yet W.M.S. depended on its large number of agents to maintain its work. Through the education system they provided opportunities for Africans, but throughout this period, the schools themselves were run by Africans with only the most rudimentary supervision from the missionaries. Teachers of the calibre of May made innovations,

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[1] W.M.S. S.L. 20.8.57 Weatherstone to the General Secretary. W.M.S. Report, 1863, Sierra Leone.

added to their school's equipment and generally acted on their own initiative. In the church, the great burden of the preaching fell on Africans, with the visit of a European missionary only an occasional event outside Freetown. On a circuit as far away as York, the church was, in all practical ways, run by Africans in 1865 and had been for most of this period. The only European supervision was evident in the decision-making body of missionaries, on which Knight and Wright sat after 1848, which moved men around the circuits and communicated with the Home Committee.

It is clear that, far from leading to apathy or heresy, this appreach by W.M.S. led to the development of a vigorous African church. While it is probably invidious to make comparisons, and probably true that necessity rather than intention led to the small number of Europeans the society kept in West Africa, there can be little doubt that W.M.S. had progressed at least as far as C.M.S. in encouraging African initiative by 1865, despite their lack of good secondary education and that their contribution to African agency was at least as great.

It is worth pointing out, too, at the conclusion of this section that the W.M.S. and its churches formed only one of several Free Church groups in Sierra Leone at this time. The others were all a good deal smaller, but all had the distinction of being entirely dominated by Africans, with very little support coming

from any parent body in England or elsewhere. Chapels were under the trusteeship of local congregations and most chose and presumably paid their own pastor. These preachers were not necessarily very well educated by C.M.S. or W.M.S. standards, but most groups made some attempt to run small schools in the villages. That they were not merely breakaway sects with only a handful of followers is shown by the census taken by Governor Macdonald in 1850 and 1851. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion could boast nearly three thousand adherents and the West African Methodists over five thousand by the time the 1851 census was taken. Even allowing for over-optimistic counting, this suggests quite a solid following in a total population of only about forty-five thousand. Such numbers would require careful organisation and some strong leadership and suggest that Africans were developing spontaneously within the church to an extent which not all European missionaries cared to recognise.

CHAPTER IX

It remains, finally, to consider the work of the governments of the period in the realm of native agency. It might appear surprising that government initiative should be left until last and be assessed after the work of the missionary societies. It is probable, however, that the governments concerned would have condoned such treatment, for various reasons.

Firstly, few Colonial Secretaries or permanent officials at the Colonial Office expected to devote a great deal of time or attention to West Africa. In the fight against the slave trade, in which the Foreign Office was also concerned, particularly in the time of Palmerston, the West African coast was an essential base for operations. The value of Sierra Leone and the Gambia as a home for freed slaves was generally, if grudgingly, accepted, though there were, of course, in this period, attempts to foster emigration to the West Indies. In the 1840's and 1850's, there was a brief period when it appeared that cotton might be obtained from British and tribal areas on the coast while palm oil was a useful product of some potential, but, apart from these, West Africa did not have a great deal to offer economically. If anything, it was in danger of being a financial burden on Britain, but, even as such, did not command a great deal of interest. In his book on his conduct of colonial affairs from 1846 to 1852, Lord Grey classed the West

African possessions at the head of a list which included Hong Kong, the Falkland Islands and Malta as "chiefly valuable as serving as factories and trading stations or as naval and military posts".[1] Although he gave some attention to the needs of the area, he was much more concerned with what later became the dominions of Australia and New Zealand and it would be generally true that these, together with Canada, and India after 1858, would have attracted most attention in this period.

A second reason for considering government initiative at the end lies in the very nature of native agency. There were political implications. Interest in the idea was probably stimulated by the publicity given to it by Buxton and the 1841 Niger Expedition. Clearly the authorities of the time had expected the newly-founded Sierra Leone of the 1780's and 1790's to be African-run one day. This end result, however, could not be achieved without education. In Britain, throughout this period, education was usually paid for by those who received it or provided by philanthropic bodies or individuals not by the central government. Britain already had an educated class and it might be expected that the Colonial Office would have felt some responsibility to provide the makings of one at least in Sierra Leone and the Gambia. This responsibility, however,

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[1] Grey: "The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration" (1853). p.263.

was to be worked out mainly through the missionary societies and not to any great extent through direct government action. It will be seen later that government assistance was of considerable help, but there was never any question that official government funds should be the main support of educational schemes. It is one of the marks of information sent home from West Africa that the government schools get little mention and it has proved impossible to find information on the scale provided by, say, C.M.S. on their educational schemes. In providing for the Liberated Africans, the government's responsibility consisted in keeping them from disease and starvation and assisting in the finding of homes and jobs. Government money had to stretch to major building works - roads, harbours, hospitals, market buildings and suchlike - and to paying the administrative staff to run the colony.

It is hardly surprising then that government interest in native agency appears to have been sporadic. There are bursts of spirited argument in communication with one or two Governors: there are moments of hard questioning by Select Committees. Occasionally, a long memorandum appeared in the Colonial Office from an official or a missionary on the subject of industrial education or African advancement. It is from these that one must piece together a policy, or, rather, a line of development which may well be more apparent viewed with the benefit of hindsight than it was at the time.

The one moment at which the Colonial Office appeared to be willing to spend money on forwarding the cause of native agency came, of course, with the Niger Expedition of 1841. Glenelg was still in office when Buxton produced the first edition of his book on the slave trade in the summer of 1838. In Parliament the anti-slave trade lobby numbered about fifty to sixty and a large number of influential, often aristocratic supporters amongst the general public encouraged the government to accept Buxton's ideas and go ahead with plans for an expedition up the River Niger. Neither Lord Melbourne's somewhat lethargic opposition nor the scepticism of James Stephen at the Colonial Office was sufficient to stop the scheme, even when the estimates proved to be wildly wrong and costs mounted. The arrival of Lord John Russell at the Colonial Office in September, 1839, gave the venture an added impetus.

When he submitted estimates to the Treasury in December 1839, Russell put forward the sort of arguments used by Buxton in his book.[1] Nearly £50,000 was being requested for the expedition, but this sum was granted in a few months. A year later, Russell set out the aims of the expedition to the Commissioners appointed to accompany the members of the expedition and here again Buxton's ideas were represented, though not by this time followed in every detail.

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[1] P.P. 1843 XLVIII 26.12.1839 Russell to Treasury Commissioners.

They were to advance trade and get agreements with the chiefs to stop slaving. Land was to be rented - but not, as Buxton had hoped, bought - but permanent settlement and the construction of forts might be decided on later. They were to make clear their official status as representatives of the Queen and offer legitimate commerce to replace the slave trade. A commission on all British goods brought by British ships to the chief's area, along with a selection of presents, should ensure that the chief would agree. The Commissioners were exhorted to show tact as well as determination and to absorb as much information as possible about local trading conditions, the organisation of tribal areas and local religious practices. They were supplied with draft treaties which involved a committal to remove all traces of the slave trade and to allow the free propagation of the Christian religion. All agreements had to be carried into effect within forty-eight hours, presumably so that the Commissioners could see them working.[1]

This was not altogether what was desired by Buxton and his humanitarian supporters. Buxton was pressing for the British purchase of and sovereignty over a hundred square miles of territory,[2] but Russell would only commit the Commissioners to inspecting the areas they visited and bringing back information on the attitudes

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[1] P.P. 1843 XLVIII 30.1.41 Russell to Commissioners of Niger Expedition.

[2] Ibid. 7.8.40 Fowell Buxton and Lushington to Russell.

of the chiefs and the dangers to health. Everyone was agreed that the whole farming venture that the expedition was going to initiate, must be kept under the aegis of the British crown: the only alternative would be to obey local laws and customs and, since that was out of the question in the climate of opinion in 1840, it would never attract the money needed to start and then sustain the farm.

Buxton was well aware that, even as the expedition was being prepared, there was strong feeling that any further extension of British sovereignty should be discouraged. The growth of British influence in a new area of West Africa was naturally suspect. Yet Buxton was also convinced that the experiment to show Africans what their own country could produce for them and thus what they could also produce for themselves could only succeed if British sovereignty was guaranteed.[1] The government maintained its position and voluntary agreements were made at little cost to Britain with as many chiefs as the Commissioners could find before the expedition ran into difficulties towards the end of 1841. A small area of land, some sixteen miles by four was ceded to the expedition, but there were few inhabitants as most of the villages in the area had been abandoned in Fulatah raids. The story of the failure of the expedition is too well known to be repeated here and

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[1] P.P. 1843 XLVIII 7.8.40 Fowell Buxton and Washington to Russell.

by 1842 the government had given up any intention of sending another. The model farm and all it stood for in Buxton's theories had been abandoned: the treaties with individual chiefs were not renewed and the government was left with a much larger bill than it had ever envisaged.

