

To the Editor of the Journal of Commerce
Gulltown.

In your paper, a few days ago, a writer, speaking of Stephen A. Benson, president of Liberia, says, that he was for a time a servant in my office in Baltimore. This is a mistake. Mr Benson's opportunities were, in some respects, less, even, than my office might have afforded, in gleanings from the observation of a lawyer's practice. Samuel Benson, the father of the president emigrated from Ambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1822, when his son Stephen was six years of age. He sailed with Ashmun, in the Brig Strong, in the month of May, and in November was wounded in the battle with the natives at Cape Mesurado, his eldest son was killed and Stephen taken prisoner. After some months of captivity, he was restored to his parents, and was put to school to the Rev^d John Bevy, who had emigrated from Maryland, where he taught a school of Colored Children in Baltimore. In 1832, the elder Benson removed with his family to Bassa, and traded with the natives and farmed until his death. His son did the same, opened, and added to, a large coffee estate, and continued engaged in mercantile and agricultural pursuits until he was elected president of Liberia, never having left Africa from the time of his landing until he died, not long since, a visit to England, where he was received with kindness and distinctions. He is a member of the Methodist Church, has been in many battles with the natives and is a cool, brave, and deliberate soldier. His manners are modest and unassuming, with the air of fixed purposes; and he is reputed to be an acute and wary politician. He writes clearly and well and to the point. His features

J. W. A. Smith

Leaf Benson
Leaf Mission

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and complexion indicate unmixed African descent: and take him altogether, he affords a striking illustration of the capability of his race, when relieved from influences that oppress them here, to establish and maintain an intelligent, industrious and brave nationality.

If I have said more than was necessary to correct the mistake of your correspondence in attributing to my agency, however remote, an influence on Mr Deussen's career, it has been because I regard him as one of many ~~men~~ ^{men}, to whom Colonialists are indebted for the vindication of the wisdom of the scheme, which has established on the coast of Africa a people and a nation, to which the free colored population of the United States may go, when ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~circumstances~~ ^{circumstances} here, now ~~rapidly~~ ^{rapidly} ~~changing~~ ^{changing} and beyond all human control, shall deprive them of the freedom of choice and leave them no alternative but removal.

Yours respectfully

Wm. H. B. Latrobe

Pres. Am. Col. Soc.

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