1-1-1981

Rise now and fly to arms : the life of Henry Highland Garnet.

Martin B. Pasternak
University of Massachusetts Amherst

RISE NOW AND FLY TO ARMS:
THE LIFE OF HENRY HIGHLAND GARNET

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARTIN B. PASTERNAK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 1981

HISTORY

RISE NOW AND FLY TO ARMS:

THE LIFE OF HENRY HIGHLAND GARNET

A Dissertation Presented

By

Martin B. Pasternak

Approved as to style and content by:

Stephen B. Oates, Chairperson of Committee

David Wyman, Member

Sidney Kaplan, Member

Leonard L. Richards, Department Head
History

Henry Highland Garnet

PREFACE

Historian Paul Murray Kendall called the art of biography the continuing struggle of life-writing. The task of bringing the relatively obscure Garnet to life was difficult, but no biographer could have asked for a more complicated and exciting subject.

My interest in Garnet began during a Topics Seminar at the University of Massachusetts. There, I first encountered this remarkable man whose dazzling orations brought some people to tears, and stirred others to action. Although materials were scattered, and limited to his most productive years, I still decided to write a full-length biography of Garnet. At first, friends and teachers were skeptical, claiming that enough material was not available, but once I began, their encouragement was total. The shortcomings of this finished work are, of course, mine.

There are so many people to acknowledge, these few words are hardly sufficient. For without the inspiration and guidance of friends and teachers, this biography could never have been written. Particular thanks must go to Mr. Jules Bloom, who first suggested that I go to Massachusetts, and who has been a constant source of

advice and inspiration throughout this effort. Also, I should like to thank my brother, Mr. Larry Pasternak who accompanied me on the many research trips, and to Ms. Ellen Semel, who unselfishly helped with the editing and typing, as did Mr. Paul Lutvak.

I should also like to express my gratitude to the staffs of both the Schomburg and Moorland Libraries. They all knew of Garnet and wanted to see him brought to life. The members of my committee, Mr. David Wyman, and Mr. Sidney Kaplan, were also warm, supportive, and most helpful. But especially, I should like to thank Stephen B. Oates, my great friend and teacher, for his constant encouragement, help, and friendship. If biography has been described as the eliciting of a human life from the "coldness of paper, to the warmth of a life being lived,"* then Stephen B. Oates made Garnet live.

*Paul Murray Kendall, The Art of Biography (New York, 1967), p. 28.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

RISE NOW AND FLY TO ARMS

September 1981

Martin B. Pasternak, B.A., Brooklyn College

M.A., Brooklyn College
Ph.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor Stephen B. Oates

Henry Highland Garnet was perhaps the most influential black American of the nineteenth century. During the course of his sixty-five years, Garnet served as an abolitionist, political activist, educator, African colonizer, and foreign minister. His "Address of the Slaves of the United States," delivered in 1843, served as a model for future black militancy. His 1865 Memorial Discourse, preached before the Congress of the United States, was the first of its kind given by a black American. Yet, up to very recently, Garnet was practically unknown.

In the last few years, two books have been published on Garnet shedding much light on his life. Earl O'fari's "Let Your Motto Be Resistance" is a fine collection of his most militant speeches. It also contains some biographical information. Joel Schor's "The Anti-Slavery and Civil

Rights Role of Henry Highland Garnet, 1840-1865" is a valuable account of Garnet during his most productive period. Since no complete biography of Garnet exists, however, I attempted to write a three-dimensional portrait of this many sided, often contradictory man; to make him live. In this biography, I will explore his strengths, his motivations, his moments of jubilation and success, as well as his periods of frustration and despair. By placing Garnet in his historical perspective, the reader will be able to evaluate the significance of this remarkable man.

In gathering material on Garnet, I unfortunately learned from his great granddaughter that most of his private papers were destroyed by fire. It was also difficult finding material on Garnet's early years. The closest approximation of a biography is James McCune Smith's sketch on the "Life and Labors of Henry Highland Garnet" which he published as an introduction to his 1865 Memorial Discourse. William Brewer's description of Garnet's life in an article "Henry Highland Garnet," published in the Journal of Negro History (January, 1928) was also valuable. Recently a few articles have appeared, each dealing with one period in Garnet's life.

Fortunately, a great many Garnet manuscripts may be found in the collections of his contempories. The most important sources were the American Missionary Society Archives, at Dillard University; the Gerrit Smith Papers, at Syracuse University; the American Colonization Society and Lewis Tappan Papers, at the Library of Congress; the William Lloyd Garrison and Maria Weston Papers, at the Boston Public Library; the Charles Sumner Papers, at the Houghton Library at Harvard University; the Joshua Giddings and Thurlow Weed Papers, at Ohio State University; the Miscellaneous Anti-Slavery Papers at Oberlin College, and the Library of Congress, and Cornell University; the Samuel Rhodes Library in London, England, and the Diplomatic Correspondences to and from Liberia, 1880-1881.

Many black history collections also contain valuable Garnet materials. The Schomburg Collection of the New York Public Library, particularly in the papers of Alexander Crummell and John Bruce, contain many personalized accounts and anecdotes. Crummell's published "Obituary to Henry Highland Garnet," was also extremely candid. The Moorland Collection at Howard University also contains valuable information, particularly during the period of the Civil War when Garnet lived in Washington. The minutes of the many

state and national conventions of Colored Citizens and Their Friends, were very valuable, as were the numerous black newspapers published in Ante-bellum America.

In many ways, Garnet was a deeply misunderstood man, even in his own times. To Garrisonian abolitionists, Garnet was a violent revolutionary, bent upon social upheaval and destruction. To many black leaders, he was a colonizer, who came to whites for money which would be used to transport blacks off to Africa. To other blacks, Garnet was an opportunist, who supported a position only if there was some financial gain in it. Yet, Garnet saw himself as the true moral and ethical spokesman for blacks throughout the world, victimized by those who did not understand him.

"Rise Now and Fly To Arms," is a fitting title for my biography. Taken from a Union Army recruiting poster which Garnet wrote, this slogan captured the enormous energy and activism of the man. As Garnet's lifelong friend, Alexander Crummell, wrote: More than any black American of his generation, Garnet had the ability to make any person who heard him, feel like rising up, and overthrowing the slave system which Garnet so vehemently despised.

CHAPTER I

BAPTISM OF FREEDOM

The sloping hills of eastern Maryland seemed like an ideal location for a boy to grow up. He could romp carefree through the countryside or even hide in the tall cedar trees. In the summer, he could swim in the private brook he liked to call the branch. Hunting was also fun, especially when he caught a hen to present his mother for the evening meal. Life certainly appeared easy enough, except that Henry Highland Garnet was born a slave.

He was born on December 23, 1815, on the plantation of William Spencer at New Market, Maryland. That he was born in bondage became the cardinal fact of his life. Although not personally abused, Garnet would recall his enslavement as the "essence of all conceivable wickedness." He said that he witnessed firsthand his "Christian mother being abused by professed Christians." Years later, Garnet recalled actually hearing the "cracking of the whip and the clanking of the chains" used on slaves who disobeyed their master. Even as a boy, Garnet realized that slavery was a system of "cold-blooded murder, blasphemy, and defiance of the laws of God."[1]

Garnet's hatred of slavery came from his father Joseph Trusty, as he was called. Joseph well understood the

realities of the slave world. On the surface he appeared the happiest and most jovial of men. He spent his time, when relieved of his household duties, "singing, praying and generally exhorting the Lord." In fact, Joseph appeared so docile and reliable that Spencer promoted him to a household slave and gave him the title of trusty. Usually, being a trusty gave Joseph extra privileges, which often included going into town for his master. However, in reality, Joseph was an angry, brooding militant, a man whose "majestic presence" inspired his family to follow but one mission: to lead them to freedom.[2]

He spent many painstaking years preparing his family for that task. First, Joseph informed his eldest son Henry that he was descended from a Mandingo chief, and that his people had always been warriors in Western Africa. The Mandigo could never be long enslaved, Joseph told his son; they were too strong and too brave. Joseph also reminded his son that he was pure black and thus unspoiled by the white man's lust. Garnet remained conscious of that fact throughout his life, and always believed that his racial purity gave him a special responsibility of leadership. Just as Moses had delivered his people from bondage, Joseph told his son, some day Henry would do the same. But first they had to be free from the Spencer plantation.[3]

William Spencer's death, in 1824, provided the opportunity for the escape. Spencer, a bachelor who took great pride in seeing his few slaves look "just right," left his entire estate to his brother Isaac and his two nephews. The new owners made it clear they wanted all the slaves in the field, and therefore, would no longer need a house slave. Like the other slaves, Joseph was designated to pick tobacco on the sandy, worn-out desertlike soil of the eastern Maryland plantation. He saw his demotion as a sign from God, and commenced plans for the escape.

On the pretense of going to a relative's funeral in a nearby county, Joseph assembled his family at sunrise for the escape. With him was his wife Henrietta, a tall "finely molded woman," with a bright face lit with "lustrous twinkling eyes," as well as Henry and a younger sister Mary. They had agreed to meet Joseph's brother and his family in the woods outside the Spencer plantation. Eleven in all composed the company.[4]

They spent the first day hiding in a covered wagon, for it was too dangerous to be seen together. In the din of night they began their journey to freedom. They continued the same pattern for six days, hiding in the woods and swamps of Maryland during the day, and traveling throughout the night. Their destination was the Delaware border. Henry, only nine years old, became so exhausted that his

"limbs gave out," requiring his father and his uncle to take turns carrying him upon their backs. On the seventh day, they rested, having arrived in Wilmington, Delaware, a city recognized as one of the most important "stations" on the underground railway.[5]

Miraculously, they found the barn of Thomas Garrett, a Quaker who gave many such fugitives their first glimpses of freedom. Garrett was a compassionate man, warm and understanding. For years he had been a "conductor" on the underground railway. He had provided many runaway slaves with food, shelter, and his knowledge of the ordeal which lay ahead.

Garrett told Joseph that the two families would have to separate. It was simply too dangerous for them all to remain together. The owners might send hired slavecatchers to retrieve a party of eleven. So Henry and his family proceeded to the settlement in New Hope, Pennsylvania, while his uncle and his family went to Greenwich, Connecticut. Would they ever see each other again?

At New Hope, Quakers gave Garnet the first formal schooling of his life. They taught him how to recognize slavecatchers, and to avoid white men who asked too many questions. They also told him that New York City, their eventual destination, although free from the "stains of slavery," still had many hostile whites, who despised and

tormented black people. Afterwards, the Quakers blessed the family and wished them good luck and Godspeed.

The fugitives began the final portion of their journey by stagecoach. Before arriving in New York City, Joseph performed the "simple but solemn" ceremony of re-baptism, or the baptism of freedom. First Joseph summoned the entire family together and proclaimed: "By the blessings of God we are now free, come let us worship him." He then rose from his knees and said to his wife: "Wife, they used to call you Henrietta but in the future your name is Elizabeth." Then, placing his hand on his daughter's head, Joseph continued: "Your name is not Mary any longer but Eliza. And my dear little boy," Joseph said as he lifted Henry upon his knees, "your name is now Henry Highland Garnet, and my name is George Garnet."[6]

With the new names which they probably took from the Quaker, the Garnet family crossed the Hudson River to begin their new lives.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I

[1] James McCune Smith, A Memorial Discourse (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1965) pp. 17-19, p. 13; William Brewer, "Henry Highland Garnet," Journal of Negro History, XIII (January, 1928).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid; the description of Garnet's mother was cited by Smith from a letter written by Samuel Smith in 1883 to ?

[5] Smith, Memorial Discourse, pp. 19-20.

[6] Ibid. p. 20.

CHAPTER II

FREEDOM SCHOOLS

New York City was an ideal location for former slaves getting their first taste of freedom. It was completely surrounded by free states, and somehow that seemed reassuring since it made any illegal entry by slavecatchers more difficult. Also it had a population of about five thousand free blacks, and that, too, provided some comfort and security. Educational opportunities were available as well.

Yet, conditions for blacks were deplorable. Housing was limited to lower Manhattan and South Brooklyn, generally the oldest and most dilapidated of the city. Jobs were few, and with the large influx of the Irish, after 1848, they got even fewer. The jobs that did exist for blacks were usually on the docks or in the service trades. Legally, a free black was denied most of the rights and privileges of a free white man. He could not vote, serve on a jury, or sue in court. Blacks could not even ride on the same street cars as whites. In fact, the free blacks of New York--as in most northern cities--were destined to live the lives of second-class citizens; lives tormented by discrimination, misery, and poverty.

George Garnet was somewhat more fortunate. He found work as a shoemaker, a trade he had learned on the Spencer plantation. Although life was difficult to be sure, Garnet was able to earn a living for his wife and his small family. They maintained a two-room apartment above a store on Leonard Street, in lower Manhattan. In time, George became a leader of the African Methodist Episcopal Church at Mott Street. This signified his growing status in the community.[1]

Education was important to Garnet, so in 1826 he personally entered his son Henry in the famous African Free School #2, located on Mulberry Street. The school had been founded in 1787 by the New York Manumission Society as an experiment to determine if blacks could be educated with the "better values of white society." From the inception, the prominent blacks of New York City took an active role in school affairs. For example, Samuel Cornish and James Russworm, the co-editors of Freedoms Journal, the city's most influential black newspaper,[2] served on the board of directors.

Charles C. Andrews, an Englishman and a member of the American Colonization Society, ran the school. Andrews believed, however, that black children had as much capacity as white children to acquire knowledge. Therefore, like other students, Garnet studied academic subjects such as

spelling, penmanship, and grammar, as well as mechanical arts. His classes began early in the morning, and usually lasted until 5:00 P.M., six days a week.[3]

As a student, Andrews said Garnet had "no rivals," but his real interest lay in helping his people. Even as a twelve year old, Garnet told Andrews how his heart "ached for the children of Africa." He was tormented by the "clanking of the chains," and the "voices of the groans." Because of Garnet's commitment, he influenced all the students to ache over slavery. Each year, on July 4, the students clad in bright West Indian costumes, met and resolved not to celebrate Independence Day as long as slavery existed in the United States. They listened to speeches and planned "schemes for the freeing of our race." They also promised themselves that when they completed their education, they would "start an insurrection" and free all the slaves in bondage. One of Garnet's schoolmates, James McCune Smith, saw Henry as the leader of these "rash but noble resolves."[4]

Employment was not easy to find even for the graduates of the African Free School. Prejudice was so severe against the graduates, Charles Andrews recalled, that most had to go to sea to serve as stewards, cooks, or deckhands in order to find any work. Those who refused to sail became waiters, coachmen, barbers or house servants.[5]

Garnet chose the sea. In 1829, at age fourteen, Henry went to work as a steward and cook aboard a schooner that shuttled between New York City and Washington, D.C. The ship also made an occasional excursion to Cuba. On his return from a trip to Cuba, Garnet suffered a great personal tragedy. Almost without warning, his right leg swelled up and he had little circulation in it.

Limping home, in "agonizing pain" from the injury, Garnet learned that in his absence, two slavecatchers dressed like Methodist ministers had entered his home and demanded of George Garnet:

"Does George Garnet live here?"

"Yes," George replied.

"Is he at home?" the intruders inquired.

"I will go see."

Without saying a word to his wife and daughter, and a friend in the room, Garnet proceeded to open the bedroom window, about twenty feet from the ground, and jumped into the courtyard in the rear. He escaped through an alley leaving his wife and daughter behind.[6]

Elizabeth Garnet also escaped from the slavecatchers and hid in a grocery store across the street from the Garnet apartment. Eventually, the slavecatchers caught young Eliza Garnet, and arrested and tried her as a fugitive before Richard Riker, Recorder of the City of New York.

She was acquitted by having her counsel provide false evidence that she was born in New York City, not in Maryland.[7]

When Garnet returned he found the house empty and the furniture stolen or destroyed. Neighbors informed him that his parents were safe, but this did not calm his rage. He purchased a large clasp knife and openly brandished it down Broadway, daring any slavecatcher to find him. He stood on the street corner, an eye witness recalled, "tall, dark skinned," with a "commanding appearance." His "deep massive eyes," which appeared "always to be staring," revealed his intense anger. "I will kill the devils who hurt my parents," he promised to himself.[8]

Calmer voices informed him that he could not remain in New York City. Slavecatchers were everywhere that season. Quakers in New York decided to send him to the home of Thomas Wills, a Quaker minister in Jericho, Long Island. From there he was indentured* to Captain Epenetus Smith and contracted to do farm work.[9]

His leg injury, however, was too severe for any agricultural labor. The injury was now a "white swelling," and he was in constant pain. "Never could he find a single

*A process by which a person was contracted to work usually for a one-year period. In the case of northern blacks, this process was used to avoid slavecatchers.

moment of peace," his lifelong friend Alexander Crummell recalled. In fact, the injury was so severe that in 1841, doctors would have to amputate the leg, leaving Garnet a cripple for life.[10]

Unable to do farm work, Garnet returned to New York City in 1831, and entered the High School for Colored Youth. The school had been founded that year by Messrs. Curtis and Leibolt, two white men who wished to give talented black youths a classical high school education. Many white people, of course, resented this notion since they believed that education should be given to blacks only to train them for menial jobs. Indeed, the mere thought of a few black youths studying Latin and Greek created a mild furor. A city newspaper, The Commercial Advertiser, questioned "what good would a classical education yield them?" "Would you feel any better because the man who waits on your table can read Virgil or Horace?"[11]

Garnet thoroughly enjoyed his classical studies. He was particularly moved by the heroic stories of men overcoming great obstacles and suffering. His favorite classical work was Virgil's Aeneid, and in the future, he referred to it frequently. He also observed that many ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates saw slavery as a system of "outrage and robbery," and often said that if

Socrates were alive today, he'd be an abolitionist.[12]

Clearly, Garnet did not see his education as simply an academic exercise. For him, education was to be used to acquire information that was helpful in the struggle against slavery. All education, he recalled, was a means to an end. And the end was always emancipation.

Even the literary society which he and classmate David Ruggles founded in 1834 was named the Garrison Literary and Benevolent Association. At the first meeting, over a hundred and fifty young blacks gathered in the public school to decide on topics for discussion. When the principal entered and told them to choose a less controversial name for their society, or be expelled from the public school, the students would not yield. Garnet led the chant of "Garrison, Garrison, forever." The students voted against changing the name of their society, and eventually decided upon another meeting hall.[13]

During this same period, Garnet joined the Sunday School of the First Colored Presbyterian Church located on the corner of William and Frankfort Streets. The Reverend Theodore S. Wright, Pastor of the church, was immediately attracted to the bright and eager Garnet. Wright, a "passionate black abolitionist" as well as a "Christian of the purest and most devoted zeal," also believed in higher education for talented blacks, and from

the moment he saw Garnet, he selected him for that education. Garnet became his protégé, his "son in the gospel," and indeed Wright loved him like a son. He baptized Garnet into the church and planned the young man's future. After a few more years of higher education which he would arrange, Theodore Wright envisioned the future ordination of a new Presbyterian Minister.[14]

In the fall of 1834, Wright decided to recommend Garnet for a new academy in Canaan, New Hampshire, called the Noyes Academy. Samuel Noyes, the New Hampshire abolitionist whose idea it was to build the school, insisted on an academy that would admit "colored youth of good character on equal terms with whites of like character." It was located in a field next to the local Congregationalist Church, and surrounded by a green picket fence.[15]

The plans for the school came at the very time the United States was at the height of agitation over slavery. During the summer of 1834, riots had occurred in New York City, and they spilled over into New Jersey, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. When Samuel Noyes, George Kimball, Nathaniel Currier, all citizens of Canaan, incorporated the Noyes Academy, violence erupted in that small New England town.

From the inception, there was opposition to the Academy. The mere notion of a school that admitted blacks

on an equal basis with whites was unthinkable for most whites. As one townsman explained: this school, with its "abolitionist doctrines," was as "contagious as cholera." All would be "infected with the mania of racial amalgamation" if the school was permitted to open. And the opponents of the school were not idle. They marched through the streets of Canaan demonstrating their unyielding opposition to the Academy. In July, when the renowned William Lloyd Garrison came to Canaan to support the Academy, a mob of whites told Garrison that he better go back to Boston or he might be killed. The next month, the opponents of the school ordered a town meeting but that,too,became a mob. They resolved not to countenance any school which "educated black children in common with whites," nor would they send their children to the school. Any person who supported the scheme, the resolution continued, would be viewed with contempt.[16]

But the people of Canaan did not buy the hysterical resolutions, nor were they intimidated by mob threats. The townspeople voted by better than two to one to allow the school to open. On September 11, 1834, the Noyes Academy officially opened.[17]

For Garnet, even the journey to the Academy was difficult. He was accompanied by Alexander Crummell and Thomas Sidney, two former classmates from the Free School.

First, they boarded a steamboat bound for Providence. Since the line refused blacks any cabin privileges, the three youths had to go without shelter or food. They continued the journey from Providence to Canaan on the top of a stagecoach, a two hundred mile distance made without use of hotels or inns. Crummell later recalled how he would never forget Garnet's "suffering from pain, suffering from cold and exposure, suffering from thirst and hunger," as well as the "taunt and insult from every village and town." Apparently, Crummell recalled, the sight of three black youths in gentlemanly attire mounted upon the top of a stagecoach brought out "universal sneers and ridicule."[18]

Upon arrival at Canaan, they were officially greeted by William Scales, the principal of the school, who introduced them to the twenty-eight whites and the eleven blacks who composed the student body. Scales, a white Congregationalist minister, also headed the classics and theology departments. The rest of the faculty was composed of George Kimball, Nathaniel Currier, David L. Child, Dr. Timothy Tilton, and Nathaniel P. Rogers--all scholars as well as committed abolitionists.

Garnet continued to study the classics, although he developed an interest in poetry. He actually wrote some verse at school. One of his poems, "Alonzo," was the

story of a gigantic warrior who left his love behind in order to fight in a foreign land. Alonzo, of course, was victorious. The poem was probably young Garnet's image of himself, a hero conquering adversity. Nevertheless, by its subtle, "almost feminine" use of language, the poem did reveal that Garnet was now, in the words of Nathaniel Rogers, one of his teachers, an "enlightened and refined scholar," as well as a "writer and speaker of touching beauty."[19]

Garnet's poetry caught the attention of Julia Ward Williams who was a student at the school, and Garnet was attracted to her. "Oh, what a lovely being she is," he confided to Crummell, "modest, susceptible and chaste." She is also a "good Christian and scholar," Garnet said. "I don't want you to think I'm in love," Garnet continued, but I shall keep in touch with her." And he did.[20]

Garnet was also a natural orator. Few people would dare meet him in debate. Besides his tremendous knowledge of the classics, which he referred to in his speeches, he was also gifted with a voice that Crummell said could be either "stinging in its repartee and wit" or, "sympathetic as to reach the ears of a tender child." When he spoke on behalf of the slave, his passion was unforgettable. As Crummell later recalled: "Never in my life have I heard such beautiful English." First he convulsed his audience

with laughter, then he turned them to tears." The Colored American called Henry the most "able and eloquent debater in the land." His teacher, Nathaniel P. Rogers, said that when Garnet spoke, he filled his audience with a "current of electricity." He had the power to make his audience feel like rising up and daring to free the slaves themselves. His orations were nothing short of "spellbinding."[21]

He was frequently asked to display those oratorical qualities. White abolitionists particularly enjoyed placing this articulate Negro before a live audience. They knew Garnet's dazzling orations would help dispel the myth that blacks were too docile to speak or act on their own behalf. For example, on Independence Day 1835, Garnet was the featured speaker at a public meeting of the New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society, in the city of Plymouth. Very mature for his twenty years, Garnet appeared even older with his pronounced limp. A white eyewitness said he stood on the podium with "full unmitigated unalleviated, and unpardonable blackness." In his speech, he demanded the overthrow of slavery so that "every man who walked the American soil, might tread it unmolested and free." The New Hampshire Herald of Freedom, an abolitionist newspaper, would characterize the speech as one of great "pathos and beauty," most unusual for someone so young.[22]

Alexander Crummell spoke next. Although three years

younger than Garnet, he, too, had maturity and wisdom for his age. But Crummell was more reserved than Garnet. His fire seemed to come from a profoundly Christian zeal and his speeches usually revealed that deep religious conviction. On this Independence Day, Crummell excited the audience with poignant Biblical references. Thomas Sidney spoke next. Different from both Garnet and Crummell, Sidney was almost white. Softspoken and gentle, Sidney possessed the kind of poetic sensitivity that left a "lasting impression" on Garnet. In later years, Garnet recalled his deep affection for the man.[23]

The idea of three blacks speaking against slavery, on Independence Day, seemed in Crummell's words to have set the "entire granite state crazy." Rumors filled the town of Canaan that it was about to be overrun with Southern Negroes, coming North to line the streets with their huts. By afternoon, a mob of about two hundred gathered in front of the school, some carrying clubs, and others just invective. Their Independence Day message was clear: "Burn the nigger school down," the mob cried.[24]

Fortunately, reason prevailed. On July 31, the mob formed again, but decided to hold a "legal town meeting" to decide what measures the town should take to expel the black students from Canaan. At the meeting, the mob appointed Jacob Trussell from Canaan to "prepare a plan of action."

The mob then resolved that the academy was a "public nuisance" which the town leaders had to remove. If the leaders refused, then the conspirators would have no choice but to "administer their own law."[25]

On the morning of August 10, the mob gathered with ninety-five oxen in front of the academy. Benjamin Porter, a leader in the conspiracy, seized an ax and struck the first blow against the school. Then, Stephen Smith, a Sheriff's deputy, grabbed the ax and cleared the fence. Dr. Tylton, one of the school's deputies, came out of his house and attempted to read the mob some provisions of the state's Riot Act. Of course, it was to no avail.[26]

At noon, in oppressive heat, Jacob Trussell took command of the undertaking. He ordered the oxen attached and "straightened" upon the main building. However, the chains broke. Undaunted, he ordered them fastened again, with the same results. By half past seven, the house had still not been moved. Trussell then decided to turn the oxen out on the meadow and adjourn for the night. By morning, Trussell had secured tighter chains. Now with great precision, the mob was able to attach the chains to the house and exert enough force to collapse it. They then gleefully carried the capsized building to the nearby Congregationalist Church.[27]

Jacob Trussell was proud of his work. With the building resting in front of the church, Trussell called his company together and congratulated them for their "fine work." By removing the Academy, they had checked abolitionism, thereby saving the United States from the "seeds of sectional discord," which surely would have followed from giving the abolitionist a "free reign." Yes, Trussell said, his gang were the true "patriots of New Hampshire."[28]

Meanwhile, the petrified black students remained in their quarters, expecting an attack at any moment. At 11:00 P.M., Crummell heard the tramp of approaching horses. Although Garnet was "so sick at the time he could not sit up," Crummell still told him to begin molding bullets for the shotgun which he was hiding for just such an occasion. When a rider fired on the boarding house, the three young men realized they had to flee. Together, Crummell and Sidney descended the staircase carrying Garnet in their arms. Amazingly, Garnet was able to fire gunshots through the window as they escaped. "These shots probably saved our lives," Crummell maintained. "You should have seen it," Crummell said later, "poor Henry limping away, and at the same time, firing bullets from the double barrelled shotgun." Sick as he was and disgraced by the burden he placed upon his friends, the twenty-year-old Garnet still managed to get in

his shots."[29]

The ordeal had its lasting effects. Garnet returned to New York physically sick and mentally disgusted. Crummell thought he came through the incident like "gold thoroughly refined from fire," but in reality it was Garnet who was burning. Perhaps it was this episode that led him to believe that violence might be the only means of liberation for blacks in white America.[30]

In any case, he never forgot this traumatic event. He spoke about it time and time again, perhaps even embellishing it for effect. Garnet boasted that he had picked up arms in his own defense. In later years, he would ask others to do the same.[31]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

[1] Smith, Memorial Discourse, p. 21.

[2] Charles C. Andrews, History of the New York African Free Schools (New York: 1830), pp. 39-46, 106-109, Smith, pp. 18-21.

[3] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 8.

[4] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 8, Andrews, pp. 39-40.

[5] Andreus, p. 122.

[6] The incident is described by Crummell in the Eulogy, p. 10, and by Smith in the Memorial Discourse, p. 25., as well as in the Emancipator, March 24, 1844.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Smith, p. 14, 28.

[9] Samuel Smith to ?
December 3, 1883, Smith, p. 27.

[10] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 12.

[11] Smith, p. 28.

[12] Smith, p. 41.

[13] Herbert Apthecker (Ed.) A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States (Vol. 1, New York: Citadel Press, 1967), pp. 151-2.

[14] Smith, p. 28.

[15] William A. Wallace, The History of Canaan (Canaan: 1887) pp. 255-260; Herald of Freedom, August 22, 19835.

[16] Wallace, pp. 258-259.

[17] Ibid. p. 261.

[18] Alexander Crummell, Eulogy to Henry Highland Garnet, p. 12.

[19] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 14; Colored American, July 8, 1837.

[20] Henry Highland Garnet to Alexander Crummell, May 18, 1837, Alexander Crummell Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

[21] Alexander Crummell, A History of the Black Man (New York: 1837), p. 128; Crummell, Eulogy, pp. 21-22.

[22] Herald of Freedom, August 8, 1835.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Alexander Crummell, Africa and America, (New York: 1867), p. 282; Wallace, p. 267.

[25] Wallace, pp. 268-271; Herald of Freedom, August 22, 1835.

[26] Wallace, p. 274.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid, p. 275.

[29] Many separate accounts of this incident were reported. They vary in some details but the gist of the story is consistent. Crummell, Eulogy, pp. 12-13; Smith, Memorial Discourse, p. 30; Crummell, Africa and America, pp. 280-281; Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, November 1837, John Bruce Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

CHAPTER III

GOD'S BLAZING FIRE

Garnet remained in bed for two months after the incident. Crummell observed how he had never seen Garnet so ill. In constant pain from his ailing leg, he also suffered from the deep emotional trauma of being driven from his school at gunpoint. He could not help wondering whether there was any hope for black people in white America.

He was relieved somewhat when Theodore Wright informed him that the Presbyterian-affiliated Oneida Institute, "beautifully situated in the Mohawk Valley," a short distance from Utica, was accepting qualified black students. In 1829, the Rev. Beriah Green, a convert of the evangelist Charles Grandison Finney, founded the Academy in order to test the practicality of uniting "Christian study with abolitionism."[1]

Finney was a leader of the tremendous religious revivalism that swept New York State during the Jacksonian era. With his powerful voice and "devastating" oratory, Finney stirred many people to new religious awareness. He preached the doctrines of human free will and perfectability, whereby each man, by his works, was the master of his own

destiny and salvation. By rejecting the Orthodox Calvinist notions of predestination and human depravity, Finney opened the doors of salvation even to the distressed and the sinful. Converts compared Finney's orations to fire, bringing forth the "blazing evidence of God's mercy." To this merciful God, Finney believed, slaveholding was a sin. It denied the true values of individual labor and human accomplishment.[2]

Anti-slavery was not, however, the only reform movement that blossomed in the west. Faith in the perfectability of human nature and of society, formed the cornerstone of many reform movements. Profoundly Christian, reformers stressed social issues that were related to the conversion of human souls. They advocated temperance, wanted to eliminate gambling and the violation of the Sabbath, called for a generally more humane treatment of the unfortunate classes in society. They hoped to create a climate in the United States in which all institutions reflected their Christian view of life.

It was in this spirit that Green founded the Oneida Institute. According to Green, the purpose of the Institute was to educate for the gospel by "teaching the truths of the Christian religion." For Green, those "truths" meant that all students must have an "awareness of the evils of slaveholding" and a desire to "sever the cord of caste and

allow all races to mingle as one." Admission was open to candidates who displayed good "moral and industrious character," as well as "fitness for public service and Christian duty." That duty also included a willingness to perform manual labor, which was an integral part of the school program. In fact, each student was required to devote three hours per day to some manual labor. Green saw this as conducive to good physical, mental and moral development. He insisted that the school combine "academic exercise with the fruits of honest labor."[3]

The average enrollment was sixty students at an annual tuition charge of $22 for each year. Financial aid was available for those who could not afford the fee. The school provided each student with a bed, books, furniture and stationery. All facilities were integrated including dormitories. Like other students, Garnet's day began at 4:00 A.M. with a call to prayer which was followed by breakfast. His meals were frugal. Garnet ate bread, butter and milk at noon, with some codfish, potatoes, and rice for the evening meals.[4]

Garnet took the standard four-year course of study. As a freshman, he studied algebra, Greek, Hebrew and theology. During his sophomore year, he studied geometry, trigonometry, surveying and more Greek, Hebrew and theology. His junior year included natural and moral philosphy,

chemistry, as well as the other required subjects. As a senior, he added astronomy, political science, and logic to his program and continued with his theology, Greek and Hebrew. Many theologians regarded the curriculum, which emphasized Greek and Hebrew--the languages of the old testament--rather than the traditional Latin, as "radical to the extreme."[5]

Beriah Green taught moral philosophy and theology. Charles West, a scientist of considerable respect, taught chemistry. In each subject each student was required to speak before his instructor or to submit a composition once a week. Students were also required to pursue one area of independent studies. Garnet chose African civilization and culture. This, of course, was a subject sadly neglected by western writers, and the material that was available had an obviously racist bias. Nevertheless, Garnet pursued this study with great enthusiasm.

He enjoyed reading the ancient Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydities both of whom presented ancient African civilization as dynamic and advanced. In fact, he probably became the greatest expert in the United States on the ancient civilizations of Africa. In 1848, he even published a scholarly article entitled, "The Past and Present Condition of the Colored Race," which traced the development of African civilization. Of course, the concept

that ancient Africa was rich, independent, and commercially advanced supported his abolitionist views as well, since it clearly implied that Africans were fully equal to Europeans.[6]

Many students actually left the Institute during the summer vacation and winter recesses to circulate throughout New York State. They often got into loud "tirades and harrangues" on the subject of abolitionism. Black students were particularly vulnerable to all kinds of racist abuses by white people. On one occasion in 1836, when Garnet was participating in a forum before a large audience in Oneida, a heckler startled the entire church by throwing a pumpkin on the stage. Missing Garnet, it splashed into pieces on the stage and the pieces hit people in the audience. Garnet quietly limped toward his audience and proclaimed: "My good friend, do not be alarmed; it is only a soft pumpkin, some gentleman has thrown away his head, and lo!, his brains are splashed out." Parishioners were most impressed with this gentle dignity and wit.[7]

In 1837, the Institute, like the rest of the nation, went through a crisis. The financial panic which struck post-Jacksonian America simply caused credit and funds to dry up. Consequently, the Oneida Presbytery which had previously contributed one thousand dollars a year, failed

to meet those obligations. Private contributions fell off as well. For a time it looked like the school would have to close.

Beriah Green pleaded with the conservative American Education Society in Boston for some money to aid the school. However, the Society refused any aid, claiming that the Oneida Institute was not an accredited college or theological seminary since Greek and Hebrew were taught instead of Latin. Gerrit Smith, a wealthy landowner as well as a supporter of the Institute, could not help but wonder if the school had favored the "aristocractic darling institution of slavery, would it have fallen on the same vengeance?"[8]

Smith did all he could to save the school. Between 1837 and 1838--despite his own financial hardships during the panic--Smith miraculously collected $1,800, some of which came from his own pocket. When Garnet learned of Smith's generosity, which permitted the school to remain open, he said he would be "eternally grateful." In fact, for the rest of his life, Garnet viewed Smith as a dear friend, and was closer with him than with any other white man. Smith returned that friendship with constant support, advice and money.[9]

Many New York abolitionists noticed Garnet, for he was now one of them. He emerged from the Oneida Institute as a well-rounded scholar and reformer who fully accepted

the doctrine of human perfectability. He believed that religion was the pillar of human society. He believed in a God that was just, but demanding. Yet, each man possessed within himself the capacity to reason and improve his life. If he followed a path of "industry, frugality and love of God," he could achieve his human potential. Alcohol lured people away from clear thought. According to Garnet, "temperance was the path to soberness and peace."[10]

He demanded much. He expected people to be God-fearing and pious. Although he understood how the conditions of the free black people could demoralize many people, he could never tolerate it. In fact, Garnet was never able to relate to people who did not meet his standards.

