

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIBERIA

Edward Wilmott Blyden

Edward W. Blyden 1907.- *The significance of Liberia, an address delivered in the senate chamber, Monrovia, Liberia, 20th May 1906*, John Richardson & Sons printers Pall Mall, second edition, Liverpool.

WALPOLE STREET,
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE,
23rd January, 1907.

DEAR DOCTOR BLYDEN,-Through the courtesy of a friend, I have been favoured with the loan of your pamphlet, entitled, „The Significance of Liberia“, a lecture delivered in the Senate Chamber of Monrovia on 20th May last.

I have read it with deep interest, and I have been struck by the sad picture which it draws of the decay of our race under exotic forms of civilisation. It would seem that we are not the only sufferers from an obtrusive and unscrupulous system, the effect of which we are, as it were, helpless by any means at present available to us to neutralise. It was just the other day that I came across the following extract of an article from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 28th December, 1906, which is an impressive protest from India by an eminent native of that country. It appears that the Indian correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* had an interview with this Indian statesman and scholar, who spoke of British rule thus :

„You will admit that we have, some of us, been apt learners. We have taken readily to your language and your literature; we have become learned in your law, in your military system, in your sciences -particularly in those involving applied mathematics- and in medicine ; but so far as your civilisation is based on Christianity and on a medieval European system of morals, you have failed with us -failed not only to convince us, but you have strengthened our primitive opposition.

„One more point before I pass from this aspect of the question : your system of morals.

We see it at work in your own country. There are actions which you dub dishonourable and which you render illegal, but to which one can trace the long list of illegitimacy, suicide, disease and insanity which disfigures your social system and undermines your race. Most of these very special curses (as they seem to me) you have done much to spread in India.“

Such an expression of opinion struck me very forcibly after reading your lecture. Before the publication of your pamphlet, I had, in a series of articles published in our local Press, incidentally referred to some of the subjects so ably and courageously dealt with by you, namely, the liquor traffic, the malignant calumnies on the race, etc. You have not spoken too soon or too strongly. I learn that the first edition of the pamphlet is exhausted. I know that I voice the sentiments of many thinking Negroes when I ask that a second edition of your lecture may be published for wider circulation among the natives of West Africa. I am making a collection of all your works, and I shall feel extremely obliged if you will kindly favour me with a list of the same, together with particulars as to the best means of obtaining them.

I remain, dear Doctor Blyden,

Yours very sincerely,

THOMAS J. THOMPSON,

Barrister-at-Law.

Dr. E. W. Blyden,
Freetown.

THIS ADDRESS IS RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED TO
HIS EXCELLENCY ARTHUR BARCLAY,
PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA,
UNDER WHOSE ADMINISTRATION A NEW AND
MOST PROMISING CHAPTER HAS BEEN
OPENED IN THE HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC.

On the occasion of the delivery of the following lecture, the Hon. R. B. Richardson, LL.D., senior Associate Justice of the Republic, presided. At the close of the lecture, Ex-Attorney General T. W. Haynes, LL. D. , made a motion to tender thanks to Dr. Blyden for his very able and instructive lecture, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication. Counsellor C. D. B. King, B.L., seconded the motion, and Attorney General F. E. R. Johnson, LL.D., on the part of the audience, extended thanks to Dr. Blyden.

A SECOND EDITION of this lecture being generally called for, and subscriptions forwarded to the Author for its republication, it is reproduced as nearly as possible as originally delivered.

E. W. B.

Sierra Leone, *1st February*, 1907.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following lecture was delivered, at the request of leading men in Monrovia, at a meeting held in the Senate Chamber, at which the undersigned had the honour to preside. While I do not take in and digest all the sentiments expressed in the lecture without modification, still it is not rendered less worthy of the deepest thought and consideration of all thinking Africans. And it is not untrue that those sentiments, in the main if not in the whole, are becoming the sentiments of a large class of the people of Liberia.

I am free to say that as Africans in the land of our fathers, hence our own land, with the advantages gained in slavery, we have special duties and glorious privileges. It is not our part to be looking backward across the ocean, but forward into the great continent, our ancestral home. Our brethren in foreign lands are striving by all possible unnatural means to become White, while we are looking eastward and are determined to remain natural.

Let us not take for granted what we have heard with our ears, and our masters have told us ; but let us search for ourselves, as the Bereans did, and see whether these things are so ; search both in the Book of Revelations and in the vast and fruitful book of nature around us.

It is our part to be learning new things which are not recorded in books, and which without us the world cannot learn; therefore, our thinking friends abroad think it such a pity that Liberians, as Africans, in an independent State in Africa, should be content to follow and imitate them on all lines, religious, social and industrial. It is in our power, they think (and rightly too), to discover fresh interests for mankind ; new avenues, not only of material, but of religious, social and intellectual progress. This is too true. In the first place we should make new friends, and renew forgotten acquaintances with our aboriginal friends. We should study their laws and customs, and convey the meaning of them to the outside world. This is what our best friends expect of us. This is what Liberia was founded for, with many prayers and tears and consecrated gifts, as we are reminded in the lecture. But how can we fulfil these expectations if we are for ever looking backward to the land of our three hundred years' bondage ? The world gains by difference, not by servile imitation.

In the atmosphere in which we were brought up it requires an effort to say, „Thank God, I am Black“. Among our relatives in the interior that feeling is as natural and spontaneous as it is to the nightingale to sing, or the cock to crow. It is more than negative : not merely gratitude that they are not White men, but gratitude that they are Black men. In our interior, „Blackie“ or „Darkie“-a term so offensive to our brethren in America- is often a pet name for children. Travelling along an interior road some years ago with a young friend, we met a fine-looking native woman, who stopped and, looking steadily at us, remarked (not supposing that we understood her language), „These people are as pretty as we are.“ This shews that we have a healthy, round, trustworthy patriotism and race pride behind us, which we must utilise.

But even to go on our own lines, as Dr. Blyden suggests, we need the aid of foreigners, especially of those foreigners to whose fathers our fathers rendered three hundred years of unrequited service in sweat, in blood, and in tears. We need their material assistance to aid us to furnish the physical and material basis or framework for the great spiritual structure which I believe Africa is destined to erect, and thereby come into immediate contact with her God and the spirit of her fathers.

But the time has now come for less theorising. Practical and demonstrative work is to be done on all lines. The light that is now being shed forth is to be accepted, that it may prove „a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway“ in our struggles for true and natural development.

