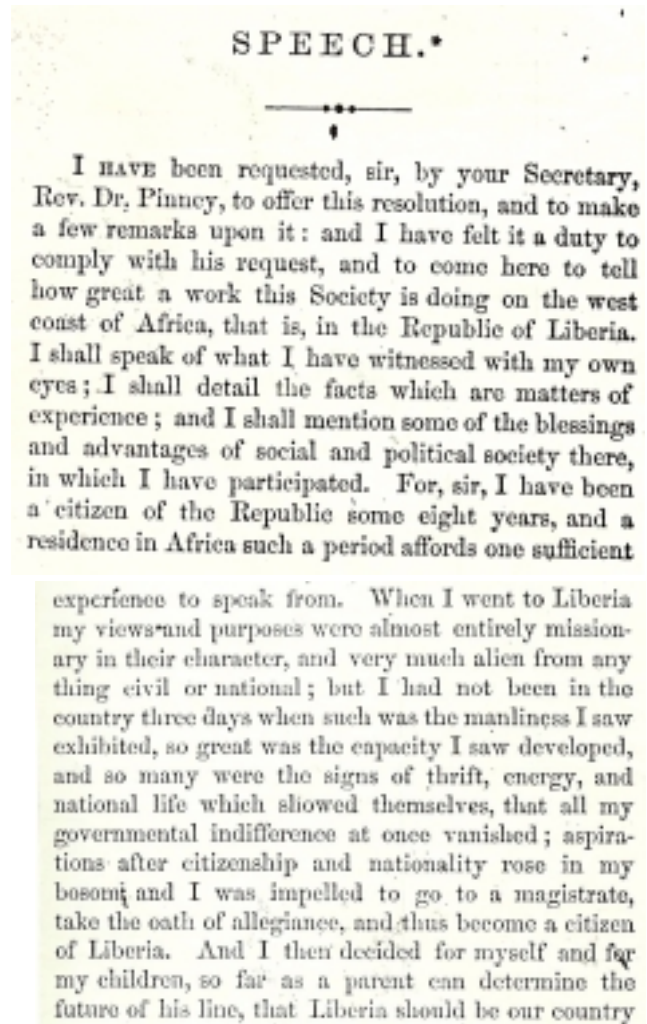


SPEECH.\*

I HAVE been requested, sir, by your Secretary, Rev. Dr. Pinney, to offer this resolution, and to make a few remarks upon it: and I have felt it a duty to comply with his request, and to come here to tell how great a work this Society is doing on the west coast of Africa, that is, in the Republic of Liberia. I shall speak of what I have witnessed with my own eyes; I shall detail the facts which are matters of experience; and I shall mention some of the blessings and advantages of social and political society there, in which I have participated. For, sir, I have been a citizen of the Republic some eight years, and a residence in Africa such a period affords one sufficient experience to speak from. When I went to Liberia my views and purposes were almost entirely missionary in their character, and very much alien from any thing civil or national; but I had not been in the country three days when such was the manliness I saw exhibited, so great was the capacity I saw developed, and so many were the signs of thrift, energy, and national life which showed themselves, that all my governmental indifference at once vanished; aspirations after citizenship and nationality rose in my bosom; and I was impelled to go to a magistrate, take the oath of allegiance, and thus become a citizen of Liberia. And I then decided for myself and for my children, so far as a parent can determine the future of his line, that Liberia should be our country

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and our home forever. Nor have I repented this election. As denizens of *all* new countries, so we have been called to the trials and some of the sufferings of emigrants; and sickness in my family has caused us to seek restoration in the land of our birth' yet, if it pleases God to open to me my field of labor, I shall soon be wending my way back to my home again.