Garnet was not an easy man to understand. He was a many-sided, often contradictory person. At times he could be angry and vindictive; on other occasions he could be passionate and gentle. "You can never tell what he will do, he is so cunning," an observer wrote in 1851, "he can stare his enemies right in the face and reveal nothing." Yet, he made friends wherever he went."

He devoted his enormous energy on one project at a time and he pursued it with full intensity. Once he made a decision nothing could change his mind, not even the

facts. Even if he realized that a decision was unsound, he would rarely relent. Friends repeatedly cautioned Garnet about the dangers of going to speak before hostile audiences, but he would not listen.

He was arrogant. He had tremendous confidence in his intellectual abilities and usually believed himself to be right. He accepted criticism reluctantly and frequently held grudges. His memory was so keen that he never forgot a condescending remark. He responded to invective in kind. On one occasion, when a white heckler asked him if he would have him marry a "dirty, stinking, greasy, black Negro wench?," Garnet replied, "No, but would you have me marry a dirty, stinking, greasy, white wench?"[12]

Garnet was also a very private man. A part of him always wished to avoid controversy and remain aloof. He loved great literature--particularly the classics and Shakespeare--and enjoyed the pleasure of being alone to read or study. But there was also his sense of mission which gave him--in his own eyes--the burning desire to liberate his own people. It was a mission he could never escape.

Because of Garnet's magnificent speaking ability, in May, 1840, Beriah Green invited him to be the featured speaker at the seventh anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Clearly, this was a great honor for

someone still a student. He would have the opportunity to deliver a major address in New York City, and be introduced by William Lloyd Garrison. This kind of recognition pleased him greatly.

He began his speech by asking Americans to examine the foundations of their republic. It was conceived, he said in "convenants of blood, seized by the oppressors hands and torn to pieces by his scourge." Garnet found "no fault with the principles of the Declaration of Independence, only with the basest hypocrisy and degeneration" that debased those principles. If the American Revolution was fought with the blood of his ancestors, "did they bleed as wise men or as fools?" Garnet asked. "The apologists of oppression ignore the black man's tears and blood. The church and state, pillars of Christianity, are immersed in blood," Garnet continued. "Let America blush with eternal shame."[13]

He meant all America. Garnet made it clear that slavery was to be condemned, not only in the South where it was practiced, but in the North where it was supported. It was here, Garnet said, among the "rocks and valleys of the North," that slavery was also accepted. The very clothing that slaveholders wore, Garnet continued, the carriages which they rode were made in the North. The "bowie knives which they flourish in quixotic glory are

manufactured in New York," he said. The whips which they "bury in the quivering flesh of their prostrate victims, are platted on the banks of the Passaic." In fact, Garnet continued, the North was the real pillar on which slavery rested. In a manner characteristic of his style, Garnet concluded his speech by trying to make his audience feel bound with the slave. "Give us our freedom," he exclaimed, "remunerate us for our labors and protect our families," he said, for I can not be free while "three million of my countrymen are wailing in the dark prison house of oppression."[14]

The speech was an instant success. The National Anti-Slavery Standard declared that Garnet "drew tears." William Lloyd Garrison wrote that "Patrick Henry never spoke better." Garnet enjoyed the praise. After the speech, Garnet returned from New York City to the Oneida Institute for graduation "with honors." But in his own eyes it was far more important that he had made for himself a national reputation, which entitled him to take his place among the leaders of the growing, but divided abolitionist movement.[15]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

[1] Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Oneida Institute, 1836 (Whitesboro, New York: 1836), p. 1.

[2] Bertram Wyatt Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (New York: 1971), pp. 64-65.

[3] Third Report of the Oneida Institute to the Board of Directors, 1838, pp. 16-18; Records of the Oneida Presbytery, Vol. 129, pp. 23-29; Utica Sentinel, August 27, 1833.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Report to Board of Directors, p. 29; Utica Observer, May 18, 1839; Catalogue of the Oneida Institute.

[6] Henry Highland Garnet, The Past and Present Conditions of the Colored Race (Troy: 1848), p. 12.

[7] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 17; Smith, Memorial Discourse, pp. 31-32; Oneida Whig, August 10, 1836.

[8] Records of the Oneida Presbytery, Vol. 129, p. 27; Beriah Green, Things for Northern Men To Do: A Discourse, (New York: 1836), pp. 6-22.

[9] Beriah Green to Gerrit Smith, July 17, 1839; Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University Library.

[10] Henry Highland Garnet, The Past and Present Conditions of the Colored Race.

[11] Maria Weston to J. B. Estlin, December 3, 1851; Maria Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[12] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 17; Smith, Memorial Discourse, pp. 39-40.

[13] National Anti-Slavery Standard, June 11, 1840; Liberator, May 22, 1840; Colored American, May 30, 1840.

[14] Ibid.

[15] William Lloyd Garrison to Oliver Johnson, May 12, 1840; Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library; National Anti-Slavery Standard, June 11, 1840.

CHAPTER IV

BATTERED SHIELDS AND BROKEN SWORDS

By the spring of 1840, the abolitionist movement was split into two camps. The first, headed by William Lloyd Garrison, was centered in Massachusetts. Garrison firmly believed in the principle of "moral suasion" whereby the role of the Garrisonian abolitionist was not to be political, but merely to convince southerners that slavery was a sin, whereupon they would seek repentance and abolish it themselves.

Garrison did not vote. He once vowed he would never hold office or exercise his franchise in a government which included slaveholders. Any political organization which sanctioned slavery, Garrison reasoned, was a pro-slavery organization, not to be supported by any true abolitionist. Since the Constitution of the United States was also a pro-slavery document, Garrison would have "no union with slaveholders" as long as slavery existed.

Conversely, a group of abolitionists, mostly from western New York and Pennsylvania (amongst them the Tappans, Theodore Weld, James Birney, Gerrit Smith and many other western evangelists), believed that only through political action could slavery be overthrown. After 1840,

the anti-slavery movement was political; "the hustings were the forums; every candidate for office in an anti-slavery community was an anti-slavery lecturer; and the halls of Congress were the battlegrounds."[1]

Political abolitionists had struggled to wrest the leadership of the anti-slavery movement from Garrison and the Garrison dominated American Anti-Slavery Society. Ironically, the immediate break came not over the question of slavery, but over the question of women's rights. In June, 1839, at a meeting of his own American Anti-Slavery Society, Garrison insisted upon raising the issue that women were entitled to all the same privileges and rights as men. Many delegates raised objections to Garrison's motion claiming that the issue of women's rights was a secondary question and to raise it at this time would only promote confusion. But Garrison, always the perfectionist, would not yield.

As a result, a group of disgruntled delegates challenging Garrison's leadership, seceded from the American Anti-Slavery Society and formed the rival Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Two weeks later, Garrison ordered a new meeting and he came prepared for battle. He made arrangements for close to four hundred delegates to come to New York from Boston to support him in the showdown which lay ahead. Then, he brazenly nominated Abby Kelly--a woman--

to chair the business committee, and he demanded her immediate confirmation. He had the necessary votes. But Garrison must have been astonished to find the vote for Kelly's confirmation as close as 557-451 in his own organization. Furthermore, by so provoking the New York delegates, who were the chief dissenters, Garrison created a split which was irrevocable.

Gradually, abolitionists were forced to take sides in this schism. For black abolitionists, this task was particularly difficult since most of them had worshipped William Lloyd Garrison. His name was almost a household word in most black communities. Yet, within a week of the June meetings, the black abolitionists of Boston held their own meeting to consider the split. Would they remain loyal to Garrison or would they join with the people who were challenging his leadership? Since most of the black leaders in the Bay State such as Frederick Douglass, Robert Purvis, and William Wells Brown were trained by Garrison, they decided to remain loyal to their leader despite their "deep regrets over the division in the ranks."[2]

Garnet and the other black abolitionists of New York did not have the same loyalty to Garrison. Garnet had met Garrison only once, when in May, 1840, he had delivered his address to the American Anti-Slavery Society, but he did have great admiration for the renowned leader.

Obviously, Garrison respected Garnet too, for he selected him as the featured speaker in the height of the turmoil. Yet, Garnet had been educated by the people who were the most critical of Garrison's leadership. These were the very people who back,in 1835, had launched the great postal campaign to flood the South with abolitionist literature. Garrison thought this act was dangerous, but Garnet thought it proper and necessary. Garnet had also heard countless addresses from Beriah Green proclaiming "he who resists the tyrants blow is doing God's work." So he had little difficulty taking sides.

Therefore, on May 15, 1840, Garnet and other disgruntled New Yorkers seceded from the parent organization and founded the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Of the original 294 members, most were from New York, including 62 from New York City. Most were black. Garnet, as well as his friends Theodore Wright, Samuel Cornish and Amos Beman were all original members of the new society. What they held in common, other than being black and New Yorkers, was a strong disapproval of Garrison's leadership. They could no longer endorse his intransigent reliance on moral suasion. These men had either personally or through association felt the lash and could not support anyone who told them not to fight back.[3]

The issue which created the greatest division among black abolitionists was membership in the Liberty Party. Founded in 1839 by the western abolitionists, this party supported the idea that only through independent political action could slavery be overthrown. Since the two existing parties were so wed to slavery and slaveholders, a new organization was needed to attack the slaveholding system. By 1840, most western abolitionists supported that position. In April of that year, the Party selected James Birney and Thomas Earle--both western abolitionists--as its candidates for President and Vice President of the United States.

Garnet was delighted. He immediately offered his support for the new party and its candidates. In a provocative letter to Maria Weston, editor of the Liberator in Garrison's absence, Garnet proudly proclaimed himself the "first colored man to attach my name to the Liberty Party" and he left no doubt where "I mean to stand." In fact, Garnet did stand by the Liberty Party, never failing to endorse its candidates throughout the Party's twenty year existence.[4]

In February, 1842, Garnet was selected as the featured speaker at the First National Liberty Party Convention held in Boston's famous Fanueil Hall. As he traveled from Troy, New York, where he was now living and teaching Sunday School, Garnet realized that the speech he was about to deliver would

be an important one: it was a direct attack on Garrison, the man he once worshipped from a distance.

Garnet began his speech by specifically condemning Garrisonians, who thought it wrong to "carry our principles to the polls." Conversely, Garnet declared, "the accursed system of human slavery," would be terminated only at the polls. The audience responded with cries of "Hear, hear." But, for Garnet to simply advocate an end to slavery or to use the franchise to abolish it, was not sufficient. "We must feel for the slaves as bound with them," he declared. "We must place ourselves in their position and go forward with the fixed consciousness that we are free or enslaved with them."[5]

"Nothing could stop the progress of the Liberty Party," he told his cheering audience; "Its cause was just and its principles were sound." But as he looked the predominantly white audience in the eye, he hinted that the Liberty Party's cause might not be sufficient. I can not harbor the thought for a moment that "slaves'delivery will come about by violence," he said. Surely, "the Almighty will hold back the trigger, and his powerful arm will sheath the sword." "No," he proclaimed, "the time for the last stern struggle has not <u>yet</u> come,"although he left his audience mindful of the fact that it might.[6]

Clearly, this speech marked Garnet as a rhetorical

revolutionary. Although Garnet did not directly call for a slave revolt, the drift of the speech was nevertheless apparent to white and black abolitionists. The Emancipator, the newspaper of the Liberty Party, described the speech as an "eloquent and powerful defense of Garnet's countrymen in bondage," and noted Garnet's "prediction" that if the Liberty Party failed to bring about the peaceful emancipation of the slaves, a "bloody revolution would follow." Although Garnet had made no such prediction, he had hinted at it.[7]

The Liberator also replied. In it, Maria Weston attacked Garnet as well as the Liberty Party. She wondered why a "respected black man" like Garnet would ever support an organization which put a "padlock upon the lips of one half of the slaves' best friends." Clearly, Garnet's statement revealed the deep divisions within the anti-slavery movement, and Weston held him "personally responsible" for fostering those divisions.[8]

Garnet would not retreat. In March, 1843, at the next Liberty Party convention, in Buffalo, Garnet resolved that the Liberty Party was not organized by interested politicians for any temporary purpose. Instead, it arose with the lasting conviction that no other political party in the United States "represented the true principles of American liberty." Although he didn't name them, Garnet strongly

hinted that influential blacks like Frederick Douglass and Charles Lenox Remond, who remained loyal to Garrison, might be forgetting that "they were black men," who owed no allegiance to the white Garrison.[9]

Douglass was quick to respond. At a convention of Colored Citizens and their Friends held in New York City in August, 1843, Douglass noted that Garnet and his followers had not acted judiciously in allying themselves to one party and thus had incurred the opposition of all other groups. Douglass wondered if the franchise was even worth having if all "colored citizens did not have the right to think and act as they pleased." He further resolved that the Liberty Party "not be the lone spokesmen for black Americans."[10]

In an instant, Garnet rose from the convention floor. As if to stake his entire reputation on the reply, he looked Douglass in the eye and shouted: "The eagle screams of Liberty, why can't I?" He then went into an almost irrational "tirade," daring anybody to debate him on the merits of the Liberty Party. There were no callers and Douglass' resolution was defeated.[11]

On Liberty Party matters, Garnet was often impulsive and rash. He defended the party with unrelenting zeal. This became one of the many crusades of his life. On one occasion he argued that anyone who was not a Liberty Party

man was an instrument of the "whig Garrison tradition," and therefore could not be trusted. Even stronger was his implication that any black who failed to support the party was a "traitor to his race." Such comments prompted the National Anti-Slavery Standard--a black newspaper usually sympathetic to Garnet--to accuse him of never speaking on the merits of the Liberty Party issue but indulging in a "huge unwarranted Liberty Party harrangue," instead.[12]

On the contrary, Frederick Douglass was more diplomatic. Years later, he explained the difference between his philosophy and Garnet's: "We were opposed to carrying the anti-slavery cause to the ballot box. They believed in carrying it there. They looked at slavery as a creature of the law; we regarded it as a creature of public opinion."[13]

It appeared that Garnet was very effective in his struggle against Douglass and the Garrisonians. He genuinely succeeded in intimidating them. In 1849, the Garrisonian abolitionist Wendell Phillips called Garnet "able and shrewd"--and therefore "one of our most dangerous enemies." Another Garrisonian, M. A. Estlin, in a letter to Maria Weston, observed a "plot" by Henry Highland Garnet to "undermine the favorable attitude of the Scotch towards Garrison." On still another occasion, Estlin observed how people were no longer such "good Garrisonians" after associating with Garnet.[14]

The observations were probably correct, since Garnet, with his enormous powers of persuasion, could devastate his opponents. He came to see his words as weapons which could be used against anyone who stood in the way of his conception of the truth. And he used them without mercy. For Garnet, anybody who did not support him, had to be an "enemy" who was working for slave power.

Another aspect of Garnet's political activities was his efforts to secure the franchise for the 30,000 free blacks living in New York State. Actually, this coincided with his Liberty Party struggles, for Garnet realized that blacks had to win the ballot in their own state in order to support the political party which best served their interest in Congress or the White House. The first task was to wipe away the "legal restrictions" which in New York held that blacks could vote only if they owned $250 worth of land or other property. Obviously, most blacks could not meet those qualifications. Garnet hoped that the state legislature would pass a bill that would abrogate all property qualifications entirely.

As early as 1837, while still a student at Oneida, Garnet initiated a campaign to urge blacks throughout the state to deluge the state legislature with petitions, asking for an abrogation of the property qualifications for

voting in New York State. He believed it necessary to form an organization which would systematically "petition the legislature for the inalienable right of suffrage." At a suffrage convention in Albany in 1837, the youthful Garnet was chosen the leader of the new Albany Suffrage Association. Garnet made many trips to the New York State capital on behalf of the Suffrage Association. At its first convention he delivered an impassioned plea:[15]

"We are not criminals," he stated, "yet we are crippled by those who rule us.... Is this a free country? Are we aliens?", he asked. "No, we are Americans, who want nothing more than the rights other Americans enjoy." He concluded by asking every man in every city and town to petition the state legislature on behalf of his "call of truth."[16]

Garnet circulated and collected the petitions himself. They read: "Amend the state constitution so that the elected franchise be extended to blacks on the same terms as other citizens." On February 2, 1841, he delivered 1,300 signatures to the clerk of the state legislature. If these signatures were not sufficient, he was prepared to "greet the ears of the legislature with more petitions the following session."[17]

Garnet's optimism was not realistic, for the state legislature refused even to consider the matter of black

suffrage. The Colored American sarcastically observed how the "distinguished" legislators--wonderful "public servants" that they were--would rather debate plans for a Hudson River Toll Bridge, than even consider black suffrage.

The next month Garnet changed his approach. He decided to focus on what could happen if suffrage was denied. Standing in the August heat, Garnet told a Troy audience that when "you combine the affranchised with the disenfranchished, the result must be disastrous to the entire community. What he meant was that when black people were "debased as citizens, they inevitably turn to crime," causing the entire community to pay for the discrimination. Even the conservative Troy Whig was impressed with this logic. It reluctantly admitted that Garnet was leading a "memorable fight to extend the suffrage." Furthermore, the paper stated, "Colored people are faithful and intelligent and have earned the right to vote."[18]

The 1842 session of the legislature came and passed and again no suffrage bill was introduced. Now Garnet's restraint turned to fury. With growing militancy, Garnet expanded upon the position he had taken five months earlier at the National Liberty Party Convention. At a suffrage convention, this time in Utica, Garnet roared: "We have

petitioned our legislature and we have been rebuked... We were born in chains, but we will not transmit them to our posterity. If we leave no more than battered shields and broken swords, we will have born a mortal battle."[19]

Perhaps at this juncture, Garnet lost all remaining faith in politicians. Not that he failed to support candidates for public office, or even campaign for politicians, but instead, he saw them as the last resort, whose effectiveness was determined only by the "united, vigorous action" of the people. Politicans, Garnet reasoned, responded only to constant, unyielding pressure.[20]

Votes, not justice, determined a politician's action, Garnet believed. On one occasion, during the suffrage struggle, he quipped, "Ask a color hating politician when he does not want your vote if he favors emancipation and he would reply, 'oh no, that would destroy the country.'" But the same politician would be quite another man, Garnet observed, if he needed a black person's vote.[21]

Clearly, most whites opposed black suffrage. They feared that granting blacks the vote was just a step removed from granting them economic and social equality, and Garnet was aware of that fear. In a letter to Garnet signed by an anonymous "Cartman" appearing in the New York Globe, the author accused Garnet and his supporters of "taking the

bread from the mouths of white Americans." Did Garnet not realize, Cartman continued, that if blacks were granted the vote, they next would be given Cartman's licenses? If this happened, Cartman stated, all white men would be driven from business, resulting in the complete "destruction of the white race."[22]

With these sentiments plainly in the majority, Garnet's suffrage drive was doomed to failure. Though he continued his efforts, it was not until 1870, with the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, that black suffrage became a reality in New York.

But Garnet's efforts were not entirely in vain. Those blacks who met the property qualifications voted regularly. It appears that most of them voted for the Liberty and later the Free Soil candidates in New York State. In that respect Garnet was successful. He had broken with the Garrisonians and convinced others that the elected franchise was an important weapon in the struggle against racial injustice.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IV

[1] Bertram Wyatt Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery, (Case Western Reserve: 1969) p. 64; Gilbert Barnes, the Anti-Slavery Impulse (New York: 1933) Dwight L. Dumond; Anti Slavery: the Crusade for Freedom in America, (Ann Arbor: 1961), p. 87, Louis Filler; The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830 - 1860 (New York: 1960).

[2] Quarles, Black Abolitionists, pp. 42-46.

[3] Quarles, Black Abolitionists, pp. 42-46; National Anti-Slavery Standard, September 23, 1841; Emancipator, May 29, 1840; Colored American, September 28, 1839.

[4] Henry Highland Garnet to Maria Chapman, May 1, 1843, (Chapman Papers, Boston Public Library).

[5] Emancipator, March 3, 1842.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Emancipator, February 14, 1844.

[8] Letter from Abby Weston to Henry Highland Garnet as published in the Liberator, June 4, 1842.

[9] Minutes: Liberty Party National Convention held in Buffalo, August, 1843, pp. 13-15.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Smith, Memorial Discourse, pp. 43-44.

[12] National Anti-Slavery Standard, October 5, 1845; Emancipator, November 9, 1843.

[13] Frederick Douglass, My Life and Times, (New York: Collier Reprint 1962), p. 62.

[14] Wendell Phillips to Elizabeth Pease, July 29, 1849, (Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library); M.A. Estlin to Miss Estlin, February 13, 1851 (Estlin Papers, Boston Public Library); M. A. Estlin to Maria Chapman, March 2, 1851 (Chapman Papers, Boston Public Library); Emancipator, November 9, 1843.

[15] Colored American, September 2, 1873.

[16] Emancipator, December 30, 1840; Colored American, February 13, 1841.

[17] Colored American, June 6, 1841; August 6, 1841.

[18] National Anti-Slavery Standard, August 12, 1841; September 23, 1841; Troy Whig, March 16, 1841.

[19] Emancipator, April 27, 1842.

[20] National Anti-Slavery Standard, September 11, 1845.

[21] Emancipator, March 4, 1842.

[22] Letter "Cartman" to Henry Highland Garnet N.D., 1846, as recorded in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, March 19, 1846.

CHAPTER V

SHALL AFRICA HAVE THE GOSPEL?

After graduation from the Oneida Institute in 1840, Garnet moved to Troy, New York, where he taught Sunday School. He also conducted reading classes for the four hundred black families living in Troy. Classes met in the lecture room of Troy's integrated First Presbyterian Church. Amos Beman, the black minister who headed the congregation was a committed abolitionist who encouraged Garnet to become ordained and eventually establish his own church.

Garnet studied theology with Rev. Beman, and in 1842, the Troy Presbytery granted him a license to preach. The next year he was ordained and installed First Pastor of the predominantly black Liberty Street Presbyterian Church in Troy. The Church had been founded on February 18, 1840, as a black section of the wealthier First Presbyterian Church, but now with its own pastor, the time was right for a separate location. The ninety member congregation insisted upon that. They chose an old meeting hall on downtown Liberty Street as the site for their new church and they vowed never to abandon it. In fact, to show their support, the congregation voted to pay half of their new pastor's annual $300 salary.

Under Garnet's leadership, church membership grew. By March, 1844, the church had over two hundred members, most of them women, some of them white, all of them poor. The Sabbath School which Garnet founded had about one hundred and seventy-five members, the reading program about a hundred. Garnet was proud of his new venture.[1]

Naturally, the church required outside support. Again it was Garnet's friend, Gerrit Smith, who came to the rescue. He persuaded The American Home Missionary Society, of which he was a Vice President, to help finance a food and reading program for the church. The Society also contributed to the upkeep of the Sabbath School and paid the remaining hundred and fifty dollars of Garnet's salary. Garnet appreciated "the Lord's work," for without this aid the church could not function.

More or less settled in Troy now, Garnet could devote some time to his personal affairs. For years he had been corresponding with Julia Ward Williams, the woman he had met in the Noyes Academy. All through the years Henry maintained "very special feelings" for Julia. She was intelligent and educated, yet quiet and reserved. Henry was tall and strong, while Julia was tiny and frail. Henry was loud and sometimes boisterous, while Julia was always soft and reserved. For Garnet, Julia was "perfect in every womanly way."[2]

Julia was no stranger to the freedom struggle as well. She had been a student at Prudence Crandall's Boarding School for Colored Girls in Canterbury, Connecticut,when in 1833, the state legislature ordered it closed for admitting black students. She was also a student at the Noyes Academy when her cousin Samuel Rhingold Ward and Garnet were driven away by a mob at gunpoint. These kinds of experiences tended to reinforce Julia's commitment to equality although she never became the activist that Henry was.

Since Julia was still the same "sweet loving woman" he had known in school, Garnet decided to get married. He invited his friends up from New York City for the June wedding. The ceremony was a simple Presbyterian affair. Amos Beman married them in Troy's First Presbyterian Church. Theodore Wright delivered the benediction. The marriage was a union of two pious Christians who vowed before God to share their lives in sickness and health, for better or for worse.

Julia shared most church activities with her husband. Generally, she taught the adult reading program while Garnet instructed the children. Henry ran a Young Man's Literary Association, while Julia headed the ladies auxiliary. They shared the teaching responsibilities in the Sabbath School. On the numerous occasions

when Garnet was out of town, Julia ran the programs herself. She was capable and competent, and completely devoted to Garnet's wishes.

In 1844, Julia gave birth to a son James. Garnet was delighted. Yet, he saw parenthood as a stern responsibility. Garnet made it clear that he expected his son to be raised with the "ordeals of Christian armor," so that he would be prepared to "fight the battles of freedom." A few years after James' birth, Garnet stated in a letter how he expected children to be raised: "Make the home pleasant to your children," he said, "Make them love home more than any other place, and they will never go astray." Moreover, he continued, parents had to make the acquisition of knowledge a pleasure, so that children will "seek it above all else." With this upbringing, Garnet hoped that someday James would follow his father's footsteps and enter the ministry.[3]

Garnet continued to believe that religion was the "pillar" on which all society rested. Therefore, the church had to take the lead in providing wisdom and morality to the people. He told Amos Beman that religion was the "salt which kept the nation from moral putrification." If we fail to provide the proper religious and moral instruction, he said, we are "doomed as a nation."[4]

Garnet was deeply concerned with the lack of religious faith in the black communities. This was partially caused by the lack of black ministers, but it was also caused by discrimination within the church. Since prejudice was tolerated within the churches of the United States, Garnet said, people were driven from the church into "downright infidelity."[5] As long as caste was accepted, Garnet said, blacks would refrain from attending church. Only the Roman Catholic Church escaped the "smear of prejudice," Garnet maintained.[6]

But even in the Roman Catholic Church, Garnet told an audience in New London, Connecticut, that hypocrisy flourished. He recounted an incident where he once heard the Bishop of Rochester, who loved to denounce sin in all forms, use profane language. The Bishop replied that he did not "swear as the Bishop of Rochester but as John Delancey." Garnet wondered what would become of the Bishop of Rochester "when the devil got John Delancey?"[7]

Garnet believes that his church was directly related to his anti-slavery work. He once proclaimed in a sermon that "he who brings his fellows so low as to make him a slave, commits the highest crime against man and God." Therefore, according to Garnet, redemption came by trusting in God and by laboring in the anti-

slavery cause. He expected the members of his congregation to be abolitionists. He expected them to do God's work, with "honor, with boldness and without retreat."[8]

Garnet actively used his pulpit to promote abolition. In March, 1842, when the United States Supreme Court handed down the Prigg decision which allowed for the immediate reclaim of fugitives, Garnet immediately called a meeting in the Liberty Street Church and from the pulpit he charged "this free republic with kidnapping," and that "kidnappers should always be put to death." We agree with Patrick Henry," he told the audience, "We will have liberty or we will have death."[9]

Obviously that kind of rhetoric did not sit well with most of Troy's white citizens. Garnet already had a reputation as an agitator, something the citizens of Troy made clear that they would not tolerate. Garnet often hid fugitives in the Liberty Street Church. In September, 1843, a mob learned of his activities and broke into the church and ran the fugitives out of town. Afterwards, they proceeded to carry Garnet from the church, wrestle him to the floor, and take turns spitting upon him. Garnet had to crawl home, since his leg had recently been amputated, and he still did not have a wooden stump.[10]

Garnet paid the price for his agitation in church.

In June, 1844, the American Home Missionary Society, who had been subsidizing Garnet, informed him that they "hesitated to renew his commission because he was engaged in political action." Garnet became furious. In a letter to Rev. Hall, President of the American Home Missionary Society, Garnet confessed, "I am guilty; I am an abolitionist." "But," he added, "If I had a thousand lives, I would spend them for my bleeding people." My "crime," he wrote and underlined, is that I "lifted my full voice for my oppressed brethren." He concluded by reminding Rev. Hall that if the commission he had received last year was improperly given, Garnet would be happy to refund it. There was no further response.[11]

Pressures mounted. Sometimes Garnet had to get out of town just to calm his nerves. Often his friend Gerrit Smith arranged for Garnet to come and relax in the squire's country estate, Petersboro, in the Genessee Valley near Utica. Garnet particulary liked it there in the country. The scenery was beautiful and the solitude rewarding. Also, he could "look his good friend Gerrit Smith in the face," and engage him in interesting conversation. On other occasions, he liked to walk the woods alone, simply to "search for his head."[12]

Sometimes Smith returned the visit and stayed with

Henry and Julia in their old wooden house a few blocks from the Liberty Street Church. He usually brought a little gift for young James. Later, Garnet would introduce Smith to his congregation as Gerrit Smith, "the political preacher," who was a "true friend of our people."[13]

Smith was certainly a true friend to Garnet. For the remainder of his life, whenever Garnet needed money, Smith came to the rescue with a donation or just a gift. Garnet could count on that. On other occasions, when Garnet was called out of town for long periods, Julia and James actually moved in with the Smith's. In 1845, right after the birth of Garnet's daughter Mary, Julia spent considerable time recovering in Petersboro. In fact, a very special relationship existed between the Garnet's and the Smith's; for Garnet it was closer than with any whites he had ever known.[14]

Back in the spring of 1839, an event occurred which had a profound effect on Garnet's life. African slave-holders had kidnapped a few of their countrymen and transported them to Havana. They then placed them aboard the schooner Amistad to be transported to the Cuban port of Cuanaga. However, Cinqué, the African leader, ordered

a mutiny, and the slaves killed the captain and his crew, taking their new Spanish owners as hostages. Cinqué then forced the Spaniards to sail eastward, and on August 25, 1839, the ship landed near Montauk Point, Long Island. Federal authorities took the entire crew into custody and removed them to a federal prison in New Haven, Connecticut.[15]

Both the slaves' owners and the Spanish government in Cuba demanded the return of the Amistad crew, so that they could be tried for piracy. The Africans wanted to return to their Mendian homeland. In the United States, the case gained immediate recognition and notoriety. The federal courts would make the final decision.

Coming to the Mendians defense was a group of abolitionists headed by Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt, and Simeon S. Jocelyn. Together they organized the Amistad Defense Committee to raise money for legal expenses. They also hired interpreters who spoke the Mendi language in order to provide the Africans some English instruction. Then, the committee embarked on a program to educate the jailors and the general public on the need for human treatment for the captives. To raise money, the committee sold pictures of Cinqué for a dollar apiece."[16]

In March, 1841, John Quincy Adams argued the

Mendian's case before the United States Supreme Court. The court ruled that the Mendians were free. Lewis Tappan, who had contributed his own money for the defense, hailed the decision as a "magnificent victory in the name of humanity and justice." Now all that remained was the final task of raising money to send the fifty Mendians back to Africa.[17]

For abolitionists, black and white, the issue gave their cause an enormous lift. Cinqué had become a romantic figure, a hero with whom blacks could identify. They displayed his picture all over the black communities of the Northeast. Also, coming at the same time as the schism in the American Anti-Slavery Society, the Amistad affair further aligned blacks on the side of Lewis Tappan and the evangelical abolitionists.

In May, 1841, black church leaders held meetings all over New York, New England, and Pennsylvania to raise money for the Mendians. Sometimes, a group of Mendians actually appeared at these meetings to demonstrate their new proficiency in English, or to sing a hymn or read a passage from the Bible. James W. C. Pennington, the black pastor of the Talcott Street Congregationalist Church in Hartford, Connecticut, was impressed with the appearance of the Mendians. He immediately issued a call for a "great

missionary convention of black people," because blacks desperately needed to do something for the "land of our fathers, and the land of our nativity." The time was right, Pennington said, for blacks to organize a missionary society of their own, to aid their people in Africa.[18]

Garnet was impressed with Pennington's call for a missionary society. Ever since his days at the Oneida Institute, he had been interested in African civilization and culture. In fact, he had already sketched some notes for an article on "Shall Africa Have the Gospel?" Moreover, as a Christian and a missionary, Garnet wanted the Mendians to "preach the gospel to the world." If Pennington was earnest in his call for a missionary society, Garnet wrote, then "my heart is in his hand."[19]

On August 18, 1841, a convention of black churchmen headed by Pennington and attended by Garnet, met in Hartford and founded the all black Union Missionary Society. Five Amistad Africans came to the first meeting as observers. The forty delegates from five states chose Pennington as their president, Rev. Beman as their corresponding secretary, and Rev. Theodore S. Wright as their treasurer. The members vowed to do all in their power to return the Mendians to Africa, and spread the gospel on that continent.

The members achieved quick satisfaction. On November 24, thirty-five Mendians set sail from New York on the schooner Gentlemen, heading for Sierra Leone near their home. On that clear autumn morning many members of the Union Missionary Society came to the pier to see them off. Members of the Amistad Defense Committee came too. Accompanying the Africans were two brothers, Henry and James Wilson from Barbados, going along as missionaries and teachers. In a short ceremony at the pier, members of both organizations, headed by Pennington and Tappan himself, pledged their continued support and assistance to the departing Africans.[20]

With the Mendians now en route back to Africa, Lewis Tappan suggested the need for a larger missionary society. He envisioned an organization which would establish schools and missions not only in Africa, but in Jamaica, Haiti, Asia, and the Pacific Islands. And Tappan had the funds to make it work.

On September 2, 1846, after years of delay, the Union Missionary Society officially merged with the Armistad Defense Committee and another group--the Western Evangelical Missionary Association--to form the American Missionary Association. Actually, the AMA had been functioning as a missionary society since 1842, but

it was not until 1846 that its constitution was officially ratified and permanent officers chosen. The Rev. William Scales of Massachusetts was elected temporary President until Simeon S. Jocelyn could fill the post. George Whipple of Ohio was named Corresponding Secretary and Lewis Tappan was elected Treasurer. Blacks were well represented on the executive board of the organization, with Theodore Wright and Samuel Rhingold Ward serving as Vice Presidents and Wright, Pennington, James Ray, and Samuel Cornish all sitting on the executive board as well. This reflected the deep desire of the American Missionary Association to have an integrated organization.[21]

According to its own constitution, the American Missionary Society was founded to set up schools and missions not only in Africa, but in the United States as well. Membership was open to any Christian who was "not a slaveholder or in the practice of other immoralities." Therefore, the AMA was also an anti-slavery society and a temperance league. All of its members were expected to be committed abolitionists who "equated slavery with sin." They agreed to publish a newspaper, The American Missionary, which would be a clear statement of these principles.[22]

Garnet, for his part, became a city missionary in the organization and the Liberty Street Church was his "mission." He received a fee of three hundred dollars a year for which he had to distribute religious tracts and leaflets, hold public meetings, visit the sick, and attend funerals. At these public meetings he was now free to "denounce slavery in all forms," which he could not have done under the commission of the more conservative American Home Missionary Society. He was careful, however, to keep his abolitionist activities out of the official church records, probably for fear of alienating the Presbyterian Church, which was still split on the slavery question.[23]

Another aspect of Garnet's responsibility as a city missionary was the selection of delegates to the state convention of the American Missionary Association. Garnet took that responsibility seriously and personally insisted upon "hand picking delegates," who were "honest and sober men," to represent themselves and the organization with "dignity and honor." With great skill, he appointed delegates who supported his views when the time came to do so.[24]

The American Missionary Association gave Garnet new status. As a minister, it gave him a national pulpit. He preached sermons as far west as St. Louis. As a public

speaker, Garnet was now in more demand than ever. With AMA funds available to him, Garnet had almost unlimited opportunities to speak, write, and travel. In fact, during the next few years, mostly with the support and the funds of the American Missionary Association, Garnet would undertake journeys and ventures that would give him the national recognition and the leadership he so desperately wanted.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER V

[1] P. Van Allen to American Home Missionary Society, May 18, 1843, (American Home Missionary Society Papers, Fisk University Library); Henry Highland Garnet to American Home Missionary Society, July 25, 1843.