In September 1841, Edward Stanley had arrived at the Colonial Office. He was markedly less enthusiastic than Lord John Russell about expensive humanitarian schemes, an attitude certainly hardened by this costly failure.[1] By now, too, Sir John Jeremie, the Exeter Hall supporter appointed Governor in Sierra Leone at the time of public euphoria over the Niger Expedition, had died. It must have appeared that all hope of seeing Buxton's theories carried out in practice had died too. But these ideas were an expression of the spirit of the age, as well as the fruit of Buxton's own deliberations. Many of his ideas had been, and continued to be, implicit in the policies of the Colonial Office. The very failure of the expedition because of the deaths of so many Europeans had underlined the need for Africans to learn to do the jobs which white men could not or would not do in the tropics. The difference, after 1841, lay in the unwillingness of the officials at the Colonial Office to be drawn into any large-scale schemes. There was no suggestion that commitments to African development in which the government was

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[1] See for example P.P. 1843 XLVIII No. 38 11.11.41. Stanley to Commissioners.

already involved should not be honoured.

One area in which the government already showed an interest was in the running of a framework of schools. A small number of schools were run directly by the colonial authorities, even though most of the burden was carried by the churches. In Sierra Leone, where Governor Campbell claimed to have instigated a major school building programme in the 1830's,[1] there were small schools in most villages. These were staffed by Africans or West Indians and were mostly one room affairs. A new school, planned for the Bananas Islands in 1840 and probably fairly typical, was to measure forty-seven by twenty-seven feet and to cost just over £250.[2] Schools were provided for girls as well as boys and, in 1840, it was thought worth appointing a schools inspector. When he reported, in 1841, he was able to say that six thousand children were being educated in forty-two schools.[3] This may sound impressive, but only fourteen of these schools were government ones. The remaining twenty-eight were in the hands of C.M.S. and W.M.S., with a small contribution being made by the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

The government was, at this stage, responsible for the Liberated Africans, but not, on the whole, for their children. There

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[1] P.P. 1842 XI q.8775 ff.

[2] Colonial Office Papers (C.O.) 267/160 5.9.40 Estimates for Public Works.

[3] C.O. 267/160 Governor Doherty to Russell
267/166 1.2.41 Report on Schools.

was a government school in Freetown, near the colonial chaplain's house, which took some Liberated African children and which the Colonial Office planned to replace in 1840,[1] but nothing seems to have come of this. Even government schools relied on missionary help, being visited by missionaries and native preachers and sometimes being supplied with books. Some even used chapel buildings for schools and many teachers had been to missionary schools themselves. The education offered differed little from that provided for working class children in England or for other Africans in Sierra Leone. The monitorial system was used, slates were the universal medium for writing and a good deal of mechanical repetition took place.[2]

The children were charged one penny per week (in comparison with a half-penny in C.M.S. schools) and, for their work, teachers received on average £12 a year, though a few aspired to £25 and two particularly good women teachers were paid £36 in the early 1840's. Governor Doherty was suggesting a government training college under European supervision in the early 1840's,[3] but this was presumably superseded by C.M.S. and W.M.S. plans to open similar colleges. The government maintained its educational work throughout the 1840's, with nearly two and a half thousand children in its schools by 1845.[4]

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[1] 267/166 1.2.41 Report on Schools.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] C.O. 267/192 Report on the Annual Blue Book. 1845.

It had already questioned the narrow and over-literary nature of the school curriculum and begun to suggest more practical training, perhaps with farms attached to the village schools.[1] A proposal was made in 1848 by the Council of Sierra Leone that three Africans should come to England for industrial training on an annual grant of £300. There was some difference of opinion on this, Governor MacDonald considering that a period of work in the Freetown dockyards would give an adequate training anyway and would be cheaper than employing expensive West Indian labour. In the end, the idea was vetoed by Lord Grey on the advice of T.F.Elliot, on grounds of expense. An outlay of £300 for such a venture would never bring an adequate return.[2] The task was left to C.M.S. to take up in the early years of the next decade.

Elsewhere in West Africa, government provision of education was more haphazard. In the Gambia, the government had some obligations to the Liberated Africans who had been settled there and clearly there were some schools as early as the 1820's, giving the usual rather limited education. In the early 1840's, no money was allowed beyond that provided by the Liberated African Department for education in this area,[3] but in 1847 a grant of £100 was given to the W.M.S. for its schools work and was maintained for at least twelve years.

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[1] C.O. 267/166 1.2.41 Report on Schools.

[2] C.O. 267/203 19.6.48 Governor Macdonald to Grey.

[3] P.P. 1845 XXXV No.28.

It was later extended to the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy, who had established themselves in Bathurst by the late fifties. Governor D'Arcy pointed out the need for a government school in Bathurst in 1860, to supplement the work of the garrison school, attended by adults as well as children and run by a clergyman.[1] This suggestion does not appear to have been taken up, but his interest in education continued and he seems to have conducted the annual examinations himself every Midsummer and to have inspected the mission schools, often arriving unannounced early in the morning, and also suggesting changes in the curriculum. He persuaded the Methodists to teach Geography and complained, as did so many officials, about the over-emphasis on religious education, despite its evident popularity with the Africans.[2]

On the Gold Coast, provision of education by the authorities dated back to 1816, when a school had been set up at Cape Coast Castle. When the fort was transferred to the Crown in 1821, money was granted for two masters, one mistress and four assistants, as well as equipment, presumably for several schools. The vicissitudes of the 1820's soon left only one school at Cape Coast Castle open and that was closed down when General Turner refused to countenance the employment of a black assistant. Meanwhile a school had opened at

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[1] P.P. 1861 XL Report for the Gambia.

[2] P.P. 1863 XXXIX Report for the Gambia and 1864 XL Report for the Gambia.

Accra in 1820 and soon had an African teacher, giving the usual type of education.[1] It is not easy to determine the fate of these schools, but government education clearly contributed to African advancement in providing the basic schooling to men who later went on to train with W.M.S. for teaching and evangelistic work.[2]

By the early 1840's, there was a sufficient surplus of educated youths on the Gold Coast for the merchant, William Hutton, reporting to the 1842 Select Committee on West Africa, to suggest that jobs ought to be provided for them in any new establishment set up. Some of these young men seem to have been half-castes who had been sent to England for their schooling, but it is likely that some would have been local youths with government schools behind them. Hutton was much in favour of schools run by Africans and welcomed Madden's suggestion that there should be a college in England given over entirely to training Africans to run colonial schools.[3] Inevitably, this idea came to nothing. Experience of such an expensive undertaking on the part of the missionary societies would serve to prove that training in England was only for the chosen few.

By the next decade, however, the governors of the Gold Coast were beginning to take an interest in education in the interior, behind the coastal forts. Governor Hill set up a small school for twenty-

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[1] P.P. 1826-7 VII Report of Commissioners Part II.

[2] P.P. 1842 XI q.3614.

[3] Ibid. q.10242-10245. 10250.

four scholars and his successor, Acting-Governor Connor, began to use money from the hated poll tax to send teachers up country. Pupils in these schools, as in so many in West Africa were often well over school age and native merchants could be found in at least one government school.[1] By the end of the 1850's, the Gold Coast could boast six schools, but this was not to say that all was well. Only three hundred and sixty-seven children and adults attended these schools and official expenditure on education - £183 in 1865 - was minimal compared with the W.M.S. outlay of £5,000 on its general educational and missionary work.[2] The usual complaint that the curriculum was too narrow was made by Acting-Governor Bird, who saw the need too for a higher calibre of teacher, as well as reading rooms and bookshops to stimulate education. For a great many boys on the Gold Coast, as in Sierra Leone, this limited schooling led to clerking jobs which might lead on to some trading position, the ultimate ambition of so many Africans.[3]

Inevitably, progress was hampered on the Gold Coast by the fragmented nature of the settlements and the continuing doubts, even after 1842, about the extent of British influence and responsibility beyond the immediate area of the forts. There was none of the

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[1] P.P. 1852-3 LXII Report for the Gold Coast and 1856 XLII Report for the Gold Coast.

[2] P.P. 1865 V Appendix I. Report of Commission of Inquiry. Gold Coast.

[3] P.P. 1860 XLIV Report for the Gold Coast.

incentive provided in Sierra Leone, especially by the presence of large numbers of helpless Liberated Africans whom the British authorities had removed from their slave ships. The apparent willingness of W.M.S. to spend large sums of money - far more than they spent in Sierra Leone - may also have encouraged the government to see widespread education as someone else's province.