There is no problem with the natives. The problem is with us Western-trained Negroes, and the White man. Happily, now, on practical lines, some of the leaders of the country are moving forward in ways to convince the masses at home and the outside world that the African, as well as the other portions of humanity, has the „Thus saith the Lord.“

ROBT. B. RICHARDSON.

THE

SIGNIFICANCE OF LIBERIA.

LIBERIA, in this the fifty-ninth year of her existence as an independent State, and the eighty-fifth of the founding of the colony, has entered - upon a new departure in her foreign relation, or rather in her relations with foreigners. She has secured the assistance of foreign experts, guaranteed by the British Government, in the management of her Customs. This measure, it is believed, will have a most favourable effect upon the revenues of the country, and therefore upon the general life of the people. To every thinking citizen of Liberia, and to such friends of the Republic as are not citizens, the new departure suggests certain reflections, some of which I desire to bring to your notice to-day.

Liberia, from the beginning of her existence as a colony, and through the nearly sixty years of her independence, has been a marvel to herself and her neighbours. The policy of exclusion or isolation, forced upon her by circumstances, compelled the Government to maintain a hand-to-mouth existence. Weakness has been the prevailing characteristic, and „To be weak is to be miserable, doing or suffering.“

The ingenuity and the power of contrivance, in order to live, on the part of her statesmen, have been taxed to their utmost.

And yet I am thankful that I am a Liberian, and I want you to be thankful also. I know that from the greatest to the least of you, you are all thankful. I am proud also that I am an African, and I want you, too, to be proud of that fact. There is nothing to be ashamed of in the whole history of the continent or of the race ; on the contrary, there is a great deal to be grateful for. It has been said of our Fatherland -it was said as long ago as the days of Aristotle- that she is ever bringing forth something new ; new and always helpful ; nothing detrimental to the interests of humanity.

Take first the people : one of the oldest races of the planet. I have seldom in my recent writings referred to the connection of the modern Negro with the great races who, in the eastern and north eastern portions of Africa, originated civilisation. I mean the Egyptians and Ethiopians. I do not like to refer to this historical fact to strengthen the claims of the Negro upon the respect of the rest of mankind. I rather like to feel that we are men by the grace of God, and that is enough.

But since it is now the fashion of some foreigners, though standing high in the scale of civilisation, to boast of their own glorious antecedents in order to prove their superiority, and to insist upon the ignoble antecedents of the African to establish his inferiority, I have thought it only proper, if only for the sake of members of our race whose opportunities of education and research are limited, to recite what eye-witnesses of the past have said on the subject of this race.

I have been surprised to notice recently, that owing to the liberality and toleration of Mr. J. Ormond Wilson, Secretary of the American Colonisation Society, and successor of such men as Ralph Randolph Gurley, William McLain and William Coppinger, General Joseph Wheeler has been allowed, in the pages of the *Liberia Bulletin* (February, 1906), to ventilate his crude and contemptuous views of the Negro. General Wheeler cannot overcome the limitations of the narrow provincial education which he received in the South in the days before the Civil War. It is difficult to understand how or why Mr. Wilson could be induced to re-publish from the *New York Journal* so repugnant an anachronism in the pages of a periodical which has for eighty years (the *Bulletin* is, I believe, a successor of the *African Repository*) held a brief for the defence of the African.

General Wheeler says : „The true friend of the coloured man is he who impresses upon him that so far from being equal to the Whites, he is very inferior. The Negro should also be impressed that the only elevation he has received above barbarism has been by associating with, and having the advantages of, the example and teachings of the Whites.

„If any argument is necessary to convince the Negro of his inferiority, you have only to tell him that Africa as good soil, as valuable timber, as rich and abundant mineral, and every

other element of wealth, as is possessed by the most enlightened and prosperous countries, and yet the Negroes of Africa have remained in an absolutely barbaric state, except in those localities where to some extent they have been thrown under the control of the Whites.“

But history fully vindicates the character of the Negro against the ignorant aspersions of his malignant persecutors.

The early friends of the American Colonisation Society had a much more accurate view of this question, and seem to have been far more disposed to do justice to the Negro than some contemporary writers in the *Bulletin*.

In a speech delivered at a meeting of the Massachusetts Colonisation Society in February, 1833, the Hon. Alexander H. Everett, a name honoured in the annals of America, said „We are sometimes told, Mr. President, that all our efforts in Liberia will be unavailing ; that the African is a degraded member of the human family; that a man with a dark skin and curled hair is necessarily, as such, incapable of improvement in civilisation, and condemned by the vice of his physical conformation to vegetate for ever in a state of hopeless barbarism. Mr. President, I reject with contempt and indignation this miserable heresy Go back to the earlier period in the history of the human race. See what the Blacks were and what they did three thousand years ago, in the period of their greatness and glory, when they occupied the forefront in the march of .civilisation ; when they constituted, in fact, the whole civilised world of their time.

„Trace this very civilisation of which we are so proud, to its origin, and see where you will find it. We received it from our European ancestors ; they had it from the Greeks and Romans and the Jews. But Sir, where did the Greeks and the Romans and the Jews get it ? They, derived it from Ethiopia and Egypt : in one word, from Africa. Moses, we are told, was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians. The founders of the principal Grecian cities, such as Athens, Thebes, and Delphi, came from Egypt, and for centuries afterwards their descendants returned to that country as the source and centre of civilisation. There it was that the generous and stirring spirits of that time -Herodotus, Homer, Plato, Pythagoras and the rest, made their noble voyages of intellectual and moral discovery, as ours now make them in England, France, Germany, and Italy. Sir, the Egyptians were the masters of the Greeks and the Jews, and consequently, of the modern nations, in civilisation, and they had carried it very nearly as far -in some respects a good deal farther- than any subsequent people. The ruins of the Egyptian temples laugh to scorn the architectural monuments of any other part of the world. They will be what they are now, the delight and admiration of travellers from all quarters, when the grass is growing on the sites of St. Peter's and St.'Paul's, the present pride of Rome and London¹

„Well, Sir, who were the Egyptians ? They were Africans : and of what race ? It is sometimes pretended, that though African and of Ethiopian extraction, they were not black. .But what says the father of history, who travelled among them and knew their appearance as well as we know that of our neighbours in Canada ? Sir, Herodotus tells you that the Egyptians were Blacks with curly hair. Some writers have undertaken to dispute his authority, but I cannot bring myself to believe that the father of history did not know black from white. It seems, therefore, that for this very civilisation of which we are so proud, and which is the only ground of our present claim to superiority, we are indebted to the ancestors of these very Blacks whom we are pleased to consider as naturally incapable of civilisation.“²

Dr. MacIver, in his great and chivalrous work on Rhodesia, has generously anticipated the cultured Negro of the future, upon whom such work must devolve.