[2] A short description of Julia Ward Williams appears in the Colored American, August 4, 1843; Crummell, Eulogy to Henry Highland Garnet.

[3] Henry Highland Garnet to Brother "B", March 4, 1851, as recorded in The Impartial Citizen, May 10, 1851.

[4] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, January 27, 1873, Gerrit Smith Papers.

[5] Henry Highland Garnet to Amos Beman, May 18, 1843, Amos Beman Papers, Yale University Library.

[6] Emancipator, November 11, 1845.

[7] Emancipator, March 4, 1842; North Star, June 19, 1849.

[8] Emancipator, September 22, 1842.

[9] An account of the meeting in the Liberty Street Church can be found in the Emancipator, March 14, 1842.

[10] Ibid, September 22, 1842.

[11] Henry Highland Garnet to Rev. C. Hall, June 28, 1844, American Home Missionary Society Papers.

[12] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, September 19, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers.

[13] Ibid.

[14] North Star, January 14, 1849.

[15] Much of the material on the Armistad uprising can be found in: Augustus Beard, The Crusade for Freedom: A History of The American Missionary Association (Boston: 1909); Benjamin Quarles, Black Abolitionists, Op. Cit, pp. 76-81,; and in the Doctoral Dissertation; The Role of Afro-Americans in the Origin and the Work of the American Missionary Association (2 Vol);: Clara Merritt De Boer, (Rutgers University: 1973), pp. 23-46.

[16] Ibid.

[17] DeBoer, Role of Afro-Americans, p. 24; Betram Wyatt Brown, Louis Tappan, p. 212; Philanthropist, May 5, 1941.

[18] DeBoer, Role of Afro-Americans, p. 25; Quarles, Black Abolitionists, p. 78; The Emancipator, July 29, 1841.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] The American Missionary Association: Its Missionaries and Teachers, (New York: 1869), pp. 9-10.

[22] Constitution of The American Missionary Association (New York: 1869).

[23] American Missionary, October, 1846; Amos Beman to S. S. Jocelyn, March 7, 1859, American Missionary Association Papers; Records of the Session of the Liberty Street Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[24] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, March 1, 1848, September 16, 1848; Gerrit Smith Papers.

CHAPTER VI

LET OUR MOTTO BE RESIST

The Amistad affair and all the ensuing political activities re-affirmed Garnet's commitment to black participation in the affairs of the nation. The Armistad committee, of course, was one direction for political action; the Liberty Party was another. Garnet, however, envisioned a third channel: a direct convention--the kind he had employed in the Albany Suffrage Campaign.

Sometime in 1843, Garnet, along with Charles Ray and Theodore Wright, organized the National Convention of Colored Citizens and their Friends. This was a loose amalgamation of many state and local black conventions held in the Northern states. Most of the delegates, however, came from New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Usually, Garnet himself called the delegates to convention, not at regular intervals, but when he thought the time was appropriate. He also chose the site, usually selecting a different city for each convention, since this would broaden the exposure of the organization. It would also prevent a mob from disrupting a permanent location.

On August 15, 1843, just two weeks after the National Liberty Party convention where Garnet had spoken

so eloquently, he called twenty-four Negro men, coming from as far east as New Haven and as far west as Columbus, Ohio, to a convention in Buffalo. The cool breezes coming off Lake Erie were refreshing. Garnet knew that the warm August weather would supply only part of the heat.

The convention chose J. H. Townsend, a Garnet protegé from Albany, as acting president. Garnet was the vice-president, a position which allowed him to control the proceedings from the floor. After the selection of the officers, the delegates spent much of the first day in contemplation and prayer. Garnet and Theodore Wright delivered the twin benedictions. On the second day, Garnet made his first major speech. He re-affirmed his support for the Liberty Party by blessing "all friends of liberty working for the complete destruction of slavery." He also blessed his "laboring friends in Ireland," who in their country, were also "toiling for the cause of liberty." This statement was rather remarkable given the nature of Irish mobs in America.[1]

On the third day, the time had come for the principal address of the convention. Most of the delegates could sense that the forthcoming Address to the Slaves of the United States, to be delivered by Garnet, would be an

important one.

The dimly lit auditorium was silent as Garnet limped towards the platform. Softly, he began to speak. It was "sinful in the extreme to make voluntary submission to slavery," Garnet said. "If we sit in idleness and wait for whites to do our work, it will never be done. Therefore, it is your solemn and imperative duty to use every means, intellectual, and physical that promises success." It was the slave himself who "must strike the blow." Not since David Walker's Appeal, had any black leader actually called for a slave rebellion.

After reminding blacks of their own revolutionary martyrs, Garnet delivered an impassioned conclusion:

> Brethren arise, arise! Strike for your lives and liberties. Now is the day and the hour. Let every slave throughout the land do this, and the days of slavery are numbered. You cannot suffer greater cruelties than you have already. Rather die free men than live to be slaves... Let our motto be resist! resist! No oppressed people have ever secured their liberty without resistance.... Labor for the peace of the human race, and remember that you are four million.[2]

The first reaction from the convention floor was stunned silence. There followed polite applause. Then silence again. Finally, Frederick Douglass regained his composure and rose to comment on the address. Douglass, who had clashed many times with Garnet over the Liberty

Party, thought the speech displayed "too much physical force." "It would lead to an insurrection," Douglass declared, and he wanted "no part in such an act." Angrily, Garnet rose and said, "Maybe the slaves ought simply to ask for their liberty since the masters would surely let them have it."[3]

But Douglass was not persuaded. He introduced a resolution calling for the abolition of slavery by "moral suasion," which was in fact a repudiation of Garnet. When it was time for a vote, a majority of the delegates sided with Douglass and rejected Garnet's call for a slave rebellion. It is significant, however, that Garnet lost by just one vote. The fact that twelve black leaders could support such militancy clearly indicated a changing attitude among black people in the United States.[4]

The outside reaction to Garnet's address was equally explosive. One reporter went so far as to say that for one hour of his life "the white man's mind was wholly at the control of this eloquent Negro." Here, declared the Emancipator, was "true eloquence--the ridiculous, the pathetic, the indignant, all called into irresistible action." The speech would have been "lauded to the skies," had it been made by a white orator instead of Garnet.[5]

Garnet's friends were quick to praise his speech. Gerrit Smith wrote the following week, "of course the speech was a good one; he never makes a bad one."[6] Crummell later wrote that the address should be preserved as a document of "like character to the Magna Carta or the American Declaration of Independence."

The reaction of some newspapers was astounding. The Cincinnati Daily Chronicle, which was not an abolitionist newspaper, observed that Garnet, "with his jet black skin," and his "finely molded, almost caucasian head" and his "thrilling eloquence, proved conclusively that "some of the Negro race, if not all, are by nature fully equal to whites." As he recounted the wrongs of his race, the newspaper continued, "it is enough to awaken every right-thinking mind to abhor the institution that would hold him or those like him in bondage."[7]

Obviously, all comments were not so glowing. The Albany Argus called the speech a "dangerous document" and demanded Garnet's imprisonment. As expected, the Liberator, which opposed slave revolts, reacted to the speech by calling it "inflammatory, treasonous, provocative, and a flight of fancy." It further implied that the "hostile" Garnet had "rigged the debate to bring Garrison in for his share of the abuse."[8]

In one week, Garnet prepared his response in the form of a letter to Mrs. Maria Chapman, acting editor of the Liberator in Garrison's absence. Garnet had long been critical of wealthy women who seemed to embrace abolitionism as a social activity rather than as a means of action. "If the time has come to this," a very candid Garnet wrote, "that I must think and act as you do because you are an abolitionist, or be exterminated by your thunder, then I do not hesitate to say that your abolitionism is abject slavery." Since the address had probably not been published during the week, it is possible that Mrs. Chapman had not read the complete text. Garnet implored the lady to study the speech and then decide if there was any "treason in it."[9]

Still, the damage was already done. Garnet now had the reputation of being the most dangerous black man in the North. Nothing he had said before, or would say again, could erase Garnet's reputation of being an insurrectionary.

After the address, Garnet returned to Troy. He devoted more time to the church--and to Julia, who was well occupied with young James. He did find time to work on a newspaper he called the Clarion, a sporadically published journal that replaced the Troy Herald of

Freedom. The paper was the total expression of Garnet's views: the language, the style and the rhetoric were all his. In the October 19, 1843 issue of the Clarion, he wrote how the nation must be delivered from the hands of "blood-sucking slaveholders," who apply their "suction to the pockets of every free laborer." Although the Clarion was short-lived and was not a high quality newspaper, Gerrit Smith, who helped support it, welcomed the Clarion as an "important new voice."[10]

At this time, Garnet also began working on a position paper,"On the Best Means for the Promotion of the Enfranchisement of Our People," which he hoped to deliver at the next convention. By June, 1844, the paper was just about completed, so Garnet called for a September convention in nearby Schenectady. In calling the convention, Garnet noted "our sphere of action should be enlarged." The time has come to try to improve the Negro as a moral and intellectual being. The wretched condition of Negro life was a great concern for Garnet. The first step in erasing that misery, Garnet wrote, was to create a "nucleus of educated men and women who could carry the message of liberty and freedom back to the heart of the black community."[11]

The Schnectady convention, which began on September 18, in no way approached the Buffalo convention for heat or

excitement. First of all, most of Garnet's opponents had resigned, claiming they could not attend the convention because of his blanket support of the Liberty Party. Probably, they just needed an excuse to avoid dealing with Garnet who was so tainted with radicalism.

This convention, however, opened and closed on a gentle note. Garnet welcomed the delegates, and then he demanded that all blacks enjoy the right to vote and the "full measure of freedom and respectability." Then, Garnet read his report. It called for a general diffusion of literary, scientific, and religious knowledge among black people. This could be accomplished by establishing public libraries, lyceums and lecture halls. Education for black youth was vital. Garnet proposed the creation of a system of day schools to encourage the arts and humanities, and a system of evening schools to teach the children useful trades.

Garnet also recommended that the black community should be removed from the mainstream of city life. "Prejudice is so strong in the cities, it is impossible for us to emerge from the most laborious and least profitable occupations." If blacks moved to the country, the report stated, they could avoid all the pitfalls associated with city life. In the country, black people

could "drive their own horses and cattle," and be free from "those miserable landlords," the report concluded.[12]

The next day Theodore Wright read his report which was almost a duplicate of Garnet's. Afterwards, Garnet thanked the trustees of Schenectady's First Baptist Church for the use of their hall, thanked his friends in Schenectady, sang a hymn of praise, and adjourned the convention.

Garnet returned to Troy to be with Julia. By year's end, Julia had given birth to a baby girl they named Mary. She was a sickly child and extremely frail. Julia constantly prayed that the Lord would look after this "helpless baby." Still, she recovered well enough to resume her teaching activities.[13]

In the Spring of 1845, Garnet embarked upon another speaking tour of New York state, while Julia and the children went to Petersboro to spend some time in the country with Gerrit Smith and his family. Garnet's tour took him to all parts of the state. Generally, he spoke in churches. Once again, Garnet observed that every church in the land, except the Roman Catholic Church, tolerated segregation of some kind.

In a white church in the small town of Homer, New York, on Independence Day, 1845, Garnet dared to tell the congregation how many members of the Church of Christ were not only slaveholders, but slavebreeders as well. Christian men and women, Garnet proclaimed, compelled their sons to "behold their mothers withering beneath the lash.... Our sisters, daughters and wives have been driven into prostitution and concubinage, and their unhappy offspring have been sold by unfeeling fathers, in order to prevent these children from pleading the privileges of their Anglo-Saxon blood."[14]

The Emancipator commented that anyone who had heard the oration of Henry Highland Garnet, no matter how prejudiced he had been, would have felt honored in taking his "coal black hand and calling him brother." Said former New York Governor Charles Seward: "I never listened to eloquence until I listened to Henry Highland Garnet."[15]

In the fall, Garnet was off to New England. He pounded away on the theme that the churches of America, by tolerating caste, drove "colored people into downright infidelity." In Providence that November, Garnet asked his audience to look at their city and decide for themselves how segregated it was. All but two churches were

closed to blacks. There was no high school for black students. Transportation facilities were segregated, too.[16]

He also began to expound on the temperance theme. Garnet had been a temperance supporter since his days at Oneida. There he learned that if blacks were to improve themselves, they required clear and alert thought. Now, in a speech before the Delevan Temperance League in Troy, Garnet told his audience that if they really treasured their children and themselves, they must be "strangers to the intoxicating cup, for alcohol stupifies the mind and mars its beauty."[17]

While Garnet was in Troy, he learned that on May 18, 1846, Congress declared war on Mexico over the disputed Texas boundary. President James K. Polk had claimed Mexico the aggressor and insisted that the United States had declared war to defend its national honor. Abolitionists felt otherwise. They felt that the war was a pretense to annex slaveholding Texas. They saw the war as "Mr. Polk's slaveholders" war, a war that should be opposed at all costs.

Garnet accepted that view and used the National Convention of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery

Society in 1847 to denounce the conflict. He took this opportunity to condemn the war, not just in the South where it was heralded, but in the North where it was tolerated. "Who makes the bullets with which we are now mowing down the poor Mexicans?" Garnet asked. The very "prating Yankees," who make the cannons, were the "same hypocrites, who with their lips deprecate the war," was his answer. "Patriotism to a Yankee," Garnet quipped, "means money; touch his pockets, and if it jingles, he is full of patriotism."[18]

One month later, still fresh from his successful speech opposing the Mexican War, Garnet and other prominent blacks like Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, sponsored still another call for convention. They hoped this would be a "truly national convention," attended by the most distinguished list of black leaders ever assembled in the United States. They agreed to meet in Troy at Garnet's Liberty Street Presbyterian Church.

On October 6, 1847, Garnet opened the convention by appointing chairmen for committees on temperance, agriculture, religion, and universal freedom. He also created a committee to study the need to institute a national black newspaper. After some introductory remarks, Garnet spoke in favor of a strong, independent, national

black press that could "strike terror into our enemies." Black people, Garnet said, must speak with one voice, "so clear and so loud, they could never be misunderstood."[19]

Frederick Douglass disagreed. He claimed that a national black press could not be sustained. It was much better, Douglass reasoned, to keep the present system and maintain many local black newspapers. Although Douglass was articulate and gained much attention in Troy, Garnet's motion for a national black press passed by a vote of twenty-seven to nine.

Still, Garnet sensed that Douglass was becoming a rival for his leadership. Garnet heard Douglass tell the convention to "agitate, agitate, our nation shall have no peace until our rights are restored," and he seemed to resent Douglass' newly found militancy. In fact, Garnet even refused to send Douglass an official copy of the convention's minutes. Douglass used this slight to illustrate his opposition to a national black press and to Garnet in particular. "Who speaks for all black people in the United States?" Douglass asked his readers in the North Star. "Does Garnet?" Douglass strongly implied that a black press meant a Garnet controlled press, since "Garnet has all the connections."[20]

Other leaders resented Garnet's influence too. The Garrisonian abolitionist, Abbey Foster, condemned Garnet and his friend Samuel Rhingold Ward as two "Liberty Party priests," who think they can speak for all black people. While Douglass drew the audiences, Foster said, Garnet and Ward used their many organizations "to get a hearing and fill their pockets." This, of course, was not the first time that Garnet's personal integrity was questioned.[21]

Garnet eagerly awaited the next convention, which would place him in the friendlier atmosphere of the National Liberty Party. In June, on his way to Buffalo, the site of that convention, Garnet's enthusiasm turned to despair. Shortly before he left the Niagara Falls station, the conductor ordered Garnet out of the rear car into one behind the engine. The conductor informed Garnet that color had provoked that command. When Garnet limped out "just a little too slowly to suit the conductor," the trainman replied: "You shall go where I choose to place you. Colored people can not be permitted to ride with whites on this road, for southern ladies and gentlemen will not tolerate it." Garnet said that since he was not "accustomed to yielding his rights

without some semblance of lawful resistance," he refused to budge. At that juncture, the conductor would take no more. He proceeded to attack and choke Garnet with such force, even the passengers had to scream, "don't kill him, don't kill him." The injuries to his eyes, temple, and chest were so severe, Garnet had to delay his journey and seek medical aid. He did, however, get in the last word before he left; he told the conductor to "go to the devil."[22]

Actually, this was not the first time such an incident had occurred. Just two months before, on the Stonington Railroad, the line Garnet called "the most prejudiced in the world," Garnet and a friend, Jeremiah Myers, were told to ride in the segregated car. Knowing the history of that "aristocratic, purse-proud, overbearing, New England line," Garnet decided to give the officials "affectionate embraces, after the mode of a grizzly bear," before they got a chance to accost him. Garnet hoped that the conductors would become weary from "such manifestations of brotherly love."[23]

Garnet recovered from the two railway incidents well enough to attend the Liberty Party convention in July. Actually, he was in a good mood. Upon arrival, he was elected vice president of the convention, and that

honor pleased him greatly. He was also delighted with the Party's platform. The Liberty Party fully endorsed equal rights for blacks, a condemnation of the Mexican War, and the denial of voting rights to slaveholders. Garnet voted for all three resolutions.[24]

The Liberty Party even nominated Garnet's friend, Gerrit Smith,as its candidate for President of the United States. Garnet delivered a key address pledging his support. He cautioned Liberty Party members not to support Martin Van Buren if he was nominated by the new Free Soil Party which now appeared likely. The Free Soil Party, Garnet said, was not anti-slavery, but merely anti-expansionist, and therefore "not worthy of the support of any true abolitionist."[25]

But Garnet relented enough to attend the National Free Soil Convention held on August 9 in Buffalo. Frederick Douglass called the convention one of the "largest political gatherings ever held in this country." Garnet watched the Free Soil Party, with its platform "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Men, nominate Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams (son of John Quincy Adams) as its candidates for President and Vice President respectively.

Garnet did not support the ticket. Immediately following the Liberty Party convention, Garnet and Samuel Ringgold Ward wrote an "Address to the Four Thousand colored voters of New York." The address implored black voters not to support Van Buren because he was "merely opposed to the extension of slavery, not the principle of slavery." Garnet asked each voter to oppose the extension of slavery by voting it out of existence. Vote to "maintain your self respect so your children will not be ashamed to have you as fathers," Garnet urged. Vote for that "impractical, uncompromising philanthropist, Gerrit Smith, if you really want equality."[26]

But, in September, the matter became academic because Gerrit Smith resigned from the Liberty Party ticket leaving members free to follow their individual consciences in the election. The Democrats had nominated Lewis Cass, and the Whigs had nominated the popular General Zachary Taylor, and both were pro-slavery candidates. Although most Liberty Party members did vote for Van Buren, it certainly did not affect Taylor's victory.

Despondent, Garnet returned to Troy, more cynical about the political process. Taylor, for fear of losing votes, refused even to address the question of slavery.

Was there any hope of electing an anti-slavery candidate in the United States? Garnet asked himself these questions as he re-evaluated his own role in the struggle against slavery. In spite of many failures in the political arena, he also had some success. He had made blacks conscious of the need to acquire and use the franchise. He had called for a slave revolt. But a new approach was needed, Garnet reasoned, and his mind became preoccupied with it.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VI

[1] Minutes of the National Convention of Colored Citizens and their Friends, (Buffalo, August 15-19, 1843) pp. 6-8.

[2] Ibid., pp. 9-12.

[3] Ibid., p. 7.

[4] Ibid., pp. 15-19.

[5] Emancipator, October 12, 1843.

[6] Charles H. Wesley, Negroes in Anti-Slavery Political Parties, Journal of Negro History XXIV, 1939; Crummell, Negro in American History, p. 127.

[7] Cincinnati Daily Chronicle, September 7, 1843.

[8] Liberator, September 8, 1843.

[9] Liberator, September 22, 1843, December 3, 1843; Emancipator, December 1, 1843; Henry Highland Garnet to Maria Chapman, May 1, 1843, Weston Anti-Slavery Papers, Boston Public Library.

[10] Troy Clarion, October 19, 1843; Gerrit Smith to Henry Highland Garnet, April 4, 1843, Gerrit Smith Papers, New York Public Library.

[11] Minutes of the Fifth Annual Convention of the Colored People of the State of New York Held in Schnectady, (New York: J. C. Kneeland and Company, 1844), pp. 3-4.

[12] Ibid., pp. 15-18.

[13] Smith, Memorial Discourse, p. 31.

[14] Emancipator, August 6, 1845.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Emancipator, November 19, 1845.

[17] Speech delivered before the Delevan Temperance League July, 1846 in Poughkeepsie as recorded in Smith, Memorial Discourse, p. 52; North Star, November 24, 1848.

[18] American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Annual Report, 1848, p. 7; Emancipator, April 8, 1848, May 19, 1847.

[19] Minutes of the National Convention of Colored People and their Friends, Held in Troy, New York, (Troy, New York: 1847).

[20] North Star, April 3, 1848; Ibid.

[21] Abbey Foster to Stephen Foster, August 24, 1848, Foster Papers, Boston Public Library.

[22] North Star, June 23, 1848.

[23] North Star, July 7, 1848.

[24] Proceedings of the National Liberty Party Convention Held in Buffalo, New York, June 14-16, 1848 (Utica: S. W. Green, 1848).

[25] Ibid.

[26] North Star, August 11, 1848, August 25, 1848.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMPIRE STATE OF AFRICA

In the fall of 1848, the leaders of the American Missionary Society asked Garnet to open a school for black children in Geneva, New York. Anxious to spend some time in the country, Garnet accepted. Principally through Lewis Tappan's efforts, the AMA granted Garnet a commission of two hundred dollars a year, and also contributed money for the upkeep of the school. The Union Colored School, as it was called, was located on High Street, just a few blocks from beautiful Lake Seneca. Behind the school was the Union Colored Church. This small, dilapidated building served the religious needs of the three hundred black people who lived in Geneva.

The school, which was really a part of the church, had only room for fifty students. When more space was needed, Garnet held classes in the yard. Later, Max Rich, a local grocer, donated additional space above his store. Still there was not enough space to satisfy the people's "growing appetite" for education.[1]

At first, Garnet lived in Petersboro with Gerrit Smith and commuted seventy-five miles, three days a week to Geneva. Julia and the children remained in

Petersboro with the Smiths, since young Mary was still too weak to travel. Afterwards, when he found appropriate accommodations, Garnet brought his wife, James, and his young daughter, Mary, to Geneva.

After several months in Geneva, Garnet wrote Tappan that the black people there lived better than black people did in the cities, although their religious condition was "deplorable beyond description." The people indulged in "drink and folly," Garnet wrote, and all kinds of "sugar coated solutions." They needed "good, solid" religious teachers, and more religious instruction, to correct these frivolous ways.[2]

On December 1, 1849, Garnet accepted the position of pastor of the "people of color" in Geneva. Within a year, Garnet reported to George Whipple, president of the AMA, that he had raised the congregation to two hundred people, and that he had personally converted fifty others to Christ. He also reported the founding of both a sabbath school and an adult reading program. Garnet hoped to also build a huge tabernacle in Geneva. He reasoned that building such a structure, "here in the wilderness," would serve as a "beacon" for all black people to see their future in the country where prejudice was not as severe.[3]

The tabernacle would cost about $500, but Garnet believed it was well worth the expense. He hoped that most of the money would come from the AMA and the American Tract and Bible Society. He implored the AMA to find "extra" funds to accomplish "God's work." He also asked Gerrit Smith for some additional money for the project. Apparently, they came through, for by July, 1850, Garnet was able to report to George Whipple that, after "plenty of anxieties," we are now hopeful.[4]

Garnet insisted, however, that neither the school nor the tabernacle be segregated. He wrote Whipple that there were a few white worshippers, and if it was "more fashionable," there would be more. We must "encourage that spirit," Garnet lectured Whipple. In spite of the fact that many people in the AMA didn't like it, Garnet wrote, he would not support a "system of caste," supported by whites or blacks.[5]

Garnet hoped to find peace of mind in Geneva. He always believed that rural areas were more conducive to thought and reflection. Geneva was located in a remote spot, and far away from the mainstream of activity. Although the issues were as important as ever, Garnet remained isolated in Geneva. He cut down on his speaking engagements, and he did not attend the next two conventions.

He had not fallen completely out of favor with the delegates, since at the 1849 convention in Cleveland, copies of Garnet's 1843 "Address to the Slaves" were distributed.

Away from the hub of activity, Garnet found time to think and to write. In July, 1848, he completed an article which he had been working on since his days in Troy; he called it "The Past and Present Condition and the Destiny of the Colored Race." Originally delivered as a speech before the Female Benevolent Society in Troy, the article was a huge discourse that represented Garnet's views on Afro-American history. The black man's past, as Garnet viewed it, was Africa, "pilfered from her glory," with her "children scattered all over the globe, humiliated and oppressed." The present was America, the "guilty nation . on whose epitaphs the graves of murdered men" were written. You Americans, Garnet wrote, "slayers of my people," must read this "mournful inscription until it is forever daguerreotyped on your souls."[6]

The destiny was a plea. "I love this country," Garnet wrote, "I love her great hills and her rolling streams.... America is my home, my country. Yet, I moan because the accursed shade of slavery rests upon her....

I love my country's flag," Garnet continued, and "I hope that soon it will be cleansed of its stains, and hailed by all nations as the emblem of freedom and independence."[7]

Through its pages of testimony, the article clearly revealed Garnet's intellectual achievements. That Garnet, a former slave, could be so knowledgeable on the ancient civilizations of Africa, was remarkable. In fact, historians cited the "Past and Present Condition" a hundred years later for its scholarship and accuracy. Yet,Garnet was criticized for the time he spent in Geneva. Douglass implied that Garnet was in Geneva only for a vacation, and that he ought to return to "civilization" immediately. It was ironic that Douglass criticized Garnet for abandoning the political struggles that Douglass himself had so opposed.

In truth, Garnet was not in Geneva for a vacation, although he did use his time alone in the country to reflect and to plan. He began to question the very foundation of the beliefs on which he had built his reputation. Could black people in America achieve equality through the political process? He wondered. Was it possible for blacks ever to assimilate into white America? In seeking answers to these growing doubts,

Garnet plunged himself into the question of African colonization. He diverted his enormous energy so thoroughly into colonization, nothing else seemed important.

For Garnet, African colonization was the culmination of nationalism, which by 1848 flourished in the world. The spirit of nationalism made Garnet keenly aware of the need for a subject people to control their own lives and destinies. That destiny was a national destiny whose first priority was to gain for one's own people a sense of national pride--and the creation of a national state. Garnet read of nationalist uprisings by Kossuth in Hungary, and Mazzini in Italy, and Daniel O'Connell in Ireland, and he admired these men greatly. These people, Garnet said, were revolutionaries, living in a revolutionary age. Just ten years before, Garnet said, he did not expect to see revolutions, but now, they "passed through his eyes daily." Garnet predicted that "revolution after revolution would take place," until all people achieved equality.[8]

Garnet reasoned that, for black people in America, colonization was the logical expression of their needs for national identity. Early in 1848, Garnet wrote that his mind had "changed greatly" regarding colonization. Before that time he had opposed Martin Delaney and his

plans for settlement in the Niger Valley, but now he treated the subject of colonization "without reservations." "I am in favor of colonization to any part of the United States, Mexico, the West Indies or Africa," Garnet wrote. "I would rather see a man free in Liberia, than a slave in the United States."[9]

For Garnet, emigration was also a source of commercial wealth and prosperity. Since the upper classes in the United States were white, blacks had no opportunities to control wealth, Garnet said. Liberia, or any other place, opened for blacks all kinds of "agricultural, commercial, and financial opportunities." Moreover, when blacks began commercial ventures, Garnet wrote, they could compete with white enterprises and slow down the "wheels of white dominated wealth and monopoly."[10]

Garnet chose Liberia as his choice for colonization. First of all, Liberia, since 1847, already existed as an independent black republic. Liberia also possessed an "independent commercial class," which Haiti, Jamaica, and other West Indian republics did not have. Therefore, Garnet selected Liberia "without reservations," and hoped it would emerge as the "empire state of Africa."

Garnet never favored colonization for all blacks in America. On the contrary, he believed that Liberian colonization was only for those people who wished to go and who "had the means to prosper" in Africa. In his paper on "The Past and Present Conditions," Garnet had written that he did not support a plan of colonization which would "send an entire race to Africa." "We are planted here," he wrote, "we can not as a whole people be re-colonized back to the fatherland." Yet, Garnet was never able to convince his critics of that fact.[12]

Criticism mounted. Frederick Douglass immediately observed that Garnet was moving towards the "dangerous scheme of colonization, and such schemes should be avoided even "when they come from a reverend." A few months later Douglass called colonization a "red herring," and implied that Garnet was a tool of the racist American Colonization Society. Even Samuel Ringgold Ward, a longtime Garnet ally, shared that view.[13]

On February 10, 1849, Garnet wrote a letter to answer his critics. Written in the form of an open letter to Frederick Douglass in the North Star, Garnet stated that he was "firmly against the wicked schemes of the American Colonization Society. The next week he wrote Douglass that Henry Clay, president of the American

Colonization Society, was a "hardened sinner," a "cruel, murderous persectuor" of black people. How dare Douglass think that he could support such a man.[14]

The dispute between Garnet and Douglass did not end with these exchanges of letters. Actually, it had been brewing for years. It started over Garnet's support of the Liberty Party. It erupted again over Garnet's call for a slave revolt, and again over the independent black press. Now, it reached its peak over colonization when Douglass said he could neither "forgive nor forget" a man of Garnet's character. Then he pronounced Garnet the "enemy," even more dangerous than the slave-holders because he professed to be a friend. Clearly, the dispute concerned more than just issues; it was personal and it was biting. Douglass saw Garnet as rude, "arrogant," and "unprincipled." For his part, Garnet viewed Douglass as an upstart and a man who took a position only when it was socially acceptable. Time after time, Garnet pointed to Douglass' rigid support of Garrison, and then his change, as evidence that Douglass was weak and "vacillating." At the heart of the matter, however, Garnet saw Douglass as a rival. Douglass was suave, sophisticated and charming, and Garnet feared

that Douglass could wrest from him the leadership he had struggled so hard to build.[15]

In May, 1849, in a meeting in New York City, Douglass assembled most of the anti-colonization blacks, like Charles Remond and George Downing of Rhode Island, to condemn colonization and Garnet. Douglass delivered the keynote speech: "Tell me not of my fatherland," he cried; "here I was born, here I will live, here I will die." Then George Downing declared himself "entirely, uniformly and absolutely opposed to Garnet's schemes of colonization." Downing also implied that Garnet's support for colonization was not based on conviction, but on the opportunities for "profit and fame." The African continent was "ripe" for capital investments, Downing said, and Garnet was too "shrewd" not to take advantage of them.[16]

The next month, Douglass called another meeting in New York City, at which he hoped for a "face-to-face confrontation over colonization." He stacked the meeting with all his supporters like Charles Remond and the newly converted Samuel Ringgold Ward, and he invited Garnet. Garnet accepted. When he arrived, however, he realized that Douglass had set a trap, and immediately decided to change tactics. Instead of debating the merits

of colonization - where he found no sympathetic ears--Garnet decided to blast Douglass for a position he had taken previously. Devoid of logic, Garnet said that in the past Douglass had opposed sending bibles to the slaves. When the group censored Garnet for raising this extraneous issue, he sulked. A reporter for the Ram's Horn, a black newspaper in New York, said he had never seen Garnet so "completely demolished."[17]

Embarrassed by his defeat, the next day Garnet decided to take the offense. In the middle of Douglass' presentation, Garnet rose and demanded that Douglass stop immediately, and answer his question. Somewhat startled, Douglass tried to continue speaking, but Garnet would not let him talk. "Did Douglass say or did he not say," Garnet interjected, that the "bible made slaves unhappy?"

"Yes," said Douglass, "but I.."

"That will do, I have the floor," Garnet interrupted.

"But I wish to state the connection in which I made it," Douglass pleaded.

Garnet replied: "I have the floor and will not yield it."

Confusion followed in all parts of the audience. Some members called for Douglass to explain; and others called for Garnet to continue. Douglass' supporters

howled that Douglass be permitted to clarify his position. Some went as far as to demand Garnet's expulsion from the hall. The confusion continued for an hour and a half, with both men still on their feet when the lights were turned out.[18]

A week later, Garnet was still seething. He challenged Douglass to debate him, "man-to-man" and told him to "choose the weapons." Douglass, however, would have no part of that. "We can not enter into the ring with one so skilled," Douglass replied, for he would "render all our clothes worn in battle, useless." For Garnet uses arguments, Douglass said, as they suit him. "He speaks non-violence to gentlemen reformers," and violence to the slaves. Such a course of "double dealing proves Garnet an unprincipled man."[19]

The next week, after Garnet apparently failed to show up for a speaking engagement, Douglass called Garnet a "hypocrite" and an "infidel." The usually diplomatic Douglass then proclaimed that Garnet only followed that part of the bible he deemed in accordance with his "bloodthirsty disposition." Finally, he repeated his frequent accusation that Garnet's principal concern was to put "money in his purse," and Liberian colonization would allow him to do just that.[20]

On August 31, Garnet wrote another open letter to the North Star to "answer his critics." Devoid of invective, the letter was merely a re-statement of Garnet's past positions. First, he supported the use of political power to end slavery. He also supported the use of physical force, if it was necessary, to obtain liberty. Finally, he supported colonization, too, and if "Mr. Frederick Douglass didn't like it, he could debate me like a man, and not shiver at the mere shaking of my goose quill."[21]

The dispute, of course, did not end with Garnet's letter. In fact, the breach never really healed, although it did seem to subside later in life. Nevertheless, Garnet seemed to have lost the battle over colonization. He never maintained the same influence with black people that he had before advocating African resettlement; for most blacks in America could never support a position which held that America was not their true homeland. Douglass understood that fact; Garnet did not.

In September, after his battles with Douglass, Garnet returned to the calm and seclusion of Geneva, and again began work on the tabernacle. At this time, Garnet also re-kindled an interest in free labor, which

in many ways was directly related to colonization. The free labor movement was simply the total disuse of all slave grown products and the substitution of English or African products, made entirely with free labor. For example, the cultivation of Indian or African cotton, or even the production of a flax similar to cotton, could substitute for slave-picked cotton. Also, Garnet believed, sugar beets grown in Ireland could be used for sweetening. Garnet saw this as exactly the same kind of boycott that the colonists had used in gaining their independence from Britain.[22]

Garnet had first heard of free labor when he was a student at the Oneida Academy. There he met Joseph Sturge, the prominent British cotton merchant and free labor advocate. Sturge, who had made a fortune in his cotton mill in England, came to America in 1840, and was one of the founders of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. While in the United States, Sturge also set up the first sugar refining plant in Rhode Island, to prove the desirability of refining sugar in the north with free labor. Afterward, Sturge returned to Britain and became a leader in the Chartist movement. In fact, to prove his commitment to the People's Charter, Sturge paid his own workers high wages, maintained a forty-hour

work week, and refused to hire children in his factory. He also fought for an extension of the suffrage to British factory workers who he thought were in the same "wretched position as the American slave."[23]

In July, 1849, Sturge and Mrs. Henry Richardson, herself a prominent reformer, invited Garnet to visit England and lecture on the subject of free labor. Garnet, having described himself as a "chartist,"* accepted the invitation. He planned to leave the following year. Meanwhile, he remained in Geneva and worked on the tabernacle. He reported that a "new spirit" was shining in Geneva. The people, too, were making "substantial improvements," with as much as fifty acres of land owned by black families in Geneva. On July 10, 1850, at the last minute; Garnet officially resigned his commission from the AMA -- effective immediately -- to "labor in Britain in the cause of free labor."[24]

Garnet eagerly awaited the journey. The trip was an opportunity to get away from Douglass who was genuinely "intimidating him." Douglass, however, couldn't resist a final shot. He implied that Garnet had no interest in

*The Chartists were a group of English trade unionists who, in 1848, presented Parliament with a petition demanding the forty-hour work week, better working conditions, and the vote.

free labor at all, and was only going to England because he was "hired" to do so. Douglass' parting words were that since Garnet had always been an "enemy" in the United States, there was no reason to believe he would be a friend in England.[25]

Nevertheless, Douglass could not diminish Garnet's excitement about his trip. He was going to a foreign land where he would meet influential people like Louis Kossuth and Daniel O'Connel at the Frankfurt peace conference where he was scheduled to speak. Samuel Ringgold Ward, already in England, had sent glowing reports that pleased Garnet greatly.