In its desire to see philanthropic organizations advancing the cause of Africans, the Colonial Office naturally came into contact with the missionary societies. Much closer contact was maintained with C.M.S. than with the Methodists, perhaps because C.M.S. represented the established church or possibly because they kept a larger number of Europeans in Sierra Leone and showed more enthusiasm than W.M.S. for education for its own sake. Probably the biggest question which confronted the Colonial Office was the organization of education for Liberated African children and the problems concerned with the division of responsibility with C.M.S. for education and pastoral care in the villages. This may seem somewhat remote from the subject of native agency, but the Colonial Office, along with most pundits on the question of Africa, saw proper organization of education - by Europeans - and the presence of such Europeans in as many villages as possible as vital to the development of Africans along the right lines.

By the Bathurst agreement of 1824, it had been settled that C.M.S. would send out and pay clergymen to staff each parish in the colony. The government in their turn would pay the lay managers in each village. The Liberated African Department was to pay teachers and provide and presumably repair school buildings.[1] This apparently watertight agreement led to as much friction as it had been designed to remove.

C.M.S. felt that the attitude of the colonial administration and the government at home only served to reduce the efficiency of European missionary work in Sierra Leone. They had worked in the colony since 1804 and, by 1838, they had two and a half thousand children in their schools.[2] If one accepts the view, then fashionable, that Christianity was, in itself, a civilising influence, then C.M.S. had undoubtedly made a sizeable contribution to the task of civilising the people of Sierra Leone. Since 1827, Fourah Bay had provided an education which might lead on to the post of assistant teacher in one of the society's schools, or to a variety of other jobs in the colony.

The colonial governors looked to C.M.S. to provide teachers for the colony's children and, on occasion, colonial chaplains and even magistrates.[3] This put considerable pressure on an already

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[1] For further details see C.Fyfe: "A history of Sierra Leone" (1962) p.154.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M8 25.6.38 Kissling's Report.

[3] See for example C.M.S. CA1/M8 25.4.38 Minutes of Special Meeting. 25.10.38 Minutes of Special Meeting.

limited team. While the administration hoped for certain benefits from the presence of missionaries, C.M.S. did not think they did much to help. The missionary committees both in Freetown and in London, spent much time trying to get the Bathurst agreement implemented by the governments of the day. There is no doubt that the buildings in Sierra Leone were in a poor state. William Young complained, in July 1836, that the children in his school in Bathurst had to wipe the rain off their books with their sleeves because the building badly needed a new roof and pointed out that inadequate buildings were a hazard to European health.[1] Schön could not find a suitable building when he went to Kent late in 1837 and there was no building which could be used as a school in Waterloo where the mission house was also in bad repair.[2] Early in 1838, it was feared that the missionaries would have to leave Hastings and Regent because of the dilapidated state of the school houses. In Regent the church had been used as a school, despite the fact that it was falling down.[3] It is not surprising that, in July of that year, Kissling had to explain to the secretaries that there had been considerable expense involved in repairing mission buildings, a situation made

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M7 4.7.36 Young to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M8 20.12.37 Minutes of Special Meeting.
29.3.38 Minutes of Special Meeting.

[3] C.M.S. CA1/M8 10.1.38 Kissling to Secretaries, Minutes No.15.
20.9.36 Correspondence from Sierra Leone.

worse by the fact that the Gibraltar Chapel in Freetown had blown down in the recent hurricane.[1]

Well before any serious suggestion was made about rebuilding Fourah Bay, those working in it were pointing out its deficiencies. Repairs were needed in May, 1837, and Kissling, who was at home in England, wrote to Dandeson Coates in September to point out that, if he was to return to the Institution, these repairs must be carried out. By December, 1841, the schoolroom had to be abandoned because of its poor state of repair and an increasing number of students accomodated in the superintendent's house. Two years later, the local committee had to agree that the Reverend Edward Jones might erect a temporary building for £150 as the existing one was by now so dilapidated.[2]

Meanwhile, the Parent Committee was trying to persuade a succession of Colonial Secretaries to carry out the Bathurst agreement. According to those working in Sierra Leone, they had not done very much so far. The Colonial Secretaries, on the other hand, were sometimes excessively wary about committing government money to building projects in the colonies and were not inclined to assist in the erection of new buildings. C.M.S. made two concerted

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/M8 16.7.38 Kissling to Secretaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M7 4.9.37 Kissling to Lay Secretary
CA1/M10 16.12.41 Warburton to Secretaries.
CA1/M11 1.12.43 Minutes of Special Meeting.

efforts in the 1830's and 1840's to persuade the Colonial Office to do more and, on both occasions the discussions were lengthy and characterised by much procrastination on the government's side. In 1836 Dandeson Coates went to see Lord Glenelg to discuss the question of new school buildings.[1] Of all the Colonial Secretaries of the time, Glenelg might have been expected to be the most sympathetic. Born into a "Clapham Sect" family, his father was a promoter of C.M.S. and friend of Daniel Wilson, later Bishop of Calcutta, Glenelg himself being a member of Wilson's congregation at St John's, Bedford Row. He agreed to see the Governor of Sierra Leone and, on the strength of this, C.M.S. decided to make a specific request for land in Regent to build a house and, four months later, they asked for £750 for the erection of five school houses.[2] The first request was granted and C.M.S. clearly hoped that the whole question of the government's relationship with the missionary societies in the colonies might now be raised. In fact, the next two years saw the Colonial Office move slowly. Glenelg was preoccupied with events in Canada: communication with the colonies was slow. The matter was passed on from one leading official to another. When a C.M.S. deputation saw Lieut-Col. Doherty, Governor of Sierra Leone at C.M.S. house in April, 1837,

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L3 4.8.36 Coates to Raban.

[2] C.M.S. Minutes 15 16.8.36 Resolution, 27.12.36 Resolution.

he merely told them to refer the matter to Lord Glenelg and get his support which they had of course, already done.[1] A letter from the Colonial Office in May informed the Parent Committee that Glenelg was waiting for information on the state of the buildings in Sierra Leone.[2] Even when the information arrived and Glenelg did notify the Colonial Governors that land was to be conveyed to C.M.S. for school building, his order seems to have had little effect.[3] By this time it was December, 1838, and in February of the next year, Glenelg resigned.

When Peel's government came in, in 1841, C.M.S. decided to approach the new Colonial Secretary, E.G.Stanley. His period at the Colonial Office in the Whig administration had seen the passing of the Abolition of Slavery Act and C.M.S. may well have seen him as in some way in sympathy with the cause of the Liberated Africans. When a deputation of friends of C.M.S. went to the Colonial Office in June, 1842, Stanley agreed that the Bathurst agreement had not been carried out and asked for an account of C.M.S. expenditure on church buildings so that he could see the Treasury on the subject. While this sounded hopeful, any possibility of help for Fourah Bay was ruled out by Lord Stanley on the grounds

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[1] C.M.S. Minutes 16 18.4.37 p.54.

[2] C.M.S. Minutes 16 30.5.37 Grey to Secretaries.

[3] C.M.S. Minutes 16 7.11.37 Grey to Secretaries.
Minutes 17 26.12.38 Resolution.

that some of its students were being given religious education for work beyond the colony.[1]

C.M.S. then waited over a year for a further move from the Colonial Office. Lord Stanley had referred the matter to the Governor of Sierra Leone in August 1842 and could do nothing without a report from him on the state of the buildings.[2] The report was finally sent off by MacDonald in June, 1843, accompanied by the excuse that the Colonial Engineer had been ill repeatedly during the year. He claimed that the government had spent nearly £5,860 on buildings and pointed out indignantly that C.M.S. put up buildings on its own initiative and now had the temerity to ask for £5,378 in compensation. He suggested a compromise settlement of £3,000 with the proviso that C.M.S. should keep all the buildings it used in future and do its own repairs.[3]

When Stanley had seen this report, he refused to grant £5,000 to C.M.S. and told a deputation from the Society that the Bathurst agreement only bound the government to spend what colonial funds would allow.[4] It was a very useful loophole. Though further letters and

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1 C.M.S. Minutes 21 28.6.42 p.139.