The ancient Egyptians and Ethiopians were, as Mr. Everett avers, clearly of the Black race. Whatever modern research, coloured by the prejudices of the day, may say, I would much rather trust Herodotus than the whole tribe of modern commentators on his writings, who arrive at their conclusion by the aid of contemporary inspiration. Herodotus, writing in the simple innocence and candour of an unsophisticated eye-witness, affirms that the Colchians must have descended from the Egyptians, because they have black skins and woolly hair (Book II., chap. 505). He celebrates the Egyptians as the greatest of men, and civilisers of the world, and twice

¹ The picture of Macanlay's „Traveller from New Zealand“ was drawn seven years after this address was delivered.

² African Repository, vol. ix., p. 26

mentions the Ethiopians as the tallest and most beautiful of men (Book III., chaps. 20 and 114). Homer bears similar testimony Ethiopians, and makes them the associates and the favourites of the gods („Odyssey,“ Book I., 22, „Iliad,“ Book 1, 423).

It cannot be supposed that if the statements of Herodotus, corroborated by Homer, were inventions, they would have passed unchallenged by a people so cultured and critical as the Greeks.

On the contrary, in the minds of these noble old Greeks, the black skin and woolly hair, instead of being associated with the meanness and misery of slavery, with ignorance and degradation, were associated with all that is noble in civilisation, respectable in learning, delightful in the arts, and splendid in military achievements.

Professor Flinders Petrie, one of the latest and most thorough of the modern explorers of Egypt, says, in his recent work on „The Religion and Conscience of Ancient Egypt“ (p. 26) : „It is certain, anatomically, that there is much Negro blood in the oldest Egyptians.“

A more recent witness, whom I am delighted to welcome among our friends and defenders against the calumny of ages, is Lady Lugard, wife of the eminent African administrator, who takes an enlightened and practical interest in the work of her -husband. In her work on „A Tropical Dependency,“ just published, she says (p. 17) :

„When the history of Negro-land comes to be written in detail, it may be found that the kingdoms lying towards the eastern end of the Soudan were the home of races who inspired, rather than received, the traditions of civilisation associated for us with the name of ancient Egypt. For they cover on either side of the Upper Nile, between the latitudes of 10 deg. and 7 deg., territories on which are found monuments more ancient than the oldest Egyptian monuments. If this should prove to be the case, and the civilised world be forced to recognise in a Black people the parent of its original enlightenment, it may happen that we shall have to revise entirely our view of the Black races, and regard those who now exist as the decadent representatives of an almost forgotten era, rather than as the embryonic possibility of an era yet to come.“

The time will come when the enlightened portion of mankind, freed from the necessity of using the African as a means of promoting their material interests, will be willing to render to him his due. Meanwhile, it is the work of the African himself to vindicate his race in the world of letters : a republic in which there is no such thing as caste. This is one reason why I have been so anxious that Liberia should have all the facilities necessary to make able and critical students of history. From the standpoint of this Republic, as a sovereign and independent State, possessed of the English language -that greatest of human instruments for obtaining general culture and diffusing information- it is possible to calculate the extent and depth of the influence she might wield in behalf of Africa and the African race.

Having considered the part which the man of Africa has had in the origin of civilisation, I now wish to recall the part which the land -the soil of Ham- has had in human development. According to the Biblical records, it appears that Jehovah selected Africa as the scene for the display of his wonders, both in the material and spiritual world. We read of „wonders in the land of Ham.“ It was to this land that the great Shemitic patriarchs, to whose descendants „were committed the oracles of God,“ came for training and inspiration. In Africa was either the beginning or the scene of the preservation of the three great religions to which the best elements of modern civilisation are supposed to be due, viz., Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For a great part of their religion then, Europe, Asia and America are largely indebted to our Fatherland.

Professor Flinders Petrie says : „We may even say that but for the presence of Egypt we should never have seen a Madonna. Isis had obtained a great hold on the Romans under the earlier Emperors ; her worship was fashionable and widespread, and when she found a place in the other great movement, that of the Galileans, when fashion and moral conviction could shake hands, then her triumph was assured, and as the Mother goddess she has ruled the devotion of Italy ever since.

But does Europe owe nothing to Africa in her secular or political affairs ? Let us see. It has already been pointed out in this paper that to this country came the enquiring philosophers of Greece and Rome in search of wisdom. In the struggle between Greece and Troy, which was to issue in the founding of the greatest of European empires, Africa sent her military contingents

to aid the Trojans, the weaker party to the contest, but out of whose defeat Rome was to arise. One of the African generals is tersely referred to by Virgil in the passage where the poet enumerates some of the most distinguished heroes who appeared in that conflict, „*et nigri Memnonis arma*“³ („and the arms of the Negro Memnon.“)

He is said to have been remarkable for his beauty, his bravery, and his skill in fight. He slew Antilochus, one of the most famous of the Greek warriors. He himself fell in battle, and poured out African blood in Europe in defence of the weak. He fell, but it was by the hand of the greatest of the Greeks, Achilles, „a foeman worthy of his steel.“

After the fall of Troy, which it was not possible for the right hand of man successfully to defend,⁴ the man who was to be the founder of the new Empire alone escaped, with a few followers. He did not at once reach the scene of his future successes on the shores of Italy. „Much was he tossed about,“ to use the pathetic language of the poet, „on the land and on the deep.“ Of the ships with which he and his companions escaped, several perished in a storm. He, with the remnant, driven by the force of the wind, reached the coast of Africa, where they found a quiet harbour. Here Aeneas landed, and after some difficulty, found his way to the palace of Dido, the Queen of the country, and to her introduced himself *in forma pauperis*.

„*Sum pius Aeneas*

Ipse ignotus, egens, libyae deserta peregro,

Europa atque Asia pulsus.“

(„I am pious Aeneas;

Driven from Europe and Asia,

I wander unknown, and in distress,

Through the deserts of Africa.“)

It was after this touching address that the African Queen uttered that celebrated sentiment of which Heyne, the great commentator on Virgil, said, that any youth who does not dwell on it with a feeling of delight ought to be excluded from a further perusal of Virgil :

„Not ignorant of misfortune myself, I have learned how to sympathise with and succour the unfortunate.“

Aeneas was the founder of Rome, and in his exile, his hunger, his distress, Africa sheltered him, revived him, gave him the inspiration of a great love, and sent him with renewed vigour on his mission of empire-building. So Africa might be called the cradle of empires. What then, do the inheritors of the strength and wisdom and glory of Rome not owe to Africa ?