Still, he was going to a strange land, without his family and with few close friends. What could he expect there? He did know that the journey would be sort of a liberation. At last he could step foot on the shores of a nation where slavery was illegal, and each man was free to follow his own destiny.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VII

[1] Information about the Union Colored School came from assorted papers in the Geneva Public Library.

[2] Henry Highland Garnet to Lewis Tappan, August 25, 1847; American Missionary Society Papers, Dillard University.

[3] Henry Highland Garnet to George Whipple, December 12, 1849; American Missionary Society Papers, Dillard University.

[4] Henry Highland Garnet to George Whipple, July 10, 1950; American Missionary Society Papers, Dillard University.

[5] Henry Highland Garnet to George Whipple, June 16, 1850; American Missionary Society Papers, Dillard University.

[6] Henry Highland Garnet, The Past and Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race: A speech given before the Troy Benevolent Society (Troy: 1848) pp. 12-22.

[7] Ibid., pp. 22-24.

[8] North Star, May 19, 1848; Weekly Anglo African, September 10, 1859.

[9] North Star, January 21, 1848, January 28, 1848, March 2, 1849.

[10] North Star, May 12, 1848, January 26, 1849.

[11] Henry Highland Garnet to Frederick Douglass, as printed in the North Star, February 10, 1849; Henry Highland Garnet to Samuel Rhingold Ward, North Star, March 2, 1849.

[12] North Star, February 10, 1849; Past and Present Condition and the Destiny of the Colored Race, pp. 25-26.

[13] North Star, January 26, 1849; August 25, 1849.

[14] Henry Highland Garnet to Frederick Douglass, as printed in the North Star, January 26, 1849; Garnet to Douglass, February 10, 1849.

[15] North Star, October 19, 1848, May 11, 1849, July 27, 1849, August 10, 1849, August 25, 1849, September 7, 1849.

[16] North Star, May 11, 1849.

[17] Liberator, June 1, 1849.

[18] Ibid.; Ram's Horn, June 17, 1849.

[19] North Star, June 22, 1849, August 10, 1849.

[20] Ibid., August 10, 1849, August 17, 1849.

[21] Henry Highland Garnet to Frederick Douglass, August 31, 1849, as printed in the North Star, September 7, 1849.

[22] Minutes of the 12th Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, held in London, July 23-25, 1851; Henry Highland Garnet to L. H. Chomeron, June, 1852; Rhodes House Library, London.

[23] Joseph Sturge, Man of the People, An Autobiography; (London: Florence Fenwick Miller, 1871): August Diamond, Joseph Sturge, Christian Merchant; (London, 1909).

[24] North Star, November 9, 1849, Henry Highland Garnet to George Whipple, July 10, 1850; J. B. Estlin to Maria Weston, March 1, 1851; Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[25] North Star, July 27, 1849, September 7, 1849; Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, July 7, 1851; Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

CHAPTER VIII

LET MY PEOPLE FREE

In August, 1850, Garnet embarked upon a Cunard Line steamer for Liverpool, England. Lewis Tappan had made the travel arrangements, securing Garnet passage only if he agreed to eat all of his meals in his own stateroom. The owner of the line said he had "no objection to serving blacks in the ship's dining room," but he refused to serve Garnet because the "American passengers might complain." Actually, there were few American passengers in the second-class section where Garnet traveled, but apparently there were enough to insist that Garnet remain segregated.[1]

Other than this "indignity," Garnet ate, drank, and slept well aboard ship. Garnet thoroughly enjoyed the ten-day voyage, except for a constant bout with seasickness and an occasional bit of race baiting by a cabin boy. On a "clear Atlantic morning," Garnet arrived in Liverpool and headed straight for Brown's Temperance Hotel, where he spent his first night in Europe. The next morning he departed for London.

Shortly after Garnet's arrival there, Joseph Sturge met him and introduced him to many prominent anti-

slavery people. These included Mr. and Mrs. Henry Richardson, both prominent abolitionists, Chartists, and free labor advocates. The couple took Garnet into their home in Newcastle upon Tyne, a town located in the very northern part of England, and Garnet thought it was one of the most beautiful spots on earth.

Like other blacks who had crossed the ocean, Garnet was amazed at the hospitality and friendship of the British people. Samuel Ringgold Ward had told him of this, but Garnet had to judge for himself. He also discovered just how conditions were for blacks in Great Britain. Garnet found that blacks, although not loved, were certainly accepted. Garnet himself freely walked the streets without fear and without insult. Also, he could use all forms of public transportation equally with whites.[1b]

Most important for Garnet was that he enjoyed the simple courtesies of greeting people on the street and having people respond in kind. How he loved to take a stroll on a Sunday morning, tip his hat to a total stranger, and have that person return the gesture. People on the streets always seemed cordial. For Garnet, English people had the rare ability to treat a complete stranger as a lifelong friend.

Garnet was also impressed with the appearance of the English people, particularly the English worker. He had been led to believe that the British worker was a despised person, much the same as the American slave. Now he saw factory workers and their wives dressed as well as the fashionable people in Boston. This helped dispel the misguided notion--supported by southern propaganda--that British workers were no better off than slaves.[2]

Garnet's first official task in Europe was to attend the World Peace Conference in Frankfurt, Germany, going as an official American delegate. Mrs. Richardson, an executive secretary of The Friends of Universal Peace, had appointed Garnet to the position. Garnet, Mrs. Richardson, and another black minister, W. C. Pennington, all crossed the Channel together to join the rest of the American delegation which numbered thirty people. Congressman Joshua A. Giddings of Ohio was the most prominent delegate.

On October 22, 1850, the conference opened. On that day, Garnet endorsed a resolution which declared that it was "the sacred duty of all men to abolish war as a means of settling international disputes." Each delegate, the resolution continued, had to return to his own country, and educate his people by the "pulpit, the platform

and the press," to eradicate those "hereditary hatreds, and political and commercial prejudices, which have caused disastrous wars."[3]

Many reporters noticed Garnet at the conference. The British Anti-Slavery Reporter commented that his "intellectual brilliance and his black skin created great excitement." Even the non-abolitionist Illustrated London News said his "pure Negro blood," coupled with his "magnificent appearance," created "considerable sensation and interest."

After the conference, Garnet and Pennington stopped off in Frankfurt for an anti-slavery rally. Garnet was happy that the German people were so concerned with slavery. Only in "civilized" America, Garnet said in his broken German, did slavery persist. The German people could do their part to end slavery by refusing to buy slave-grown products. As long as there were customers for slave-grown products, Garnet said, "there would be slave labor."[4]

Garnet returned to Newcastle, excited and eager to begin his lecture tour on the subject of free labor. He decided, however, not to confine his talks to free labor, but to speak on many subjects. British audiences liked him and were particulary amazed with his eloquence. In October, at a free labor meeting in the small town of

Gatesboro, near the Scottish border, Garnet dazzled his audience by proclaiming himself the "slaves advocate" because every drop of blood in his veins was African. "What is it about blacks that whites fear so much?" Garnet asked. "Why is it that the more African we appear, the more whites see us as a threat? A threat to what, their civilization, their daughters?"[4b]

Then he proceeded to show pictures of mulatto slave girls rejected by their own parents. How "guilty these fathers are," Garnet said. "They abuse their own children." What "vile and vulgar people" they are for rejecting their own blood. But that was not surprising, for these slaveholders "treat their own white children like dirt as well." The usually reserved British audience gave Garnet a standing ovation.[5]

Although Garnet enjoyed his European trip, he still missed home and Julia. Julia remained in Geneva, where in October she gave birth to a new son. However, with the termination of Garnet's AMA commission, she was financially unable to provide for the infant. Apparently, the money Garnet sent from England never arrived, so Julia had to ask Gerrit Smith and Lewis Tappan for money. July wrote Smith that she was in "great need" of money because her son James was "very sick" and the doctor would

not make a house call without advance payment.[6]

Tappan helped by endorsing a check from Garnet and immediately sending it to Julia. The check came just one week after Julia sold one of Tappan's autograph books for fifty dollars and she kept five dollars for herself.[7]

On March 1, 1851, after a long illness, seven-year-old James Crummell Garnet died of the "fevers." When Garnet heard the news he was desolate. His oldest child, the boy he hoped would follow him to the ministry, was gone, and Garnet was so far away. How he yearned to be with his gentle, loving Julia in this moment of crisis, but Garnet was alone.[8]

While in England Garnet learned that Congress had passed a series of measures that became known as the Compromise of 1850. In a series of bills, California was admitted to the union as a free state, and the rest of the Mexican Cession was divided into two territories, New Mexico and Utah, both to deal with slavery on the basis of "popular sovereignty." Another measure of the Compromise was that the slave trade would be abolished in the District of Columbia. Finally, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was amended to provide for the appointment of federal commissioners with authority to issue warrants

and compel citizens under penalty of imprisonment to assist in the capture of fugitive slaves. These accused fugitives were to be returned to the South, without a trial by jury, simply upon the submission of an affidavit by their alleged owner. This last, and most odious measure, enraged abolitionists.

Garnet, himself a fugitive, urged resistance from England. In a letter to the American anti-slavery newspaper, the Impartial Citizen, Garnet asked his people to "act like men." "Knowing the spirit of my people," Garnet wrote, "I do not hesitate to say that the law can never, never, be enforced."[9]

Garnet was particularly angered when in September, 1850, William Chaplin, a Massachusetts lawyer was imprisoned for helping a fugitive to escape. From Newcastle, Garnet wrote a letter praising Chaplin and demanding his immediate release. Garnet hoped to assure all his friends that Chaplin enjoyed the "support of millions of bondsmen" and that his name would always live in the "anthems of the free." However, the next month, Chaplin was shot and killed in the act of escaping from prison. "American slavery has gained another victim," Garnet wrote, and that Chaplin's death could only be avenged by continuing to resist the fugitive slave law.[10]

In December 1850, Garnet began a speaking tour of Ireland. For a long time, Garnet had admired the Irish people. He thought them a persecuted people, persecuted because they did not have their own homeland. Garnet equated his feelings on African nationality with the emerging struggle of the Irish people for an independent republic. While in Ireland, Garnet met the Irish leader Daniel O'Connell who not only was an Irish nationalist, but a committed abolitionist as well. The two men became good friends. At speeches and rallies O'Connel often accompanied Garnet and introduced him as a friend of the Irish people and a friend of free labor.

In January, Garnet spoke in Belfast before a meeting of the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society. He also spoke in several Presbyterian churches in that northern city. He mentioned the relationship all churches bear to slavery. He asked the Protestant Congregation to adopt a resolution deploring the "inconsistent conduct" of many churches, "professing Christian principles, but in fact, upholding slavery."[11]

On January 22, Garnet preached two sabbath sermons in the small Irish town of Ballymoney. For the evening service, people paid a sixpence to hear Garnet speak. The large crowd was not disappointed when Garnet read a

poem, "The Blind Slave Boy," which depicted the misery of a sightless slave child living in a white world. His tragedy was the tragedy of all slaves, whose world was darkened with the horrors of slavery. The crowd appreciated the poem, and the next evening Garnet had tea with six hundred people who gave him a "rousing Irish sendoff."[12]

In March, on his way back to England, Garnet stopped off in Dublin and spoke in the famous rotunda in the self-proclaimed Irish capital. O'Connell was there and the two men raised their hands in a gesture of mutual support and pledged to continue their mutual struggles. Garnet returned to London delighted with the impression he had made in Ireland.[13]

On May 19, Garnet spoke before a huge rally sponsored by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The rally was packed with spectators--among them, Alexander Crummell who had just arrived from the United States, and Horace Greeley, the editor of the New York Tribune. Garnet chose this occasion to denounce the American Colonization Society and its president, Henry Clay. For abolitionists, there was "no more contemptible name" than Henry Clay, Garnet said, in view of his support of the fugitive slave law. Garnet re-affirmed his desire to

promote emigration to a "free Liberia," but insisted he had no loyalty to any organization whose president was a "slaveholder and a scoundrel."[14]

In June, Garnet spoke in London's famous Exeter Hall before the twelfth annual convention of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Garnet was aware of the famous orators who had spoken in the hall, and he alluded to the memories of Pitt, Wilberforce, and Clarkson. Now, Garnet hoped he could make his contribution to the cause of freedom. He asked his large audience--the largest he had ever addressed--to denounce the fugitive slave law as a "deliberate attempt to perpetuate slavery on the American continent." He urged all people to "feel bound with the fugitive," and be willing to offer him refuge. He thundered in conclusion: "From the rolling hills of Massachusetts, to the gulfs of California, let my people free."[15]

The Anti-Slavery Reporter said of the speech: "Everyone who listened to this enlightened man could not help realize his deep suffering and personal tragedy." Garnet had the ability to make his audience "feel bound with the slave." In fact, Garnet was not just using rhetoric, for he came to see himself as a displaced person, banned from his own country. After the speech,

when asked which country he preferred, Garnet replied that as great as his patriotism for the United States was, "he loved liberty more; and where it was in the greatest abundance, there was his home."[16]

After his glowing success in England, Garnet proceeded to Scotland where he achieved still greater success. Although the climate was cold, damp, and foggy, the people were warm and friendly. Moreover, they were extremely receptive to his anti-slavery message. Garnet found the Scottish people "straightforward and independent," and deeply concerned with American slavery. The Scots were also churchgoing people who could be counted on to attend religious and benevolent meetings. Every time Garnet spoke in Scotland, he encountered a sincerity and a warmth he had never seen before.[17]

He spoke first in Glasgow. There, in a series of free labor meetings, Garnet told working people to buy free labor rather than slave-grown products. He praised the Scottish worker for his dedication to free labor. Next he spoke in Edinborough at one of the largest anti-slavery meetings ever assembled in Europe. He said that it was the "deliberate design of the American government to undermine the free labor system" by filling world markets

with slave-grown products. Only by supporting free labor, Garnet told his sympathetic working-class audience, could we end the "wicked destructive" slave system. "Your struggle" to maintain your dignity as workers, is "our struggle." The audience gave Garnet a wild ovation.[18]

Following the speech, Garnet returned to the home of Sarah Wigham, the president of the Edinborough Ladies Emancipation Society, with whom he was staying. Together, they decided to invite Louis Kossuth, the popular Hungarian reformer, to support them. On November 18, 1851, Wigham wrote a letter to Kossuth--the great Hungarian nationalist and the hero of the 1848 uprising--and invited him to Scotland to speak at the next convention of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Kossuth refused. Although he extended Garnet his support, he declined to speak in Scotland for what was "obviously a domestic matter."[19]

Though Garnet remained in Scotland throughout most of 1852, he occasionally journeyed back to nearby Newcastle. On one occasion, he returned to attend the funeral of Henry Richardson, who had died in Africa while instituting a free labor cotton factory. After the funeral, Garnet returned to Edinborough where he became

active in Presbyterian Church affairs, a church that Garnet said was "without the stains of slavery." Andrew Sommerville, secretary of the Presbyterian Committee on Foreign Missions, noticed Garnet and in October, 1852, nominated him to be the Presbyterian missionary to Jamaica, West Indies.[20]

For Garnet,the timing was just right. He had been abroad for over two years and he was homesick. He had not seen his wife in that time and he had a son whom he had never seen. Garnet decided to accept the position. All he now needed was "official confirmation" that he had been ordained. He wrote the leaders of the United States Presbyterian Church, asking for a "simple certificate" of his ordination. Apparently, Garnet received no reply from the "pro-slavery Presbyterian Church." Angrily, he wrote George Whipple at the AMA and asked him for a "few lines" to verify his position at home and his "standing as a minister of the gospel."[21]

On October 19, 1852, after the paperwork was completed, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland officially designated Garnet as its Jamaican missionary, effective immediately. Garnet attended a ceremony in his honor, and bid farewell to Europe.[22]

When Garnet arrived in Jamaica, Julia told him that his

son, the child he had never seen, had just died. Garnet's first ministerial function in Jamaica was to proceed over a burial ceremony for his infant son. This was the second son he had lost in two years. Now there was just Mary, and Stella Weims, a fugitive girl Julia had brought from the United States. How Garnet wanted a son.

Garnet hid his despair in working, plunging into his duties as pastor of the Sterling Presbyterian Church in Grange Hill, in the District of Westmoreland. The parish was located on the west coast of the island, in the best sugar-growing section of the country. The congregation had about four hundred members, which included a white planter as an elder. The church was a solid stone building which also housed the school.[24]

By November,1853, the Sabbath School which Garnet founded had over a hundred fifty members. On Sunday mornings, he began religious instruction at nine, and continued until noon. Afterwards, he traveled five miles on horseback to another school and preached again until mid-afternoon. He returned to Grange Hill by dusk and usually preached another sermon to the young people.[25]

During the week, Garnet and a "very able" black teacher taught most of the classes. They offered a

Wednesday evening adult class to church members, and another class on Friday evenings to candidates. He also held Bible classes on Thursday mornings for young men, and another class, very early Saturday morning, for the general population. Apparently, the population was so dense, Garnet had no trouble filling his classes. He was so busy, he left Julia completely in charge of the female industrial school.[26]

What dismayed Garnet was not the lack of education, but the absence of religious faith in Jamaica. The physical and mental condition of the Jamaican people were not worse than in America, Garnet wrote, but the spiritual condition was. Both the level of religious belief and the morality of the people were at a "low ebb," Garnet wrote. "Everywhere you see what slavery has done, and although slavery no longer existed, landlordism did," and for Garnet that amounted to the same thing.[27]

Yet, Garnet was sympathetic to the Jamaican planter. He wrote Fredrick Douglass that the landlord was "genuinely interested in the welfare of the masses," and "they do all in their power to promote the happiness of their hands." He even tried to recruit American blacks to come to Jamaica and work on the sugar cane plantations. He promised that the laborers could earn $2.50 for every

acre of cane they helped harvest. He also spoke of other "opportunities" available in Jamaica. They could raise other crops and earn "substantial" money. Moreover, the planters wanted them because American blacks had "industry, skill and go-ahead enterprise."[28]

Garnet actually advertised in the newspapers for black workers. Both the New York Tribune and Frederick Douglass Paper (formerly the North Star) ran advertisements, endorsed by Garnet, asking for laborers. Was Garnet receiving a commission? He certainly made Jamaica seem appealing. He downplayed the high prices, the low wages, and the yellow fever that was rampant in Jamaica. Instead he stressed the opportunities and the notion that "many workers have become rich," and others have become landholders. Some laborers were actually cultivating their own sugar and selling it for twice the price paid on the English market. Possibly, Garnet made Jamaica so appealing because he was selling land to the immigrants as his predecessor--the Rev. William Scales--had done. Be that as it may, Garnet continued to recruit American workers. He urged that immigrants pay their own fare (which was most unlikely) to avoid the "pitfalls of becoming indentured." If they paid their own way, Garnet reasoned, then they were free to "pursue their own

career," and "go as far as their ingenuity would carry them."[29]

If Garnet exalted the American worker, he downgraded the Jamaican worker. In a letter to Douglass, Garnet wrote that the "creole is naturally indolent." The local people are simply "destitute of sufficient physical energy," to work hard. Although a livelihood from the soil was available, Garnet wrote, Jamaicans have "ridiculous notions" about work. Some natives will not work in the fields even if they suffer from a "lack of the most common necessities of life." Garnet concluded that the American worker could do "four times more work than the native," and with less complaining, too. This preposterous attack on the Jamaican population only leads to the conclusion that somehow Garnet was profiting from American immigration.[30]

Douglass was suspicious too. He revived his longstanding feud by calling Garnet's "Jamaican schemes" still another example of his "irresponsibility." He urged that Garnet come home and stop "draining the lifeblood of colored Americans," to far places like Africa or Jamaica. As long as leaders like Garnet continued to tell blacks that America was not their home, Douglass wrote, then the condition of black Americans would never

improve.[31]

In July, 1855, Garnet fell ill. He suffered off and on from the "intermittent fevers," which gave him chills, nausea, and jaundice. Mary caught the fevers, too, and so did Stella Weims. The sickness lasted for months. When the attacks were most severe, Garnet felt weak, chilled and appeared "bilious." All these were common symptoms of yellow fever which was then ravaging Jamaica.[32]

Stella Weims became hysterical. "I don't wish to live here," she said. "I want to go home and see my poor slave mother," she cried. Garnet got out of his own sick bed and visited the girl he had come to love like a daughter. A few days later, in March, 1856, Stella Weims died. Garnet delivered the funeral service. After Stella was planted in the ground, Garnet got down on his knees, kissed the soil, and then rose to deliver the eulogy. "She was truly a child of sorrow," he said in the eulogy, "exiled from her native land and doomed to die far from her home and loved ones." But, "alas," Garnet said, "now she will suffer no more."[33]

Stella Weims' eulogy was the last official act Garnet performed in Jamaica. His health had not improved, so Garnet wrote Sommerville and asked per-

mission to take a leave of absence and return to Boston to seek medical aid. When it was granted, Garnet departed on the "long and perilous" voyage of thirty-two days. He was "very sick" when he left, but, as soon as the ship reached the Gulf of Florida, Garnet found some relief. The relief was temporary, however, for soon after his arrival in Boston, Garnet continued to suffer from chills and "intermittent fevers."[34]

When he arrived in the United States, he visited Julia who had left Jamaica a few months previously to convalesce at her sister's house on Nantucket Island. Garnet joined her there, and they recuperated together. When he felt better, Garnet was able to resume some lecturing. In April and May, he delivered a series of lectures in Boston, on "Jamaica in slavery and freedom." As his health improved, his disposition and attitude also improved. He was delighted to see old friends, and even found his friendship with Douglass "gratifying in the extreme."[35]

In July, Garnet felt well enough to visit Gerrit Smith in Petersboro. On the way, he stopped off in Auborn and actually visited with Douglass. Later, the two men spoke on the same platform at an Independence Day rally. Garnet, of course, would still not recognize

Independence Day, but vowed instead to celebrate Jamaican Independence Day, in August. Actually, Garnet had come to western New York because he desperately needed advice from Smith. Garnet faced a huge dilemma. Should he return to Jamaica, or should he remain in the United States? He thought he had made the decision to remain in Jamaica and be "a missionary of liberty and the gospel," but now he had second thoughts.[36]

The free people in the North needed him too, Garnet reasoned. Their religious state was "abysmal," and they surely had need for "competent black ministers." On the other hand, Garnet said, he could no longer work with the many pro-slavery churches in the United States. But alas, Garnet wrote, when "I hear the din of battle coming from the shores of America, my soul leaps up from within me."[37]

Another consideration for Garnet was that while he was away, Theodore Wright, his old friend and mentor, had died, leaving vacant the influential post of pastor of the Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City. Garnet had grown up in that church. He was baptized there. It was Theodore Wright who first introduced Garnet to the ministry. Wouldn't it be fitting for Garnet to assume the leadership of a church that had

meant so much to him in the past?

Apparently, Smith advised Garnet to remain in America and accept the post. Smith and Lewis Tappan promised their support, and Garnet needed them desperately. His financial affairs in the past had created suspicions. Garnet had a reputation for failing to separate church funds from his personal funds, and people were reluctant to trust him with money.

Garnet, without directly admitting wrongdoing, begged Smith for forgiveness. "Help me clear up past embarrassments," he wrote Gerrit Smith. I know that my future will be "full of trials," he said but "I am prepared to serve my people." With your help, Garnet wrote,"our future will be brighter."[38]

Garnet decided to accept the position. He was now over forty years old, in the prime of his life. His tall appearance, his receding hairline, and the full beard he had grown, made him look older. Yet, Garnet faced uncertainty. He had made too many mistakes and too many enemies. Garnet had been away for six years, and in his absence, Frederick Douglass had gained prominence as the most important black leader of his generation. Garnet vowed to regain his lost prestige, especially in the black community. In December, he wrote Smith,

"I have to make things right again.... I will make it work."

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VIII

[1] Samuel Rhingold Ward, Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro, 1854; (reprinted by Arno Press: 1968), pp. 209-211.

[1b] Ibid., pp. 241-245.

[2] Ibid., p. 245

[3] Illustrated London News, September 7, 1850; Anti-Slavery Reporter, October 1, 1850.

[4] Ibid.

[4b] Anti-Slavery Reporter, October 1, 1850.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Julia Garnet to Gerrit Smith, February 11, 1851, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

[7] Julia Garnet to Lewis Tappan, November 18, 1850, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress.

[8] Geneva Gazette, March 4, 1851.

[9] Impartial Citizen, October 26, 1850.

[10] Miscellaneous Garnet Manuscripts n.d. in the Rhodes House Library, London; Anti-Slavery Reporter, October 1, 1850.

[11] Liberator, May 30, 1851.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Anti-Slavery Reporter, February 2, 1851.

[14] Ibid., June 2, 1851.

[15] Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, held in London, July 23-25, 1851.

[16] Anti-Slavery Reporter, June 1, 1851; Fredrick Douglass' Paper, August 1, 1851.

[17] Ward, Autobiography, p. 337.

[18] Frederick Douglass' Paper, March 1, 1851 (formerly the North Star).

[19] Sarah Wigham to Louis Kossuth, November 18, 1851, as reported in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, December 2, 1851.

[20] Henry Highland Garnet to American Missionary, June, 1853.

[21] Henry Highland Garnet to George Whipple, March 17, 1852; AMA Archives, Dillard University; Lewis Tappan to George Whipple, June 6, 1852, AMA Archives.

[22] George Sommerville to Henry Highland Garnet, April 19, 1852, October 7, 1852; National Library of Scotland, Edinboro.

[23] George Sommerville to Garnet, October 27, 1852, November 5, 1852, February 15, 1853.

[24] Ibid., Henry Highland Garnet to American Missionary, June, 1853.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Frederick Douglass' Paper, September 2, 1853.

[29] Ibid., Frederick Douglass actually ran a story describing the yellow fever epidemic in Jamaica; Henry Highland Garnet to L. A. Chomerow, October 2, 1854; Rhodes House Library, London.

[30] Ibid., Frederick Douglass' Paper, July 31, 1853.

[31] Ibid., September 2, 1853.

[32] Milton Simms, M.D. on the staff of Downstate Medical Center in New York City, confirmed these as symptoms of yellow fever. The "bilious" appearance would be the result of the malfunction of the liver, common in yellow fever. Fredrick Douglass also ran a story describing the yellow fever epidemic in Jamaica, Frederick Douglass' Paper, March 1, 1856.

[33] Frederick Douglass' Paper, March 21, 1856; Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, March 25, 1856; Gerrit Smith Papers.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Frederick Douglass' Paper, April 11, 1856.

[36] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, July 9, 1856, December 3, 1856, Gerrit Smith Papers.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Miscellaneous Garnet Manuscripts n.d. in the Rhodes House Library.

[39] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, December 3, 1856; Gerrit Smith Papers.

CHAPTER IX

THE BLACK REPUBLICAN

In December, 1856, Garnet began his duties as pastor of the Shiloh Presbyterian Church, located on Prince Street in downtown New York City. The church had been founded in 1820 by Theodore Wright, and had become by far, the city's most influential black church and center for black religious and cultural activities. When Garnet arrived, just one year after Wright's death, he found the church completely disorganized: the Sunday School closed, books missing from the reading rooms, few worshippers filling the church's 1,200 pews.[1]

Garnet resolved to restore the church at once. He hoped to show the AMA, which had given him another commission, that he could administer a church. Garnet and Julia rented an apartment on Laurence Street, around the corner from Shiloh Church, to carefully separate his personal affairs from church business. At work, he was sure to outline all church expenditures, to remove any doubts about his financial integrity. He had to convince the AMA that he could make Shiloh Church vital again.

Within a year, Garnet proudly reported to Rev. Jocelyn that his congregation now numbered two hundred

regular members, with close to six hundred people attending services. In March, Garnet again wrote Jocelyn and described how young people were returning to church. The Sunday School now had over two hundred and fifty students, Garnet wrote, with forty part-time teachers. Garnet carefully listed all the teachers' names and their salaries, to insure accountability. Garnet made it clear he wished to avoid any financial "embarrassments."[2]

Yet, Garnet constantly needed money. His two hundred and fifty dollar grant from the AMA was not sufficient to meet rising church expenses. As usual, he went to Gerrit Smith for support. Garnet was particularly skilled at coaxing Smith into making a large contribution by reminding him that Lewis Tappan had given money. On one occasion, after Garnet wrote Smith that "our dear friend" Lewis Tappan had come through with $250, Smith surpassed that donation with $500. Garnet liked to go to Petersboro and look his friend Gerrit Smith "right in the eye" when he collected money. Usually he returned to Shiloh Church "invigorated and refreshed."[3]

Under Garnet's leadership, Shiloh Church regained its position as the leading center for black cultural and political activity in New York. In March, 1857, Garnet led an all-night concert prayer meeting for the enslaved.

By 3 A.M., over twelve hundred people (in what one newspaper called the "largest congregation of colored people ever assembled in New York") overflowed Shiloh Church to sing and pray for the people still enslaved. At dawn, just before the meeting ended, Garnet led the congregation in singing the popular hymn, "Old Hundred," as the people left the church in a spirit of "song and joy."[4]

On more serious occasions, fugitives from the South came to Shiloh Church seeking asylum. Garnet liked to boast how he frequently provided fugitives with "lodging under his roof," as well as his "last crust of bread," and he never "asked for or received a single penny." As many as a hundred and fifty fugitives arrived each year, Garnet said. On one occasion, in June, 1857, just after he had recovered from a "severe bout with bronchitis," Garnet returned from his sickbed to introduce the congregation to a newly escaped slave from Alabama whom he was hiding. It was the fugitive's first public appearance, and he was frightened. Garnet, though, insisted that he say a few words. First, the man thanked God for his delivery and then pleaded for the freedom of the other four million slaves still in bondage. He spoke of the South as a land made "beautiful by the hand of God, but ugly by the shackles of slavery." The audience of

blacks were deeply moved, for they seemed to realize how personal the conflict over slavery could be to them.[5]

In May, 1854, while Garnet was away in Europe, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois helped push the Kansas Nebraska Bill through a badly divided Congress. The measure declared the old Missouri Compromise "inoperative and void," and left the settlers in Kansas and Nebraska free to decide for themselves the status of slavery in those territories. Based upon the principle of "popular sovereignty," whereby the people decided the fate of slavery in the territory, this bill, with brazen disregard for the moral implications, erased the Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30° which many northerners had considered a "sacred barrier to freedom." When President Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire signed this bill into law, a wave of protests erupted unparalleled in the history of the republic.

Garnet must have been deeply disturbed by the passage of this act although his correspondence from Europe contains little mention of it. When he returned to the United States, however, the subject gained his constant attention. In May, 1856, shortly after his return from Jamaica, Garnet told an audience in Dr. Pennington's church in Hartford: "If we must fight in Kansas, here's to you!

When a coward does not fight, his enemies walk all over him." Garnet also singled out President Pierce, who had "used the full power of the presidency" to support the new legislation. Garnet viewed Pierce as a "contemptible" figure whose devotion to slavery would be responsible for the "bloodshed that would surely follow in Kansas." He only hoped that Pierce would live long enough to feel his "limbs tremble beneath him," and see his "cheeks grow pale," with the guilt he surely deserved.[6]

Garnet's predictions proved fairly accurate. Kansas did become a testing ground for popular sovereignty. North and South alike determined to win Kansas for their own, rushed men and arms into the disputed territory. The question of slavery in Kansas was not decided by the people but by outsiders who refused to let Kansans work out their own destiny. With rising horror, Garnet read reports describing how five thousand "border ruffians" swept into Kansas from Missouri and illegally elected a pro-slavery territorial legislature, which promptly enacted a slave code and strict laws against abolitionist agitation. Garnet knew that anti-slavery settlers had arrived from New England, refusing to recognize the pro-slavery legislature because it had been decided by obvious fraud.

By January, 1856, two governments existed in Kansas, one for slavery, the other for freedom.

Garnet read reports of fighting and bloodshed on the plains of Kansas. His ears filled with stories about places like Pottawatomie Creek, where in the dead of night, a free soiler named John Brown and six companions had dragged five pro-slavery settlers from their cabins and murdered them. Accounts of "Bleeding Kansas" filled the pages of northern newspapers, and Garnet studied them all with keen interest. For him, a Civil War had begun in Kansas, and if bloodshed was necessary, it was all part of the greater violence that had been initiated by the slave power in its attempt to spread slavery into the territories.

As a counterpoint to the fighting in Kansas, violence also broke out in Congress. In the spring of 1856, during a heated debate over Kansas, Senator Charles A. Sumner of Massachusetts delivered a tirade on the Senate floor about the "crime against Kansas." Senator Sumner, who already had a reputation as a brilliant orator, called the administration "tyrannical" and "imbecilic," and accused it of "raping the virgin territory of Kansas" and opening it to the "hateful embrace of slavery." Sumner demanded that Kansas be

admitted to the Union as a free state. He ended his speech with a personal attack on Senator Douglas of Illinois and Senator Andrew F. Butler of South Carolina, who was not in the chamber.[7]

Preston A Brooks, a nephew of Senator Butler and himself a Congressman from South Carolina, decided to avenge the attack on his uncle's honor. Two days later, Brooks quietly entered the Senate Chamber where Sumner was working at his desk, and struck Sumner on the head with his "gutta percha" cane, until Sumner fell unconscious and bloody upon the floor. I gave him about thirty "first-rate strikes," Brooks boasted later, until the end when he "bellowed like a calf." The injury was serious enough to prevent Charles Sumner from returning to the Senate for close to three years.[8]

After the caning, Garnet himself participated in rallies that protested the violence committed against Charles Sumner in the sacrosanct halls of the United States Senate. In June, at one rally, Garnet surprisingly shared the platform with Stephen A. Douglas in denouncing the attack on Sumner. Frederick Douglass, who was also present, called Garnet's speech "classic and unsurpassed," and said it was by far the best of them all. Douglass also noted that he was glad to see Garnet again devoting

his attention to matters of "true relation," instead of wasting his time on colonization.[9]

The events in Kansas led to the formation of a new political party in the United States--the Republicans, a coalition of former Free Soilers, Conscience Whigs, and a few Democrats, all brought together to oppose the spread of slavery. This party, confined to the North, reflected the growing Northern concern that slavery must be kept out of the frontier. Republicans now demanded that the territories be saved for free labor. Although some abolitionists joined the Republican Party, it was still not an abolitionist party. In 1856, the Republican Party whose platform was to contain slavery where it already existed, nominated the former explorer John C. Frémont as its candidate for President.

At first, Garnet was hostile to the Republicans. He thought the party did not go far enough to promote the "true humanity of the Negro," which meant it had not endorsed black suffrage. In May, 1856, at a convention of radical abolitionists in Albany, Garnet declared publicly that he had no sympathy for the Republicans because their platform ignored black suffrage. However, three months later, at a State Suffrage Convention in

Syracuse, Garnet endorsed the Republicans as the best political alternative. "The Republican Party is not all we desire," Garnet told his audience, "but as far as it goes, it is right." At least it wanted to "prevent the vast territories of Kansas and Nebraska from the curse of slavery," and compared to the Democratic Party, which clung to the doctrine of popular sovereignty, this was substantial progress.[10]

Garnet added that blacks had to cooperate with whites, if they were to achieve equality. That cooperation meant voting Republican, Garnet said, in spite of the racist remarks Republicans often made. Yet, Garnet repeated that most blacks, because of continued property qualifications, could not vote. "I can not be permitted to vote for even a pound keeper," Garnet chided, but "if I could, I would vote for Frémont." Nothing would be more "ludicrous or misguided," Garnet said, than to see a black Democrat. It would be "equally idiotic," Garnet said, to vote for the "Know-Nothing Fillmore," the same man, who when President, "jumped from his seat with indecent haste," to sign the Fugitive Slave Law and "never regretted the deed." Therefore, if blacks were to exercise any political power, they had to vote Republican.[11]

On March 6, 1857, the United States Supreme Court handed down the Dred Scott decision, which not only denied that Negroes could be United States citizens, but held that Congress could not prohibit slavery in the territories. Neither, the court declared, could territorial legislatures. In effect, the court now legalized slavery in the territories.