2 C.M.S. CA1/L3 12.4.43 Secretaries to Warburton.
C.O. 267/181 12.6.43 Governor Macdonald to Stanley.

3 C.O. 267/181 12.6.43 Macdonald to Stanley.

4 C.M.S. Minutes 22 16.8.43 p.176.
C.O. 267/181 5.9.43 Stanley to Macdonald.

deputations were planned, C.M.S. could not hope for the substantial support they felt was justified. C.M.S. was understandably aggrieved. There had been great delays at each stage of the debate. Dandeson Coates had been reduced to writing privately to Sir James Stephen in July, 1843, to see if the report from Sierra Leone showed any sign of arriving.[1] All this time, the plans for Fourah Bay, which C.M.S. claimed they could not carry out without reimbursement from the Colonial Office, were nearing completion and causing further expenditure. Since C.M.S. fixed its hopes of native agency on Fourah Bay at this point in the 1840's, its secretaries could be forgiven for not regarding the government as altogether sympathetic.

Governor MacDonald's compromise suggestion made in 1843 may well have laid the foundation for the next development, for at the end of the 1840's, C.M.S. did in fact take over a number of buildings and gave up future claims on government money for their repair. They were given unwanted village houses so that they could add to their responsibilities the education of Liberated African children under the age of twelve. This transfer of responsibility was preceded by a correspondence at times voluminous, which gives a good picture of the way ideas on African development were growing.

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[1] C.O. 267/183 6.7.43 Coates to Stephen.

Initially, in 1847, C.M.S. took over all ecclesiastical buildings which they were already using.[1] This was quite a simple transaction, although it occasioned much discussion on the exact state of repair of the buildings concerned and complaints were still coming in three years later.[2] At the same time, a lively discussion took place on the nature of the education suitable for Africans, in preparation for the handover of the Liberated African schools. The initial suggestion was made almost casually by Governor MacDonald, on the grounds that if C.M.S. was to have some schools and houses in the villages, they might as well have the children currently living in them too. The education in some of these schools was poor and Lord Grey was soon sounding out the C.M.S. secretaries for their views on taking on the extra job. The society was generally willing to do this as long as they were given a free hand and not subject to interference from emigration agents.[3]

By now, Governor MacDonald's Blue Book for 1846 had arrived home. It included some quite stringent criticism of education in

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[1] C.M.S. CA1/L4 27.10.47 Instructions to returning missionaries.

[2] C.M.S. CA1/M14 25.7.50 Graf to Secretaries.

[3] C.O. 267/198 26.6.47 MacDonald to Grey.
267/201 15.10.47 Straith to Hawes.
18.11.47 Straith to Hawes.

Sierra Leone, suggesting that attendance was sporadic and in any case much of what was taught was of little use. "With all the good that is done under this present system, no real or lasting benefit can ever be secured to the inhabitants of this colony, or the African race generally."[1] C.M.S. should only have the education of the Liberated African children committed to them if they were prepared to initiate courses in secular education approved by the government. Inspectors from the government schools should be able to visit them without warning. George Barrow at the Colonial Office had Lord Grey's attention brought to this report and recommended that C.M.S. should receive no buildings until its views on the education of Liberated Africans were known.[2] Grey agreed and C.M.S. began to prepare its defence. Industrial education was impossible without a Normal School to act as a model and to train teachers: in any case, no industrial education had been introduced into government schools and C.M.S. claimed that with boarding schools at their disposal, the government should have found such schooling easier. A government grant would be essential if a new industrial venture were to begin. C.M.S. suggested the buildings at Gloucester and Charlotte as a suitable place to start and the Colonial Office officials agreed that estimates might be prepared.[3]

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[1] P.P. 1847 XXXVII Report for Sierra Leone.

[2] C.O. 267/201 15.10.47 Straith to Hawes.

[3] C.O. 267/201 10.11.47 Straith to Hawes.

More practical ideas soon arrived from the C.M.S. secretaries. The proposed Normal School should teach agriculture, carpentry, printing, spinning or needlework and milling. The government boarding school at Wellington seemed more suitable than the two schools thought of previously and might perhaps have a farm attached on nearby land. The government would have to bear the initial expense and pay a master £200 a year, but C.M.S. would pay the other teachers. In return a capitation fee of 5d per day per child was settled - along with a quantity of red tape to which the missionaries objected regularly. These ideas met with general approval and Governor MacDonald was asked to read them and to send a full report on schools in Sierra Leone so that plans could be made.[1] Not surprisingly the governor's reply was not altogether encouraging. Industrial education in his opinion could be begun without a Normal School. The first thing that many children would have to do would be to learn to read and write properly and surely even C.M.S. could occupy itself with this. He also raised the sensitive question of the Classics and Mathematics, being taught presumably at the Grammar School and Fourah Bay. He declared that such educational frills were "really doing an injury .. to the African himself". Most Africans were from rural backgrounds and few were ever likely to reach a station in

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[1] C.O. 267/201 18.11.47 Straith to Hawes.
7.12.47 Grey to MacDonald.

life where Greek or Latin could be of the slightest use. Education at Fourah Bay was far ahead of the intellectual capacities of Africans, who would be far better occupied learning to read and write really well. The job of the schools was to bring up Africans to be useful members of society and to this end industrial education should begin at once. A Normal School, if it was absolutely vital, could start at once at Hastings.[1]

Lord Grey agreed with Macdonald that the Classics were an unsuitable study for colonial society and this mildly red herring led the argument off into a further general defence on the part of C.M.S. of their education system.[2] Meanwhile plans for more practical education appeared to be going forward. About twenty acres of land, it was decided, were to be attached to each school and it was hoped that the Colonial Office would pay for tools and produce £500 to train an industrial master.[3] They eventually allowed only £300 for the purpose, but C.M.S. declared themselves ready to begin as soon as the formal transfer of the school buildings had taken place.[4] However, this was further delayed by arguments about their exact state of repair and by alarm in C.M.S.

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[1] C.O. 267/203 25.7.48 MacDonald to Grey.

[2] C.O. 267/203 6.9.48 Straith to Grey.

[3] Ibid.

[4] C.O. 267/211 27.2.49 Grey to Straith.
1.2.49 Straith to Hawes.

circles at the poor health of children coming off the slave ships. C.M.S. were trying to get as many buildings included in the deal as possible and were meeting the determination of the governor on the subject.[1]

Towards the end of 1849, C.M.S. found a potential industrial master, John Johnson, a man with long experience in the West Indies, accustomed to dealing with large numbers of negroes. Although T.F.Elliot did not think him particularly suitable or well-qualified, the Colonial Office agreed to accept him on the recommendation of C.M.S., paying him £300 a year and allowing an initial expenditure of £100 on equipment.[2] In October, 1850, MacDonald was able to report that the transfer of buildings and responsibility was complete. Only the colonial school in Freetown was to remain under government supervision, with a few buildings in the 'frontier' village of Kent being kept too,in case the colonial administration needed them.[3]

Johnson had by now been in Sierra Leone for some months. The whole plan, with its financial backing from the government, was about to get under way. Johnson, however, proved to be a disappointment. He was ill soon after his arrival and, even when he recovered, he showed little initiative. He expected that C.M.S.

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[1] C.O. 267/211 22.3.49 Straith to Grey.

[2] C.O. 267/211 23.10.49 Straith to Grey.

[3] C.O. 267/216 6.10.50 MacDonald to Grey.

or the colonial authorities would tell him exactly what to do and waited in Freetown for instructions instead of getting out to the proposed Normal School at Hastings. The fact that C.M.S. had asked him to inspect all its buildings in Sierra Leone and to solicit the help of the A.I.C. in starting agricultural work did not spur him on to any great activity. He did assert that he had found india-rubber trees which had escaped the notice of the local people and gave some help later in the search for cotton-growing sites. He was clearly unsettled in the colony and resigned in June 1851.[1] The Normal School idea and, with it, the possibility of developing practical schooling faded for the time being. It was another two or three years before Kissy was chosen as a site and C.M.S. was able to set about starting an industrial training school on its own initiative. The whole, prolonged discussion had however cast a clear light on the interests of the government when it came to teaching Africans. A suitably educated working class was what was aimed at, not a lot of over-educated Africans who saw manual work as beneath them. They were genuinely alarmed, perhaps because the information at their disposal was so often suspect, at the prospect of a society dominated by men impatient with middle class aspirations.

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[1] C.O. 267/219
5.2.50 Johnson to Grey
23.12.50 Johnson to Grey
13.7.50 Smyth to Johnson
9.10.50 Johnson to Graf
5.11.50 Johnson to Graf
C.M.S. CA1/L4 12.11.50 Straith to Johnson.

