President Downing took the floor, and spoke forcibly against the project. He quoted from the Constitution of the American Colonization Society to show that the objects of that Society purported to be ‘to evangelize and civilize Africa’—and so far as professions went, the Colonization Society was as good as the Civilization Society. Mr. D. stated that the advocates of the civilization movement had declared that this country was no place for the colored man—that the colored man here was ‘a magnolia out of its place.’ Furthermore, the Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, President of the Society, had declared that ‘a place should be set apart for the colored people.’

[Rev. Mr. Smith denied that Mr. Garnet had ever made such an assertion.]

Mr. Downing referred the gentleman for a substantiation of his remark to the columns of the New York Express, and particularly to a sheet which was his (Smith’s) especial favorite, the New York Herald. (Applause.)

[One of the Vice Presidents declared that he had heard Rev. Mr. Garnet say what had been attributed to him.]

[The Rev. Mr. Smith—who, by the way, is the agent of the Civilization Society—appeared staggered at this accumulation of proof against his denial, but not convinced that he was in error.]

[The audience, a majority of whom were anti-civilizationists, appeared to enjoy highly this discomfiture of the advocate of the civilization cause.]

President Downing proceeded at considerable length to denounce the civilization movement. He regarded it as a money-making movement; and although he would not say so, yet he was afraid his friend Smith
had a money-interest in the undertaking. It was charged against him, however, and he must say that the circumstances against him looked rather black.

[Mr. Smith—It is a black operation. (Laughter.)]

Mr. Downing—It is black indeed! Mr. D. continued in a strain of vigorous remark against colored people leaving this country, and triumphantly asked where there was one colored man who would go to Africa?

[Mr. Smith—Here’s one!]

Mr. Downing—Then the sooner you go the better! (Boisterous laughter.) And if you had gone before, there probably would not have been any necessity for discussing the question in this Convention. Mr. Downing continued his remarks, answering at length the arguments of those who advocated the undertaking.