Republicans and abolitionists were outraged by this ruling. In one blow, the Dred Scott decision shattered the entire anti-expansionist position of the Republican Party. If Congress had no right to keep slavery out of the territories, then could another decision rule that states had no right to prohibit slavery either? Garnet, for his part, regarded the decision as a "deliberate and provocative attack" by the pro-southern Taney Court on black people. In Shiloh Church Garnet told his audience that black people "would not be trodden under foot; they will arm themselves someday." Even the non-violent Frederick Douglass who was in the audience, approved of those sentiments.[12]

After the Dred Scott decision, Garnet's rhetoric became more militant. He was convinced that the court's ruling proved beyond doubt that southerners would stop at nothing to spread slavery. From his pulpit, Garnet

urged resistance and revolution. Journalists like Horace Greeley came to Shiloh Church to hear the preacher, whose orations were so dazzling that they sent an "electric current" down the spine of all who listened.[13]

In the spring of 1858, Garnet was still seething. He was involved in another fugitive case, in which Egan Brodie, a black slave hunter had captured two fugitives and returned them to the South. By August, Garnet identified Brodie as the betrayer, and he travelled all the way to Cincinnati to expose him. When he located Brodie, Garnet personally set up a mock trial, and when the defendant was convicted, Garnet administered "three hundred lashes from a paddle; one for each dollar Brodie had been paid."[14]

In September, 1858, Gerrit Smith decided to run for Governor of New York on the Radical Abolitionist Party. But Garnet faced a dilemma. Smith, who had been his lifelong friend and financial supporter, now asked Garnet for help. Garnet, though, had already endorsed the Republicans and had called on other blacks to do the same. Another change of position would lend support to those who believed that Garnet was insincere and opportunistic.

Nevertheless, Garnet now decided to endorse Smith. He rationalized this by saying that Edward D. Morgan, the Republican candidate, had not come out for black suffrage (which would have been political suicide in New York). In reality, Garnet was paying a debt to his friend Gerrit Smith. In September, at a Colored Man's National Suffrage Convention in Troy, Garnet gave his official plea for Smith. His efforts were unsuccessful, however, as Smith received only five votes at the convention, the rest having gone to the Republican candidate. Garnet left the convention, and, in an effort to save face, he angrily wrote Smith that he could not believe how "blind black men were to their own interests." Smith, of course, lost the election to Morgan, who became the second Republican Governor of New York.[15]

Following the election, Garnet withdrew from partisan politics. Actually, he became involved with still another scheme which monopolized his thoughts and energies for the remainder of the decade. Sometime in the fall of 1858, Garnet resumed his colonization efforts. He had been involved in African Colonization before he went to Europe, but it appeared his interest had waned. Now, though, Garnet had developed plans for a new organization which he hoped would put his ideas into action. It is

likely that the Dred Scott decision rekindled Garnet's interest in colonization, since it declared, in effect, that blacks had no home in America. Nevertheless, Garnet had plans for a new organization, which he hoped would become the most ambitious black controlled venture ever undertaken in ante-bellum America.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IX

[1] Henry Highland Garnet to S. S. Jocelyn, March 4, 1857, A.M.A. Papers; Records of the Shiloh Presbyterian Church can be found at the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Annual Report American Missionary Association, 1857.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, July 9, 1856, January 8, 1857, Gerrit Smith Papers.

[4] Henry Highland Garnet to S. S. Jocelyn, April 10, 1857, May 8, 1857, A.M.A. Papers.

[5] Ibid.; Weekly Anglo-African, September 15, 1859.

[6] New York Tribune, May 7, 1856.

[7] Frederick Douglass' Paper, July 11, 1856, Douglass printed Sumner's entire speech and much of the reaction to it.

[8] John A. Garraty, The American Nation (New York: American Heritage, 1966), pp. 387-388.

[9] Frederick Douglass' Paper,June 27, 1856, July 18, 1856.

[10] Ibid. October 3, 1856; New York Tribune, September 24, 1856.

[11] Ibid.

[12] New York Times, May 18, 1857.

[13] New York Herald, May 18, 1857.

[14] Liberator, September 7, 1858.

[15] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, September 10, 1858, Gerrit Smith Papers; Frederick Douglass' Paper, October 3, 1856.

CHAPTER X

GRAND CENTER OF NEGRO NATIONALITY

Back in 1856, about the same time Garnet had returned from the Caribbean, the Reverend Jefferson Bowen, a white Baptist missionary, also returned from abroad. The Southern Baptist Missionary Association had dispatched Bowen to Abeokuta (now Nigeria) in the Yoruba Valley to examine plans for a settlement there. Upon returning to America, Bowen began lecturing on the mission he had instituted in the Yoruba Valley. He hoped to open the valley to American commercial enterprises, just as the Perry Mission had opened Japan. He also wrote a book, Central Africa, which stressed the development of civilization found in Yoruba villages. The book described the highly developed agricultural methods, and the sophisticated weaving, dyeing and cloth making industries found in Abeokuta. Bowen concluded that "enterprising American blacks" could migrate to Abeokuta, and share in the enormous commercial opportunites available there.[1]

Garnet completely supported Bowen's proposals for settlements in the Yoruba Valley. His former association with the Free Produce Movement made Garnet believe that

British textile interests would welcome the development of cotton growing in Africa. As a missionary,he was also convinced of the need for Christian missions in Africa. Therefore, these two forces--economical and evangelical--led Garnet to form a new organization. In the fall of 1858, Garnet founded the African Civilization Society with the fervor and commitment of a lifelong crusade.

Garnet, who wrote the constitution, stated that the purpose of the society was the "evangelization and civilization of Africa." He hoped to promote all "Christian non-denominational missions" dedicated to bringing the gospel to Africa. He also hoped to destroy the slave trade in America by promoting the growth of the cotton industry in the Yoruba Valley, whereby Africans would become both producers and consumers of cotton. This would undermine the need for slave grown cotton, Garnet believed. The African Civilization Society, Garnet said, would take the responsibility of becoming the "agent" for all black churches who wish to establish "Christian and industrial settlements," in a "fertile, healthy and attractive region."[2]

Garnet said that the society did not wish to "subvert the governments and overthrow the reigning

princes of African Countries," but wanted instead to sit down by their side and teach the people by example that "we are part of themselves." By our example, Garnet wrote, we could build schools and churches, interest the people in the arts and sciences, and develop the natural resources of the entire continent. Garnet fervently believed that these ends were "just, legitimate, and profitable."[3]

Garnet viewed the African Civilization Society almost as his private empire. He was assisted by the Reverend Henry M. Wilson, pastor of the Seventh Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, but Wilson was a weak man who allowed Garnet to dominate him. Garnet enunciated grandiose plans for his organization. He hoped the Society would become a "grand center of Negro nationality," from which flowed "streams of commercial, intellectual and political power." Certainly Garnet saw himself dispensing that power.[4]

Garnet anticipated opposition and he got it. In January, 1859, he wrote Douglass, "what objection have you to blacks in this country engaging in agriculture and commerce in Africa? What objection can you possibly have to any organization that wishes to destroy the African slave trade and cooperate with anti-slavery men and

women all over our country?" "Tell us in your clear and manly style," Garnet wrote, "Gird up thy loins and answer me if thou canst."[5]

Douglass, however, was not amused by Garnet's sarcasm. In Douglass' Monthly, he published a long reply to Garnet's letter. "We want no nationality," Douglass wrote, "we prefer to remain in America. No idea is more oppressive than the idea that America is not our home." This gives rise to the "willful and lying assumption that white and black people can not live together in equality." Besides, Douglass continued, "it is one thing to support the right of any man to seek his fortune elsewhere, but quite different to join and assist such men in their private enterprise. Does Garnet know how sarcastic he is?" Douglass asked his readers. "His tough and nimble tongue tears with every touch. Our 'facetious' brother, with all his 'dazzling' rhetoric, will never convince us," Douglass said. And he reminded his readers that Garnet would not encounter the "perils of the sea," and the "savage life" in Africa unless there was something in it for him.[6]

Undaunted, Garnet continued to champion colonization. In August, he addressed a convention of black emigrationists and proclaimed, "Let only those who wish to go, go and

find a nation of which the colored American could be proud." Two weeks later, at J. Sella Martin's Baptist Church, Garnet again tried to convince his critics that he did not favor mass emigration. Here he told a hostile audience that "he who tells me that I must go is an impudent man, but he who says I shall not go is a fool." Later that week, in a speech before the African Civilization Society, Garnet insisted that America was "my home." However, blacks must look elsewhere as long as graduates from Negro schools could only find employment as painters or laundresses. When white Americans got accustomed to seeing "well-to-do Negro cotton traders and opulent black businessmen," Garnet continued, then "blacks would no longer need to look towards Africa."[7]

Critics were not convinced. George Downing, long an opponent of Garnet, wrote at length how "deceptive" the African Civilization Society was for "draining" the most talented blacks in America off to Africa. William Wells Brown saw the society as an "unwitting tool" of the racist American Colonization Society, and part of the scheme to remove blacks from America. In fact, most black leaders believed that Garnet was inadvertently working for the "slave power" by supporting colonization. Nothing

Garnet said or did could erase those feelings. Later, a public meeting, at Reverend James Glouster's Zion Church in New York City, approved a resolution that denounced Garnet as a "supporter of prejudice" and an "enemy of the anti-slavery movement in America." Garnet's supporters became so enraged that they disrupted the meeting. Even the pro-Garnet Weekly Anglo-African called the meeting one of the rowdiest and most "unsatisfactory demonstrations ever held in the city."[8]

Despite the continued controversy over colonization, Garnet remained determined to put his plans into action. In the summer of 1859, Garnet learned that Martin Delany, the nation's foremost black emigrationist, also had plans for a Yoruba Settlement. Delany, who never liked or trusted Garnet because he took money from whites, insisted, however, on an all black venture. In August, Delaney, accompanied by Robert Campbell, a young Jamaican chemist, embarked on a "scientific exploration" to the neighboring Niger Valley. The two men carrying cotton gins and seed, departed for London, en route to Nigeria. When Garnet learned of Delaney's mission, he called a meeting of the African Civilization Society and officially offered his support.[9]

Three months later, Campbell wrote Garnet from Africa and told him that a contract between the settlers and the African King had been proposed. Signed a month later, the treaty permitted settlement in Abeokuta as long as the settlers agreed to respect the laws of the native authorities. Garnet was overjoyed. He immediately called a meeting of the African Civilization Society to secure support for the treaty. He assured Campbell that we have a "number of men who are willing to embark on this glorious enterprise." Garnet boasted that this settlement would do more for the abolition of slavery, by creating a new respect for black people, than "fifty thousand lectures by the most eloquent men of this land."[10]

In August, 1860, Garnet rented the Cooper Union auditorium to announce plans for the settlement. He ordered that admission be charged to discourage whites from disrupting the meeting. For Garnet, the speech was an important one, since he wanted to make his position clear. He began by reminding his audience that if Africa was to be "redeemed" by Christian civilization, that could only occur by the "free and voluntary emigration of enterprising colored people." It was the duty of Christians and philanthropists in America, Garnet continued, to help carry the "gospel and civilization into Africa." The

African Civilization Society, Garnet said, proposed the "removal of all unchristian barriers" anywhere in the world.[11]

He then promoted a four-part plan of operation to guarantee success. The first part was to confirm friendly relations with local chiefs. The second was to purchase suitable land for development by settlers and to furnish them with the necessary mechanical and agricultural implements. The third part, Garnet said, was to build schools and churches, instruct the natives in the arts and sciences, and develop the natural resources of the country. Finally, Garnet hoped to promote commerce by growing cotton and other tropical crops entirely with free labor. Garnet observed that this would "break up the slave trade and,therefore, undercut the profitability of slavery."[12]

His critics, of course, immediately commented on the speech. Most of them, like George Downing of Rhode Island, distorted the Society's aims and accused Garnet and the African Civilization Society of discouraging American blacks from struggling for freedom at home. Downing and a few others actually distributed a circular which asked: Will you be shipped off to Africa? Will you permit Garnet to send you back to slavery? J. W. C.

Pennington, a former Garnet supporter, called the speech "ill-timed" because the nation was in the midst of a crucial presidential election (something to which Garnet appeared oblivious).

Even Garnet's old classmate, James McCune Smith, now a wealthy dentist in New York, remarked that the African Civilization Society, since it dealt with "slave trading kings," actually condoned slavery. Garnet, in an extreme display of temper, replied that his "former" friend Smith was a "scoundrel" who, like other rich black men, became successful because he acted like a "white man." Look at his mansion, Garnet chided. It had been built and serviced by white labor. "You are no better than your white brethren," Garnet said. You, too, "do not employ niggers."[13]

Garnet's full-time commitment to the African Civilization Society had interfered with his church work. His many speaking engagements kept him away from Shiloh Church quite frequently. Certainly, the AMA objected to the time Garnet spent away from Shiloh Church. They also resented the notion that Garnet, by working for the African Civilization Society, was actually violating the AMA constitution by supporting a rival missionary organization. Back in September, 1859, when Garnet had

asked the AMA for more money to do "good works for the free blacks of the North," his request had been refused. Afterwards, Garnet wrote Jocelyn and admitted his "past mistakes," but said that it was still necessary to find "earnest godly men" to serve the American people. He begged Jocelyn to reconsider the request and not let his "hopes and dreams be crushed to pieces."[14]

Two months later, Garnet again wrote Jocelyn and asked for a new grant, this time to create an official church agency to dispense funds. Garnet included the request for money for an Anglo-African reading room to be initiated at Shiloh Church. He asked his friends and the "friends of his race" to support him in this venture, and even promised not to be connected with any other missionary society. Apparently, the AMA decided the reading room was completely inappropriate, for they strongly opposed that project. In fact, the AMA became so angry with Garnet that they contributed funds to a new black school, the "biggest in the city," and Garnet got nothing. The AMA seriously considered terminating Garnet's commission altogether, and reneged only upon pressure from Gerrit Smith.[15]

Although preoccupied with colonization, Garnet was aware of the deepening sectional crisis by the end of the decade. In fact, he had known about a plan that would shake the very foundations of the republic. In March, 1859, in the home of black attorney Stephen Smith, John Brown met with Garnet, Fredrick Douglass, and William Sill of Philadelphia, to discuss a plan to incite a slave insurrection at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Brown advised the black man to "talk to every family of the right stripe" about how he hoped to spark the greatest slave revolt in American history.[16]

Brown had known of Garnet since his 1843 address calling for a slave revolt. At Gerrit Smith's home in Petersboro he asked the preacher: "Mr. Garnet, what do you think of the plan?" "Sir, the time has not yet come for the success of such a movement," Garnet replied. Afterwards, both men got down on their knees to ask God about the plan, and each left the meeting unclear of the others intentions. Brown probably never really trusted Garnet. Although he admired Garnet's militant rhetoric, Brown still knew that Garnet trumpeted colonization, which for Brown was an unacceptable solution to the racial problems in America.[17]

In October, Brown and a group of dedicated followers,

black and white, attacked Harper's Ferry. They seized the federal arsenal and hoped to arm the slaves and foment a slave revolt. The attack failed. Although Brown's men occupied the arsenal and captured a few hostages, no slaves came forward to join them. After a two-day siege, federal troops rushing up from Washington captured Brown and his remaining supporters in a fire-engine house. The State of Virginia tried Brown on charges of conspiracy, murder, and treason against Virginia. After an impassioned statement to the court in which Brown declared his willingness to forfeit his life for the "furtherance of the ends of justice," and mingle his blood with the "blood of millions in this slave country," he was hanged.[18]

John Brown's raid generated intense excitement in all parts of the country. Southerners thought it was the greatest threat to disunion in the nation's history. In the North, abolitionists applauded his act, and Republicans, many of whom detested the raid, were still moved by Brown's heroism and courage. Shortly after Brown's execution, many northerners gathered all over to condemn the South for hanging him, and to degrade the slave system he so violently despised.

At midnight, on December 2, on the evening of

John Brown's death, Garnet addressed an overflow crowd at Shiloh Church. People were milling around hours before the scheduled memorial service. John Brown, the old man whose "hairs were white with the frosts of many winters," was hanged that morning, but to these mourners he was a martyr. The crowd gave Garnet a standing ovation as he limped down the church's wooden aisles to reach the small podium.

At exactly midnight, as church bells rang out throughout the city, Garnet began to speak. In life, Garnet had considered Brown the "noblest white man in the nation." In death, Garnet portrayed him as the "saint who dealt the death blow to human slavery." "In the sign of these times," Garnet told the suddenly stilled audience, the "dreaded truths were written by the finger of Jehovah.... For the sins of this nation there is no atonement without the shedding of blood." The audience became restless. They heard exactly what they came to hear.[19]

For most New Yorkers, Garnet's call for bloodshed and civil war was revolting. The mere thought of a war for the liberation of slaves horrified them. Throughout the city, rich and influential New Yorkers called "union saving" meetings to discuss the impending calamity. On

December 19, prominent New York politicians and business leaders gathered in the city's Academy of Music to condemn all talk of disunion. Charles O'Connor, a wealthy lawyer, actually praised the slave system as "just, benign and ordained by nature." Upon hearing the remark, Garnet publicly quipped that he would "walk without remorse or tread on O'Connor's head." He also suggested that O'Connor, because of his "enlightened" views, might be appointed to the Supreme Court.[20]

The nation still teetered on the brink of civil war, as the Sixties began. All over the South, charges reverberated of a northern plot to destroy slavery. Fireating southerners like James Yancy of Alabama agitated for secession and disunion. As a result of John Brown's raid, it seemed that all hope for a peaceful solution to the crisis of slavery vanished.

Both major political parties realized that the upcoming 1860 Presidential election would be crucial. In April, the Democrats met in Charlestown and tried to nominate Stephen A. Douglas. When Douglas would not accept the platform which promised no interference with slavery in the territories, southerners met separately, and nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. Northern

Democrats nominated Douglas who ran on the platform of popular sovereignty.

Meanwhile, in May, the Republicans met in Chicago and drafted a carefully-worded platform calling for a high tariff for manufacturers, a Homestead Act for settlers, and a provision whereby neither Congress nor local legislatures could give "legal existence to slavery in any territory." In choosing a presidential candidate, the Republicans looked first to former New York Governor, Charles Seward, and then, on the third ballot, turned to the "railsplitter," Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, as their party's nominee. Lincoln appeared a wise choice. He had the reputation as a man of honesty, integrity, and his views were thoughtful, yet moderate. He was also a good Republican who fully endorsed the party's platform.

Lincoln, though not present at the convention, proudly accepted his party's nomination. He eagerly awaited the November election and he could sense victory. A few days earlier, die-hard Whigs and the remains of the short-lived Know-Nothing Party, had formed the Union Party and nominated John Bell of Tennessee for President. Now there were four candidates in the race, and Lincoln's chances looked good.

Garnet was not sure about Lincoln. Although he had committed himself to the Republicans, he still raised the same objections about their failure to support black suffrage. In October, both Garnet and Douglass addressed a convention of radical abolitionists and again condemned the Republicans for not opposing state laws which denied blacks the vote unless they had $250 in real property. Both Garnet and Douglass supported a motion that "ten thousand votes for Gerrit Smith, who was again running for president, would "do more for the eventual abolition of slavery than two million votes for Lincoln." Douglass, however, relented and actually campaigned for Lincoln. Garnet did not.[21]

When the election came, Lincoln won the popular vote, although not with a majority. His 180 electoral votes, however, were more than enough to elect him President. A few days after the election, South Carolina, which had been threatening to leave the Union for years, ordered an election to a convention to decide the state's future. On December 20, the convention voted unanimously to secede, and by February, 1861, six other states in the deep South seceded and established the Confederate States of America. The foundations of this new confederation were Negro slavery and white supremacy.

What would outgoing President Buchanan do to combat the crisis? What could President elect Lincoln do? Southerners wanted Lincoln to capitulate on the principles of his party. Lincoln did promise not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, but even that did not satisfy southerners. But Lincoln would not relent his fundamental belief that slavery can be kept out of the territories. Yet, Garnet was worried. He wrote Douglass that he was not confident in the "incorruptible purity" of the new President. He realized that Lincoln had to battle with the "monster of disunion," but implored him never to become a "scheming politician," and abandon the principles of the party.[22]

Garnet said little else during the secession crisis. His concerns were still chiefly with African Colonization. The Weekly Anglo-African reported Garnet's activities during this crisis, and found him completely preoccupied with his Yoruba settlement, almost as if he was oblivious to the impending Civil War. He must have known, though, about Fort Sumter, and Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to subdue the rebellion, and the start of Civil War.

Yet, Garnet said nothing. Wat it not the time to rally around the new Commander in Chief? Garnet must have realized that a southern victory would end all hope of seeing slavery abolished in his lifetime. Nevertheless,

as Lincoln and the Union faced the greatest crisis of their lives, Garnet remained distant. "I will do what I have to do," Garnet said. "My mind remains unchanged."[23]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER X

[1] National Anti-Slavery Standard, October 23, 1858; Richard MacMaster, "Henry Highland Garnet and the African Civilization Society," Journal of Presbyterian Church History, Vol. XLVII (Summer, 1970).

[2] African Civilization Society Circular, American Colonization Society Papers, Vol. 154, Folder 114, Washington, D.C.; Constitution of the African Civilization Society (New Haven: Thomas J. Stafford, 1861); Benjamin Coates, Cotton Cultivation in Africa, Suggestions on the Importance of Cotton in Africa (Philadelphia: C. Shern and Son, 1858).

[3] Weekly Anglo-African, March 17, 1860.

[4] Ibid., September 10, 1859.

[5] Douglass Monthly, February, 1859.

[6] Ibid., September 17, 1858, October, 1859.

[7] Weekly Anglo-African, September 10, 1859; Journal of New York Colonization Society, Vol. X, 1859.

[8] Frederick Douglass' Paper, July 22, 1859; Weekly Anglo-African, October 22, 1859, April 21, 1860; New York Herald, April 13, 1860.

[9] Martin R. Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party (New York: 1861), p. 10; Victor Ullman, Martin R. Delaney: The Beginnings of Black Nationalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 226-246.

[10] Delany, Official Report, p. 11; Robert Cambell to Henry Highland Garnet, February 11, 1860, March 3, 1860 as reported in the Weekly Anglo-African on those dates; Weekly Anglo-African, September 3, 1859; Dorothy Sterling, Making of an Afro-American (New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 201.

[11] Ofari, Let Your Motto Be Resistance, pp. 88-91, 183-185; Weekly Anglo-African, March 17, 1860.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Weekly Anglo-African, September 10, 1859, November 17, 1860, January 12, 1861, January 19, 1861.

[14] Henry Highland Garnet to S. S. Jocelyn, September 14, 1859, November 29, 1859, AMA Papers.

[15] Ibid., October 4, 1860, December 14, 1860.

[16] Liberator, December 15, 1859.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Stephen B. Oates, To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 326-327.

[19] Weekly Anglo-African, December 9, 1859.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Frederick Douglass' Monthly, October 1860, March 1861.

[22] Weekly Anglo-African, January 21, 1861.

CHAPTER XI

OH SOUND THE JUBILEE

Though Garnet claimed that his mind "remained unchanged," by the winter of 1860-1861 he had changed his mind again. Sometime in December, 1860, Garnet met James Redpath, a white man who headed the Haitian Emigration Society. Redpath told Garnet that Haiti possessed an entirely different future for blacks than Africa did. In Haiti, Redpath said, black people would develop in "total freedom," because Haiti was an independent nation, not a colony subject to "foreign control." Evidently, Redpath convinced Garnet, and by March, Garnet was advocating Haitian colonization. Although some people questioned his sincerity, Garnet said he was for Haitian emigration because Haiti was a "proud black nation," not merely an annexation of the racist American Colonization Society. Haiti also was born out of the "revolutionary struggle" of Toussaint L'Overture, and that, too, impressed Garnet.[1]

In March, Garnet accepted the post as resident agent for the Haitian Emigration Bureau in New York City. The agency paid Garnet a monthly salary; his duties included getting publicity, and winning support. Garnet took out

advertisements supporting Haitian emigration in the Weekly Anglo-African, and the newspaper, although it took "no official position" on Haitian emigration, was generally favorable to everything Garnet did. Robert Hamilton, the editor of the Weekly Anglo-African, frequently printed letters on how Garnet hoped to build Haiti into a "black empire in the Caribbean."[2]

Critics, of course, were shocked by Garnet's new position. Martin Delaney blasted Garnet for working for an organization headed by a white man. Douglass saw Garnet's enterprise as still another "adventuristic scheme" designed to make money for Garnet. James McCune Smith inquired, "How come, Mr. Garnet, your position always changes when you are offered a handsome salary?" He concluded that Garnet was simply "bribed" and "bought out." Unable to respond to the accusations, Garnet replied: "My father on the plantation taught me never to fight with a skunk."[3]

Critics continued to badger Garnet for his support of Haitian emigration. In a letter to Garnet from "one of the people," the author, observing Garnet's change of views, inquired why Garnet reversed himself so frequently. In February, Garnet began a speaking tour of New York State in an attempt to answer his critics. He spoke in

Poughkeepsie, Troy, Geneva, and Rochester, each time stressing the advantages of Haiti for Negroes. But apparently the constant pressure was too much for him. In April, Garnet resigned his commission as resident agent.[4]

Two weeks after his resignation, Garnet renewed his plans for an African settlement. Now, since he had feuded with Delany, Garnet decided upon his own settlement, completely independent of the treaty Delaney had secured. Garnet estimated that his new settlement, which the African Civilization Society would officially sponsor, would cost ten thousand dollars and he hoped that Gerrit Smith--who had never supported colonization--would aid him. In May, Garnet asked the members of the African Civilization Society to make him the leader of the Company, by trusting him with full powers of administration.

Garnet said he would personally select the thirty "enterprising and skilled" black people who would bring honor to this glorious mission. All he still needed was $10,000, which he hoped would come from "freedom-loving" people throughout the world. He now wrote a constitutional supplement to the African Civilization Society asking investors to support his project, and he promised to take personal responsibility for its success.[5]

A doubter asked Garnet, "If Africa is so glorious, why don't you go there?" Garnet replied that he "could not leave America until he left a heritage of freedom to his children." He was annoyed that people questioned his motives, but said he would not be deterred. He still was for "African Colonization, Haitian Emigration, Negro Nationality and universal liberty."[6]

Garnet's plans received a serious setback in 1861, when new tribal warfare erupted in the Yoruba Valley. As a result, British merchants, who Garnet counted on for investment, threatened to pull their money out of Nigeria. However, on July 20, in a move Garnet applauded, the British annexed Lagos for the Crown, restoring the confidence of British merchants.[7]

Garnet, however, felt he needed personal assurances that merchants were still willing to invest in free labor plantations in the Yoruba Valley. Therefore, in August, he decided to make a second voyage to England. Now that the United States was involved in Civil War, it was also important to convince British merchants that the cause of free labor was not merely an economic issue, but a "life and death" issue on which rested the survival of the Union. Before leaving, Garnet finally commented on the war. In July, after the Union defeat at Bull Run,

Lincoln appointed thirty-five year old George B. McClellan, a West Point graduate with a fine military record, to command the Army of the Potomac. Although McClellan spoke of striking swiftly at the heart of the Confederacy by capturing Richmond, all he did was remain in Washington, drilling and training his army. Both Garnet and Douglass became "furious" with McClellan as a "constant source of delay."[8]

Garnet wrote that it was a "concession of weakness" that McClellan's army was not "marshalled out of the District of Columbia" to wipe out the "vermin" who formed the advancing army. He added that the nation needed leaders who could "look beyond a day or a month" and see that the Union needed an "all-out attack" on the Confederacy. Abraham Lincoln is not the man we have known, Garnet wrote, if he "takes counsel from compromisers and conciliationists. Old women are excellent in the care of children, but are decidedly a nuisance in the councils of war."[9]

Before leaving for England, Garnet's friends at the African Civilization Society gave him a testimonial dinner and wished him a good voyage. The group also gave Garnet a gold-handled cane, and they gave Julia a new

china set. After the presentation, the group raised their glasses filled with cider, and toasted to the motto: "Immediate unconditional universal emancipation, African civilization, Haitian emigration."[10]

In late August, immediately before his departure, Garnet learned that the trustees of Shiloh Church had removed him from the pulpit and temporarily closed the building. They probably were fed up with Garnet for traveling so much, and they wanted a full-time, less controversial, minister. Garnet called the closing of the church a "flagrant violation of God's authority," and a "shame to the name of religion," as he left the country under a cloud of despair.[11]

The voyage, however, eased some of Garnet's hurt. First of all, the federal government had issued Garnet a passport which stated that he was a "citizen of the United States." This act in itself was a clear reversal of the Dred Scott decision which had ruled that blacks were not American citizens. Although previously the government had granted some passports to blacks, the wording on the documents read that they were "dark" in color. Garnet wanted the inclusion of the word "black" on his passport, and Secretary of State Seward issued it that way. "That point had to be tested," Garnet

said, so better "do it at once and let color assume its proper position."[12]

For Garnet, the Atlantic crossing was particularly pleasant. He wrote Julia and described how he slept in an "elegant stateroom" and sat at the dinner table between two white men who said nothing which offended his "very sensitive feelings." How different this was from the first voyage where he was "caged up in the steward's room and forced to eat his meals alone."[13]

As usual, Garnet got seasick on the voyage. As soon as the ship cleared Sandy Hook, "old Neptune called me and led me to the side of the ship and told me to throw my resolutions overboard," which he did in "double quick time." The next day he watched two giant whales making a stir. A woman asked him, "Why do they make such noise and commotion?" They are the "biggest fish in the sea," Garnet replied, and they are "black, too, madam, so you can account for the noise they make."[14]

On the fifth day out, Garnet saw an iceberg; he commented that it would some day be a "source of great annoyance and dangerous to ships which cross the sea." On the tenth day, he saw a child die aboard ship and witnessed the "solemn funeral." A minister aboard ship

said a prayer. Then the remains of the young boy disappeared into the sea. Garnet thought how similar this was to the plight of his own people, with so many slave children "disappearing" into the night, never fulfilling their talents or potential.[15]

On the eleventh day, Garnet saw the "green hills of Ireland," and by evening the ship landed in Liverpool where Garnet changed vessels and departed for London. There he stayed at the home of Mrs. Julia Croft, a prominent British abolitionist and a strong Union supporter. Frederick Douglass hoped that Garnet's association with Mrs. Croft would prod him into taking a more active role in defense of the Union. Douglass wrote that although Garnet left at a "critical period," supporting an "unworkable scheme," he still could do much for the Union. Certainly, Douglass wrote, "No man is more eloquent in defending our interests abroad."[16]

Garnet found the British people deeply divided over the American Civil War, with many prominent industrialists and aristocrats supporting the Confederacy. The landed gentry tended to identify with the aristocratic lifestyle of the southern planter, while factory owners and workers had mixed feelings. Although many supported the principles of free labor, owners and workers were still

dependent upon southern cotton. Garnet hoped to convince all sides that a Confederate victory would only undermine the free labor system, which wouldn't benefit employers or workers.

Therefore, in all his arguments, Garnet combined his plea for African cotton plantations with a call for a Union victory. For Garnet, the two issues were now interrelated. When he advocated free labor plantations in Africa, he applied the same logic to why "the Union had to defeat the Confederacy." And when abolition emerged as the "plain and obvious issue of the Civil War," Garnet continued, then free labor would unmistakably become the great principle of the century.[17]

Garnet spoke to factory owners in Birmingham and implored them not to waver on that "great principle." At a series of meetings called to seek alternative sources to raw southern cotton, Garnet suggested settling "Christian families in Africa" to initiate free labor plantations there. He ended his speech with a strong appeal to the British sense of destiny and mission. "Give Africa your civilization," Garnet said, and she will give you her commerce, her wealth, and her labor."[18]

Garnet's aspirations for large-scale free labor plantations in Africa were never realized. Civil war

continued in Nigeria, and in this climate, few Englishmen invested their money in free labor plantations. Garnet came to England seeking money and support for his settlement, and returned four months later with only idle promises. Nevertheless, he returned to the United States with new optimism. Now was the time to help transform the Civil War from a "fratricidal conflict" over the fate of the Union to a "life and death struggle for the greatest principle the world had ever known."[19]

When he reached New York early in 1862, feeling "invigorated and refreshed," he learned that the trustees of Shiloh Church had reversed their decision and re-installed him as their pastor. Their only condition was Garnet make some attempt to "modify his behavior" and spend more time with the church. Garnet was happy to comply, especially since he had new plans for improving conditions at home. Garnet's new objective was to convince the leaders of government that blacks were determined to fight for their own freedom and help save and spread the cause of free labor. He hoped that determination would convince the President to change his objectives of the war, which before mid-1862, he prosecuted as a war to save the Union rather than to free the slaves.[20]

Garnet set about raising money for slaves who had become "contrabands of war." In December, 1861, at a huge rally in the basement of Shiloh Church, to aid newly freed blacks at Fort Monroe at the base of Chesapeake Bay, the congregation raised more than $60. They also collected several boxes of clothing for those "poor souls" who became victims of the American Civil War. Two weeks later, Mrs. Elizabeth Keckley, Mary Todd Lincoln's mulatto dressmaker and founder of the Contraband Relief Association, came to Shiloh Church to personally announce the first lady's $200 donation. Afterwards, Garnet and Douglass presented Mrs. Keckley with another two hundred dollars which Douglass said came from the "soul" of New York's black community. Both men hoped that word of these donations would get back to the President and show him how determined black people were to secure their own freedom.[21]

Meanwhile, Garnet read the war news and it disgusted him. It was now almost a year since the outbreak of hostilities, and McClellan's army still had not moved from Washington. It was apparent to Garnet, and to Lincoln, that McClellan's army was the laughing stock of the nation. Garnet thought the army had almost a passion

for looking "ridiculous and silly." In March, Lincoln relieved McClellan of his command because he was "plainly unaggressive," although he allowed the general to remain in charge of the army of the Potomac.[22]

On March 17, McClellan finally moved. He floated a huge army of 112,000 men down the Potomac to the Virginia Peninsula with their objective to capture Richmond. After a month-long siege, he captured Yorktown at the base of the York River. A quick thrust towards Richmond might have destroyed the rebel army altogether, but McClellan stalled again. In effect, McClellan's delays allowed the Confederate Army to re-group, while his army remained immobilized without making a single offensive thrust. Lincoln was dismayed but Garnet was incensed.

On March 6, in spite of his troubles with McClellan, Lincoln called Charles Sumner into his office and read him a draft of a special message he was sending to Congress proposing a voluntary federal-state emancipation scheme, whereby Congress would finance a program of gradual compensated emancipation in the border states. Lincoln shied away from a complete presidential decree, claiming it would antagonize the border states whose loyalty he desperately needed. Sumner, although not

overjoyed with compensated emancipation, nevertheless welcomed it as a step in the right direction. On April 10, Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia.