Much of the alarm was occasioned by the factious reports sent so regularly by Governor MacDonald. Even in 1851, when the argument might have been regarded as finished, he was still despatching large quantities of correspondence on education, adding his own opinions on each occasion. He claimed that hardly a single boy in Sierra Leone could speak English properly and it was English which was needed to fit them for the humbler jobs to which most were best suited. As a result, Africans were of no use in the offices where they got jobs and most merchants were dissatisfied with mission school boys. He even asserted that those who spoke at A.I.C. meetings had their ungrammatical English corrected by those who wrote the minutes, so that their command of the language sounded better than it was. Herman Merivale and Lord Grey had seen enough of Macdonald's despatches to know the motives behind them and put a firm end to the correspondence.[1] They did agree, though, with the main terms of his argument, namely that a simple, secular education was what was required, with the addition of industrial training where possible to fit the mass of the people for what would be regarded in England as working class jobs. The onus was on C.M.S. to prove that the type of curriculum provided at the Grammar School, and particularly at Fourah Bay, could possibly contribute to the development of this sort of society and that they were not preparing large numbers of children for a life to which they would never aspire.

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[1] C.O. 267/220 25.1.51 Macdonald to Grey.
20.5.51 Macdonald to Grey.

CHAPTER X

Since they did not want to find themselves deeply involved in educational schemes, it is hardly surprising that the Colonial Office had not done a great deal in the realm of industrial experiment. There was no lack of suggestions on the subject in spite of this. Back in 1826, Major-General Turner was writing to Lord Bathurst to ask that superintendents might be sent from the West Indies to get cotton and coffee plantations going in Sierra Leone. This was largely because of the lack of regular work for the vast numbers - over two thousand in that year - coming off the slave ships, but it was all part of the task of creating an orderly, contented African society, able to manage its own affairs.[1] The widely held opinion that Africans would not progress in agriculture or industry as long as their desire for consumer goods was low appears in much evidence to Select Committees and in letters and reports on West Africa.

This was countered by those who thought the African would like to make a profit, but were prevented from doing so by the paucity of convenient outlets for surplus produce.[2] Certainly it was true that few Africans had the sort of capital necessary

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[1] P.P. 1826 XXVI Papers relating to Liberated Africans No.2.

[2] See for example C.O. 267/160 3.10.40 Governor Doherty to Russell.

to begin a plantation and James Schon" claimed that there was very little money at all in the colony in the early 1840's.[1] Here was an area where judicious government loans to Europeans or Africans could have helped, but Sir John Jeremie's attempts to get a savings bank going at this time received no further official help after his death in 1841. When it showed signs of making a loss some months after its opening in February 1841, Lord Stanley instructed Fergusson that it should close.[2] It was the opinion of the colonial chaplain of the time that this scheme would have worked, since most local people trusted the government and would have been prepared to deal with a government bank.

Governor Campbell had his contribution to make to the discussion. Quantities of useless commodities had been sent to Sierra Leone, he asserted, in a vain attempt to further industrial enterprise. Coffee, cotton, ginger and sugar cane could and should be grown on government farms. These would employ slaves newly released by the Courts of Mixed Commission for three months after liberation, thus giving them a stable job and training in good agricultural methods.[3] Like so many ideas put forward to Select

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[1] P.P. 1842 XI q.7299-7300.

[2] C.O. 267/166 13.12.41 Stanley to Governor Fergusson.
267/201 18.5.47 Hawes to Hawkinson.

[3] P.P. 1842 XI q.8842-8843, 8859, 8894-8899.

Committees, this one sank without trace and there were certainly plenty of other experts on Africa who believed that any attempt to farm new crops would be disastrous. Palm oil and groundnuts should be the staples of any agricultural venture. Others with long experience in West Africa believed that occasional experiments in plantation farming were a waste of time anyway, since the African would always return to trade, given the opportunity. Real pessimists viewed any venture on the West coast of Africa as a failure before it began, since European investment was unlikely and, without safe capital backing no long-term enterprise could succeed.[1] Yet, contemporary with these opinions were those of the naturalist, Thomas Whitfield, who proclaimed enthusiastically that the soil of the Gambia could produce any crop and that cotton production in Sierra Leone could be self-supporting immediately.[2]

With this confusingly wide range of opinions before them, it is hardly surprising that officials in the Colonial Office were paralysed into procrastination. As a result, individual initiative on the part of governors or a missionary, or some importunate philanthropist was the pattern of what sporadic development took place.

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[1] P.P. 1842 XI. See evidence of McGregor, Midgeley, Forster etc.

[2] Ibid. q.9660.

The history of cotton growing provides a good example of this. As early as 1825, William Allen was addressing the government on the subject. Lord Bathurst appointed one John Gyles at £100 a year to superintend the work. He arrived with several species of cotton, but died almost immediately. The governor chose a Mr Caillé, who planted sea island cotton at Kissy and then argued about his salary and left for the interior.[1] Individual experiments by Dr Fergusson and the Rev. Morgan were going on by the early 1840's and Governor Jeremie was full of hope and enthusiasm that a newly-founded society in England with huge capital funds would help to initiate a trade which could compete effectively with slave-grown cotton from Egypt or America. Jeremie hoped for a grant of £200 from the colonial funds to start off with and had, as was inevitable in Sierra Leone, formed a committee, which included Fergusson, Morgan, Logan Hook and Colonel Doherty. The experiment was to last only long enough to prove that cotton was a viable product. Individuals would then take up planting for themselves.[2] Approval was soon forthcoming from the Colonial Office and an Afro-West-Indian, Henry Vincent, was found to superintend the work.[3] By then, though, Jeremie had been dead for nearly three months and, although Vincent and his family set off for Sierra Leone,

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[1] C.O. 267/163 28.12.40 Minutes of Council of Sierra Leone.

[2] C.O. 267/163 28.12.40 Minutes of Council of Sierra Leone.

[3] C.O. 267/169 24.6.41 Young to Vernon Smith.

the projected farm at Waterloo got no further than a set of regulations. Without powerful individual backing, the idea died.

Fergusson tried to revive the experiment, encouraged by a flourishing first crop in 1842,[1] but his own tenure of office was brief and his successor, Colonel George Macdonald, did not allow his customary inertia to be disturbed by the demands of a model farm.

It took the efforts of an enthusiastic merchant, Abraham Bauer, to bring the subject to the attention of the Colonial Office eight years later in 1850. They supported him in his search for information and provided him with useful letters of introduction.[2] Interest had been shown in Parliament a few months previously in the possibility of getting cotton from new sources. India was the country suggested in debate, but since Sir J.W.Hogg explained that India could use all the cotton it could produce in its own craft industries,[3] Africa would have been another fairly convenient and obvious choice. The Colonial Office arranged to have some of the papers on the experiments of the early 1840's published for the use of M.P.'s. No great interest was kindled, however, and even

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[1] C.O. 267/175 Report on Blue Book for 1841.

[2] C.O. 267/218 23.9.50 Bauer to Hawes.
11.10.50 Grey to Bauer.

[3] Hansard 3rd series CXII 1850 c.10-68.

Abraham Bauer does not seem to have been able to accomplish anything. The interest in cotton and other products continued, but produced no concerted action. Bauer arrived in Sierra Leone at the end of 1850 and offered sixpence a pound to the locals for their cotton. He intended to follow the current practice, much disliked by many Africans, of paying in goods and succeeded in infuriating Governor Macdonald both with his proposal and with his "claptrap" ideas expressed at a public meeting in Freetown. Macdonald considered him dishonest and was convinced that he had come purely to make money and certainly not to further cotton growing. He had clearly irritated Macdonald by his frank criticism of the colony's amenities and the Colonial Office was subjected to a long correspondence from the governor, which it eventually ended without further comment.[1] The project had failed partly because of Macdonald's unwillingness to back someone else's plans. As soon as Bauer faded from the picture, there was little or no hope that cotton-growing would revive unless it was taken up by another forceful individual. In this case the individual was Henry Venn, with his representative in Sierra Leone, Thomas Peyton and the initiative passed, until Peyton's death, to C.M.S. An appeal in 1851 from Charles Cruikshank for government help for an agricultural scheme had met with no positive encouragement from Lord Grey.[2]

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[1] C.O. 267/224 5.11.51 Macdonald to Grey.
26.12.51 Macdonald to Grey.

[2] C.O. 267/226 19.7.51 Cruikshank to Grey.

The general ides of keeping Africans in West Africa to farm, rather than sending them to plantations in the West Indies was sound, but colonial funds could no longer pay for these ventures.

Samples of coffee and cotton had continued to arrive in London, from time to time and been sent on to the Board of Trade. It was difficult to know what they proved since reports conflicted so much. Governor Norman Macdonald had at times, appeared keen to get general industrial schemes going, provided they were his own, and enthusiastically circulated leading residents with booklets sent out by the Colonial Office in 1847.[1] Once more, reports began to appear, in this case optimistic, since this was Macdonald's temperament. There can be little doubt that he had the force of personality to get things done and that he was full of practical ideas. While criticising the over-literary nature of missionary education,he had instituted prizes at Fourah Bay and the Grammar School to induce boys to take an interest in the sort of mechanical training which he claimed was more suitable.[2] There is no doubt either that he possessed to a marked degree the ability to irritate those around him, and was unable to carry them along with him. Instead of a co-operative effort with C.M.S. to persuade boys to turn to practical jobs, his hyper-critical attitude produced a marked rift with the missionary authorities and a great deal of

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[1] C.O. 267/197 19.4.47 Macdonald to Grey.