The resolution in my hand expresses gratification at the signs of industrial, moral, and intellectual progress in Liberia. And this, sir, is the assertion of fact. In every department of life and labor in Liberia there are unmistakable evidences of growth. I feel the assurance to affirm here that in every quarter the most casual observer can perceive strength, confidence, self-reliance, development, increase of wealth, manliness, and greater hardiment of character. A glance at any of the facts indicative of national growth serves to show this. *Take the item of Agriculture.* When I went to Liberia the farming and husbandry of the country pertained chiefly to the home supply. But the case is somewhat different now, and the change, considering the small civilized population, is indeed wonderful. The productive capacity of the republic warrants this assertion. Look at our coffee-fields. It is, indeed, not generally known, but, indeed, I make a *moderate* statement when I say, that our citizens have planted, and have now in full growth, not less than 1,000,000 coffee trees. It is true that we are not telling as much upon the market as we are able to in this particular. Various reasons can be given for this, some

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arising from the state of the country; some from the condition and character of the people; especially from the fact that the acquisitive principle is latent, reserved, and sluggish in many men in the land; but the main reason is, that we have lacked suitable machinery for cleaning our coffee.\*

But there are signs that even now serve to show that we are yet to have a large participation in the coffee trade of the world, and this is seen, especially in the interest exhibited in this trade by the citizens of Bassa, and in the important and increasing exports which are annually made from that country.

Look next at the facts relating to our production of sugar. When I landed on the shores of Liberia, eight years ago, not a pound of sugar was exported from the land; I doubt whether as much as a pound was then made for home consumption. But, sir, since those days life, and energy, and power have been thrown into this branch of industry. The forest has been levelled; broad fields have been cleared; and hundreds of acres of sugar-cane have been planted, cut down, manufactured into sugar, and replanted again, and again, and again. Taking the Republic in the aggregate, we have between five and six hundred acres of land appropriated to the growth of cane. Some of the farmers on the St. Paul's River have thirty acres under cultivation, some forty, some sixty. This year there is unusual activity among the planters. Sugar-making is no longer an experiment among them; they have put forth their effort and it has

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succeeded; the market has welcomed their contribution, and *they have made money*. This stimulant has incited them to nobler efforts, and I have no doubt that some half-dozen men on the St. Paul's will, this year, enlarge their respective farms to one hundred acres each. At the last grinding season, some of these men manufactured and shipped to foreign ports, some thirty thousand pounds, some forty thousand pounds, and in some instance fifty-five thousand pounds of sugar, with a proportional quantity of molasses and syrup. These facts, with the strong current of industrial interest now flowing in this particular channel, warrant the belief that Liberia bids fair to become one of the greatest sugar-producing countries in the world.

These two staples, that is, sugar and coffee, are the chief staples produced by us; and having referred to them, I need not detain you by any special reference to cocoa, cotton, and other articles which have not as yet entered largely into the calculations and efforts of our farmers as sources of gain.

*Take the item of Trade.* All along the coast and in the interior, from Sherbo River to Cape Lahou, our merchants have set up their trading factories among the natives. This trade is a trade in CAMWOOD, IVORY, GOLD, COUNTRY CLOTHS, and especially in PALM OIL. In order to carry on this trade our citizens need the service, coastwise, of sloops and schooners, and those whose ambition has stretched beyond the home trade, have bought for themselves brigs and barks for foreign trade. And thus the merchants of Liberia are owners of quite a respectable com-

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mercial fleet. The number of vessels, small and large, owned by Liberia, and engaged in trade, is forty.

What the correct statement is of exports and imports, I can only say proximately. The imports at the single port of Monrovia, for the year 1880, amounted to near \$150,000; but as there are *five* other ports in the Republic, and two of them of great importance, that is, with respect to native trade, I have no doubt that our imports exceeded \$300,000. I am happy to say that our exports exceed our imports; we are factors and producers over and above our consumption of foreign products; and thus we are enabled to show signs of thrift and progress, and indicate increasing wealth. The report of exports from the port of Monrovia is about \$192,000 in 1860, and I presume that the sum of \$400,000 is no exaggeration of the amount for the whole republic.