Garnet was ecstatic over the news. Although friends cautioned that it was premature to celebrate, Garnet ignored their advice and proceeded with an Emancipation Jubilee. On May 5, at five o'clock in the morning, Garnet held a public prayer at Shiloh Church to celebrate the emancipation. Flanking Garnet at the flag-raising ceremonies in front of the Prince Street entrance,were thirteen former slaves from Virginia. In the evening, the same group marched uptown to Cooper Union where they joined blacks from Brooklyn,Harlem, Jamaica, and Flushing. They all assembled for a rally where Garnet, Frederick Douglass, James McCune Smith and George Downing were scheduled to speak. Garnet proclaimed, "Hallelujah," to the hysterical crowd and rejoiced that freedom at last had come to the national capital. "The stars and stripes have assumed new beauty," Garnet said, as he proposed "three cheers for the Union, the President and old John Brown." Immediately, in a frenzy of emotion, the people removed their handkerchiefs and burst into the John Brown song. "Glory, Glory Hallelujah, his soul is marching on."[23]

Garnet must have found it ironic that at the same time he began rejoicing the coming of freedom at home, Lincoln again pondered colonization. On August 14, Lincoln summoned a delegation of five undistinguished black leaders from the capital, and advanced a plan of colonization which he had contemplated for years. Under this plan, the federal government would finance the re-settlement of blacks to the Chiriqui region of Central America. "Your race suffers greatly by living among us," Lincoln told the delegation, "while our race suffers too." Therefore, we should live separately, Lincoln said. Yet, he added that black people have suffered the "greatest wrong of any people," and it was a shame they "could not be free in the United States."[24]

In truth, Lincoln had already concluded that Presidential emancipation was the "last and only alternative," and it was a "military necessity, absolutely essential to the preservation of the Union." He only championed colonization to "calm white racial anxieties for the proclamation he was about to drop on them." Yet, Garnet was incensed. He was seething as he read Lincoln's words on colonization. He found it totally "absurd" for Lincoln to re-settle men who had "watered their native soil with the sweat of their unpaid labor" once freedom

finally arrived.[25]

Lincoln, however, waited for a Union victory before he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Meanwhile, he had installed Henry Halleck as General-in-Chief, and he really hoped at last he had found a general who would take command. He also sent McClellan's army home since it wasn't fighting anyway. Moreover, Robert E. Lee, who had assumed command of Confederate troops, turned his army northward towards Washington and the entire city was in turmoil. On September 5, Lee invaded Maryland and unleashed his fall offensive. Garnet read about Lee's advance and was petrified that the defense of the Union still rested in the "incompetent" hands of General McClellan. Nevertheless, on September 14, McClellan started fighting the most "awesome battle of the war," at Antietam Creek in Maryland, and he proudly reported to the President that his "victory was complete." Although the victory was not as complete as McClellan promised, Lincoln still regarded the Battle of Antietam as a "sign from God," and he issued the preliminary emancipation which gave the rebels until January 1, 1863 to return to the Union, or have all their slaves freed.[26]

Although Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was no more than a declaration of intent,

Garnet read it as a final pronouncement. Upon hearing the proclamation, old Sister Bemaugh rose in Shiloh Church and proclaimed: "When you feel the spirit, you must not squelch it," and Garnet wholeheartedly agreed with those sentiments. In spite of objections urging restraint, Garnet proceeded to celebrate the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. On September 29, a week after Lincoln's announcement, Garnet told his audience at Shiloh Church, that as a boy on the Maryland plantation, he remembered his father and grandfather, singing a song which anticipated this day. "They say a people shall be free, there's a better day a coming, oh sound the jubilee."[27]

In January, when the Emancipation Proclamation became official, Garnet celebrated again. On New Year's Eve, another overflow crowd gathered in Shiloh Church to hear Garnet's Emancipation Jubilee. At 11:55, Garnet led a five-minute silent prayer in which he dropped to his knees to thank God for delivering the slaves. At midnight the choir sang Garnet's favorite hymn, "Blow Ye Trumpets Blow, the Year of Jubilee Has Come." The next day,blacks from all over the city assembled at Cooper Union and heard Garnet call Lincoln's Proclamation "one of the greatest acts in all history," which should be

celebrated like the Fourth of July. He then proposed "three cheers for the President, three cheers for our native land and three cheers for Horace Greeley" who was in the audience.[28]

The moment of joy was short-lived however, for blacks in their triumph still had to face whites who viewed the Emancipation Proclamation as the ultimate outrage. Lincoln's act had changed the entire Civil War into a struggle for human freedom. Many whites, though, considered it a war for "nigger freedom" and castigated Lincoln as a traitor to his race. Some whites even vowed not to fight. On the other hand, Garnet also realized that the Emancipation Proclamation opened new opportunities for blacks, perhaps even to become soldiers in the Union Army. For Garnet, the Emancipation Proclamation was so significant, because now freedom could be translated into equality under law.

Two days after Garnet's Emancipation Jubilee, Lewis Tappan, now seventy-five years old and tired, came to Shiloh Church and with tears in his eyes, read a poem which captured the new mood:

"Judge not by virtue of the name,
or think to read it on the skin;
honor in white and black the same,
the stamp of glory is within."[29]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER XI

[1] Weekly Anglo-African, December 20, 1860; James Redpath, Guide to Haiti (Boston: 1890) pp. 98-100.

[2] Weekly Anglo-African, December 29, 1860; Redpath, p. 99.

[3] Weekly Anglo-African, January 5, 1861, January 12, 1861, January 19, 1861.

[4] Ibid., February 9, 1861, February 16, 1861, April 6, 1861.

[5] Supplement to the Constitution of the African Civilization Society (New Haven: 1861) p. 6.

[6] Weekly Anglo-African, April 13, 1861.

[7] Minutes of the Session of the Shiloh Presbyterian Church Vol. II (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church Archives), pp. 17-18; McMaster, pp. 109-110.

[8] Frederick Douglass' Monthly, August, 1861.

[9] Weekly Anglo-African, May 4, 1861; Frederick Douglass' Monthly, August, 1861.

[10] Weekly Anglo-African, April 27, 1861.

[11] Minutes of the Session of the Shiloh Presbyterian Church, pp. 117-118.

[12] Frederick Douglass' Monthly, November, 1861; Anti-Slavery Reporter, October 1, 1861.

[13] Henry Highland Garnet to Julia Garnet, September 15, 1861, as reported in Frederick Douglass' Monthly, October, 1861.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., Frederick Douglass' Monthly, September, 1861.

[17] Weekly Anglo-African, November 18, 1861.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Recommendation of The Third Presbytery in the case of Shiloh Church (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church Archives, 1862).

[21] Frederick Douglass' Monthly, December, 1861.

[22] Benjamin Quarles, Negroes in the Civil War, (New York: 1968), p. 129.

[23] Quarles, p. 143; Liberator, May 23, 1862.

[24] Stephen B. Oates, With Malice Toward None, The Life of Abraham Lincoln (New York: 1977), pp. 309-312

[25] Oates, p. 312; Frederick Douglass' Monthly, December, 1862.

[26] Ibid., pp. 316-318.

[27] Quarles, pp. 163-164.

[28] New York Times, January 1, 1863.

[29] Ibid.

CHAPTER XII

RISE NOW AND FLY TO ARMS

The Emancipation Proclamation did permit blacks to serve in the Union Army. Although they served in segregated units, commanded by white officers, and for lower pay than white troops, still Garnet wanted them to enlist. When asked why a black man should fight for the Union, Garnet replied that black people were "men" and "American citizens" who had to "show the world" their willingness to fight for their own freedom. Besides, Garnet said, we must fight to erase the "slanderous myth" that we are too timid to fight. Garnet also reasoned that once blacks had guns in their hands, the nation could never re-enslave them, "not without a good fight" anyway.[1]

In January, 1863, Governor John A. Andrews of Massachusetts led a movement to recruit Negro troops. Andrews named the Massachusetts abolitionist, George Luther Stearns, to head a committee to supervise the raising of black troops. To speed up his work, Stearns employed prominent black leaders like Garnet, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Martin Delany, all of whom had already endorsed black recruitment. Stearns

asked Garnet and the other agents to write him each evening to report their progress. In a letter marked "confidential," Stearns suggested that each agent publish articles, essays, and posters that would "stir the emotions" of black people and persuade them to enlist. In his posters, Garnet often used many of his own revolutionary slogans. "Fail Now and Our Race Is Doomed...Rather Die Free Men Than Live As Slaves... Rise Now and Fly To Arms."[2]

Surprisingly, with all his eloquence, Garnet was not a very capable recruiter. Garnet begged young men to "come forward and enlist," and he told them unless they did so, their "doom was sealed." Garnet admitted he had "some reservations before," but now he supported recruitment with "full heart." Yet, despite his frequent calls to "join the armies of John Brown" by "marching through the heart of the rebellion," few volunteers stepped forward.[3]

In April, at a rally at Shiloh Church, Garnet made a passionate appeal, but still only one recruit volunteered. "I am ashamed of you," Frederick Douglass rose and told the audience, "are you a bunch of cowards?" At that moment, Robert Johnson rose, and defended the Negroes of New York. It was not cowardice which made

young men hesitate to enlist, Johnson said, but a "proper respect for their own manhood." If the government wants black Americans, Johnson continued, let it guarantee them all the "rights of citizens and soldiers." If it did, he would "insure five thousand in twenty days." The crowd gave Johnson a sustained applause.[4]

Johnson's advice was well taken, and Garnet incorporated it in his future appeals. Two weeks later, in another rally at Shiloh Church, Garnet argued that the black man should fight for three reasons--for his country, for promotion on the field, and for honor. But since a black soldier could never be promoted to higher than a captain, Garnet said, there was no encouragement for him to enlist. Do not call the "black soldier a coward," Garnet said, with an eye on the government. Instead, "do him justice, give him an equal chance with white soldiers, and he will show you how he can fight."[5]

However, all talk of recruitment in New York was premature, since Governor Seymour had not authorized the raising of black troops. In May, a committee of prominent citizens including Garnet, Horace Greeley, and John C. Frémont, petitioned Lincoln in defense of black recruitment in New York. The letter stated that

since black people had great patriotism and were willing to volunteer for service, the "dictates of justice, humanity and expediency" demand the recruitment of "loyal men without regard to color." Whatever his personal leanings were, Lincoln replied that you "must see the Governor about this matter."[6]

Bowing to the President's judgment, the committee petitioned Governor Seymour. When it received no reply, the committee wrote another letter, this time stating it was prepared to go to Massachusetts if facilities were not offered in New York. It was ready to "take up arms" to defend the Union, and asked the Governor not to stand in the way. Seymour, however, was not moved by the threat, and again did not reply. Disappointed but not dejected, the committee went ahead with recruiting plans.[7]

In July, meanwhile, a series of events occurred which had a profound effect on blacks in New York City. Fearing competition from newly-freed blacks, angry whites took to the streets and demonstrated their opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation. They believed that competition from black workers represented a threat to their existence, and were prepared to take "all

necessary steps" to eradicate the "menace." Unless they acted, the mostly Irish rioters feared that the city would be overrun by blacks, and that no white American's job would be safe. The result was the bloodiest race riots in New York City history.

On July 12, the crisis began when the New York newspapers published the list of men drafted from that area. White workers who could not raise the three hundred dollars necessary for a draft exemption resented going to war to free the same people who threatened their jobs. They resorted to violence to resist the forces of racial equality. The workers became a mob, looting stores and factories, and burning warehouses. They also burned abolitionist homes, and newspapers like the New York Tribune, and any other business which was sympathetic towards blacks. Whoever got in their way, was "clubbed without mercy or burned without hindrance."[8]

On the second day, the attacks degenerated into all-out riots. The rioters burned a Negro orphanage and hanged Negroes to lampposts and incinerated them. The entire black population of the city had to hide or face being clubbed to death. Any black seen on the street could be pounded to death, and if he stayed

home, his house could be burned. With few policemen willing or able to help, New York remained at the "mercy of a mob."[9]

Garnet and four of his friends hid in the parlor of his home, waiting in tense silence. Fortunately, his daughter Mary had removed his nameplate from the door, an act which probably saved his life. On the third day, Garnet could take it no longer and recklessly took to the streets. He found Shiloh Church desecrated but sill standing. As he walked the streets, he saw "marauding bands dancing and howling around the red flames of the burning buildings." He also saw a black man hanging on a limb while a "demon in human form" produced a knife and proceeded to cut out pieces of the hanging man's flesh, and offered it to the mob. "Who wants some Nigger meat?" he cried, and the mob replied, "I, I, I."[10]

By the fourth day, the violence had subsided, but a "pall of smoke" had settled on the city. It was impossible, of course, to estimate how costly the damage was, but an authority on riots in New York City called it "staggering." Fortunately, a group of local businessmen met after the riots and decided to help the victims of the disaster. These men set up a relief

agency across the street from Shiloh Church and commissioned Garnet to dispense the aid. Garnet personally processed 3,000 needy cases, and received a small grant of $25 himself.[11]

Garnet was deeply touched by the committee's generosity. He expressed his gratitude in a letter to J. D. McKenzie, the Executive Secretary of the Committee of Merchants. "We were hungry, and you fed us," Garnet wrote. "We were thirsty and you gave us drink, we were naked and you clothed us.... You obeyed the noblest dictates of the human heart, and by your generous, moral courage, you rolled back the tide of violence that might have swept us away." Rather ironically, McKenzie responded that he hoped "in time, black people would trust the white man as a friend."[12]

Back on the war front, McClellan had done nothing after Antietam. Exasperated with his inaction, Lincoln finally moved, to the joy of Garnet and most abolitionists, and replaced McClellan with another West Pointer, General Ambrose E. Burnside. Had Lincoln finally found a general who was willing to fight? Apparently so, for in December, 1862, Burnside ordered a march on Fredericksburg, which at least represented some motion southward.

However, Burnside was completely outmaneuvered by Lee, and the Confederate Army handed him one of the worst defeats of the war. With tears in his eyes, Burnside ordered the evacuation of Fredericksburg, and Lincoln replaced him with Joseph Hooker. Hooker did no better as he concentrated his army at Chancellorsville, just ten miles west of Fredericksburg, in utter desperation. Although his army outnumbered the rebels, he did not force the action until the following May, where he suffered heavy losses and retreated again.

Lee then took the offensive. He crossed the Potomac and headed northward. On July 1, Lee's army gained control of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, and the entire nation prepared for a major battle. The Union Army, now commanded by General George Meade, took position at Cemetery Ridge, just south of Gettysburg. On that field,the two sides slugged out the most grueling battle of the war, and, two days later, when it was over, the Confederate Army retreated, spent and bleeding. In spite of horrendous losses on both sides, Garnet could observe that the tide of battle had changed.

Apparently, the staggering losses at Gettysburg re-opened the desire of many northerners to secure new

manpower by recruiting black troops. In each case, states had the responsibility of raising troops to fill federal quotas. In New York, the New York Post commented that Governor Seymour was "stalling" and thus depriving the state of "able Negro soldiers." In October, Seymour replied that he did "not deem it advisable" to recruit black troops. Garnet, along with sixty other members of the Committee for Recruitment, petitioned the governor again, demanding that he reverse his decision. When Seymour refused, the Committee then petitioned Secretary of War Stanton to federalize the New York Militia. They hoped this tactic would allow the national government to oversee the recruitment and training of black troops in New York. On November 24, Stanton overruled Seymour although he permitted the governor to save face by crediting each troop recruited to New York. By December, aided by the efforts of Garnet and Douglass, over 2,300 black men had stepped forward, more than enough to fill the first colored regiment.[13]

Now, all that remained was to appoint a ranking officer. Garnet wanted Colonel Dwight Morris of Connecticut, a white officer who was sympathetic to black troops, and he also wanted a black major in order to "build morale." Stanton, however, who would not be

told whom to appoint, selected Lieutenant Colonel N. B. Bertram of Philadelphia instead. In December, members of the Union Loyal League Club, which replaced the New York Committee for Colored Recruitment, met with Bertram, and agreed to report to Rikers Island where recruits were sent as soon as they were mustered.[14]

Garnet went to Rikers Island too, but as a civilian, since his amputated leg made it impossible for him to be a soldier. He did serve as Chaplain for the three black regiments that would train on the Island. His principal responsibilities were to insure the well-being, and to hear the complaints of black recruits, of which there were many. Although Stanton had stipulated that black soldiers were entitled to thirteen dollars a week (the same pay as white soldiers), most received considerably less. Blacks were also promised a $300 bounty, but few if any received it. This deception was so widespread that Garnet actually threatened to quit his post.[15]

When unscrupulous concessionaries on Rikers Island charged black troops 50¢ for a cup of coffee, or $1 for a canteen of water, Garnet printed circulars exposing the conditions, and they were rectified. He was also able to secure special police to ride the Rikers Island Ferry, to prevent black troops from "constant abuse and

beatings." Finally, with aid from Gerrit Smith, Garnet instituted a relief program which aided sick and wounded soldiers.[16]

On March 6, 1864, the First New York State Regiment of the Twentieth United States Division of Colored Troops left Rikers Island for Louisiana. Over a thousand men marched on the special ferry which transferred them to the Thirty-Sixth Street Pier at the East River. In the bitter cold, they proceeded to march down the east side to Union Square, where they were now cheered on the same streets that many had been "mobbed, hunted down, and beaten." For Garnet, this put "ordinary miracles in the shade."[17]

At one o'clock they arrived downtown at the Union League Club house and attended the flag-raising ceremonies. Garnet and Julia sat on the platform and observed one of the "most imposing ceremonies they had ever seen." As the troops marched in column to their positions, Garnet was impressed with the "evenness of their dress and the carriage of their muskets." When the last troop had settled, President Charles King of Columbia University, told the troops they stood "emancipated, regenerated--and disenthralled--the peer of the proudest soldier in the land." Afterwards, a white woman bestowed an American flag "as an emblem of love and honor" on a

recruit, and the New York Herald called that gesture a victory for "miscegenation," since that act was surely the equivalent of a "marriage ceremony."[18]

After the festivities, the troops stacked arms and moved to the refreshment table where coffee and sandwiches were waiting. Then the troops reformed their lines and prepared to depart. The Chief of Police and a hundred of his men, followed by Garnet and other members of the Union League Club, marched to the beat of martial music down Broadway to South Ferry. At the pier, Garnet shook each recruit's hand, as the troops boarded the S.S. Ericsson bound for New Orleans.[19]

Apparently, still upset with the treatment of black recruits, and unhappy that he could not become an army chaplain (a post that included an officer's commission), Garnet left his post and went to Washington. In April he had received a unanimous call by the Trustees of Washington's Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church to serve as minister. While Garnet worked at Rikers Island, the Trustees had again closed Shiloh Church, so the appointment came just at the right time. Garnet liked Washington because he was "close to the center of power" where he could "strengthen the hands" of the national leaders."[20]

Although he and Lincoln never met, the President was aware of Garnet. On several occasions, Garnet called at the White House, but the President always refused to see him. Was he too much of a firebrand to suit Lincoln? Garnet wrote Martin Delaney that he had been abroad and had spoken to people of "nobility and royalty, but I have never seen people harder to reach than the leader of government in Washington." Garnet concluded that since so many black people had called on Lincoln "expecting something and coming away dissatisfied," the President had decided to "receive no more black visitors."[21]

From Washington, Garnet learned that the war might be ending at last. Ulysses S. Grant, the hero of Vicksburg on the western front, had assumed command of the Union Army, and he was just the general Garnet was waiting for. Although he was stubby and unkempt, and had compiled an indifferent record at West Point, Grant was not afraid to fight. Grant's strategy was simple and logical. He would attack Lee and capture Richmond, and that pleased Garnet greatly. In May, Grant marched an army into the wilderness where Hooker had been routed the year before. There, Grant fought two battles, and although he suffered enormous

casualties, he plodded forward. After a month of fighting in the wilderness, with losses of 54,000 men killed or wounded, Grant camped his army at Petersburg, nine miles from Richmond, not yet ready for the final annihilation.

Meanwhile, in June, the Republicans renominated Lincoln, and the President chose Andrew Johnson, a strong Unionist from Tennessee, as his new running mate. The Democrats nominated Lincoln's nemesis, George B. McClellan, who endorsed a platform that resembled peace at any price. Not only did Lincoln face opposition from McClellan who lambasted the President's "ineptness" and Grant's "butchery," he also faced opposition from those in his own party who thought him a failure. Garnet wondered, too. Could Lincoln be re-elected? And perhaps even more significant, what would happen if he were not re-elected?

Garnet continued to ask himself these questions with Grant stalled at Petersburg, and Lincoln's re-election uncertain. What was the future of the black man in America? Were blacks to be returned to slavery? Could he and his fellow black men ever enjoy the privileges of citizens of the United States? To find answers to these questions, Garnet called another convention of the

National Association of Colored Citizens and their Friends. No convention had met since 1853, but Garnet now felt that one was needed to establish the principles that would guide the future of black people in America.

On October 4, 1864, Garnet opened the National Convention in Syracuse with a prayer and a plea that conventions should continue until "complete freedom is ours." Only in unity, Garnet said, "could we promote the principles that were so important to us all." In the afternoon, the convention elected Douglass (who had not supported calling a convention) the permanent president over Garnet. That evening, dejected and lonely, Garnet walked the streets of Syracuse alone.[22]

Suddenly, a band of Irish hoodlums emerged from a tavern and wrestled Garnet to the ground. They stole his silver-plated cane, removed his wooden stump, and forced him to crawl face down in the mud. Apart from his bruised pride, Garnet was not seriously injured and returned to the convention the next morning to help draw up a declaration of human freedom.

Before beginning work, the delegates made a collection for Garnet to buy a new stump and cane. Then Captain Ingraham of the Louisiana Colored Troops presented Garnet with the blood-stained battle flag,

and the delegates rose and gave the "two injured warriors" three hearty cheers.[23]

Douglass then began assigning delegates to committees to help write a "declaration of right and wrongs." He called on Garnet to first "clarify his position" before being assigned to a committee. Garnet found such a request humiliating at this late date, and spoke of a continuing effort by "Douglass and others," to "throw him on the shelf for his connection with the African Civilization Society. Garnet was furious that Douglass had raised that issue again, but said he would continue to act upon his convictions and "maintain his belief in Negro nationality."[24]

The next speaker, John S. Rock, a black attorney from Massachusetts, was more direct. He resented "sidetracking debates," and reminded the delegates that it was the United States, not Garnet, that stood at the "moment of decision." "There are two parties," Rock proclaimed, "the one headed by Lincoln is for freedom and the republic, the other one headed by McClellan is for despotism and slavery." The audience responded to that clear statement with long and sustained applause.[25]

The next morning, George Downing, long a Garnet critic, requested the floor, He, too, could not rest without a harsh condemnation of Garnet and the African Civilization Society which was now sponsoring schools in the South. "How come you take money from white men, Mr. Garnet?" Downing asked. Impatiently, Garnet rose, fixed his eyes on Downing, and replied: "If Jeff Davis would send an amount to educate colored children, I would gladly receive it and say at least that's one good thing you have done." Turning to the entire audience, Garnet said: "Downing has tried to cripple my influence with the convention and has successfully accomplished that purpose, but he, too, will go away a little lame."[26]

In the end it was Garnet who lost. The convention passed a resolution which declared "we have no sympathy with the African Civilization Society." The final Declaration of Right and Wrongs was a weak statement that offered few specific proposals. Called to enhance unity, the convention adjourned divided and embittered. Relations between Garnet and Douglass deteriorated again. The Negro Convention movement appeared dead.[27]

Fortunately for the Union, the summer of despair ended. On September 2, General William Tecumseh Sherman marched his army into Atlanta, and the rebels abandoned the shell-torn city. Then, Sherman marched to the sea, leaving a path of destruction in his wake. Sherman's victories rallied the Union behind Lincoln. As Lincoln's armies won victories on the battlefields, his chances looked better at the polls. He viewed the election with new confidence, too. When the votes were counted, Lincoln defeated McClellan by almost a half million votes, and the electoral difference was even more substantial.

Garnet felt relieved. He thought McClellan was incompetent, disloyal to the Union, and certain to re-enslave blacks. Lincoln, although weak, was a man of integrity. For Garnet, Lincoln's victory was indeed crucial. Freedom had triumphed over slavery, and the Union would be preserved.

In January, 1865, the House of Representatives began debate on the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. For Lincoln, and most Republicans, this constitutional amendment was necessary to prevent courts or future administrations from overturning the Emancipation

Proclamation. Quoting Lincoln, sponsors of the Amendment proclaimed: "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." Lincoln did all in his power, like "button-holing former Whigs," and promising federal jobs, to insure the Amendment's passage.[28]

When it came time for a vote, Garnet waited in "tense silence" in the House gallery. Both sides anticipated a close vote. When the roll call proceeded, every Republican voted for the Amendment, and enough Democrats to insure the two-thirds majority by just three votes. At once, a "storm of cheers" broke out amongst the Republicans who "jumped around, embraced one another, and waved their hats and canes overhead." Garnet shouted and applauded from the gallery, where he and other "ubiquitous Negroes" cheered this magnificent day alongside whites. "Oh what a pepper and salt mixture it was," Garnet recalled.[29]

One week later, on February 6, the Reverend William Henry Channing, Chaplain of the House of Representatives, invited Garnet to preach a memorial sermon to commemorate the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment. He invited Garnet, not Douglass, because Garnet was the "most eloquent black man in the land." The move had the blessing of the President and his Cabinet. Knowing

that no black man had ever preached in Congress, Garnet made certain his oratory would be something special.[30]

At 11:00 o'clock on the morning of the President's 56th birthday, Garnet arrived in the House of Representatives, and found every seat in the gallery occupied. The choir from the 15th Street Church was already present, and an eyewitness observed that it seemed strange to see this "band of black vocalists standing where before only white people were permitted to stand." All eyes focused on Garnet. The white and black people in the audience--both "appearing comfortable with each other"--had come to hear a sermon from the most distinguished black orator in the nation.[31]

At noon, Garnet mounted the podium and prepared to speak. Surrounded by portraits of Washington and Lafayette, Garnet appealed to a sense of freedom that bound all Americans. The hour-long speech was Garnet's interpretation of the black man's past, and his hopes for the future. What is slavery, "this demon which people have worshipped as a God?" Garnet asked. "It is the highly concentrated essence of all conceivable wickedness. Theft, robbery, pollution, incest, cruelty

> cold-blooded murder, blasphemy, and the defiance of the law of God. It has divided our national councils. It has endangered deadly strife

> between brethren. It has wasted the treasure of the Commonwealth, and the lives of thousands of brave men, and driven troops of helpless men and women into yawning tombs. It has caused the bloodiest Civil War ever recorded in the book of time. It has shorn this nation of its locks of strength that was rising as a young lion in the western world. When would the agitation end? When all unjust burdens are removed from every man in the land. When emancipation was followed by enfranchisement and all men have the right of American citizenship. When our brave soldiers have justice. When the men who "endured the suffering and peril on the battlefield in defense of their 'country' have the privilege of voting for their rulers. When in every respect, the black man is "equal before the law" to the white man in this land. "We ask for no favor, but we plead for justice." Honorable Senators and Representatives! Illustrious rulers of this great nation, speedily finish the work which the Almighty has given you to do: Emancipate, Enfranchise, Educate, and give the blessings of the gospel to every American citizen."[32]

Since it was the Sabbath, applause was not in order, but at every crucial moment of the speech, the audience responded with a hearty "amen." Garnet had won new respect from his black friends. People in the audience requested a copy of this "important epoch in our history" to preserve for their posterity. The Weekly Anglo-African called Garnet's speech "dazzling," and said

it fulfilled the "wildest dreams of his youth." Even the Liberator admitted that Garnet "reverberated" the halls of Congress with his wisdom and intelligence. It was indeed the high point of his career.[33]

Only the Washington Daily Times was openly hostile to the speech. The editor said that the halls of Congress were "polluted" by Garnet in an "open desecration of the Sabbath." It was "shameful," the editor said, that Garnet was permitted to occupy the speakers desk to deliver a "political harangue--miscalled a sermon."[34]

Still, Garnet was gratified with the generally favorable reaction to his discourse. For a short time, he regained the recognition and the adulation he so desperately craved. In April, the Board of Elders of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church commissioned James McCune Smith to write a short biographical portrait of their pastor. The portrait depicted Garnet as the most influential black man in the land, to which all other blacks came for leadership and direction.

Garnet could now see that the war was ending. Renewed pressure from Grant at Petersburg overwhelmed the depleted Confederate Army. On April 3, Richmond fell.

Although Lee's army tried to retreat, Grant enveloped him. Recognizing the futility of further resistance, on April 9, Lee surrendered to Grant at the Appomattox Court House. Garnet's reaction was sheer relief. The conflict which he thought would never end was finally over; "Jehovah has trumpeted, victory was won."[35]

News of Lee's surrender set Washington into a frenzy of joy. While the nation celebrated, Lincoln pondered reconstruction. He questioned what the role of blacks would be in the new reconstruction governments. He concluded that "very intelligent blacks and those who served in the Union forces" should have the vote. Yet, he wished to remain "flexible," and avoid any strongly-worded ideological statements which might flame racial tensions. He was, however, prepared to act, when he was convinced that "action would be proper."[36]

On Friday, April 14, Lincoln was in a good mood. He and his wife had decided to go to the theatre, to see the contemporary English play, "Our American Cousin." During the third act, John Wilkes Booth, a famous actor with strong Confederate sympathies, stepped into Lincoln's box and shot him in the head. The next morning the President died.

Garnet, like the rest of the nation, was shocked. Could this really be true? Garnet, who had often been critical of Lincoln, now mourned him in death. On Saturday morning, Garnet and other blacks in the national capitol went out in the cold drizzle, and saw the city stricken with grief. They heard the church bells toll, and by noon they saw the city shrouded in black drapes and decorations.

The following Wednesday, Lincoln lay in the east room of the White House. After a funeral, a procession of black troops led the body down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. Along the route, thousands of black people lined the streets to pay their final respects to the slain President. Thousands of black people also filed through the Capitol rotunda to get a last look at their fallen hero.[37]

On April 21, the funeral train carrying Lincoln back to Springfield left Washington. Garnet felt he had to do something to show the world Lincoln's death was not in vain. Certainly, the Thirteenth Amendment was Lincoln's monument, but Garnet wanted something more visible to immortalize the slain martyr.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER XII

[1] Frederick Douglass' Monthly, April, 1863.

[2] The Miscellaneous Anti-Slavery Papers at Cornell University contain this "confidential letter." They also contain a copy of Garnet's recruiting poster from which this dissertation gets its title.

[3] Frederick Douglass' Monthly, June, 1863.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., July, 1863.

[6] Henry A. Reilly, Report: Organization of Colored Troops, (New York: 1869),Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library, pp. 1-2.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Quarles, Negroes in the Civil War, pp. 238-239.

[9] Ibid., Joel Headley, The Great Riots of New York, (Reprinted New York: 1970), pp. 206-208.

[10] Ibid., Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Citizens and their Friends, held in Syracuse, October 4-7, 1864,Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library, p. 20.

[11] Headley, p. 208; Report on the New York Relief Commission for Colored People, (New York: 1863), Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library, pp. 9-11.

[12] Ibid., pp. 31-34; Henry Highland Garnet to the Committee of Merchants, August 22, 1863, J. D. McKenzie to Henry Highland Garnet, n.d., are both cited in Smith, Memorial Discourse, pp. 61-62.

[13] Reilly, p. 5.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., Report on the Committee of Volunteering, (New York: 1864),Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library, pp. 35-38; Smith, Memorial Discouse, p. 58.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Rielly, pp. 17-19; New York Herald, May 6, 1864; Quarles, pp. 190-191.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Henry Highland Garnet to Martin Delaney, February, 1865, as cited in Delaney's Autobiography Martin Delaney: My Life and Service (Boston: 1877), p. 164; The letter is also cited in Victor Ullman's Martin R. Delaney (Boston: 1971), p. 293.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Citizens and their Friends, held in Syracuse, October 4-7, 1864, pp. 9-10.

[23] Ibid., pp. 12-14.

[24] Ibid., p. 17.

[25] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[26] Ibid., p. 28.

[27] Ibid., p. 29.

[28] Oates, With Malice Toward None, p. 405; Weekly Anglo-African, April 15, 1865.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Weekly Anglo-African, June 14, 1865.

[31] Smith, Memorial Discourse, p. 269.

[32] The entire discourse plus the biographical portrait by James McCune Smith was published in the frequently-cited Memorial Discourse, pp. 66-69; Earl O'fari's Let Your Motto Be Resistance also published the entire discourse, Appendix pp. 187-203.

[33] Ibid., Weekly Anglo-African, June 14, 1865; Liberator, April 15, 1865.

[34] Washington Daily Intelligencer, April 13, 1865.

[35] Weekly Anglo-African, September 3, 1865.

[36] Oates, With Malice Toward None, p. 424.

[37] Oates, pp. 434-436; Quarles, p. 343.