[2] P.P. 1847 XXXVII Report for Sierra Leone.

defensive argument, concerned largely with justifying what C.M.S. had done. His offensive manner certainly contributed to the early departure from the colony of John Johnson in 1851.[1]

It was unfortunate that one of the few governors to live out his six year term of office was unable to overcome the personality problems which hindered real co-operation between those who could have forwarded this aspect of African advancement. It should not be forgotten, though, that his interminable despatches did furnish the Colonial Office with practical information on the details of agriculture and industrial organization, even if some of his more exuberant judgments on the colony's potential did require a more sober assessment. He was a source of many practical ideas, some already discussed and it is worth noting that for a man who did little to hide his disdain for Africans, he put a remarkable amount of effort into schemes to help them. By the late 1840's, Freetown at least gave much encouragement to those who wished to see Africans forming an artisan class - and Macdonald was supported by opinion both at home and in the colony in this. Only a few skills such as blacksmiths and other metal workers were missing. There was a demand for good quality housing, which Africans were beginning to see as a good means for investment. Quite substantial wages could be earned by skilled workers like carpenters, masons and ship-wrights and these were the type of citizens that Macdonald wanted to see.[2]

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[1] C.O. 267/219 13.7.50 Smyth to Johnson.

[2] C.O. 267/206 15.5.48 Wilkins Terry to Barrow.
10.5.48 List of artisans.

In the Gambia,too,Governor Smyth O'Connor claimed,in a long panegyric in 1857,that a new class of Africans, "enterprising, energetic and industrious" was emerging, overcoming the hindrances which had held them back in the past. They paid their taxes and were useful members of society in a community where colour prejudice was no longer evident. Africans would soon be able to compete with whites commercially and take a leading place in the colony.[1] This almost lyrical despatch probably tells us more about Governor O'Connor than it does about the Gambia and Governor D'Arcy gave a more realistic assessment in 1862, with his report on attempts to start cotton-growing in the interior to supply the needs of Manchester in the cotton famine. This experiment continued into 1863 with help from the Manchester Association,who sent a box of Egyptian seed to a government farm and cotton-growing went on for at least two years, but there is little evidence to suggest that colonial funds were called on. As usual this was an individual venture with help from private sources at home.[2]

It should perhaps be made clear that this reliance on private philanthropy was not caused by any lack of concern at the Colonial Office that progress should take place in West Africa. While Colonial Secretaries came and went, especially in the 1850's, the

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[1] P.P. 1857-8 XL Report for the Gambia.

[2] P.P. 1862 XXXVI Report for the Gambia.
1864 XL Report for the Gambia.

permanent officials followed the development of these colonies with interest. Private philanthropy was common in mid-Victorian England and, as with education, the Colonial Office accepted as normal the idea that schemes to help the poor and underprivileged might well be carried out by the rich and energetic. They were always ready to help with information and useful letters of introduction. Increasingly, though, they were less willing to give direct financial aid. The civil and judicial establishment cost over £10,000 a year in the early 1840's.[1] Quite expensive public works were necessary, especially during the years when the population was rising fast as freed slaves came off the slave ships. For example, in 1846, Macdonald reckoned that the colony needed a new gaol, a lighthouse at the Cape, a merchant seamen's hospital, a courthouse, a new police station and repairs to the wharf. Of these, only the lighthouse could be expected to pay for itself. Only seven miles of good coach road existed and new roads were planned to link Freetown with Kissy and Wellington.[2] As well as this the Liberated African Department had to consider its charges at the King's Yard, from which the only financial return was presumably on the sale of slave ships. By 1860, the total expenditure for the year was £31,000.[3] With all this unavoidable spending on public works, and on the officials essential to run a colony, it is not surprising

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[1] P.P. 1842 XII(551) Nos. 7 and 9.

[2] P.P. 1847 XXXVII Report for Sierra Leone.

[3] P.P. 1862 XXXVI Report for Sierra Leone.

that Colonial Secretaries and their officials were less than eager to commit themselves to further expenditure on costly schools for industrial training or plantations where the crops might well fail.

Governor Andrews of the Gold Coast reported to the Duke of Newcastle in 1861 that the six industrial schools run by the Basle missionaries on the Gold Coast had cost nearly £7,000 in 1860. This was despite the fact that four of the teachers supported themselves by their own skills. Since most boys who had benefited from this education went straight into trade anyway and their numbers were very small, the obvious conclusion was that the outlay was not justified and the government should be discouraged from getting involved.[1] By the 1860's the climate of opinion was enough to secure further retrenchment, but this was not altogether new. From time to time in the previous twenty years, demands had been made for justification of colonial expenditure. The Colonial Office was under more or less permanent pressure to avoid expensive schemes where possible or to make colonies pay their own expenses. Obviously most attention was given to the larger colonies and to those where white settlement was possible and West Africa could always be justified in its role as a base in the fight against slavery, a fight with which most M.P.'s would have supported.

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[1] P.P. 1862 XXXVI Report for the Gold Coast.

Even this emotional factor, however, did not allow heavy expenditure on philanthropic schemes whose success was in any doubt.

CHAPTER XI

In the mid-1860's, West Africa once again found itself the centre of critical attention. Expensive fighting on the Gold Coast in 1864 aroused the old fears in Parliament that too much money was being spent on a generally useless part of the world. C.B.Adderley, a Tory who raised questions of colonial military expenditure fairly regularly, was well known for his conviction that the colonies should bear much more of the burden for their own defence.[1] A select committee in 1861 had looked into the matter of military expenditure, but had been primarily concerned with 'true colonies', that is those with some measure of self-government. West Africa was dismissed in debate as no more than a series of bases for the suppression of the slave trade.[2] Now, in February 1865, Adderley moved for a select committee on British West Africa, "a country",as he said, "notoriously unfit for occupation by the Anglo-Saxon race."[3] He made no secret of his bias on the subject. In 1861, he had referred to Britain's

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[1] For further details of his background and ideas see J.Hargreaves: "Prelude to the Partition of West Africa" (1963) pp. 66-68. For his opinions on defence see Hansard 3rd series 1859 CLV. c. 391-399.

[2] Hansard 3rd series. 1862 CLXV c.1032-1060.

[3] Hansard 3rd series. 1865 CLXXVII c.535-599.

possessions in West Africa as "pest-holes in the name of colonies" and questioned whether they should be retained at all.[1] Events in Lagos and on the Gold Coast in the early 1860's did nothing to change his mind: the Ashanti Wars raised questions about the proper administration of the colonies and taking Lagos in 1861 was quite simply a disastrous mistake. Britain should no longer be taxed in order that Africa might be civilised.[2]

Lord Stanley joined Adderley in the general castigation of Britain's position. He expressed the feeling of many M.P.'s in stating that the life of a white officer was "worth more than the merely animal existence of a whole African tribe." Britain had not invented the slave trade and any debt owed to the African race had long since been paid. England's resources should be turned to civilising the needy in England rather than being wasted on colonies where little evidence of progress could be found.[3] Here was a complete reversal of the Exeter Hall humanitarian views which had been in vogue twenty-five years before and whose shadow had stretched out over much of this period. Their forcefulness had faded as British policy on the slave trade was called in question

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[1] C.B.Adderley. "Letter to Disraeli on the present relations of England with the colonies." (1861).

[2] Parliamentary debate 1865. See note 3. p.205.

[3] Ibid.

and if these new opinions held sway, Africa would just be abandoned.[1] Cardwell, the Colonial Secretary of the day, leapt to the defence of the missionaries who had done so much practical work towards the ending of the slave trade and he was confident that the proposed enquiry would vindicate what Britain had done, but the general drift of opinion was clearly towards some disentanglement of British ties.

