

SEPTEMBER • 1902

in West Africa, where there is reason to believe the Egyptian and American plants will thrive and produce a fibre suitable for the manufacturer.

The Company desires to secure the services of an expert who would be able to locate areas suitable for the Company's operations. I had occasion to speak of this matter to my friend Mr. Calloway who is now in Togoland, and he advised me that you would be able to nominate the expert we require. We would wish to enter into an agreement with whomever may be selected, so that we may be certain of his services for one year at least. It may be taken that he would be retained in the Company's employ in one way or another, just so long as he serves the Company faithfully.

We would like to know what salary he would require; of course all his expenses, transportation, subsistence, etc., would be met by the Company.

It may be interesting to you to know that the Company in carrying out its operations has in view the locating on its properties in Africa of American families (coloured) experienced in Cotton growing. The methods the Company may adopt in order to carry out this part of its scheme, have not been fully formulated, therefore it is impossible now to advise you what they may be. It is my personal belief that the removing from the Southern States of even a small proportion of its skilled labour, will have a beneficial influence in the way of helping to bring about a better understanding between the various peoples in the Southern States.

I take it that you will be concerned to see the result of this endeavour and I hope that when the moment arrives for active work, to have your co-operation.

Trusting to receive from you a response at an early date as will suit your convenience. I remain with respect, Yours faithfully,

Henry F. Downing

TLS Con. 225 BTW Papers DLC.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Francis Downing (1846-1928) (see above, 3:84) was born in New York City. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1872 to 1875. In 1887 he was appointed a U.S. consul in West Africa but resigned the next year. Downing maintained a lifelong interest in Liberia. He was a delegate to Henry Sylvester Williams's Pan-African Conference in 1900 and was appointed to the executive committee of the Pan-African Association. For several years beginning in 1902 Downing was manager of New Cotton Fields Ltd., a London company that promoted cotton-raising in West Africa and encouraged black American farmers to migrate to West Africa.