CHAPTER XIII

WE WILL SURVIVE

On April 25, just two weeks after Lincoln's assassination, Garnet already had plans to build a "black people's" monument to the slain President. He insisted that the monument be a black people's monument because he believed Lincoln had special significance for black Americans, and they had to honor him in their own way. He also wanted the monument in Washington because the nation's capital had the largest black population of any city in America. Therefore, Garnet and other black leaders in the District of Columbia founded the National Lincoln Monument Association to begin plans for construction. The group, which included Martin Delany, Joshua Logan, Robert Hamilton, and James McCune Smith, wanted to build a monument which would not only be a memorial to Lincoln, but a model for the "elevation and education" of black people as well.[1]

Months later, when Garnet asked Gerrit Smith and other white friends for a donation to "our Lincoln monument," Martin Delany angrily resigned from the monument committee. He wanted "no part," he said, in an organization that came to whites for support. Frederick Douglass wrote Garnet,

"when we wish to build monuments of any kind, let us build them with our own money; and if we build monuments with white men's money, let us have the grace to admit that the monument is as much the property of whites as the blacks." The next month, Douglass again wrote that Garnet wants "only a colored people's monument, yet he comes to whites. When we want to build our own tombstones, let us do it with our own money."[2]

Garnet was so offended by Douglass' remarks that he wrote Douglass and cautioned that he ought to be "better employed than to be on the side of the copperheads fighting your own people." "Haven't we had enough failures?" Garnet asked. Let us now try to succeed for once, and show the world we are capable of doing something for ourselves, Garnet stated. Because of this controversy, Garnet's plan to build a Lincoln monument, for the time being, came to nothing.[3]

Meanwhile, Garnet decided to find out all he could about the new Chief Executive, the Tennessee Unionist, Andrew Johnson. He was, according to Garnet, something of an unknown entity. He had served courageously as the military governor of Tennessee, and in that capacity, had always displayed a keen hatred of confederates. Yet he was a Democrat and Garnet had said repeatedly he had no use for that "treasonous bunch." Nevertheless,

Garnet decided to wait and "reserve judgment" on the new President.[4]

In May, President Johnson recognized the unionist government of Francis H. Pierpoint as the official government of Virginia. After his inauguration, Pierpoint raised a call to select a state assembly. When it met, it specifically banned blacks from voting. Blacks, who under the military rule of General Butler, were protected in the full employment of the "rights and liberties of all loyal men," became furious. On May 23, a group of Norfolk's blacks called for a mass meeting of all "loyal citizens without regard to birth or color" to protest the injustice. The group vowed to take all "actions necessary" to win the vote in the coming election.[5]

In June, a committee of Norfolk's most prominent blacks assembled in the Catherine Street Baptist Church and decided to draft an "Address from the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Virginia," to the people of the United States. They chose Garnet to write the final draft of this most revealing document. The Address began by affirming that America was not a land which belonged exclusively to whites; blacks had labored and fought here, too. Yet, blacks continued to be the victims of discrimination. Only two months had passed since the end of the Civil War,

and in Virginia eight hundred blacks had been jailed by a secessionist mayor. All over the state, the Address continued, black people were being beaten for resisting forced labor. This situation was "intolerable."[6]

Garnet did not want the "interminable military occupation of the South, but "we must have our complete and unfettered rights.... We are men," Garnet continued. "We have shown it on the battlefield and we must be treated like men.... We are not stupid, we are not lazy and we know that freedom means honest work at honest wages." Garnet then urged the blacks of the South not to be "supine," but to stand up for the political rights and their rights as workers. Everywhere in the South, Garnet continued, "your late owners are forming labor associations to fix and maintain prices." Garnet urged that blacks form labor associations to "fairly regulate the price of their labor," too. Also, Garnet said, "we must make certain that contracts made with black workingmen are fully endorsed."[7]

According to Garnet, the surest guarantee for the independence of black people was for them to own the soil they worked on. He urged black farmers to form land associations in which they would pay small installments into a fund holding the mortgage on the land. When the

mortgage was paid, black farmers could receive clear title to their land. Blacks had to develop economic power, the Address concluded, for "without economic power, political power had no meaning."[8]

In July, the Weekly Anglo-African hired Garnet as an editor and assigned him to the South to investigate conditions there. He was asked to write a column, "Notes From the South," which was to appear each week in the paper. In August, he and Julia departed by steamer, and arrived in Kent County, Maryland, the place of Garnet's birth. As he drove by carriage through the country, he saw the peach and watermelon fields he had loved as a child. Then, he arrived in Newmarket, which he surely felt was the "garden of the South."[9]

What an extraordinary experience it was to return to his former plantation. First, he set out to find the tomb of the Spencers, the family who once had the "impudence to claim our fathers and ourselves as their property." As he strolled through the graveyards, he was "most solidly impressed to read the epitaphs of the dear departed owners." The next morning he drove a few miles out of town and found the estate where he was born. Again, he could touch the wildwood trees he climbed as a child, or swim in the branch, the stream where

he almost drowned. For Garnet the experience was "beyond all feelings."[10]

The Spencer plantation now comprised ten farms. The mansion house was in ruins. Almost everyone he had known was now dead. At last he found two people who had known him as a child, and they gave him a basket of fruit and a branch of cedar. Garnet and Julia then left Newmarket forever.[11]

Next, they took the steamer down the "sluggish muddy waters" of the James River on to Richmond. Upon approaching the city, they saw the remains of exploded steamers and ironclads which looked like "huge alligators basking in the summer sun." In the city they saw fifteen hundred of the finest stores in Richmond, all in ruins, and five hundred black men at work clearing the rubbish, while the whites sat in "sackcloth and ashes." It appeared to Garnet that the "angel of death and desolation had swept over this once proud and beautiful city."[12]

Garnet spoke in Richmond for half an hour, telling his Negro audience not to rest until enfranchisement was won. But while he spoke, he could see in the distance that all was not well. Black men ran through the streets "as bloody as bears," claiming they were beaten by Union soldiers. These "mostly Irish soldiers," Garnet

said, took delight in robbing and beating black people, and unless black soldiers were used to garrison the city, this situation would continue.[13]

Garnet now headed north to Cincinnati to see how well his people were adjusting in the midwest. He had been to Cincinnati seven years before, and he found changes there "perceptible." The fertile valleys outside the city were now filled with mansions, stone houses, and cottages, with an occasional black family living there. In the city, streets were crowded with people busy at work. All over the city Garnet saw talented black artists making fine oil cloths and superb velvet and silk carpets. In Cincinnati a black artist painted Garnet and Julia, and presented them with the paintings. "What a gift it was to "see ourselves as others see us."[14]

From Cincinnati, Garnet journeyed to Louisville, the city of "overproud aristocrats," where he preached in the Center Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Garnet told his audience that it was much better to work for "Mr. Cash than Mr Lash. A black man now looks better to whites than he used to. He looks taller, brighter and more like a man." Wasn't it strange, Garnet said, that the "more money you make, the lighter your skin will be; the more land and houses you get, the straighter your

hair will be."[15]

His final stop was in Saint Louis, where Garnet saw bona fide black colonels commissioned by the State of Missouri, and he even attended services in Saint Louis' First Presbyterian Church. Garnet observed that if the North does not hurry up, "southern christianity will take the lead in overcoming prejudice."[16]

In October, after returning from the South, Garnet wrote Gerrit Smith that the journey had been "very enlightening," and for the most part, he had been "kindly received." He was "amazed" how people could be "so kind to a native," especially a black one. Yet, he realized the situation in the South was "totally unacceptable." He saw the "emancipation crumbling," as former slaveholders returned "their madness to the South." These slaveholders, according to Garnet, would rather see black people "blotted out of existence than see them free." Unless the federal government protected the rights of the freed men--with a hundred thousand black troops if necessary--southerners would virtually re-enslave black people.[11]

For Garnet, Andrew Johnson was now the "chief villain" in this "bloody affair." His program for reconstruction offered black people no protection what-

soever. All he proclaimed in May, 1865, was that southern voters had to take a loyalty oath; and upon that oath, were eligible for a general pardon. In fact, many wealthy former Confederates were excluded from the pardon altogether. When enough "loyal" people in the state had established a government and written a constitution, that state would be re-admitted to the Union. There was no mention of black suffrage--as Lincoln had done--because Johnson was openly hostile to it. In October, Garnet wrote Smith that Johnson's plan of reconstruction was "disastrous to the cause of freedom." In fact, Garnet said, that when he discussed Johnson's plan with his former teacher, Beriah Green, the old man tore up the plan and "smashed it into a thousand atoms."[18]

In November, Garnet resumed his position as pastor of Washington's Fifteenth Street Church. He told his congregation about his experiences in the South, and they responded to his descriptions with "warmth and laughter." However, he also told them about the "unpunished brutalities" in the South, and these stories frequently brought his audience to tears. Garnet concluded that the federal government had to "guarantee and secure all citizens, irrespective of race or color, equality

before the law including the rights of impartial suffrage."[19]

Meanwhile, Garnet continued to work with the many relief associations in the nation's capital. Since the end of the war, thousands of blacks had poured into Washington, most of them in terrible need. Food, shelter, and education had to be made available if blacks were to survive in the city. As Garnet pointed out, Washington's free black population always paid taxes, but since the city never let their children attend tax-supported schools, they had to start their own schools and pay their own teachers. Now with so many more people to educate, Garnet said, "we can't possibly take care of ourselves, we're swamped."[20]

To aid the relief, Garnet applied to the Freedman's Relief Association for help. This was a private philanthropic organization, completely separate from the government supported Freedman's Bureau. The organization was born out of the war to "relieve government of the enormous burden of caring for the starving black people all over the South." After the war, the organization sponsored schools and shelters to enable blacks to eventually "support and govern themselves."[21]

In Washington, by the end of 1865, the Freedman's Relief Association had subsidized four schools and twelve shelters. Each school had about four teachers, who usually earned five hundred dollars a year plus their board. Generally, it cost about $15 a month to board and educate each student. Washington also had several trade and industrial schools for adults.[22]

E. M. Zelie, the chief administrator of the Washington schools, said he could point to the schools in the nation's capital with a "sense of pride." Rev. William E. Channing, the National Director of the Freedman's Relief Association, said that the Washington schools should set an example in making blacks "intelligent, refined and educated citizens." He hoped the day would come, however, when education would be financed through a general school tax.[23]

Garnet remained most active with the African Civilization Society School which now had over two hundred students, most of whom were "good readers." It was "astonishing," a report concluded, how "rapidly they learn." Garnet wished to expand the school to include an adult education program. In December, he wrote the Director of the Executive Committee of the National Freedman's Relief Association and asked for money. We

must buy "lumber, nails and glass," he wrote, to put up "temporary buildings for the old and crippled freed men" who arrive daily in this "city of refuge." "We also need cloth to teach women without husbands how to make and mend garments," Garnet wrote. And, we also need beds, Garnet continued, so people will not have to sleep on "cold stable floors" and die of pneumonia and other pulmonary diseases.[24]

Certainly Garnet welcomed support from the Freedman's Relief Association, but he resented any control. The association made it clear they preferred white teachers, claiming most of the freed men were more comfortable with them. Garnet, on the other hand, wanted black teachers, because he thought white teachers generally did not "understand the manhood of black men." White teachers often did no more than "corrupt the minds of black people," Garnet argued. "Education can only be meaningful if it exists upon the basis of equality of race." Garnet's position probably alienated him from the National Freedman's Relief Association, and it is likely that he received less than his share of grants because of it.[25]

Somewhat dissatisfied with the Freedman's Relief Association's position on black teachers, Garnet lent

his name to a series of local organizations which became known as Garnet Leagues. These leagues were dedicated to advancing the material interests of black people by hiring black teachers and ministers to develop higher standards in religion, art and literature. Garnet hoped that these leagues would organize literary societies and reading rooms, to keep the people informed on their own history and culture, and to "advance the general prosperity" of the freed men. Although Garnet Leagues formed in Washington, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and New York, Garnet remained active in the Washington League only.[26]

Meanwhile, attacks against blacks in the South continued. Newspapers each day reported new killings. Former Confederates paraded the streets, wearing Confederate uniforms, shouting Confederate slogans--as if a Civil War had not been fought. Finally, most southern states passed the so-called "black codes" to control blacks in the South. These codes limited the freedom of blacks by requiring them to farm, or forcing them to sign labor contracts. They also classified many indigent blacks as "vagrants," and required they be "hired out" to any white person willing to pay their

fine. That was reconstruction "confederate style," and it enraged even many moderate northerners.[27]

Therefore, the Republicans in Congress began to oppose Johnson's plan of reconstruction. First, in March, 1866, Congress formed a joint committee on reconstruction, establishing its authority over reconstruction by passing a bill which extended the Freedman's Bureau (originally passed in 1865 as a temporary measure to care for refugees). Johnson vetoed the measure on the grounds that it was an unconstitutional extension of military authority in peace time. Then Congress overrode the President's veto, and passed a Civil Rights Act which declared blacks citizens of the United States and gave the federal government the power to enforce this authority. Radical Republicans, like Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, argued the rights of citizens included the right of impartial suffrage.

In March, 1866, Sumner told the Senate there was no "substantial protection for the freed men except the franchise." He must have this, Sumner argued, for his protection, for the union, for the peace of the country, and for justice. Garnet read Sumner's speech and was overjoyed. He wrote the Massachusetts Senator that he wished to render his thanks and "undying gratitude"

for that "glorious and inspired production." "If I were able to," Garnet said, "I would have a million copies printed and scattered all over the land."[28]

Garnet continued to feel good throughout the spring of 1866. In April, General Howard, the Director of the Freedman's Bureau, offered Garnet a position with the bureau, and although Garnet refused the position, claiming that Howard was not interested in universal black suffrage, the two men parted as friends. Also, on April 27, Garnet and a small group marched past the homes of Sumner and General Grant, cheering that the "principles of liberty have now triumphed." Thank God, after all our suffering, Garnet said, our race will now "rise and flourish." Then they marched to the Capitol, where Lincoln had lay in state the year before, and Garnet proclaimed: "rest, rest in peace glorious martyr, statesman, ruler, benefactor and friend."[29]

In the summer of 1866, the Republicans called a convention in Philadelphia to bolster support for their programs. They chose Garnet and Douglass as honorary delegates. Some Republicans believed that Garnet's and Douglass' selection was "unfortunate" since their presence would only "jeopardize Republican success at the polls" in the fall elections. Nevertheless, Garnet

and Douglass went to Philadelphia and were generally well received.[30]

On the third day of the convention, northern delegates caucused and decided to consider black suffrage. However, even the radical members, including Benjamin Butler, Benjamin Wade, Horace Greeley, Simon Cameron, and Carl Schurz, urged "caution and moderation." Since black suffrage was so despised by white Americans, it could only lead to disaster in the November elections. Nevertheless, the delegates invited Garnet and Douglass to speak.[31]

Black history in America, Garnet said, was filled with pain and suffering. Yet, after two hundred and fifty years of "denial and pain," we are still here. Our birthright demands the right of impartial suffrage and equality under law, Garnet said. The next day, when the entire convention met, the mostly black southern delegates chanted for the vote. Then, West Virginia Governor Barement, the president of the convention, tried to find some face-saving compromise, and decided to allow southern delegates to submit a report on black suffrage. The report would not be binding on the entire convention.[32]

Afterward, Garnet went to Pittsburgh where he spoke

to the Garnet League. Somewhat disheartened with the failure of the Republicans to support black suffrage, Garnet told his audience, "We black people do not intend to die beneath the oppressor's heel." We are strong, "we will survive." Later he stopped off and spoke to some civic and business leaders in Pittsburgh, and was generally impressed with the city on the Allegheny.[33]

Shortly after Garnet returned to Washington, in March, 1867, Congress passed the first Reconstruction Act, over the President's veto. This act divided the South into five military districts, each controlled by a Major-General with the power to "protect the civil rights of all persons." For re-admission to the Union, states had to adopt a new constitution guaranteeing blacks the right to vote, and disenfranchising high-ranking former confederates. When these conditions were satisfied, a state could be re-admitted to the Union.

Garnet was delighted with the act. Although he did not favor the "interminable military occupation of the South and had little faith in the compassion of most Union soldiers, he still applauded the federal government for intervening to protect the civil rights of black Americans. This, for Garnet, was a "marvelous change."[34]

In October, Elizabeth Keckley, Mary Todd Lincoln's mulatto seamstress and companion, informed Garnet that the President's widow was in "pressing financial need." She had no government pension, and was in debt from expensive clothing she had bought during the war. Garnet and Douglass both promised to help by lecturing on behalf of that "great lady." Garnet wrote Mrs. Keckley that he would do all in his power although he feared it would not be "as much as you anticipate."[35]

Garnet actually did sell some of Mrs. Lincoln's clothing. He and Douglass sold several shawls, handkerchiefs, dresses, and two Russian sable capes, probably at a fraction of their true value. In November, Mrs. Lincoln wrote Keckley, that Garnet and Douglass will have my "grateful thanks." They are "noble men." She then insisted upon giving Garnet one of the late President's walking canes because she knew that Lincoln would have liked for Garnet to have it.[36]

Back in November, 1866, when Garnet was in Pittsburgh, he met the trustees of the Estate of Charles Avery, who had been one of Pittsburgh's most influential cotton merchants. Avery, who had been a conductor on the underground railway, in 1858, founded a school for black students. The school, renamed Avery College after Avery's death that same year, was founded to give black youth

"full opportunities for higher education."[37]

Avery instructed in his will that each year the trustees provide six thousand dollars to run the school. He also requested that the school only hire black teachers because the black man would show his true potential when "trained in an institution where he feels himself welcomed, at home, and taught by his own kind."[38]

Evidently, the trustees convinced Garnet that the school was worthwhile, and offered him the presidency, with a $1,400 annual salary. He accepted. He was to begin work in September 1868. In April of that year he resigned his post as pastor of the Fifteenth Street Church, leaving it in the hands of J. Sella Martin, whom he trusted to carry on his work. Then he and Julia departed for Pittsburgh.

The school was located on Nash Street in the Allegheny section of the city. The building, a classic three-story Greek revival structure, had been used by Avery as a station on the underground railway. The first and second floors were now used as classrooms while the third floor was a chapel. Garnet's office was in the main building and his residence was a few blocks away on South Canal Avenue.

Garnet supported Avery's goal that the school offer

a complete college curriculum. Courses included Latin, Greek, mathematics, natural and practical sciences, and philosophy. Garnet taught the philosophy classes, and he conducted services in the chapel. Years later, women were admitted and courses in manual training, domestic economy, millinery, tailoring, literary studies, and public education were added to the curriculum.[39]

Apparently, Garnet was not a very good administrator. He knew little about ordering books and supplies. He frequently overspent and by the end of the school year, supplies had dwindled almost to nothing. On one occasion he was forced to excess "two capable teachers" because he didn't have the money to pay them. He admitted his "inexperience" in a letter to the Rev. Asa Dodge Smith, the president of Dartmouth College. He asked Smith to send him the proper forms for issuing diplomas, and the brief address which usually accompanied their presentation. He said it had been years since he witnessed a graduation, and although he wanted to honor a "few worthy colored men" in July, he had no "recollection" on how to perform the ceremony.[40]

In May, while Garnet was in Pittsburgh, the Republicans nominated Ulysses S. Grant as their candidate for President. Grant had been Garnet's first choice

even though his friend Gerrit Smith preferred Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase. Grant easily defeated Horatio Seymour of New York, and he did it with a substantial black vote. The Republicans viewed Grant's victory as a justification for their reconstruction program, and they also saw the large southern black vote as a mandate to enfranchise more black voters. Therefore, early in 1869, the Republicans, over bitter Democratic opposition, proposed a Constitutional Amendment which forbade a citizen from being denied the vote in any state on account of race or color.[41]

Sensing the importance of this measure, Douglass immediately called a Convention of the Colored Men of America, to lobby for the ratification of this new Fifteenth Amendment. No convention had been held since 1864, and that one had disbanded over colonization. Now was the time for a strong, unified showing, Douglass thought. He invited all the important black leaders to Washington, including Garnet who came as a delegate from Pennsylvania.[42]

On January 13, the convention opened in the prestigious Union League Hall. Douglass appointed Garnet temporary Chairman, but he refused, claiming that the position should go to a southerner, since southern

delegates sat in the convention for the first time. Garnet also knew that Douglass, by offering him the chair, was preventing him from speaking from the floor. Now Garnet became the first speaker. He spoke of the Civil War as being in "vain," and Grant's victories as "fruitless," unless the newly emancipated citizens received the "complete franchise."[43]

On the second day, the convention moved downtown to the Israel Church. Garnet opened the exercise with a prayer, and he stated his wish for a resolution to hold annual conventions until "manhood suffrage was recognized throughout the United States." In the afternoon, George Downing read the "major report of the convention." The report called for universal suffrage, and accurate census, the creation of a national holiday on emancipation day, and continued support for the Republican Party. Downing then added the platform that we should revere the memory of Thaddeus Stevens, the "great commoner" who had just died.[44]

The next morning, this apparently harmonious convention exploded when Garnet tried to declare J. J. Roberts, the former President of Liberia, an honorary delegate. Downing tried to table the motion but he made matters worse. "Would Garnet stop at nothing," Downing

asked, "to push his narrow self-serving views down our throats?" When debate began, I. C. Weir, Garnet's fellow delegate from Pennsylvania, said he did not want "a foreign odor under our noses," but Garnet had pushed it there. Since Roberts ran away and "hid himself in the swamps of Liberia when we needed him during our Civil War, we certainly have no need for him now." Douglass agreed claiming this was just a ploy by Garnet to disrupt a harmonious convention.[45]

Garnet was embarrassed. He did not expect such a harsh condemnation. Realizing his defeat, Garnet called for a vote and was badly voted down. In fact, the motion to seat Roberts received only four votes.

Later that afternoon, Republican politicians came by to offer some support. Governor Samuel Merrill of Iowa promised to "strike out the word white" from state suffrage requirements. Indiana Senator George Julian offered a "renewed commitment" to social justice and Senator Ashley of Ohio promised his "undying efforts" on behalf of black Americans. The final effort of the afternoon was to create a committee to call on President-elect Grant and congratulate him on his victory.

The committee of five included Downing, Douglass, Robert Purvis, Garnet, and John M. Langston, of New

Jersey. Langston, a non-controversial figure, did most of the talking. "Permit us to congratulate you on your election in the name of the Convention of Colored Citizens," he said. "Let us express our confidence in your ability and your determination to execute the laws enacted to protect the life, liberty and rights of colored citizens." In this reconstruction period we know it is difficult to "remove the rubbish of the now dead slaveholders' oligarchy," Langston continued, but we know you will "fill this chair with glory." Grant replied by thanking the black men for their confidence and promising that during his administration, he would provide black people with "every protection of the law," and his personal efforts to secure future protection.[46]

After the convention, Garnet returned to Pittsburgh. Whatever influence he once had was now gone. He had endorsed colonization at the time the rest of the black population was anticipating the equal protection of law in America.

On March 30, the last required state ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, and it became law. All over the Capitol black people marched, rallied, and celebrated. At one rally thousands of blacks marched in a procession led by twenty carriages containing some of the most

distinguished blacks in the nation. Frederick Douglass spoke. George Downing spoke, and white abolitionists like Wendell Phillips said, "We have washed color out of the Constitution." But Garnet remained in Pennsylvania and nobody seemed to miss him.[47]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER XIII

[1] Weekly Anglo-African, August 12, 1865.

[2] Weekly Anglo-African, August 21, 1865.

[3] Henry Highland Garnet to Frederick Douglass, November 8, 1865, as recorded in the Weekly Anglo-African, November 12, 1865.

[4] Weekly Anglo-African, October 6, 1865.

[5] Herbert Aptheker, To Be Free (New York: 1948), pp. 140-142.

[6] An Address from the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Virginia, to the People of the United States (New Bedford, Massachusetts: 1865), Copy in New York Public Library; Address also printed in The Liberator, September 8, 1865.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Weekly Anglo-African, August 19, 1865.

[10] Ibid., September 3, 1865.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., August 25, 1865.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., October 1, 1865, October 21, 1865.

[15] Christian Recorder, September 30, 1865.

[16] Weekly Anglo-African, October 21, 1865.

[17] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, October 23, 1865; Gerrit Smith Papers; Weekly Anglo-African, September 3, 1865.

[18] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, October 23, 1865; Gerrit Smith Papers.

[19] Weekly Anglo-African, November 18, 1865.

[20] Jacqueline Bernard, Journey Towards Freedom (New York: 1969), p. 215.

[21] Report of the Freedman's Relief Association in the District of Columbia (Washington: 1866), located in the Moorland Collection at Howard University, p. 7.

[22] Ibid., p. 9.

[23] Ibid., pp. 7-9.

[24] Appeal of the African Civilization Society on Behalf of the Education of the Freedmen and their Children. (New York: 1865), located in the Moorland Collection at Howard University; Henry Highland Garnet to the Executive Committee of the National Freedman's Relief Association, December, 1865, as reported in the Weekly Anglo-African, September 9, 1865.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ceremonies of Welcome for Colored Soldiers of Pennsylvania by the Garnet League (Harrisburgh 1865): located in the Schomburg Collection of the New York Public Library.

[27] John Hope Franklin, Reconstruction After the Civil War (Chicago: 1961). Franklin devotes the entire third chapter to what he calls "Reconstruction Confederate Style."

[28] Henry Highland Garnet to Charles Sumner, February 7, 1865; Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[29] Autobiography of General O. O. Howard (New York 1907), pp. 320-321.

[30] New York Herald, September 5, 1865.

[31] Ibid., September 6, 1865.

[32] Ibid., September 7, 1865.

[33] Speech of Henry Highland Garnet before the Garnet League in Pittsburgh, November, 1866; Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

[34] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, February 20, 1873; Gerrit Smith Papers.

[35] Alice Keckley, Behind the Scenes (New York: 1868), p. 316.

[36] Mary Todd Lincoln to Alice Keckley, November, 1865, as recorded in Alice Keckley, Behind the Scenes, p. 348.

[37] Margaret Carlin, "A Dream and a Bulldozer," Pittsburgh Press, February 16, 1969.

[38] Ibid.; Carl Wilhelm, Complete History of the City of Allegheny, 1740-1890 (Pittsburgh: 1891) pp. 316-321.

[38a] Ibid.

[39] Records of Avery College (1870-1871) were located in the basement of the Avery Memorial AME Church in Pittsburgh.

[40] Ibid., Henry Highland Garnet to Asa Dodge Smith, May 4, 1870; Asa Dodge Smith Papers, Dartmouth College.

[41] Minutes of the National Convention of Colored Men of America, held in Washington, January 13-15, 1869 (Washington: 1869), pp. 4-6.

[42] Ibid., pp. 20-22.

[43] Ibid., p. 18.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 20.

[46] Ibid., Appendix 10

[47] New National Era, May 26, 1870.

CHAPTER XIV

PLANTED IN AFRICA

In 1870, after only two years there, Garnet decided to leave Avery College and return to New York City. He never really enjoyed academic life, but he remained in Pittsburgh only because of the steady salary. In New York, he had no such prospect. Garnet learned, however, that in 1869, the trustees had re-incorporated Shiloh Church on Prince Street, and were looking for a pastor. However, the congregation of Shiloh Church was now so small, the trustees could not offer Garnet a regular salary. Still, Garnet accepted the trustees' offer and became pastor again.

On October 2, 1870, after an absence of six years, Garnet returned to the pulpit of Shiloh Church. However, he found the changes enormous. The church that for years had been New York's most influential black church, had deteriorated almost beyond recognition. The Sunday School which Garnet founded fourteen years previously was now closed and so was the adult reading program. Garnet begged the American Missionary Society for funds to maintain the church, but because of "past irregularities," they refused him. The congregation, most of whom had

moved uptown, also provided little relief.

What personal funds Garnet had were now gone, too. In January, 1873, Garnet wrote Gerrit Smith that no one could believe he could suffer such "financial hardships" after "having been so prominent." Yet, that was the case. Garnet said he was indigent and asked Smith in his "generous distribution to the needy" to please remember him. A month later, Garnet thanked Smith for his "generous draft of two hundred dollars," and said it came at the right time since both "my friends and my funds were exhausted."[1]

Nevertheless, Garnet said he would continue to "preach the gospel to the city's poor," even if the job was much harder now. Garnet was presently in his mid-fifties and seemed to approach his work with less interest and less patience. Conditions had changed too. Since the end of the Civil War, and with the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, even those whites who supported black people felt their responsibility was finished. Blacks were now free to enjoy all the "privileges and immunities" of citizens, but that was a luxury few blacks could afford. In New York, as in other large cities, most blacks remained "hidden and unnoticed," doomed to a life of poverty and despair.

Although blacks were permitted to attend public schools, few graduated. It was not a lack of intelligence which prevented them from completing their education, a school administrator wrote, but their need to survive in a hostile urban environment. Many black children found employment on the docks, or in the stables, and some begged on the streets. Garnet worked for a while with the Freedman's Bureau School, but found his efforts futile. Even General Howard, the Director of the Freedman's Bureau, remarked that by 1870 the changing attitudes of most white Americans toward the freedmen resulted in a massive cutback of funds which made educational programs unworkable.[2]

In March, 1871, Julia came down with pneumonia. Garnet called a doctor but her condition continued to worsen. On March 18, she died. Garnet mourned the loss of this "gentle, sweet-tempered, God-loving woman," who had been a "perfect wife." Garnet thought about how she had always been there when he needed her, and how she had looked after the church when he was away. Friends said he treated her with the same "love and kindness" after thirty years of marriage as he had when they were both students at the Canaan Academy. Now she was gone, and Garnet wrote Gerrit Smith "I am alone."[3]

Garnet received little comfort from his children. His son Henry was now teaching in the South, and although he had "many fine talents," he was still a disappointment to Garnet because he never "converted to Christ." Mary was now married, and living in New Jersey with her two children. However, her husband was shiftless and irresponsible and Garnet deplored that. Perhaps he resented even more that the Barbozas remained in New Jersey and Garnet rarely saw his two granddaughters.[4]

After Julia's death, Garnet resolved to again become active and play some role in national affairs. He had been away over two years. In his absence, Frederick Douglass and George Downing had assumed undisputed leadership of the black movement, and neither liked nor trusted Garnet. Because of his support of colonization and other "money making schemes," Downing thought him outrightly "dangerous." Yet, even if his leadership in the black community was over, Garnet still hoped to raise his voice on behalf of some issue or crusade. In June, President Grant appointed Douglass to a Presidential Commission to study the feasibility of annexing the Caribbean Island of Santo Domingo to the United States. Douglass supported the proposal claiming he favored the

peaceful extension of United States' influence and culture over Caribbean regions. This would be the best way to guarantee Santo Domingo a republican form of government, Douglass reasoned. He also claimed that annexation would help American material interests, since cheap coffee and sugar would be more readily available. Mostly to be contrary, Garnet disagreed.[5]

He wrote the New National Era, edited by Douglass' son Louis, and said that he opposed annexation because he wanted to preserve Haiti, and Santo Domingo, the two nations that shared the island, as "separate black nations." He also chided Douglass for serving on a presidential commission as merely a "showcase" black man. The New National Era responded to the disagreement by saying it is neither "new nor interesting" to see these two men "arraigned in hostile battle." The newspaper recognized that Garnet was "confusing the cause of the Dominicans with his personal opposition to Douglass," and his constant need to become "The Negro advocate." However, the editorial continued, "giants have a right to sport," and these men "both love it."[6]

The next year, still searching for a cause, Garnet campaigned for the annexation of a Caribbean Island. He declared that he was "duty bound" to raise

his voice on behalf of the "patriots of Cuba" who were fighting slavery on the Spanish-owned island. Cuba, he said, had to be annexed to the United States to guarantee that "war torn island" a "republican form of government."[7]

In December, 1872, the Cuban Anti-Slavery Society, an organization whose membership included Charles Sumner, selected Garnet as their Secretary. They invited him to speak at a convention at Cooper Union, where hundreds of Cubans were scheduled to be in the audience. At last, Garnet would have another chance to address a large audience. He began his speech by proclaiming his "abhorrence" to the Spanish government which practiced "inhuman and unnecessary butcheries" on Cubans fighting for their freedom. Garnet, in customary fashion, said he stood bound with the "five hundred thousand enslaved Cubans" who "heard the call of freedom." The Cubans in the audience then rose in long and sustained applause.[8]

Garnet continued by reading a poem which he said he composed for this occasion:

> "Freedmen's battle once begun,
> bequethed from bleeding son to
> son, though baffled it is never
> won."

Sensing he had the audience in a frenzy, Garnet said "my sympathies" are drawn to your cause. "Slavery shall be blotted out from every island in the Western Sea. The shores of our republic shall not be washed by waves made bloody with Cuban slavery." He ended his speech by quoting Placido, the black Cuban revolutionary poet. "Oh liberty, I hear a voice calling me, with a voice like God's and a vision like a star."[9]

Garnet's speech gained him some new recognition. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish wrote the Cuban government protesting the injustices in Cuba and mentioned Garnet's "stirring address" which "moved the conscience" of the American people. The New York Herald thanked Garnet for raising world public opinion on the "humanitarian rights of the Cuban people." Spanish outrages in Cuba demanded American action, the Herald wrote, even an "armed intervention in the name of humanity and civilization."[10]

Garnet must have realized that the United States would not intervene in Cuba on behalf of black slaves yet, he continued to campaign for annexation. In February, 1873, Garnet wrote to Gerrit Smith asking him to raise "the silver trumpet to his hips and blast it for Cuban liberty." He also went to Washington and

"personally called on President Grant." He presented the President with a petition signed by citizens from New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, demanding some American action. Grant offered these petitions his "hearty support," and said that Secretary of State Fish already has this matter under "careful consideration." Grant then commended Garnet for his interest in Cuban emancipation, and assured him that the United States stood "on the side of freedom." In fact, the State Department received Spain's "promise" to establish a "more liberal government in Cuba," and "eventually," to emancipate the slaves.[11]

He continued, however, to work in obscurity. In December, 1873, at a National Convention called in Washington to take action on a reform bill, Garnet came as a delegate from New York, but was not asked to speak. He must have felt humiliated, having the reputation as the "best black orator in America," yet forced to remain silent. Surely, Garnet could have spoken on the resolution imploring Congress to enact into law a bill to protect "civil and public rights of all Americans without regard to color." Charles Sumner spoke about the need to protect the civil rights of black people, and J. Sella Martin spoke on how the law must protect

people, not injure them. Garnet, whom the convention perceived as too dangerous, too controversial, and too divisive, listened in silence.[12]

George Downing delivered the major "declaration of principles." He demanded not only "equality and justice under law" but employment opportunities as well. He also asked that black people should have the right to serve on juries in the South and attend integrated public schools. These provisions, Downing said, were clearly implied in the "privilege and immunities" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[13]

On March 11, 1874, in the midst of Senate debates over a Civil Rights Bill he had authored, Charles Sumner died of heart failure. Black people mourned Sumner as for no public figure since Lincoln. Garnet journeyed to Washington to attend the funeral of a man he considered a "great friend." Sumner had devoted his entire lifetime to equal rights for black people, and Garnet wanted to express his "undying gratitude." On March 13, on a cold and dreary morning, Garnet and hundreds of blacks marched behind the hearse in a funeral procession from Sumner's house to the Capitol, where the body was scheduled to lay in state in the Capitol rotunda.[14]

At the services, many black leaders spoke, but not

Garnet, who was not even asked. J. Sella Martin said that "no man in the century did more to command the voice of humanity and reason than Sumner." He towered over all men. His voice cried out for the "downtrodden and the despised." Martin said there could be no greater honor to Sumner than to pass the Civil Rights Bill Sumner worked so hard to achieve. After the last eulogy, the coffin was closed, and Sumner's remains were taken home to Boston.[15]

Garnet returned to New York despondent and depressed. Whatever recognition he had received from Republican politicians, who were all too willing to use him in order to give lipservice to their commitment to black Americans, was not shared in the black community. Feeling rejected, Garnet wrote Gerrit Smith, "Who would have thought it would come to this?" Who would have ever believed, Garnet asked, "that the trials of an old abolitionist would not have ended once slavery was destroyed.... After all I've done....I am alone, unappreciated, and old age is creeping up on me." Yet, Garnet lamented, "I mean to die in the harness."[16]

Didn't anybody appreciate the work he had done? Even his congregation was moving away. The Civil War and all the industrial development that followed created enormous changes in lower Manhattan. New cast iron

buildings were rising each day to meet the growing demand for factories, stores, offices and warehouses. As the line of buildings advanced northward, the old buildings were constantly displaced by the new. Blacks became the victims of this progress. As their wooden houses were converted into modern cast iron structures, blacks were forced to abandon the neighborhood and move to the "shantytowns" which grew uptown.

By 1874, church attendance in the downtown Prince Street Church had fallen almost to nothing. Fortunately, the Republican Party rescued Garnet and allowed him to use their hall on Twenty-Third Street as a temporary church, so the church could be closer to the congregation. Garnet even moved his residence to Third Street, but that was still far from the Republican Hall.[17]

In 1875, Garnet learned that Congress finally did pass a Civil Rights Act. It attempted to secure for all citizens equal rights in hotels, theaters and other places of public accommodation. It also declared that no state could deny black people the right to serve on juries. Once again, blacks gathered in Washington and commemorated the Act, and the memory of its author, Charles Sumner. Douglass proclaimed it a "great day in American history," and asked for silent reflection to honor all those people, black and white, who had

advanced the cause of freedom. The Act, however, was declared unconstitutional seven years later by the United States Supreme Court.[18]

For Garnet, perhaps the final indignity came in April 1876, when the Freedman's Monument Committee finally unveiled their Lincoln memorial. The plan to build the monument had been Garnet's from the start. After a stormy beginning, in which members of the committee criticized Garnet for wanting a black people's monument, the committee proceeded to raise over sixteen thousand dollars for a monument. It commissioned Thomas Ball, an eminent sculptor, to design the monument. The federal government appropriated an additional three thousand dollars for the foundation and pedestal. On April 14, the anniversary of Lincoln's assassination and of the emancipation of slaves in the District of Columbia, the committee unveiled the statue. Congress had declared the day a holiday so that all people could attend the ceremonies. On the platform, President Grant sat with members of his cabinet, Supreme Court Justices, Senators, Frederick Douglass, George Downing, and other prominent black Americans.[19]

The statue showed Lincoln standing, holding the Emancipation Proclamation in his right hand. His eyes

gazed upon a slave still kneeling on the ground. At the base of the monument was carved the word "emancipation." At the ceremonies that followed, the President and leading Republicans spoke, followed by Frederick Douglass, who was billed as the "orator of the occasion." Douglass said that during Lincoln's wise and beneficent rule, "black people had lifted themselves from the depths of slavery to the heights of liberty and manhood." He then proceeded to outline the important contributions of blacks to American history. Garnet was never mentioned.[20]

The Republican Party, however, remembered Garnet, and in June, 1876, the leaders invited him and Douglass to speak at their national convention in Cincinnati. The offer was merely symbolic, since the Republicans no longer had any real commitment to equal rights for black people. Garnet recognized that the Republicans were more concerned with monetary and tariff policies, than with race relations. Nevertheless, Garnet spoke on the first day, thanking the Republicans for inviting him and for giving some protection to the "black men who helped save the Union." He pleaded for Republicans to remember the freedmen in the South who still were exploited by both former slave-owners and by bankers charging "unconscionable rates of interest." Sensing the inclination of the delegates,

Garnet concluded: "You may talk about your banks, or your silver and your gold, but don't forget the suffering freedmen."[21]

Two days later, Garnet as a delegate-at-large, cast his ballot for Rutherford B. Hayes, who became his party's nominee. In an extremely close election, Hayes defeated the former New York governor, Samuel J. Tilden, but only after an electoral commission handed Hayes several disputed electoral votes from the South. As part of the "bargain," Hayes agreed to withdraw the last federal troops from the South.