The Select Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Adderley. He was joined by Cardwell and Chichester Fortescue from the Colonial Office, and the Marquis of Hartington from the War Office, but no-one was appointed to represent the Foreign Office. Sir Francis Baring, an elderly Whig, spoke for C.M.S. There was a fair balance between those who favoured staying in Africa and those against it, but this balance made a compromise solution more or less inevitable. The Manchester Radical element, looking for free trade and a cheap colonial policy was represented in W.E.Baxter, proposed by John Bright, and William Forster, a Quaker woollen manufacturer. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's third son was present, along with Lord Stanley. The conduct of the inquiry was dominated by Adderley, who faced the thirty-four witnesses with some searching and sometimes rather irritable questions on the value of the colonies. Most of the witnesses had

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[1] See W.L.Burn. "The Age of Equipoise." (1964) pp. 69-71.

lived on the coast for several years or visited it regularly as merchants. T.F.Elliot spoke for the Colonial Office. Dr Livingstone and Captain Richard Burton presented opposing points of view as explorers and general experts on Africa.[1]

The Committee had a report drawn up by Colonel Ord, Governor of Bermuda, whose brief had been to look at West Africa not as a conventional colony because of the climate, but as a series of footholds for extending trade and stopping inhuman behaviour.[2] Ord reported that the slave trade had gone from the British settlements, partly because of British presence and partly because of the energetic work of the squadron. Legitimate trade, Buxton's solution, was insufficient to stop it. Lagos had enjoyed a healthy trade with Britain for years, but had still been the local headquarters of the slave trade. Slavery prospered at Whydah where there was also a flourishing trade in palm oil. The Buxton thesis appeared to be close to abandonment. The witnesses were looking back over a period of about twenty-five years in which sometimes discouraging attempts had been made to carry out Buxton's ideas and it is as important to consider what they thought as it is to assess the importance of the Select Committee's final recommendations, based as they were on some strongly-held preconceived notions.

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[1] See J.Hargreaves. op.cit. pp.64-78 for a discussion of the 1865 Select Committee and for much of the information contained here on the Committee members.

[2] P.P. 1865 V Appendix I.

A good deal of attention was, of course, given to Colonel Ord, who produced generally favourable evidence of African advancement. Sierra Leone, which by now took in few freed slaves, showed all the signs of a settled community, paying its taxes and increasing its exports. Africans could be found, as for many years past, in the merchant and administrative classes. Their material possessions in the form of houses and carriages bespoke a stable and prosperous society. Education was good and suited to Africans, who corresponded on the whole to the lower classes at home.[1] On the Gold Coast, Africans were working in government service.[2] All the same, Ord could not be persuaded to testify that self-government was a possibility. The failure of the régime at Lagos was evidence of this and much as the Committee wished to convince him that his own evidence proved the latent ability of the African, he would not agree that Africans could yet be substituted for Europeans in so responsible a position.[3]

Sir Benjamin Pine, who had administered the Gold Coast from 1856 to 1858, developed this argument further. He talked of training Africans to take a greater part in government, aiming to hand over to the chiefs something like fifty to a hundred years hence, but not before then. As a preparation, local government

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[1] P.P. 1865 V q.670-685, 782-792.

[2] Ibid. q.843-848.

[3] Ibid. q.1020-1072.

should be given over more into their hands straight away. Too much local responsibility still rested with the governors and British policy must point towards the day when Africans could govern themselves. Until then, however, it was Britain's duty to stay in West Africa.[1] Here, Richard Pine, Governor of the Gold Coast, agreed with him, though he conceded that only one governor with a small police force might be enough to oversee the whole coast.[2]

The strongest argument for the retention of British authority came from Dr Livingstone, by this time less popular than in previous years and certainly viewed with less respect than one might expect. He had no direct experience of West Africa and his arguments were perhaps too strongly expressed. As far as Livingstone was concerned, British settlement had been entirely responsible for the opening of lawful trade and the ending of slave trade because, as he said, "we Englishmen have always a sense of justice and do their (sic) duty better on the whole."[3] In contrast, he pointed out, Portugal had allowed the slave trade to continue and thus killed legitimate trade. He refused to accept any of the criticism of missionaries raised by some witnesses and asserted that they had contributed to trade, civilisation and industrial development

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[1] P.P. 1865 V. q.3012-3016, 3052-3055, 3158.

[2] Ibid. q.7413-7415.

[3] Ibid. q.5610.

as well as spiritual growth. Britain could not contemplate withdrawing its presence, since it meant settled trade, the lynch-pin of advancement as far as Livingstone was concerned.[1]

These rather old-fashioned viewes were unlikely to appeal to Adderley or his supporters and much more weight was given to Captain Burton, one of the earliest witnesses to be called. His experience as a consul in British West Africa, though rather superficial, was enough for him to be heard with some respect, the more so since his strongly-held opinions coincided with those of many on the Committee. Burton pointed out that annexation had been too much to the fore in British policy. "As a rule," he said, "the Englishman is fond of annexation and it is always locally a pleasant subject to propose taking a place."[2] Progress might be made on the Niger, but keeping Lagos would only lead to problems in drawing boundaries and the hostility of the inland towns.

Burton's disdain for West Africans was well known and he was certainly not suggesting withdrawal in order that Africans might prosper. His love for Islam made him intolerant of missionary work and unwilling to admit that missionaries had contributed anything to the real progress of the African. Instead, he contended, they had set Africans in positions of authority for which they were as yet too immature and created an unbalanced society in which white

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[1] P.P. 1865 V. q.5583-5589, 5652-5656.

[2] Ibid. q.2282.

men counted almost for nothing. Despite the evidence given by men with a closer knowledge of West Africa, it was the general tenour of Burton's evidence which was to weigh most heavily in the end.

There was certainly plenty to suggest that Africans were developing the ability to run their own affairs. Andrew Swanzy who had traded on the Gold Coast for twenty years reported favourably on the intelligence of the Africans he met, though he was less enthusiastic about their capacity for hard work.[1] Although John Harris, an ally of Burton's and a merchant at Sherbro, made the claim that missionary educated youths from Sierra Leone were too bookish and unreliable, he conceded that in general the local people were acquiring the trappings of civilisation and there can be little doubt that such acquisitions required hard work and thrift.[2] According to John Tobin, a Liverpool merchant in the West Africa trade, Africans were every bit as skilled in trading as Europeans - a matter of little surprise, since they had been practising this skill for centuries. In future, said Tobin, Africans should guide their own progress, and not just follow European guidelines.[3] The Rev. Charles Gollmer and Gottfried Bühle gave evidence of the potential of the peoples in the area around Lagos, where Africans had done so much to organise and run their own church. Considerable educational advance

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[1] P.P. 1865 V. q.4830-4833.
[2] Ibid. q.4923, 5003-5005.
[3] Ibid. q.5354-5356.

had been made at Abeokuta and the other centres of the Yoruba Mission and the Niger Mission was now entirely African run under the hand of Bishop Samuel Crowther.[1] Much of this territory was beyond the bounds of British protection and was determined to stay so, but the Committee showed much interest in the area, perhaps in the hope of proving that native organisation was so advanced that Lagos could safely be abandoned.

Further missionary evidence came from James Berrie and George Sharpe, who also pointed to advance in what was called civilisation, a term that no-one cared to define too tightly. W.M.S. now had a chapel at Lagos, a school and a mission station at Abeokuta. After seventy years of missionary work in Sierra Leone, Africans had reached a point where they were ready to govern themselves.[2] Samuel Blackall, Governor of Sierra Leone since 1862, testified to the achievements of missionary work and progress in industrial skills shown by a recent industrial exhibition.[3] Yet, of all these men who commended Africans for their development, very few believed that the time had come for Britain to withdraw. For most of them the cause of native agency would not be advanced if Africans were left to themselves: the seeds of future competence were there, but withdrawal would lead,

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[1] P.P. 1865 V. q.5853-5855, 6083-6099, 5932-5934.

[2] Ibid. q. 7143-7343.

[3] Ibid. q. 8080-8092.

at least at Lagos, to a return to the slave trade and, elsewhere, to muddle and disorder. Since efficiency and order were important to the colonial department, the West African colonies must remain in the care of British Officials who could guarantee peace and good organization.

It was, then, those who cared least for Africa who came down most strongly on the side of disentanglement. While they included in their report in June, 1865, the assertion that Britain's policy should "encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to the natives the administration of all the Governments",[1] it is clear that the transfer of the administration was of more immediate importance than any qualities which might develop as a result. Indeed the inclusion of the first half of the sentence may well have been part of the compromise which left Britain in charge of Sierra Leone and held onto the lower reaches of the River Gambia the Gold Coast and Lagos. It was agreed that there should be no more extension of territory in the new settlements[2], but, in the old established ones, the Committee conceded that the annexation of 'informal empire' might well have to continue if peace was to be maintained.

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[1] P.P. 1865 V. p.xvi.

[2] Ibid. p.xvi.