In all this, I have left out the important part which her stalwart sons contributed to the up-building of America.

But Africa has not yet finished her *rôle* as asylum and refuge for those who need succour. The Jews are to-day seeking a country where they may worship God in peace and freedom. Turning from Asia, their ancestral home, and from Europe, the country of their exile, Great Britain has offered them a home again in Africa, the land of their ancient bondage and training, where they are to be invested with Jewish local autonomy under British control. I agree with Mr. Zangwill, the most inspired of the modern prophets of Israel, that England's offer should be accepted. In the order of Providence it may be accepted, and Africa will again open wide her maternal bosom to fulfil once more the functions of „the dry nurse of lions.“ And here it is possible the children of Israel may perform their crowning work for humanity. Begun in Africa their great work may be finished on this continent.

But now let us return to Liberia. This Republic is the offspring not only of American philanthropy, but of American prayer. Liberia is the child of many prayers. No one can look through the volumes of the *African Repository* for the seventy years during which it was the organ of the American Colonisation Society, without being struck both with the lofty character of the American citizens who conceived the idea of founding this Republic, and with the learning, the zeal, the eloquence, the devotion with which those men laboured for the upholding and welfare of this independent Negro State in West Africa. I do not believe that in the history of any philanthropic movement can more examples be presented of magnificent purpose, of

³ Virgil, Book I., 489.

⁴ „Si Pergama dextra Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuisset.“-Virgil

elevated and fervent devotion, of exalted liberality, of brilliant and convincing oratory, than are presented in the history of the American Colonisation Society. And as time rolls on and Liberia arrives at and develops her own African life, exhibiting the strength and beauty and force of genuine African character, the American citizen, however exalted his position, will be proud to look upon her as one of the chief glories of American history.

We read the other day in a recent number of the *Liberia Bulletin* (February, 1906) of the pride with which General Latrobe, of Baltimore, referred to the connection of his illustrious father with the early history of the colony. John H. B. Latrobe, the distinguished parent of the General, was for fifty consecutive years one of the most eloquent and most versatile of the exponents and defenders of Liberia -a name by the way; given to the colony on his suggestion, while a student in the law office of Robert Goodloe Harper.

I am sure that already, in the land of the hereafter, in the Elysian fields, Washington and Jefferson, and especially Monroe, after whom this city was named, have welcomed Roberts and Benson and Teage and Warner as kinsmen not unworthy of their fellowship.

I have said that Liberia is the child of many prayers ; of earnest prayers, and such prayers are always answered. I mean that the aim or intention of such prayers is always answered, not always the word or the form. The form of the answer is often disappointing, but the object meant is always attained. Not the stone is given, but the bread ; not the serpent, but the fish.

Now our friends in America, in the early days of the colony, desired, and in these days also there are come who desire that Liberia, in her religious and political affairs, shall shape her course according to the American model. But this desire is rapidly diminishing under the influence of a larger, experience, guided by the scientific spirit of the age : the light which anthropology, ethnology, and even theology, have thrown, and are continuing to throw, upon man's racial character and the destinies of the different sections of humanity. Therefore, our American friends in secular and political life, as well as some in religious life, are taking less and less practical interest in our political, social -and religious affairs. The Baptists and Presbyterians have withdrawn their support from the establishments which for many ears, at great expense, they kept up in Liberia. The Methodists and Episcopalians have virtually withdrawn so far as their White supervision is concerned, and it is evident that before long they, too, will follow the Presbyterians and the Baptists. Everybody is finding out that for healthful progress, Liberia must be cut loose from leading strings, in religion as in politics.

When, on 26th July, 1847, Liberia declared herself a free, sovereign and independent State, and was by the great Powers acknowledged as such, she also proclaimed, and it was conceded to her by those Powers, her right to deal finally with all political, social and religious questions affecting her existence. Our friends in America are recognising this, and are admitting that the political, social and religious history of this Republic must take its course, as the history of all other peoples has taken its course. They are discovering that all endeavour to altar or modify or qualify or improve in any degree or in any detail the course of this African State, must end in failure.

Those great men and eminent women who, fifty or sixty years ago, in various parts of the United States, encumbered their gifts for education in Liberia with dogmatic conditions, were philanthropic at heart and beneficent in intention, and with the light they then had, did the best they could ; but I venture to think that if they had to make those bequests now, they either would not make them at all, or make them absolutely free, and „tie no strings to them.“ It is evident that Liberia College, though greatly assisted by those gifts, has been also greatly hampered by their conditions.

That the policy we have been pursuing, and are now pursuing, has never been successful, and is not successful, may be seen in the decay, the disintegration, the dissatisfaction everywhere prevailing in our religious, social and industrial affairs. Dr. Richardson, the President of Liberia College, reviewing the situation in his last Annual Report (January, 1906), which for clearness and point has never been excelled by any of its predecessors, remarks as follows

„It appears that we are living in the dispensation of God's destructive providence. Whether it be really so, or the perverse actions of men make it appear so, I cannot divine, but

one thing is certain, as will be acknowledged on all hands, and that is that in the entire country there is a greater tendency to pluck up, to break down, to destroy and to afflict, than there is to build up and to plant.“

It may not be out of place here to refer to Japan, whose marvellous achievements are still the subject of unqualified eulogy among men of all races. A writer in a recent number of the *London Quarterly Review* says : „If there is anything to admire in the Japanese character as it exhibits itself to-day, it is the detective tact and selective insight with which the Japanese chose what was best for their development out of the four systems of religion which offered themselves to the people for acceptance, viz., Shintoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity.“ The Japanese selected from each of these systems those elements which they considered useful for their race and country. Of course, from Christianity they took only what Christ himself taught in the four Gospels. They eliminated, by severe persecution, what was peculiar to Europe. When, in the sixteenth century, Francis Xavier went as a missionary among them, he was so struck with their virtue, purity of life, and outward devotion, that he said of them, „This people is the delight of my soul.“ But had he succeeded in fastening upon them the European idea of religion, they would long since have gone the way of the North American Indians, the Sandwich Islanders, the New Zealanders, the Australians. Instead of being one of the foremost nations of the world, they would either have disappeared from the face of the earth or would have fallen into the hands of some foreign Power, as Hawaii, the Philippine Islands and Madagascar have done. Abyssinia, like Japan, resisted foreign religious invasion, and like Japan, it has held its own against a formidable European Power, and maintained its independence. Forty years ago Uganda was a great African State, but it was discovered by that-gallant and wonderful filibuster, Henry M. Stanley⁵. It is now said to have been converted by the missionary, but it has lost its independence.

