Brittanic Majesty's squadron on the Sierra Leone station. Commodore Jones claimed the right of free trade with the natives at a place for which the American Colonization Society held deeds from the native Kings. The Board declined expressing any opinion in reference to the difference in question, because they did not wish to take sides in a controversy, which they regretted to see going on. The present occasion is one, however, in which the Board think it is right to express the views which they have entertained in regard to the questions suggested above.

The origin of all government is a compact between the parties subjected to it, who agree to give up certain natural rights for the benefits to be derived from association under control. To establish a nation the ownership of the soil is necessary in perpetuity. This ownership may be gradually acquired by the increase of a single pair into a large community, or a community already in existence may acquire it by conquest or purchase from the aboriginal inhabitants. As government is a compact that may be varied in its terms according to the will of the parties, - these last may place control in whatever hands they please; they may retain it within themselves, or allow a portion of it to be extraneous, either absolutely or temporarily. About these principles there can be no difference of opinion. It follows from them, that it was perfectly competent for the twenty or thirty men and women

who left Baltimore in November, 1833, to agree among themselves as to the form of government which they would adopt in the event of the purchase of the territory of Cape Palmas from the aboriginal inhabitants; and they might agree among themselves that, in consideration of the aid given by the Maryland State Colonization Society and to be afforded thereafter, this Society should exercise certain stipulated powers during a prescribed period. It was quite as competent for them to make this agreement inter se & with the Society, which was done in the charter signed by the emigrants before sailing, as it was for them to agree that they would not claim the natural right to drink spirituous liquors, but but give up, which they did by the same instrument. The emigrants who joined the expedition at the old Colony signed the constitution or charter, and became bound by its terms; so that when the territory was acquired, the compact among the parties became forthwith the law of the new community; and all subsequent comers, whether they signed the constitution or not, became bound, in the act of becoming citizens, by its terms. The territory being thus acquired, the emigrants in possession was to depend upon the natural increase of the people. From this view of the subject, it will be seen that the authority of the State Colonization Society is the result, not of any right, inherent in themselves, of sovereignty, but of an agreement which is incorporated into the fundamental law of the nation which has thus been established.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

I. Minutes
A. Records of the Meetings of the Board of Managers

4. June 1838—October 1851

1845