*Take next those items which pertain to the best and most abiding interests of man, those which pertain to civilization—I mean schools and religion.*

Through the provident care of the several denominations of Christians in the United States, all our settlements are provided with schools, and opportunity for securing a common education is afforded to a goodly portion of our population. The Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal missions have each their schools in all of our larger towns. In these schools are gathered together, under teachers of, in the main, respectable acquirements, our civilized children. But they are not exclusive. Numbers of native children, servants on the farms and in the families of our citizens, are also received in these schools. The Sunday-

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schools receive a much larger number of natives and Congoes for instruction, and the churches are oftentimes filled with them. I have seen, in some Sunday-schools, with our own children, thirty, forty, and fifty native children, under instruction in English and the Christian religion. Added to this, are the schools, exclusively for natives, under missionary direction, all which agencies are bringing forward a large class of natives of the soil, English-speaking in tongue, and civilized in habits and manners. Some of these already approach our own civilization. Many of them are respectable citizens in our towns and neighborhoods; men who not long since were heathen, but having been brought up in American families, are now civilized men. They live in our towns and villages; they go to our schools; they visit our families; they pay taxes; and they marry among our people. Some of them are teachers; a few have become ministers of the Gospel. One case of this civilized transformation is worthy of notice. It is the case of a native young man, who was brought up in a mission-school at Bassa; subsequently he was brought to *this* city, and went to the second colored public school in this city, and afterwards returned to Africa. On a recent occasion, a vacancy having occurred in the representation to the Legislature in that county, this young man was pitched upon by the Bassa people as the proper person to be sent. I believe, however, that the purpose of his fellow-citizens was frustrated by some missionary arrangements; but from the way I have heard responsible citizens speak of him, I feel quite certain that the people of

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Bassa regard Mr. Pitman as one of their foremost men for character and ability.

I am endeavoring to show how in various ways Liberia gives evidence of moral, industrial, and intellectual progress, and I think the statements I have brought before you evince energy and progress among my fellow-citizens; but perhaps a more life-like representation of activity in Liberia may be gathered from a brief account of a recent journey along our coast. I left Cape Palmas, a few weeks ago, on my return to America, and on our journey we stopped at every settlement on the way to the capital. When we reached Sinou we found there the bark E. B. Roye, the property of a most enterprising fellow-citizen, Mr. E. J. Roye, merchant of Monrovia. In a day or two we reached the settlement at Bassa, and there we found a small craft trading, owned by another fellow-citizen. We went to Junk, and there we saw the fine steam saw-mill of Payne and Yates, their yard filled with plank, and a long distance along the banks multitudes of logs, which are furnished them by the enterprising natives there, for their mill. Off from the town we found there, lying in the harbor, two vessels, the property of Payne and Yates, Liberians, loading with lime and plank. We went on to Monrovia, and, as we turned the noble projection which makes Cape Montserrada, we found in the roads *six* vessels and the steamer Seth Grosvenor, all the property of our own citizens, and floating the Liberian flag. We went ashore and entered the streets of our capital; a city regularly planned and gradually filling up with brick and stone edifices. The next morning we were

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woke up with the early sound of martial music, and, hastening into the streets saw a fine body of troops gathered from several settlements, and led by the Secretaries of State, and of the Treasury, on their march to the beach to embark for the southern section of the country, to put down a pestilent set of natives, who, for the last three years, have been giving us much trouble and defying our authority.

A few days afterwards, I took a journey to the new interior settlement, Careysburg. I sailed up the St. Paul's and found everywhere the signs of progress. I had been nigh three years away from Montserrada County; and great was my surprise to see large and extensive fields cleared, and planted with sugar-cane, which, when I went to Palmas, were a dense wilderness; new brick and frame-houses recently erected; brick-kilns at divers places, containing from fifty to one hundred and fifty thousand bricks. Great was my delight, as we sailed up the river, to behold widespread sugar-fields; the brick mansions of the farmers, ranged upon the banks of the river; and to see in the distance, the curling smoke ascending, and the floating steam from the sugar-mills, at several points, where the grinding of the cane had commenced, and sugar was in the process of making. Stopping a few hours at the farm of an old friend and schoolmate, who plies two noble packets on the St. Paul's; has a large sugar-cane farm; and at the same time is making this year, one hundred thousand bricks, I mean Mr. Augustus Washington; I started thence, through the wilderness, for Careysburg. After a few hours' travel, we came first to a solitary log-house of a new