With regard to the conversion of Uganda to genuine Christianity, strong doubts are now entertained, even in quarters most favourable to the idea of its permanent evangelisation. The report of a recent most friendly critic, Mr. Victor Buxton -a name honoured in West African history- who visited Uganda last year (1905) for the purpose of examining its condition from the missionary point of view, does not seem to be reassuring. „At a missionary conference which I attended at Mango,“ says Mr. Buxton, „no subject discussed was of greater importance than the means to be used for promoting holiness of life among the Christians ; but this session was marked by a tone of sadness and anxiety Speaker after speaker dwelt upon the same subject, deploring the low tone of public opinion among the leading men of the country, no less than among the common people Many of the professing Christians do not prove to be really converted, and a lower moral tone prevails as the Church grows in numbers and outward prosperity.“⁶

These are the usual signs of the beginning of that downward course from which native races seldom return until they disappear *nulla retrorsum vestigia*, a result, happily, that cannot take place on this continent, because there are inexhaustible sources of reinforcement in the vast unconvertible forces of Paganism and Mohammedanism.

⁵ The Edinburgh Review, January, 1878, said : „Mr. Stanley has conducted a geographical raid across the middle of Africa, which has led him into scenes of bloodshed and slaughter, beginning at the Victoria Nyanza, and not ending until he arrived in the neighbourhood of the Western Coast The question will no doubt be hotly discussed how far a private individual, travelling as a newspaper correspondent, has a right to assume such a warlike attitude, and to force his way through native tribes regardless of their rights, whatever those may be. A man who does so acts in defiance of the laws that are supposed to bind private individuals. He assumes sovereign privileges, and punishes with death the natives who oppose his way. He voluntarily puts himself into a position from which there is no escape except by battle and bloodshed ; and it is a question which we shall not argue here, whether such conduct does not come under the head of filibustering The opinion that the interior of Africa has been thrown open to civilisation and trade by Mr. Stanley's daring navigation and descent of the Congo river, is one which requires to be supported by much stronger evidence than we at present possess before it can be adopted. That evidence is not yet forthcoming.“

⁶ *The East and the West*, July, 1905.

As a rule, among African races, what the foreign missionary regards as conversion to his religion is the development of the spiritual forces in the African, who looks upon the teaching of the Christian propagandist; which at first is simple and comprehensible, as differing in no respect from what he learned from his own teachers in their sacred groves. But as the peculiarities of European customs are brought more and more to the front, he recoils from the new system as a disillusion and a snare ; and as we see everywhere in West Africa, and as we sure to witness in Uganda, notwithstanding the curious evidence of proficiency in Christianity given by the *East and the West*, that in Uganda the C.M.S. converts have become so expert that they can read the New Testament upside down.

The second and third generations of so-called converted do not continue in the footsteps of their fathers. The Lagos and Sierra Leona papers all point out that the churches are losing their hold upon the people. Paganism is re-asserting its sway, and Islam is having the right of way⁷

If we in Liberia continue, in dealing with the aborigines, to conform to the ordinary missionary methods of suppressing instead of utilising indigenous institutions, it will only be a question of time when, as result of national, physical, intellectual and moral degeneracy, some foreign Power will step in and take charge, as has happened in Hawaii, Madagascar, the Philippine Islands, and Uganda.

Two great indigenous agencies of self-preservation appeal to us -Paganism and Mohammedanism. The word Paganism does not in any sense describe the system, but only expresses the ignorance of the outsider. We cannot afford to neglect it. We should enter its sacred groves, as many a European has done, and study it. Our women should enter them and study the laws affecting their sex. The Japanese, as I have told you, did not expel the religion of their fathers for a foreign religion. In this respect they resemble the Celtic races of Europe, who with the Oriental religion blended reverence for the sacred places and sacred persons of their past history. We hear France a great deal criticised because she has disestablished the Church. But I do not believe that there is a more religious people on the globe. The nation is a nation of truth-seekers, and has suffered the fate of all who will not conform to the state of things as they exist, brought into being partly by the follies of men. The French are a nation of protesters, deserving far more recognition from the rest of Europe than they have received from their courageous investigation and discoveries in the realm of truth. Their recent action with regard to the Church cannot be attributed to irreverence, but to a deeply religious spirit. They have followed the example of their own great philosopher and teacher, Ernest Renan, who, brought up a priest, trained amid the glories of a magnificent hierarchy, and learned in all the wisdom of the Church, said, „I left the Church that I might follow Christ.“ The people of France have not broken with their religious past. They have their sacred places, to which they pay periodical visits with all the earnestness, simplicity and devotion of their fathers. In their cemeteries they shew the same reverence for their dead, and they recognise their connection with the living in the same practical manner as our aborigines do. I saw at Pere la Chaise, in Paris, probably the greatest burial ground in Europe, that the tombs were decorated with every little thing of personal use which belonged to the deceased, and which he valued. I was struck with the similarity of this practice to our own native customs, which are called superstition by those ignorant of their meaning and utility.

Protestants, in their iconoclastic zeal, destroyed everything which in their Pagan days their fathers revered ; so that in England and America there are no sacred places. An indiscriminate Vandalism has obliterated all the land-marks of native religion, and the people reverence neither places nor persons. This is what the missionary has done in Africa wherever, backed by foreign influence, he has had power to do so ; and he has substituted for what he has abolished, nothing as good. The sacred spots are gone, and wherever this has happened the natives are less spiritual and less moral ; less loyal, less obedient and less amenable to order than anywhere else. The Church is no substitute for the Purroh or Bundo ; everywhere in Christian West Africa it is losing its hold upon the people, because there is nothing, either in the building or its associations, to appeal to the deeper feelings of the African. The *Lagos Standard*

⁷ See also the *East and the West*, July, 1905, p. 350.

of 7th March, 1906, says: „The Christian religion is at its ebb in the Protestant churches in Lagos. The Bible has not its usual place in the schools. There is no time now for Catechism amongst the infants, and ignorance of Bible history is most alarming. The churches are getting thinner and thinner in attendances, although the pulpits are everywhere filled with able preachers. The churches are now only fully attended when some new dress is to be displayed, as when a newly-married couple or a bereaved family has to attend the service in procession. The rising generations subscribe more to clubs and secret societies than to the support of their ministers."