It was not the clearcut conclusion that Adderley and his supporters wanted: neither was it in any sense a triumph for native agency. In Sierra Leone, the one area of British rule where Africans were most ready to govern themselves, the British were to remain. It was probably true that Lagos, if it had been abandoned, would have reverted to the lucrative slave trade and,with the restlessness of the Ashanti peoples inland,the Gold Coast would soon have lost whatever civilisation British presence had brought about. The recommendations were, in any case, never implemented completely. In February, 1866, the settlements were united and Samuel Blackall became the first Governor-in-Chief. Disentanglement from Africa, even with Adderley at the Colonial Office, was too complex to be carried out: even those most contemptuous towards Africa would not contemplate swift abandonment and African self-government could not be achieved overnight. Genuine autonomy was, as so many witnesses had asserted in 1865, quite a long way ahead, even assuming that European opinion remained favourable to the idea.

CONCLUSION

By 1865, then, a certain amount of progress appeared to have been made in the external organisation of native agency. In Sierra Leone, an African Anglican church was taking shape; Africans were now a common sight in well paid professional positions and in government. However, two points need to be made in conclusion.

There can be little doubt that the general European view of native agency was limited. As should be evident from much of this thesis, Europeans were preoccupied with organisation, with the external arrangements for producing native agency. If they could build schools and colleges, pay for scholarships to England and pick bright African boys to take advantage of them, African agency would result. It was, as was suggested in the introduction, essentially paternalistic: it was also the result of a very narrow view of what African agency really meant. For most Europeans, even including Henry Venn, whose approach was more statesmanlike than most, native agency meant a Europeanised African society. It meant men and women with a European education, accustomed to non-African standards and customs, forming a society not unlike that of mid-century England or Germany. The development of a middle class with a smattering of Classical education, a fair number of possessions and, hopefully, a strong grasp of the Christian faith,

would guarantee a stable society, able to break free from the temptations of slavery.

The sense of self confidence in Victorian England understandably led to a belief that a copy of that way of life in West Africa could be equated with civilisation in a way which their old customs and practices could not and that all efforts should be devoted to producing at least the external trappings of that society. It was, in a sense, a denial of Buxton's thesis that Africa would be saved by "the natural and healthy exercise of her own energies",[1] for what was offered was, at times, little more than a layer of Western culture to disguise what was regarded as an inferior way of life.

One of the results of this limited view is that documentary evidence on this period illustrates the work done by Europeans, rather than initiative shown by Africans. Missionaries and government officials alike delighted to inform their superiors about a new school or extension to a college, even about the beginnings of an experimental farm; they devoted much less space to the efforts of Africans on their own behalf. At times, it seems that the easiest way for an African to achieve mention in a missionary despatch was to misbehave in some way. Certainly, unless a man had been to

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[1] T.F.Buxton: "The Slave Trade" (1839) p.19.

England for education and was therefore known to the mission secretaries, he could expect much of his activity to go unreported. Yet it is clear that the advances made by Africans in the thirty years up to 1865 cannot be explained purely by the exertions of a small number of Europeans. On the missionary side, for example, there were never more than twenty Europeans in Sierra Leone and only a handful on other parts of the coast. Many villages were without a missionary for several years at a time. The local church and school continued to function. Newly arrived Liberated Africans in Sierra Leone appear to have joined the church and taken advantage of education without the presence of a resident European. Although they rarely received mention, large numbers of energetic Africans were active in trade, medicine, education and the administration of the colony. John Ezzidio, the Wesleyan lay preacher and local trader, for example, joined the new Legislative Council, set up in 1863, another step in a long and prosperous career as one of the leading citizens of Freetown. Men like Ezzidio, William Pratt and William Grant, also both businessmen, and of course Bishop Samuel Crowther, were witnesses to African initiative.

By 1865, these men almost certainly saw themselves as ready for self government and thought that it would come as a result of the findings of the Select Committee. James Africanus Horton, whose medical training in the 1850's had been so successful and who had

served in the army since coming back to West Africa, saw the 1865 resolutions as a challenge to Africans to use their opportunities. "This is indeed a grand conception," he said of the Committee's decisions, "which if developed into fact will immortalise the name of Britain as the most generous and enlightened nation that has adorned the face of the globe."[1] Liberia had been independent for twenty years and Edward Blyden and his views were soon to become known in Sierra Leone. He and Horton differed profoundly in their view of the value of European culture - Horton believing that Africans could benefit from it and Blyden decrying it - but both assumed that Africans had nothing to feel inferior about and should be allowed freedom to develop their potential in their own way, rather than being tied for years to come to the apron strings of their white benefactors.

Horton's book, 'West African Countries and Peoples', was not published until 1868, but much of the material was already written in 1865 and is indicative of the opinions of educated and thoughtful Africans of his time. His view was essentially optimistic. Sierra Leone could well be self governing . Its people were blending into one race; its revenue was increasing; Freetown was well advanced and likely to remain prosperous, with its excellent harbour and fertile surroundings. He longed to see Fourah Bay as the university

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[1] J.A.Horton: "West African Countries and Peoples". (1868) p.73.

of West Africa[1] and better organised education leading to wider opportunities for all. Even on the old, vexed question of agriculture he was guardedly optimistic. He clearly saw the whole European contribution as a springboard from which Africans could propel themselves into a self-determined and prosperous future. It was to be several years yet before the derogatory attitude of Blyden was to attempt to turn the balance of opinion against the culture and religion of the West and to emphasise so forcefully the narrowness, as he saw it, of the contribution which had been made.

The second point to be considered in conclusion is that of motive. It might be assumed that the driving force behind so much effort in raising Africans to European standards, in 'elevating the native mind', would be African advancement, no more, no less. The facts, however, point to a very different situation throughout this period. Apart from Buxton, probably the only protagonist for native agency farsighted enough to desire the advance of Africa for its own sake was Henry Venn. He came to prominence at C.M.S. at a time when the failure of the Niger Expedition was impressing on those concerned with the area the idea that Africans must now advance in order that European lives might be spared. The debt for the slave trade must be paid if the Humanitarians were to be satisfied, but the death of so many Europeans on the Niger had very quickly

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[1] This hope was, of course, to be fulfilled when Fourah Bay became part of the University of Durham in 1876.

turned the balance towards the conviction that West Africa was too much of a 'white man's grave' to be a tolerable place for such a debt to be paid.

In the development of Venn's thinking, African agency came to mean 'euthanasia of mission', the conviction that the freeing of missionaries from West Africa was in order that they might go on and preach in some other, equally unhealthy place or proceed into the interior of Africa itself. As the period went on and the sense of guilt about the slave trade began to die away, this type of view became progressively less acceptable and its popularity was not increased by concern over the cost of these apparently useless settlements. As opinion swung steadily against West Africa towards the early 1860's, native agency re-emerged as the answer to a new set of problems. An efficient native agency would now mean that Britain could abandon West Africa with a clear conscience and neither English lives nor English money need be wasted any longer. The sooner Africans could reach a point of reasonably efficient self-government the better.

This was very different from Venn's slow, painstaking, but persistent advocacy of a self-governing church in Sierra Leone in the 1850's. While for officials in government, concern with balancing budgets and justifying the expenditure of both money and human lives fostered a short-term view, Venn in his position of

dominance at Salisbury Square was able to forget the convenience of the missionaries - often to their ill-disguised dismay - and work towards a more distant goal; the African had the right to education and advancement and the Christian duty of the white man was to provide it for him, so that he could be left to run his own affairs and the white man could go on to some new effort elsewhere. In the recommendations of the 1865 Select Committee, such altruistic views had failed to appear and practical necessity reasserted itself: West Africa was an expensive and impractical place to be. It was not profitable and was still injurious to European health: for the convenience of the European, rather than the African, native agency must develop so that Africa could simply be left alone.

Inevitably, over a period as long as thirty years, fashions and ideas had changed. The eager philanthropy of the late 1830's had given way to a more calculating wisdom by 1865 and, in West Africa itself, to a desire to use more freely and independently the benefits which white settlement had brought. These attitudes can best be summed up in quotations from the writers whose ideas mark the beginning and end of this period. In 1839, Buxton had expressed the feelings of his Humanitarian friends in these words:

> "I firmly believe that Africa has within herself the means and the endowments which might enable her to shake off and to emerge from her load of misery, to the benefit

> of the whole civilised world and to the unspeakable improvement of her own, now barbarous, population."[1]

In 1868, James Africanus Horton, dedicating his book to Henry Venn, set about defending the potential to which Buxton had pointed and, looking ahead to see the way in which that potential might be realised more independently, he wrote:

> .."the nations of Africa must live in the hope that in process of time their turn will come when they will occupy a prominent position in the world's history."[2]

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[1] T.F.Buxton: "The Slave Trade". (1839). p.238.

[2] J.A.Horton: "West African Countries and Peoples". (1868). p.16.

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