of having a constant ready market for their produce & of the facilities
it would lend to industry; & they were fully sensible of the total change
that would ultimately take place in their national character in almost
every point of view from living in contact with our superior
species. Yet with all this they are so fickle & capricious that
we are obliged to be ever upon the look out. They have twice called
all their people from our towns & forbidden all trade or intercourse
of any kind with us & the aspect of affairs was so threatening
that we were obliged to be all night upon our arms. But they
have uniformly come forwards the next day & sett the palaver
of their own accords. They appear rather to wish to intimidate
us that in affairs of trade we may come to their terms, than to com-
-mence actual hostilities: for as I before observed the more intelligent
of them are sensible that the country will ultimately be much benefited
by our settling in it. There are however many very influential
head men in this town who know very little of the customs &
habits of the civilized Europeans & it is next to impossible for convince
them that we have any goods object in view. & so jealous are they
& suspecting that when you speak of the subject of schooling their
children & teaching them our mechanical arts, they shake their heads &
will not believe one word of the matter. And moreover as all
palavers & matters of business have to come before this Sanhedrim
it is almost impossible to effect any thing with them. all
respecting our colony being new to them they have to act without
out precedent. They are so regards to a strictly matri-
-monial contract, & with them a breach of faith is common, & in
many instances considered laudable, especially where the matter has
been managed adroitly. Theft is also common, & seldom punished
excepting when their cattle are purloined, in which case the thief
is either expelled the country or shot. They are capable in
stealing from, rapsels or from colonist by the King & all articles
so obtained of any amount are divided amongst the headmen,
the thief returning a country thief. This has been & will be for a
long time a great hindrance to the prosperity of the colony & many
will suffer severely when they commence farming, & are more scattered.
At present clustered as we are on this little cape with a constant
night guard of their men, something is creeping every night & in many
instances great boldness is manifested. They have slipped their bonds the
the matting of the houses & stripped the little clothes from the sick.

yet tis impossible to seize them, owing to the darkness of the nights
during the rains. I have authorised the guards to shoot dead any
aborigine who may be found prowling about town after dark & the king
has sanctioned the order. Still we cannot prevent it. What any people
can do who scattered over an extent of territory I cannot tell, but
I hope we shall have time to strip this foaming through the King & headmen.
As soon as I think we are strong enough I shall make the King
responsible for all thefts committed by his people & in case of thefts
committed by natives from other towns, carry the palaver there & demand
restitution. I intend some ately to Cockeranoy the other day & immedi-
-ately went down & collected a palaver & not only procured those
I went in quest of but in the same house found four other valuable
articles that had been stolen from the colony.

May 15th

To give you some idea of our precarious situation at this time
I will just mention the occurrences of the few last days. As I before
stated to you our provisions are fading away short & of our American
bread stuff we have not enough to leave for four weeks. Of this the King
in our vicinity was informed & although all palavers respecting trade had
for some weeks been sett by a consultation of Kings & headmen, he de-
-termined to take advantage of our circumstances & seize the opportunity
also prevent our trading with other tribes except his own. He mor-
-eover strictly forbid all his people from bringing us any article of provisions,
& also laid an embargo upon all intercourse with the neighbouring
towns: particularly Rock town with which he & his people are for-
-merly at war. The people of this town (Rock town) had been our only reliance
since our arrival for procuring rice. & were at the time of this
trick of the Kings actually measuring out rice to us in the store.
The King sent up his head men, ordering them to bring no more
rice, nor take any goods of us to purchase rice with: (which is
the custom here). This was placing us in a very unpleasant situation
& could not be practised with. Thinking that I could coax them out
of their unfair & illegal actions as I had always been able to before. I
mounted my ass & went down to the town where the head men were
all convened. & commenced talking the matter over & reasoning with
them upon their unjust proceedings: but all to no purpose. They
did not pretend to reason but only said they would do as the pleased
right or wrong. I then stated fully our circumstances to them, that
unless they permitted the Rock town people to bring rice we must starve,

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

II. Correspondence Received
A. Letter Books

2. 1834--1835

1834