The true African, whatever his creed, never wholly abandons his aboriginal faith. I know of a native African clergyman, educated in the schools of Europe -such a character, perhaps, as Mr. Grant Allen has immortalised in his Rev. John Creedy- who in his dying moments exclaimed, " I die in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Fetish of my fathers." That man died in peace, satisfied, as Naaman was, when, with the prophetic benediction, he bowed down in the house of the god Rimmon.

The other system that appeals to us is Islam, which includes in its ranks all the most intelligent tribes of the Continent -sixty millions. We cannot afford to neglect that. I am satisfied that there are elements in the two systems by which, if adopted into the life of the people of Liberia, instead of dying out, as we are now doing, we should rapidly advance in numerical and material prosperity, in physical vigour and effectiveness, in chastity and sobriety, in pure morals and spirituality.

I know it is difficult -with some of us impossible- to escape the prestige of the White man, which has played so important a part in the history of our exile ; and even here, where we are trying to be ourselves, we feel the pressure of his influence.

But we have no example in history of any people going out of slavery to an alien race, carrying with them or reproducing in their new home the politics or religion of the dominant race whom they had served. The most conspicuous illustration we have on this subject is, of course, the Hebrews. Before they were allowed to enter the land of freedom they were taken through a great and terrible wilderness, and kept there forty years, that they might forget. In fact, they never did forget : the generation that came out of Egypt had to perish in the wilderness, not excepting their leaders, Moses and Aaron, who could lead the people only to the borders of the promised land. These men could not enter because the smell of Egypt remained on their garments, and the traces of its superstition or religion so clung to them as to unfit them for useful residence in the land of freedom.

The duty of the African returning from America is, as it was of the Hebrew, to remember the American Egypt as the house of bondage, and the training he received there, except in its material and industrial aspects, as the training adapted to slaves.

In prefacing the ten Commandments Jehovah said : " I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage." The fact to be indelibly inscribed on their minds was the bondage ; -and they were continually reminded of this : *the house of bondage*. The leeks and the onions -the fleshpots of Egypt- were to have no place in their memory. They were to forget the magnificence of the Egyptian temples and their gorgeous ritual ; the glories of Isis - and Apis were to be obliterated from their minds. They were simply to " spoil " the Egyptians and cross the Red Sea: take of their material wealth, but leave behind their religion and theology. Their artistic skill and mechanical competence were to be used in constructing and adorning the Tabernacle, a movable tent for the dwelling place of their omnipresent and omniscient Guide. Once they prostituted those gifts to produce an image of the object which they saw their masters worship in Egypt ; and they perished by thousands in consequence.

But it may be said there is no analogy between the relation of the Hebrews to the religion of Egypt, and ours to the religion of America, for the religion of America is not idolatry, it is the worship of the true God -a religion adapted to men of all climes and races. I am not prepared to deny that the religion professed in America is the true religion for humanity ; but I cannot admit that we have an exemplification of the spirit of that religion, so far as it has affected us. In its relation to us, it is Osiris or Isis, under whose inspiration bricks without straw were exacted from the Hebrews, and their male children ordered to be slain at their birth. "

There is no place," said Senator Ingalls, standing in the American Senate, " there is no place in American politics for the Golden Rule or the ten Commandments." But American politics flourish under the shadow of the American religion, if it is not the offspring of that religion. Nearly all the decisions of the Supreme Court of that country affecting the Negro have been in diametrical opposition to the Golden Rule ; and in their social and industrial relations with us, there is not one of the ten Commandments which has not been violated with impunity.⁸

Therefore, the religion we were taught in America was the religion of the house of bondage. Its fundamental tenet was, " Slaves, obey your masters." We had to obey those whose inspiration, in their political life, was neither the Golden Rule nor the ten Commandments.

In coming to Africa we left behind us those political tenets and the religion that gave them inspiration, and have come to a country where we can have uninterrupted access to the Founder of the religion which the American professes, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Divine inspiration is confined to no race. If or when Liberia shall elect to declare herself on the side of the natural laws of climate and race, she will find that the common sense and righteousness of the world will be on her side. It is the duty of the rulers and people of the Republic to seek, first, the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of nature, and is within us. "This Commandment," said Moses to the Hebrews, "which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it ? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it ? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deut. xxx., 11 - 14.)

This is the gospel that Christ commanded His apostles to go and preach, to tell the people that the kingdom of God is within them, and this was the gospel that Paul preached to the men of Athens : that men of all nations who dwell on all the face of the earth are the offspring of God, and that they should „seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us ; for in Him we live and move and have our being " (Acts xvii.). This is the gospel that men of all climes and countries understand and welcome, which the learned Athenians approved of, and which the lowest human being that God ever made will rejoice in. I am sure that genuine Christianity-the Christianity of Christ of which we read in the Gospels, which was foretold by the prophets and poets of humanity, and which we see exemplified in the lives of individuals, is a life-giving power.

„The words that I speak unto you,“ said Christ, „they are spirit and they are life“ (John vi., 63). I am sure that the Christianity of Christ is an energy that will stimulate all action, all righteousness, all goodness. I am sure that in its presence all things would become brighter and larger, all men would be happier and more free.

On the other hand, I am sure that Christianity, as conceived and modified in Europe and America, with its oppressive hierarchy, its caste prejudices and limitations, its pecuniary burdens and exactions, its injurious intermeddling in the harmless and useful customs of alien peoples, is not the Christianity of Christ.⁹

But I am sure, also, that the Christianity of Christ is no cunningly devised fable, no *ignis fatuos*, to disappear in darkness and confusion. I am sure that its spirit will ultimately prevail in the proceedings of men : that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. I am sure that Jesus, upon whom is the spirit of the Lord, because He hath anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised : I am sure that this

⁸ SPRINGFIELD (MISSOURI), 14th April.- A mob to-day took two Negroes out of the local jail and hanged them on the statue of the Goddess of Liberty on the Court House building. A fire was then made under the bodies, which were burnt to ashes. The Negroes were charged with assaulting a White woman, but were probably innocent.- Reuter, 14th April, 1906.