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settler; soon after we reached a group of good, substantial dwellings, forming a little village, surrounded by acres of recently cleared land. After a while we arrived at the neighborhood where large preparations are being made for the interior road. There I saw, at different places, the banks of some four different streams secured by neat, solid masonry of our own laborers, in preparation for the bridges, projected for the cart-road. In two places, fine bridges, symmetrical and substantial, had been thrown across these streams. At another spot I saw a company of twenty odd men, in busy activities, preparing a new bridge, and grading the road; and all this work was being done by workmen, emigrants from this country, citizens of Liberia and under the direction of Liberian officers and superintendents. Five hours brought me to Careysburg; and as I ascended the main street to a lofty elevation, I saw, on every side, the town laid out before me, with the precision of a multiplication-table. All around were visible more than a hundred mansions of the emigrants, surrounded by largely cleared patches of vegetables; their humble chapels in elevated positions; a large reserve in the heart of the settlement for a public park; not far in the distance were the larger farms of the settlers, while the air was filled with the cheerful sounds of labor, of conversation, of hilarity; and peace and happiness seemed to rest upon man and beast and nature!

I have presented these incidents to you, sir, as evidence of life and activity in Liberia. They show, I think, that men are alive in that country, and are moving the arms of industry. There are, you know,

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I have been speaking thus far, sir, with reference to that part of the resolution which relates to the industrial, moral, and intellectual progress of Liberia. I wish now to show, in as brief a manner as possible, that as the Republic is growing in itself, so likewise it is telling upon the interests of the aboriginal population. I have already referred, incidentally, to this topic. I wish, however, to call attention more distinctly to one or two facts which will show more strikingly the work we are doing among our uncivilized kin in Africa. *Our diffusion of the English language illustrates this point.* A mighty number of native children have been brought up in our colonist families and in mission-schools. Many of these, it is true, on reaching their majority, return to country homes; but they carry with them good English utterance; in many cases capacity to read and write; in *all* cases many of the elements of civilization. I have had native boys working for me, who when they wished any article from their distant towns, would write an English note, in as good style as myself;

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and yet they dressed and were living in native style. Their habits, civilized necessities, and acquired wants assimilate to ours. Vessels sailing from American ports loaded with provisions, on reaching our coast, find a ready market in native towns, as well as among our civilized settlers. They buy meat, and fish, and sugar, and molasses, as well as cloth, tobacco, and beads. And thus, in these and various other ways, our different settlements are diffusing a civilizing influence among our native population, and gradually bringing them up to our standard of civility. There is also another large class of natives who live among us constantly: the youth who have been apprenticed to our families, have grown up in our midst, and who have been brought, more or less thoroughly, into civilized habits. These form an important and valuable accession to our population. You know, sir, that our population is often set down at 15,000 persons; but this by no means does us justice. *That* is very likely our *emigrant* population; but for every *American* citizen, you may safely put down another, either *native* or *Congo*, who has been trained in our families or schools, and who form, in the aggregate, an equal population to our own. They are indeed the *lower crust* of our civilized population; but we should have the full benefit of their enumeration, and we should be thus reckoned fully at 30,000 civilized people.

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*upon the natives around us, especially as it respects their rights, freedom, and civil elevation.*

You know, sir, that slavery is indigenous to the soil of Africa. Indeed, sir, it is indigenous to all soils on the globe, and is the cause of misery and distress wherever it exists. It is thus in Africa. But the hopes of freedom, the aspiration for liberty, work as strongly in the bosom of the native African as in any other man on the globe. The servile population of our surrounding tribes, even to the far interior, know where safety can be found from the oppressor. Hence, this class, when they find the yoke intolerable, seek the protection of our flag. Runaway boys and fugitive slaves come to us from the Bassas, the Queahs, the Veys, the Deys, and especially the Pessahs, who are the hereditary slaves of the interior. All along the banks of the St. Paul's, in the rear of our new settlements, are to be found a heterogeneous compound of people of all these tribes, living in small towns, enjoying the protection of our laws. I remember the case of two boys who escaped the slavery of their tribe, by coming to my own neighborhood; they were pursued by their native master. They were taken before a magistrate, who refused to return them to their master. The ground assumed was, that slavery was not recognized by our laws, and that fugitives from slavery could not be sent back to bondage. Thus, sir, our Republic is already a refuge of the oppressed. Thus, sir, are we demonstrating to the heathen tribes of Africa the highest laws of freedom, and the beneficent operation of Christian government. And thus likewise are we realizing on the

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soil of Africa, the words of one of your own poets:

“No slave-hunt in our borders, no pirate on our strand,  
No fetters in Liberia, no slave upon our land!”