In order to placate blacks who perceived this bargain as the end of all federal protection for them, Hayes appointed Frederick Douglass the Marshall of the District of Columbia. Although the appointment was only ceremonial, Garnet still hailed it as the most "complete acknowledgement ever given by any chief executive to black people." Was there a federal appointment in line for him too, Garnet wondered?[22]

When none came, Garnet returned to New York and entered almost total seclusion. Old friends like Alexander Crummell noticed the "enormous change" in Garnet. He said he hated to admit it, but Garnet had lost all of his "vital energy." Even those

"magnificent powers" of speech were failing him. The strength, the power which he poured into his speeches, was now gone, Crummell said. Sometimes, he was even hard to understand.[23]

Garnet, frequently ignoring church activities, stayed home now and sulked. He found his own people "ungrateful and forgetting," and wondered if it was worthwhile carrying on. He was sure that "sorrow and misfortune" had descended upon him like a cloud." Not only was he "broken in spirit," but his health was failing too. His frequent bouts with bronchitis were now diagnosed as "developed and advanced asthma," and he was constantly in pain. However, his depression was even more chronic. Sometimes he begged for death. "It's all over," he frequently said, "Why don't you let me sink quietly into my grave? Who would miss me?"[24]

Thurlow Weed, the influential Republican politician and journalist and also Garnet's neighbor, became aware of his situation and decided to help him. Weed, always known as a "patronage peddler," learned of Garnet's misfortune, and decided to reward him for his many years of service to the Republican Party. In 1878, Weed donated money to relocate Shiloh Church in a new building, uptown on Twenty-Sixth Street. Weed also helped Garnet find jobs for

some of his friends, and that made Garnet feel important again. On one occasion, Weed aided Garnet to secure for a "worthy black man" a conductor's position on the Third Avenue Street Line, while another time, Garnet got a young black teacher a position in his native Tennessee. Weed, who hated graft, viewed these favors simply as service to a "loyal Republican."[25]

Late in 1878, Garnet's spirits were uplifted somewhat when he met Sarah Thompson. Born in Tennessee in 1831, Sarah was a teacher in the Freedman's Bureau Schools in Memphis and Mississippi. In 1873, while teaching in Mississippi, Sarah reported that the lack of decent facilities in that state's schools was a "burning shame," and she resigned from the bureau. She had been teaching English and speech in the New York City public schools when she met Garnet.[26]

Sarah was a very strong woman. Aggressive and self assured, Sarah was a career woman who insisted on her own identity and demanded equal rights for women. In fact, Sarah had founded the Kings County Suffrage Association, and the larger Equal Rights League, organizations of black women dedicated to women's suffrage. Still in her forties, Sarah had enormous energy and vitality.

Garnet had little sympathy for Sarah's feminist

activities. Nevertheless, in 1879, they were married. Garnet and Sarah immediately moved into a new apartment on McDougal Street, although Sarah insisted upon keeping her own name. She also remained active with her teaching and women's rights activities. Garnet, however, needed a full-time wife. The marriage ended after only one year. In 1880, Garnet moved uptown to West Twenty-Sixth Street, across the street from Shiloh Church, while Sarah remained at McDougal Street.[27]

His daughter Mary was having martial problems too. Following years of aggravation, Mary decided to leave her husband, and labor as a Christian missionary in Africa. She asked Garnet to contact the Ladies Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church, and have her formally "adopted" in Africa. In September, 1880, Garnet said he had no "reservations" sending his only "beloved and dutiful daughter" to Africa, because he knew she would do "great work in this distant land." Garnet said Mary was trained for this sort of work all through her life. Besides her ordinary qualifications as a teacher, Garnet wrote, Mary had special qualifications in vocal and instrumental music, and she was also proficient in needlework. In November, Mary departed for Liberia, and now Garnet was more alone than ever.[28]

In July, 1881, shortly before he was shot by a frustrated office seeker, President Garfield appointed Garnet United States Minister and Counsel General to Liberia. It was ironic that Garnet, while forgotten by the black community, was given the highest appointment ever accorded a black American. Yet, that was the case. Weed, who had no commitment to black civil rights, convinced Garfield to make the appointment. It was essential, Weed reasoned, that the Republican Party continue to be perceived as the party of black Americans. In states like New York, where the black vote could be significant, it was important not to alienate black voters. A diplomatic appointment could ease the concern of many blacks that the Republican Party had abandoned them.

Weed then sent Garnet a telegram informing him of the President's decision. Garnet was stunned. He told Weed he would spend the rest of his life in "grateful remembrance of your kindness." He jumped at the opportunity to go to Liberia. At last, he said, "I will see the land of my fathers."[29]

Crummell did not want Garnet to go to Liberia. He said it was "too risky" with all those tropical fevers in Africa, and anyway Garnet was too sick to make the trip. "Would you have me linger here?" Garnet asked, "in

old age, in neglect, and in want?.... I cannot stay amongst these ungrateful people who have completely forgotten me," Garnet replied. "No, I go gladly to Africa."[30]

On July 17, after the Senate confirmed Garnet's nomination, Secretary of State James Blaine officially announced Garnet's appointment. Garnet accepted the position with a renewed "sense of responsibility and confidence." On July 27, in the Federal Building in New York, Garnet took the bond and oath of office, and the State Department informed him he would depart for Liberia in November. Meanwhile, he was to remain in New York and await diplomatic instructions.[31]

In October, the State Department forwarded Garnet the official Commission, which included diplomatic instructions and a letter of introduction from President Arthur, who had assumed the Presidency in September after Garfield's assassination. The instructions informed Garnet that the embassy was in turmoil. James Smythe, the present minister was sending frequent dispatches warning of civil war and tribal unrest in Liberia. Native Africans were also looting American property in Liberia and this represented an "intolerable threat" to the security and commerce of the United States.[32]

Smythe suggested that some hostility to the Americans and the naturalized Liberians might end if foreign vessels were permitted to trade in Liberian ports. This would end the American trade monopoly which was clearly a source of resentment. Smythe also believed that native Liberians would be less resentful if they were free to purchase land, borrow money, and invest capital in their own country. Blaine generally favored these reforms, but he did not instruct Garnet to implement them.[33]

He told Garnet that the British were also complaining about the destruction of their property. Bands of Liberians were crossing the border into the neighboring British-owned Gold Coast, and were constantly looting British mining settlements. This was a "serious matter," Blaine said, especially since the United States had no mission in the Gold Coast to protect its interests there. Blaine also told Garnet that a wealthy British woman named Mrs. Langston had been robbed while visiting Liberia, and she was suing the Liberian government. Blaine told Garnet to give this matter his "urgent attention."[34]

Before leaving, Garnet asked the State Department for an advance on his salary because he simply did not have the funds to make the journey. On November 5, Blaine

wired Garnet that because of his "pressing financial conditions," he would attempt to serve him an emergency grant beyond the customary thirty-day advance compensation. Within a week, Garnet received the additional money, which he found "entirely satisfactory." He also vowed to follow Smythe's ministerial references in Liberia, and to acknowledge the receipt of all communications.[35]

On November 6, Garnet preached his final sermon at Shiloh Church. He said it was ironic that the "grandson of a conquered chieftian should be sent to the very scene of his ancestors' defeat and degradation." Afterwards, the congregation presented him with a memorial plaque which would remain in Shiloh Church. On November 11, he wrote Weed to thank him for his "many favors," and said he looked forward to departing the following morning for Africa.[36]

On November 12, Garnet sailed alone for Liberia, and eight days later arrived in Monrovia. His first reaction upon entering the city was the "magnificent sight" of his own people working hard to build their own civilization in Africa. He saw a beautiful farming community outside Monrovia, and for him it was the "realization of a lifelong dream." Garnet waited a month before assuming his official duties. He wanted some

time to get to know the landscape and the people. He visited the new Liberian college and was most impressed with it. He also had a wonderful visit with Mary at her mission, fourteen miles outside Monrovia. He told her he was "delighted with Liberia," and the kindness with which Liberians received him. "No man could have been made more welcome," Garnet said. Yet, he was sick and Mary knew it. From the moment he arrived, the African heat produced a reoccurrence of his old "tropical fevers," and he constantly appeared weak and out of breath. He yearned for sleep. Mary was concerned but not surprised. Garnet told her he "came to Africa to die," and he wanted to be buried in her soil.[37]

On December 20, he reported to the ministry, and Smythe entrusted him with the archives and all "property of the delegation." He wired the State Department that he had taken possession of the material and "all was in order." Then he set up his own desk with his calling card "Planted in Africa," and bid farewell to Smythe. Later that afternoon, Garnet had his first official meeting with Liberian President Edward Blyden, who welcomed him to his new post. Garnet, acting according to instructions, then conveyed the "hearty good will" of the President of the United States to Blyden. The same day, Garnet

acknowledged the receipt of thirty days pay, and another eight-day advance.[38]

Garnet, however, was really too sick to do much work. In January, the fevers got "much worse," and Garnet slept constantly. Dispatches arrived from Washington, and most remained unanswered. Garnet did not inform the State Department of his illness. The Department, however, informed Garnet of an emergency to an American vessel in Liberian waters. Some native residents had seized the Timbo, an American ship leased to Liberians, massacring the crew and then sinking the ship. "This cannot be allowed to continue," the dispatch read. "We will allow a man of war to be sent to the Liberian Coast" to protect American interests and property. Garnet was too sick to respond to the dispatch.[39]

The State Department became suspicious because Garnet did not send in his paperwork. William Frelingheysen, the new Secretary of State, reprimanded Garnet for not submitting his forms in a "uniform manner." He then enclosed the correct printed forms for the transmission of account, and the payment of embassy staff. He curtly called the proper procedures to Garnet's attention and he referred him to the State Department manual as a guide. Also, Frelingheysen wondered why it was "so difficult" for

Garnet to respond to his dispatches on time.[40]

Garnet never recovered from the last attack. Although he at times regained consciousness, he lapsed into sleep. On February 12, after complaining of severe discomfort and chills, Garnet fell asleep. At four o'clock that afternoon, he died.

The entire Liberian government attended the funeral. Edward Blyden, his cabinet, and the Chief Justice served as pallbearers. Blyden delivered the eulogy. He said no man meant more to his two countries than Garnet. His "dignity, his fidelity" and his sense of mission will be missed, forever. The soldiers then fired guns as they accompanied the funeral procession to the Pine Grove Cemetery.[41]

They buried him "like a prince," which befitted the man they said had the "blood of African chieftains in his veins." The bugler sounded taps as they planted Garnet on a hilltop, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean which separated his two beloved countries.[42]

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER XIV

[1] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, January 27, 1873, February 20, 1873, Gerrit Smith Papers.

[2] Records of the Charles A. Dorsey School, located on Sands Street in Brooklyn, 1868-1893; Dorsey School Library; Howard, Autobiography, p. 284.

[3] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, January 27, 1873, Gerrit Smith Papers; Crummell, Obituary to Henry Highland Garnet, p. 26; Death Records, New York City Department of Health.

[4] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, January 27, 1873; Gerrit Smith Papers; Garnet's son Henry was born sometime after Garnet returned from Jamaica.

[5] New National Era, April 27, 1871, May 4, 1871.

[6] Ibid., June 8, 1871.

[7] Proceedings of the Meeting of the Cuban Anti-Salvery SOciety, December 13, 1872 (New York: 1872), p. 4.

[8] Ibid., p. 16.

[9] Ibid., p. 17.

[10] Ibid., p. 19; New York Herald, December 15, 1872.

[11] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, February 6, 1873, February 20, 1873; Gerrit Smith Papers.

[12] New National Era, December 11, 1873.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., March 19, 1874.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Henry Highland Garnet to Gerrit Smith, February 20, 1873; Gerrit Smith Papers

[17] New National Era, June 26, 1873.

[18] Ibid., May 18, 1875.

[19] Inaugural ceremonies of the Freedman's Monument to Abraham Lincoln. (St. Louis, 1876), p. 10.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Proceedings of the National Republic Convention held in Cincinnati, June 14-16, 1876, (Concord, New Hampshire, 1876) pp. 3-5.

[22] Henry Highland Garnet to Frederick Douglass, March 22, 1877; Frederick Douglass Papers, Library of Congress.

[23] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 27.

[24] Ibid., p. 27; Mary Garnet and United States Department of State, February 21, 1882; State Department Archives, Dispatches from Liberia, National Archives.

[25] Henry Highland Garnet to Thurlow Weed, August 31, 1877, February 28, 1881; Thurlow Weed Papers, University of Rochester Library.

[26] New National Era, November 13, 1873; Bureau of Teacher Records, New York City Board of Education.

[27] Hallie Q. Brown, Homespun Heroines and other Women of Distinction, (New York: 1943), p. 272; New National Era, November 13, 1873; Director of New York City 1870-1881.

[28] Henry Highland Garnet to Mrs. James Lorimer, September 1880; Presbyterian Church Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[29] Henry Highland Garnet to Thurlow Weed, July 8, 1881; Thurlow Weed Papers; Crummell, Obituary, p. 26.

[30] Crummell, Obituary, p. 27.

[31] James K. Blaine to Henry Highland Garnet, September 11, 1881; State Department Archives, Diplomatic Instructions to Liberia, National Archives.

[32] Henry Highland Garnet to James K. Blaine, July 11, 1881, July 16, 1881; Dispatches from Liberia.

[33] Joseph Smythe to James K. Blaine, May 15, 1881, June 4, 1881, July 5, 1881, August 3, 1881, October 21, 1881, Dispatches from Liberia.

[34] James K. Blaine to Henry Highland Garnet, November 5, 1881; Diplomatic Instructions to Liberia.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 28; Henry Highland Garnet to Thurlow Weed, November 11, 1881; Thurlow Weed Papers; New York Times, March 11, 1882.

[37] Crummell, Eulogy, p. 28; Mary Garnet to State Department, February 21, 1882; Dispatches from Liberia.

[38] James K. Blaine to Henry Highland Garnet, November 2, 1881; Diplomatic Instructions to Liberia; Henry Highland Garnet to James K. Blaine, November 10, 1881, November 21, 1881, December 20, 1881; Dispatches from Liberia; Henry Highland Garnet to John Edward Bruce, 1881, John Bruce Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

[39] John Gibson to Henry Highland Garnet, January 19, 1882; Dispatches from Liberia.

[40] William Frelingheysen to Henry Highland Garnet, February 17, 1882, February 24, 1882; Dispatches from Liberia.

[41] Crummell, Eugloy, p. 28; Mary Garnet to State Department, February 18, 1882; Dispatches from Liberia, Liberian Pine and Palm, February 24, 1882, New York Times, March 11, 1882.

[42] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In a letter from Liberia, written several years after Garnet's death, Liberian official Henry M. Turner wrote: "For forty years before Mr. Lincoln issued his proclamation of freedom, Dr. Garnet fought for his race as no other man could. He periled his life and all else for his freedom." In truth, the life of Henry Highland Garnet supports this account.

Garnet was born a slave. After his remarkable escape from that institution, Garnet proceeded to educate himself, and in 1842, he became an ordained Presbyterian minister. His rigid education in the Noyes Academy and the Oneida Institute prior to his ordination, had also prepared him well for the social and political activism that marked his life. He had been trained in western New York by abolitionists who fully endorsed the principle that the political process was an essential weapon in the struggle against slavery and racial injustice.

In 1843, Garnet formally broke with Garrison and his doctrine of moral suasion when he proudly attached his name to the Liberty Party, the first black man to do so.

He also led a campaign in New York State to win the vote for those disenfranchised blacks who, because of property qualifications, could not vote. Later that year, at a convention of Colored Citizens and their Friends, held in Buffalo, Garnet called for a slave revolt. His speech served as a model for future black militancy. Even John Brown had it printed at his own expense.

Meanwhile, Garnet continued to advocate resistance. As events like the Mexican War, the Kansas Nebraska Act, the Fugitive Slave Law, the Dred Scott Decision, and John Brown's raid brought the nation to the brink of Civil War, Garnet exercised his leadership to advocate resistance. Unless black people took the lead in fighting for their own freedom, Garnet reasoned, they were doomed as a people.

Another of Garnet's important contributions was his views on African colonization. Fully based on the principles of nationalism, Garnet believed that oppressed people could best fulfill their destinies by establishing a national homeland. Therefore, Garnet supported nationalistic uprisings in Ireland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and the struggle of some American blacks to establish a homeland in Africa. Although Garnet never saw emigration

as the solution for all blacks--as he was frequently accused--he did see it as a logical alternative for those who chose to go.

Garnet's personal association with prominent European nationalists and reformers bears mentioning here. He was in close communication with leaders of the Free Produce and Chartist movements in England, the Fenian Brotherhood in Ireland, the World Peace Movement in Germany, and the 1848 National uprisings in Italy, Greece, and Hungary. In fact, Garnet maintained a close association with Daniel O'Connell, James Bright, Carl Schurz, Mazzini, and Louis Kossuth, which made him truly a world leader.

Garnet's commitment to nationalism and self-rule led in 1858 to his founding the African Civilization Society. This all black organization which Garnet hoped would become a "grand center of Negro nationality, was not only an emigrationist society, but a black cultural center as well. By founding schools and missions in both the United States and Africa, Garnet hoped the organization would create a new awareness of black culture and civilization in both continents. In many respects, Garnet laid the foundation for twentieth century black nationalists

like Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X.

With the outbreak of Civil War in America, Garnet entered a new phase of his life. Seeing freedom now possible at home, Garnet exerted pressure on the national leaders to transform the Civil War from a war to save the Union to a war to free the slaves. After Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Garnet struggled to recruit blacks in the Union Army,and eventually he served as an honorary army chaplain to those black troops who trained on Rikers Island.

Perhaps the high point of his career came in February, 1865, when the national leaders selected Garnet to preach a memorial sermon commemorating the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment, before the Congress of the United States. Because Garnet was the most distinguished black orator of his generation, it was not surprising that he was chosen over Frederick Douglass to deliver this stirring discourse.

After the war, Garnet was active with the Freedman's Aid Society, the Freedman's Bureau, and the African Civilization Society. These organizations founded schools for the many former slaves in need of education. For two years, Garnet also served as president of The Avery Institute, an all black college in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Finally, after a period where Garnet felt neglected and unappreciated, President Garfield selected him to be First Council and Minister to Liberia. This was the highest diplomatic appointment ever accorded a black American. More research is needed to explain why Garnet was so forgotten by black Americans and yet, given such an important position by white politicians. His long-time support of colonization, a position that was becoming increasingly unpopular in the black communities, supplies only part of the answer.

Garnet died after only a month in Africa. Because of delays in communications, newspaper obituaries written two months after his death, merely mentioned his passing. The New York Presbytery commented on the "dignity, fidelity, and usefulness of his life." His lifelong friend Alexander Crummell, however, called Garnet the best-known black man of his generation, and said that no one could take his place. He was the "giant" who towered over them all. Yet, up to very recently, Garnet was relatively obscured. But those who obscured Garnet in place of Douglass and other black leaders, could not obscure the fact that Garnet, more than any black American of the nineteenth

century, stirred others to "Rise now, and fly to arms."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

African Civilization Society Papers, Folder 114, Volume 154.

American Colonization Society Papers (1850-1865). Library of Congress.

American Colonization Society Papers. Library of Congress.

American Home Missionary Society Papers, Dillard University, New Orleans.

American Missionary Association Archives, Dillard University, New Orleans.

Henry Bellows Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Amos Beman Papers, Yale University.

John Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library.

John A. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Alexander Crummell Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

Frederick Douglass Papers, Library of Congress.

Abbey Foster Papers, Boston Public Library.

William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

Joshua Giddings Papers, Ohio State University.

Horace Greeley Papers, Library of Congress.

Andrew Johnson Papers, Library of Congress.

Joshua Leavitt Papers, Library of Congress.

James Lorimer Papers, Presbyterian Church Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Samuel May Papers, Cornell University.

Miscellaneous Anti-Slavery Papers, Case Western Reserve.

Miscellaneous Anti-Slavery Papers, Cornell University.

Miscellaneous Anti-Slavery Papers, Library of Congress.

Miscellaneous Anti-Slavery Papers, Oberlin College, Ohio

Presbyterian Church Archives of Scotland, National Library of Edinboro, Scotland.

Samuel Rhodes Papers, Rhodes House Library, London, England.

Wilber H. Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society.

Asa Dodge Smith Papers, Dartmouth College.

Gerrit Smith Papers, New York Public Library.

Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

State Department Archives, Diplomatic Correspondence to Liberia, 1881, National Archives.

State Department Archives, Dispatches from Liberia, 1881, National Archives.

Thaddeus Stevens Papers, Library of Congress.

Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress.

Martin Ullman Papers, New York Historical Society.

Thurlow Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

Maria Chapman Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

OTHER DOCUMENTS

Address From the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Virginia, to the People of the United States. New Bedford, Mass.: E. Anthony and Sons, 1865.

Annual Report of the American Missionary Association, 1856. New York: 1856.

Appeal of the African Civilization Society on Behalf of the Education of the Freedmen and Their Children. New York: 1865.

Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Oneida Institute, 1836. Whitesborogh: Oneida Institute Typographical Association, 1836.

Celebration by the Colored People's Educational Monument Association in the Memory of Abraham Lincoln, July 4, 1876. Washington, D.C.: Board of Directors, McGill and Witherow, 1876.

Ceremonies of Welcome for the Colored Soldiers of Pennsylvania by The Garnet League, August 1865. Harrisburg: 1865.

Coates, Benjamin. Cotton Civilization in Africa. Suggestions on the Importance of the Cultivation of Cotton in Africa, in Reference to the Abolition of Slavery in the United States. Philadelphia: C. Sherman and Son, 1858.

Constitution of the African Civilization Society. New Haven: Thomas J. Stafford, 1861.

Crummell, Alexander. Eulogy on Henry Highland Garnet, D. D. Presbyterian Minister, Resident of the United States to the Republic of Liberia. Washington: 1882.

Death Records of the City of New York, 1873.

Garnet, Henry Highland, The Past and Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race: A Discourse. Washington, D. C.: Moorland Foundation, 1848.

Green, Beriah. Things for Nothern Men To Do: A Discourse. New York: 1836.

Minutes of the Fifth Annual Convention of Colored Citizens of the State of New York, held in Schnectady. New York: Kneeland and Company. 1844.

Minutes of the National Convention of Colored Citizens and Their Friends: Held in Buffalo, on August 15-19, 1843. New York: Piercy and Reed, 1843.

Minutes of the National Convention of Colored Men of America, held in Washington, D.C., January 13-15, 1869. Washington, D.C.: 1869.

Minutes of the Session of the Liberty Street Presbyterian Church in Troy, New York. Presbyterian Church Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Minutes of the Session of the Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City. Presbyterian Church Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Minutes of the New York State Convention of Colored Citizens held in Albany in 1840. New York: Piercy and Reed, 1840.

Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, held in London, July 23-25, 1851. London: 1851.

Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 1860. New York: 1861.

Proceedings of the Meeting of the Cuban Anti-Slavery Society, December 13, 1872. New York: 1872.

Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men Held in the City of Syracuse, New York, October 4-7, 1864. New York: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1864.

Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored People and Their Friends, held in Troy, New York, on October 6-9, 1847. Troy, New York: J. D. Kneeland and Company, 1847.

Proceedings of the National Liberty Party Convention, held at Buffalo, New York, on June 14-15, 1848. Utica, New York: S. W. Green, 1848.

Proceedings of the National Republican Party Convention held in Cincinatti, June 14-16, 1876. Concord, New Hampshire: 1876.

Recommendations of the Third Presbytery in the Case of Shiloh Church. Presbyterian Church Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Records of the Session and the Church Register of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, 1841-1868. Vol. I; Moorland Foundation, Washington D. C.

Records of Avery College, 1870-2, Avery Memorial Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Records of the Charles A. Dorsey School in New York City, 1868-1893.

Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1849-1853, New York, 1848-1853.

Report on the Committee on Volunteering, Union League Club. New York: Club House, Number 26, 1864.

Report of the New York Relief Commission for Colored People. New York: Whitehorne, 1863.

Report of the Freedman's Relief Association in the District of Columbia. Washington, D.C.: 1861.

Smith, James McCune. A Memorial Discourse Delivered on the Floor of the Congress of the United States, Delivered on February 12, 1865. Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1865.

Speech of Henry Highland Garnet delivered before the Garnet League in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh: November, 1865.

Supplement to the Constitution of the African Civilization Society. New Haven: 1861.

Teacher Records, New York City Board of Education, 1872-1886.

Third Report of the Oneida Institute to the Board of Directors, 1838. Volume 129, Records of the Oneida Presbytery.

BOOKS

Andrews, Charles. History of the New York African Free Schools. Reprint; New York: Negro University Press, 1969.

Aptheker, Herbert. (ed.) A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States. Vol. 1; New York: The Citadel Press, 1967.

_____ The Negro People in the United States. New York: The Citadel Press, 1951.

Aptheker, Herbert. To Be Free. New York: 1948.

Barnes, Gilbert H. The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1933.

Beard, Augustus. The Crusade For Freedom: A History of the American Missionary Associaton. Boston: 1909.

Bell, Howard M. The Negro Convention Movement, 1830-1861. New York: Arno Press, 1969.

Bernard, Jacqueline. Journey to Freedom. New York: 1969.

Brown, Bertram Wyatt. Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery. New York: Atheneum, 1971.

Brown, Hollie Q. Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction. New York: 1973.

Crummell, Alexander. Africa and America. New York: 1967.

_____ History of the Black Man. New York: 1837.

Dann, Martin. (ed.) The Black Press 1827-1890 The Quest for National Identity. Capricorn: New York 1972.

Delaney, M. R. and Campbell, Robert. Search for a Place: Black Separatism and Africa, 1860. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1971.

Delany, M.R. Martin Delany: My Life and Service, An Autobiography. Boston: 1877.

Diamond, August. Joseph Sturge Christian Merchant. London: 1909.

Douglass, Frederick. The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass as Written by Himself. Reprint of 1892 rev. ed.; New York: Crowell Collier Books, 1962.

DuBois, W.E.B. The Negro Church. New York 1924.

Dumond, Dwight. The Anti-Slavery Origins of the Civil War. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

_____. Letters of James G. Birney: 1837-1857. Vol. I; New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1938.

Filler, Louis. Crusade Against Slavery. New York: 1960.

Foner, Eric. Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Franklin, John Hope. From Slavery to Freedom. 7th ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

_____. The Emancipation Proclamation. New York: Doubleday, 1963.

_____. Reconstruction After the Civil War. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Gara, Larry. The Liberty Line. University of Kentucky: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1961.

Garraty, John A. The American Nation. New York: American Heritage, 1966.

Green, Samuel. Beriah Green. New York: No. 18 Jacob Street, 1875.

Gross, Bella. A Clarion Coll: A History of the Negro Convention Movement. New York: 1970.

Headley, Joel. The Great Riots of New York: 1712-1873. Reprinted ed.; New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970.

Hornshy, Alton, Jr. The Black Almanac. New York: Baron Educational Series, 1975.

Howard, O. O. Autobiography of General O. O. Howard. New York, 1907.

Keckley, Alice. Behind the Scenes. New York: 1868.

Litwack, Leon F. Been in the Storm So Long. New York: Random House, 1979.

Litwack, Leon F. North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

McPherson, James. The Negro's Civil War. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

Maybee, Carleton. Black Freedom: The Non-Violent Abolitionists from 1830 Through the Civil War. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970.

Meier, Auguste and Rudwick, Elliot, eds. The Making of Black America. Vol. I; New York: Atheneum, 1969.

Mye, Russel B. William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers. Boston: Little, Brown, 1955.

Oates, Stephen B. Fires of Jubilee Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion. Harper Row, 1975.

Oates, Stephen B. To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

_____. With Malice Toward None, The Life of Abraham Lincoln. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

Ofari, Earl. "Let Your Motto Be Resistance" The Life and Thought of Henry Highland Garnet. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.

Penn. Garland I. The Afro-American Press and Its Editors. Springfield, Mass.: Wiley & Co., 1891.

Quarles, Benjamin, The Afro-American Press and Its Editors. Springfield, Mass.: Wiley & Co. 1891.

_____. Frederick Douglass. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

_____. Lincoln and The Negro. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

_____. The Negro in the Civil War. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953.

Ray, F. T. Sketch of the Life of Charles B. Ray. New York: J. J. Little & Co., 1887.

Rezneck, Samuel. Profiles Out of the Past of Troy, New York. New York: Chamber of Commerce, 1970.

Roberts, William. A Concise History of the Presbyterian Church. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publishers, 1922.

Seifman, Eli. A History of the New York Colonization Society. New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1966.

Siebert, Wilbur H. The Underground Railroad. Reprint; New York: Arno Press, 1968.

Simmons, John. Men of Mark. New York, 1904.

Smedley, Robert. History of the Underground Railroad. Reprint; New York: Arno Press, 1969.

Soring, Gerald. New York Abolitionist. New York: 1969.

Stampp, Kenneth. Era of Reconstruction 1865-1877. New York: Random House, 1965.

Sterling, Dorothy. The Making of An Afro-American: Martin R. Delany. New York: Doubleday, 1971.

Still, William. The Underground Railroad. Reprint: New York: Arno Press, 1968.

Sturge, Joseph. Man of the People, An Autobiography. London: Florence: Fenwick Miller, 1871.

Tappan, Lewis. The Life of Arthur Tappan. Reprint; New York: Arno Press, 1970.

Tyler, Alice Felt. Freedom's Ferment. Reprint; New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Ullman, Victor. Martin R. Delany: The Beginnings of Black Nationalism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

Wallace, William A. History of Canaan. Canaan: 1887.

Ward, Samuel Rhingold. Autobiography of a Fugitive Slave. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1970.

Wesley, Charles. Negro Labor in the United States. New York: Vanguard Press, 1927.

Wilhelm, Carl. Complete History of the City of Allegheny 1740-1810. Pittsburgh: 1891.

Woodson, Carter G. The History of the Negro Church. 2nd. ed.; Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921

UNPUBLISHED THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

De Boer, Clara Merritt. "The Role of Afro-Americans in the Work of the American Missionary Association" (2 Vol.) Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Rutgers University, 1973.

Miller, Ernest J. "The Anti-Slavery Role of Henry Highland Garnet" Masters Theses, Department of History, Union Theological Seminary, 1969.

Shaw, Joel Alan. "The Anti-Slavery and Civil Rights Role of Henry Highland Garnet, 1840-1865." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Howard University, 1973.

ARTICLES AND PERIODICALS

Aptheker, Herbert. "Militant Abolitionism." Journal of Negro History, XXVI (October, 1941), 438-84.

Aptheker, Herbert. "Negroes in the Abolitionist Movement." Journal of Negro History, June, 1957.

Bell, Howard. "Negro Emigration" Phylon XX, 1959.

Bell, Howard. "Negro Nationalism 1858-61." Journal of Negro History, XXI, 1968.

Bell, Howard. "Negroes in the Reform Movement." Journal of Negro History, XXI, 1968.

Bell, Howard. "The National Negro Convention." Ohio History, LXVII, 1958.

Brewer, William. "Henry Highland Garnet." Journal of Negro History, XIII, (January, 1928).

Carlin, Margaret. "A Dream and a Bulldozer." Pittsburgh Press,February 16, 1969.

Cross, Bella. "The National Negro Convention." Ohio History, Journal of Negro History, XXL, 1968.

Hirsh, Leo H., Jr. "New York and the Negro from 1783-1865." Journal of Negro History, XVI (October, 1931).

Litwack, Leon. "Abolitionist Dilemma." New England Quarterly, XXXIV, 1958.

McMaster, Richard. "Henry Highland Garnet and the African Civilization Society." Journal of Presbyterian Church History, XLVIII (Summer, 1970).

Meyers, John. "American Anti-Slavery Society Agents, and the Free Negro." New York History, XXVIII, 1970.

Miller, Floyd J. "The Father of Black Nationalism." Civil War History, XVII, (December, 1971).

Padget, James. "Ministers to Liberia and Their Diplomacy." Journal of Negro History, XIII (January, 1928).

Pease, Jane and William. "Black Power--The Debate in the 1840's." Phylon, XXXIX (Spring, 1968).

Quarles, Benjamin. "Ministers Without Portfolio." Journal of Negro History, XXXIX (January, 1954).

Wesley, Charles. "Negroes in Anti-Slavery Political Parties." Journal of Negro History, XXIX (January, 1944).

Wesley, Charles. "Negroes in New York in the Emancipation Movement: Negro Abolitionists and Their Work." Journal of Negro History, XXIII, 1939.

Woodson, Carter G. "Henry Highland Garnet." D.A.B., IV, 1932.

NEWSPAPERS

African Repository and Colonial Journal. This newspaper gave detailed accounts on the debates over colonization amongst the blacks of the United States. For Garnet, it was particularly valuable between the periods of 1856-1861.

American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter. This was the newspaper of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and was published in the United States between 1840-1846. It was particularly valuable in understanding the split between Garnet and the Garrisonian's.

The American Missionary. The newspaper of the American Missionary Association gave some coverage of Garnet's missionary activities in the United States.

The Anglo-African. Originally entitled the Weekly Anglo-African, this newspaper published by Robert and Thomas Hamilton from 1859-1865, gave detailed accounts of Garnet during that period. In fact, Garnet served during 1865 as an editor of the newspaper, and his column, "Notes From the South," contain much valuable information.

Anti-Slavery Reporter (London). This newspaper of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was published in London after 1848. The newspaper gave a detailed account of Garnet's activities during his European trip from 1850-1854.

Cincinatti Daily Chronicle. September 7, 1843.

Christian Recorder. September 30, 1865.

Colored American. Edited by Samuel Cornish, this newspaper gave a detailed account of the activities of New York abolitionists from 1837-1840.

Frederick Douglass' Monthly. Originally published in the 1840's as the North Star, and then as Frederick Douglass' Paper, this newspaper reflected Douglass' insights and views. It was especially valuable in tracing and analyzing Douglass' life-time controversy with Garnet.

The Emancipator and Free American. This was the newspaper of the National Liberty Party. Published between 1840-1850, under slightly different names, this newspaper actively supported political abolitionism.

Herald of Freedom. Edited by Joseph Kimball and Nathaniel P. Rogers, this abolitionist newspaper was published in Concord, New Hampshire from 1835-1846, and gave some accounts of Garnet when he was a student at the Noyes Academy.

Illustrated London News. This non-abolitionist newspaper gave some mention of Garnet during his European period, 1850-1854.

Impartial Citizen. Published by Garnet's friend, Samuel Rhingold Ward from 1851-2.

The Liberator. This newspaper of Garrison and the American Anti-Slavery Society gives surprisingly little mention of Garnet and his activities.

The London Times. November 10, 1851.

National Anti-Slavery Standard. This New York based Garrisonian newspaper contains much Garnet material during the earlier part of his life.

New Era. Published by Frederick Douglass' son Louis, this newspaper, which became the New National Era in 1870, was a valuable source of information dealing with Garnet's later period.

The New York Daily Tribune. Horace Greeley gave some attention to Garnet during his New York period from 1856-1863.

The New York Times. Contains some mention of Garnet, particularly after 1858.

Oneida Whig. August 10, 1836.

The Pine and Palm. Published in Liberia, this newspaper gave some accounts of Garnet's funeral and obituaries.

Radical Abolitionist. Sporadic mentioning of Garnet between 1858-1860.

Rams Horn. June 17, 1849.

Syracuse Daily Standard. October 6, 1864.

Troy Clarion. Published by Garnet in 1842, this newspaper replaced the Troy Watchman. Unfortunately few copies remain in existence.

Troy Whig. March 16, 1841.

Washington Daily Intelligencer. April 13, 1865.