⁹ The striking letter of Bishop Hartzell in the *West African Mail*, (4th January, 1907) furnishes a suggestive example of the methods which have so signally failed and so utterly discredited missionary operations in West Africa..

„Jesus shall reign where'er the son
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no-more."

I am sure, also, that all counterfeits, however bright or real they look, must vanish as the truth appears. We should not be discouraged because the system bearing the name of Christ makes no progress on this continent-that it lingers, halts and limps on the threshold of a great opportunity. Jesus is lame. He has been wounded in the house of his friends. We must bind up his wounds. Treading in the footsteps of our immortal countryman we must bear the cross after Jesus. We must strip him of the useless, distorting and obstructive habiliments by which he has been invested by the materialising sons of Japhet. Let Him be lifted up as He really is, that He may be seen, pure and simple, by the African, and He will draw all men unto Him.

I want now to give you an instance (the only one I shall on this occasion refer to, though there are several instances in the history of Liberia) shewing the helplessness of the religion we have been taught, to build up or preserve a people.

On 26th March, 1833-seventy-three years ago -Mr. Arthur Tappan, a distinguished philanthropist of New York, and at one time an ardent supporter of the American Colonisation Society, made the following statement as to his reason for ceasing to support the Society. He said :

" The first thing that shook my confidence in the Society was the fact that ardent spirits were allowed to be sold at the colony, and, as the agents (of commercial houses) wrote me from Liberia, in giving the assortment suitable to make up an invoice, were considered indispensable. I used the little influence I had with the Society to obtain a prohibition of the admission of ardent spirits into the colony, with what success may be seen in the fact that no less than fourteen hundred barrels of the liquid poison have been sold there within a year."

This was in 1833, when the colony was only about twelve years old. Just think of it: that at that time one hundred barrels of spirits were consumed every month in Monrovia and its neighbourhood !

To the credit of the Society it must be stated, however, that they did all they could to stop it. It must be remembered that the traffic was introduced by the slave traders long before the colony was settled. Most of the liquor was used by the aborigines in the purchase of slaves for the foreign trade. The Society was afraid that in their weak state, having no international rights, if they attempted to check it by legislation, they might intensify the evil.

In their reply to Mr. Tappan, they said: "Under the influence of these considerations the Board have deemed it best to rely on moral influences for preventing the introduction of ardent spirits into Liberia."

As a matter of fact they did, by resolutions passed three years before, pronounce against the liquor traffic. One resolution, adopted 28th June, 1830, was as follows :

" Resolved, that the friends of the Society throughout the country be informed that this Board will discourage the introduction and use of distilled spirits in the colony and among the native tribes."

On 8th November, 1830, they adopted the following

" Resolved, that the Secretary be requested to prepare an address to the colonists, to be sent out by the vessel now about to be despatched, in which he shall encourage them to form temperance societies, and adopt such measures as may tend to diminish both the use and the sale of ardent spirits in the colony, and in commerce with the natives.¹⁰

Wealthy friends of the Society gave money for the sending out temperance emigrants and establishing temperance settlements.

But it would seem that the " moral influences " upon which the Society relied have failed altogether to achieve the desired reformation. For in the year 1904, the American Minister in Liberia, Dr. Lyon, was in a position to forward to his Government the following heartrending report :

¹⁰ *African Repository*, Vol. IX., p. 87, Vol. X., p. 107.

" I submit a few facts concerning the imports of spirituous and malt liquors into the Republic of Liberia, taken from the report of the Government statistician for the quarter ended 31st March, 1904. The quantity of liquors brought in, when compared with that of other articles, such as foodstuffs, would seem to offer an inviting field for temperance missionary work. The statistics do not include the rum made in local distilleries, nor the wines made from the palm and bamboo trees by the aborigines, which are drunk in large quantities.

IMPORTS OF SPIRITUOUS AND MALT LIQUORS INTO LIBERIA, AFRICA, DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1904.

Whence imported	Quantity, gallons.	Value, dollars.
England	... 1,419	... 882
Netherlands	... 10, 430	... 5, 812
Germany	... 23,267	... 8,121
Total	... 3 5,116	... 14, 815

" The liquors consisted of gin, rum, whisky, brandy, beer, ale, champagne, and wines.

" During the same three months the report shews that there were imported into the Republic 128,411 pounds of stock-fish, valued at \$18,531; 596 barrels of flour, valued at \$2,296; 26,047 pounds of smoked bacon, valued at \$2,863; 1,476,496 pounds of rice, valued at \$26,138; 4,196 pounds of biscuits, valued at \$682 ; and 581 cases of canned meats and fish, valued at \$4,499. The imports of spirituous and malt liquors are exceeded in value only by the imports of rice and stock-fish ; the combined values of the imports of flour, bacon, biscuits, and canned meats and fish do not amount to as much."-*Monthly Consular Reports*.

The distressing fact appears, then, that after a period of seventy-five years' Christianising effort, such a fearful record has to be made; and we only have, to look around us to verify the melancholy statements. Our youth, before our eyes, are being swallowed , up in the vortex of the unhallowed stream which still flows unchecked through this so-called Christian community.

The liquor traffic is the trade mark of European enlightenment, the emblem of a high civilisation.

Now let me give you another picture. In 1833, the same year in which Mr. Arthur Tappan recorded his protest, Rev. Melville B. Cox, the founder of the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Liberia, on his way to this country touched at the Gambia. In his graphic descriptions of that colony, speaking of the commercial activity which he witnessed there, he said it was a place of considerable trade ; vessels were constantly entering and clearing from England, France, and America, which supplied not only the settlement itself, but, through the merchants, the whole valley of the Gambia, with European -goods, etc.¹¹ The liquor traffic was then at its height. In January of this year (1906), I visited the Gambia and the Governor there, Sir George Denton, informed me that the Gambia is now almost a Mohammedan colony, and the liquor traffic has nearly entirely disappeared. Islam can suppress the liquor traffic. The Christianity we have received cannot.

Liberia and Abyssinia are the only two independent Christian Native States on the Continent of Africa. Recent papers inform us that Abyssinia has suppressed the introduction of European liquors. That State has been recently admitting Mohammedans into its counsels. The perpetuity of Liberia depends upon three pieces of legislation, viz., the amendment of the Constitution to secure continuity in the policy of the Government; the suppression of the liquor traffic; and the amendment of the Marriage Law.