It is these realities, which I have witnessed, experienced, participated in, which have led me to commend the Republic of Liberia to those of my friends in this country, who, either from enterprise or the spirit of emigration, feel disposed to look to other lands. For a number of years past, a goodly number of American colored men have left this country, in order to better their fortunes. Some have gone to California, some to Australia; and, after accumulating wealth, returned again to their homes. A like feeling now influences many in these States, save that they are seeking *permanent* homes abroad. Some are going to Hayti; some have their attention turned to the West coast of Africa, especially to the Yoruba country, and the locality of Abbeokuta. And this latter class interest me a deal more, I confess, than those who are going to the West Indies. And this chiefly because the *need* of Africa—*her need of civilized emigrants*—is great, and because educated free colored men are *the* fit agents to effect the regeneration of Africa. We cannot, it is true, make great pretensions; our training and culture have been exceedingly imperfect. We have been deprived of many of our rights in this country. We have been debarred from many of those privileges and prerogatives which develop character into manhood, and mastery, and greatness. Still we have not been divorced from your civilization. We have not been cut off from the lofty ideas and the great principles

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which are the seeds of your growth and greatness, political, intellectual, and ecclesiastical.

On the contrary, we too have learned clearly and distinctly the theory of free speech and of constitutional government. We too have participated somewhat in all the vast wealth, both religious and civil, of your Anglo-Saxon literature. We too have learned the advantage, and have risen to the elevation of all those great legal charters which interest men in government, and which make government subserve the best interests and desires of its citizens. And these kindly though incidental providences have placed us in governmental capacity, and in fitness for the prerogatives of government, in advance of many peoples, who in other respects are above us. The freed black man of America is, I feel assured, a superior man, in the points I have mentioned, to the Russian, to the Polander, to the Hungarian, to the Italian. Notwithstanding our trials and burdens, we have been enabled to reach a clearer knowledge of free government than they, and to secure a nobler fitness for its requirements, duties, and guarantees. I speak from the facts which have fallen under my observation, among my brethren in Africa. And hence I feel desirous that those enterprising and Christian men here, who are looking abroad for new homes, and other fields of labor, should join us in Africa, for the regeneration of that continent. My own desire, moreover, is that instead of scattering ourselves thousands of miles apart along the coast, we should rather concentrate our parties and our powers. Of course, I cannot say a word in the ab-

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stract, against the mission which draws many men, and some of my own personal friends, to Abbeokuta. But I do regard it a mistake in policy. I have the impression that providence points out all that field to the freed and cultivated men who have been raised up and prepared by the English at Sierra Leone; and who, especially by blood and language, seem to me God's *chosen* messengers to the valley of the Niger and its far interior. And I have the conviction that we of the United States, with our peculiar training, and with our democratic tendencies, will find ourselves out of place, as well as in an uncongenial element, in the strong governments of interior Africa. And therefore I have thought that in every way, it would be far better for men having this country for Africa to join their fortunes with us in Liberia. Our training, habits, customs, education, and political experience, have made us—it is not, it is true, a dignified mode of expression, but I have used it in private, and may be pardoned its use here—they have made us "Black Yankees;" and I feel assured that in Liberia, we shall find a more congenial field, better appliances, a government more suitable to our antecedents, better fitted to a youthful nation and an aspiring emigrant population; to achieve *that* which seems to me the master aim of all our colonization to Africa, and the noblest duty of the Republic of Liberia—I mean the evangelization and enlightenment of heathen Africa! But, sir, I fear I tire you, and I close at once.

For three hundred years the European has been traversing the coast of Africa, engaged in trade and

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Now, sir, we are there: we black men of America—we who have been trained in the severe school of trial and affliction—we who have been educated amid the free institutions of this country; and, sir, I pledge you in behalf of that able man, our national chieftain, and all the other leading men of Liberia, that we will endeavor to fulfill the duties which devolve upon men laying the first foundations of new empire; and to meet in a proper manner, the obligations which Divine Providence has brought upon us.

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