The question of plural marriage, so far as it affects Liberia and Africa, did not escape the earnest consideration of the early friends of colonisation. Rev. Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, a tower of strength in the Presbyterian Church, among the strictest of the orthodox, referred at length to this subject in a paper published in the African Repository for January, 1834, regarding it partly from the standpoint of public sentiment and partly from the standpoint of utility under certain conditions. He said then, as I say now: " We do not mean to say said that

¹¹ *African Repository*, vol. -IX. P. 177.

men are at liberty to violate, individually, the Jeep and settled public feeling on subjects of this kind; but only if society could be led into the scheme, there is nothing that morally forbids it."

"Napoleon Bonaparte," the Doctor goes on to say, "asserted that the only possible way to place various castes and races of men, in any State, upon a footing of perfect equality, was to allow polygamy."

This was the result of his reflections on the political state of Egypt, and he saw no method to secure peace among the multifarious classes of all Eastern nations better than the violation of the marriage laws of Europe. „ This opinion," Dr. Breckinridge adds, "is certainly worth something; and the universal course of events which confirms it is worth still more. For we believe it will be hard to find a community in which races of men, materially different from each other, have lived in the enjoyment of equal privileges where polygamy has not been tolerated."¹²

But there are other and far more serious aspects of the question. The marriage laws of Europe have created difficulties which are to the social reformer insurmountable. There are to-day , as one of the direct results of those laws, 80,000 women on the streets of London, professional outcasts, without homes, without husbands, without health, without virtue : the burden and disgrace of the community.

Professor Margoliouth, Professor of Arabic at Oxford, has just published a book entitled „ Mohammed and the Rise of Islam“ in which he has the courage to write as follows : " It is best to hush the voice of sentiment and treat Mohammed's rules and innovations for the female sex as an attempt to grapple with a hopeless problem : which the European nations solve by harbouring prostitution.¹³ In the European system a portion of the female population is *wholly* degraded; in the polygamic system the whole of the female population is *partially* degraded. But it is evident that the European system must be far from final and satisfactory The presence of a swamp, with its malarious exhalations, however healthy the district, must affect the entire atmosphere. That this is so may be gathered from the unsavoury and infectious reports which one reads in every foreign newspaper of the proceedings in the Divorce Courts; and of the accounts one gets of the presence in great cities of foundling hospitals and homes for fallen women. Among the aborigines of Africa there are no such institutions, and they are not needed. Why introduce conditions that will render them necessary ?“

But besides these evils attendant upon the European marriage law, we are, in Tropical Africa, confronted with the physiological or sanitary difficulty. The infant born in this climate requires from its birth-and, indeed, before its birth-every assistance that will fit it to withstand the rigours of the perpetual heat and exhaustion of the situation ; to overcome the indigenous fever which assails it soon after birth, and to which hundreds also succumb. After its birth, the strength of the mother for two years must be wholly devoted to the building up of the babe. She must nurse it without interruption during that period. This is the law of Africa, and there is no part of this continent where any other law has been adopted with success. And I may remark in passing, that the short period devoted to lactation by mothers in this country, in imitation of the custom in temperate climes, is in a great degree responsible for the thirst for drink which is destroying the youth of the land who survive the perilous time of nursing. The brief period of

¹² It was the extensive domestic relations of Solomon which made it possible for him to bring so many tribes under his influence and to maintain peace among them ; and not a little of this influence was due to his Black wife from Egypt. „ He is the true type," says Dean Stanley, " of an Asiatic monarch. Europe could never have had a Solomon. But such men have a place in the designs of Providence and in the lessons of Revelation." (Jewish Church, vol. ii.) If Liberia, as an African State in Africa, is to grow strong and expand in the ancestral home, the policy of Solomon, though impracticable in the political arrangements of Europe, should be carefully studied by the statesmen of this Republic, otherwise expansion is impossible, and Liberia is doomed not only to perpetual weakness as a nation, but to extinction as a political force in Africa.

¹³ Such a solution of the problem in Africa would destroy the entire population. It is evident we cannot solve it thus. We prefer a partial degradation of the whole to the entire degradation of a part. In Africa everybody is above ground. We can do without the „submerged tenth.“ Let each race, then, grapple with its own problem, and do not, under any pretext, whatever, force certain features of its own problem upon others.

liquid nutrition leaves the child for ever thirsty, and as he grows older the thirst increases and water does not satisfy it. He craves strong drink.

Foreigners may ridicule this theory, but we must study it. The problem is ours; we have got to live here. They cannot live here. Neither their race nor habits allow their permanent residence here. Miss Kingsley, who studied the African in his own unsophisticated home from a scientific standpoint, respected and defended his social institutions as a means of his preservation.

But what about the Liberian or the African who has been brought under or subjected to the European system ; who has violated the laws of his fathers and has not followed the example of his mothers ? He is perishing, daily perishing. Within a few years in Liberia whole families become extinct. In the city of Monrovia and in other settlements there is a silence in our streets. No children play and romp, and dance and sing, as in the neighbouring villages among the aborigines. On the contrary, our children have not sufficient vitality to initiate or prosecute a game. Weak, puny and incapable of exertion, they attract the attention of foreigners. Those who touch at our ports in the steamers constantly remark on the worn, haggard and weary appearance of the young men who visit the ships for the transaction of business. Languid, listless, incurious, they rush to the saloon for drink. I am informed that in no other West African port is there so much consumption of foreign drinks on board steamers by natives as in the Liberian ports.

It is time for the subjects which I have had the honour of bringing before you to-day to be taken into serious consideration. They should be brought to the notice of children in our families and pupils in our schools.

In attempting the necessary reforms we do not, happily, labour under the disadvantage of confronting old and venerable indigenous institutions. The customs we are combating are not African customs. The framework of our society is not hoary, rigid and unelastic with age. We are not assailing a heap of time-honoured prejudices and traditional institutions. What we have is all copied. We have been looking over the shoulders of foreigners, and copying without question what they wrote on the slate, knowing neither rhyme nor reason for the record. It will not , cost us much to rub out the unmeaning scrawl. It is true we find this difficulty : that our people are slow, according to the slowness of ordinary humanity. But the old is passing away. New elements are entering into the situation. The Church is getting to understand that it must adapt

its methods to climate, race and country, or the people will flee from it, as many in West Africa are now doing, for life and preservation. There is a thing for the life of the people more important than the Church, and that is Liberty. " The Love of Liberty," runs our inspiring National motto, " brought us here ;" not love of the Church. THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE IS THE HIGHEST LAW.