Of the articles which our soil & climate will enable us to raise for exportation the following are the most prominent, viz. Palm Oil, Sugar, Molasses, Coffee, Cotton & Tobacco. Now the question is which ought to be encouraged & recommended to the Colonists for cultivation. Doubtless the Sugar Cane is best adapted to our soil & would yield the greatest profit but its cultivation I consider at present by the Emigrants entirely out of the question. You are aware that to effect any thing with this it requires, Skill & experience in the business & capital; which few or no Colonists have. If any attempts to push a thing of this kind when we are not fully prepared will not only fail, but deter others. Hence engaging in it when the proper time shall have arrived. The Coffee tree does not grow spontaneously here as at Bassa & Cape Mesurado, but would do well were it introduced. Yet I do not think that exactly the thing we want at present. It requires four years to mature it, & our Colonists, coming here poor & destitute, require some immediate support. Taking all circumstances into consideration I consider Cotton & tobacco as decidedly the best articles for new emigrants to commence with. & the others can be introduced after they are cheerly under way. In 4 months from the time of planting they could reap the avails of a crop & would thereby be placed in comfortable circumstances. I doubt not but Palm oil will in a short time commend the attention of the Colonists as well as natives & must render this one of the great marts for that article. The Palm tree grows spontaneously on all the rivers of Africa in our territory, & apparently with equal luxuriance on the sandy beach as in our fattest valleys; in fact the whole face of the country is covered with them & it only requires a ready market like the Brazils to induce the natives to manufacture it in immense quantities for exportation. I have at some pains to ascertain the habits of the tree & the practicability of cultivating it to advantage. It will produce the nut from which the oil is pressed in three years from the time of planting, & after it is once fairly out of the ground, nothing can interfere with its growth; consequently it needs no culture or attention.

I have calculated that 435 trees will flourish on an acre of ground allowing each tree 100 square feet. The third year they will bear, although not plentifully; the fourth & after, past the days of mean, they will produce nuts affording upon an average 1 Gallon of oil to the tree, & this sells in America & Europe at from 8 cts per lb. say 50 cts per Gallon; giving the husbandman the handsome sum of $218.00 annually, requiring at his hands barely grubbing the soil at first & perhaps two weeks pruning afterwards yearly, & the manufacture of the oil from the nut which is very simple & very

The pulp after a few minutes boiling becomes soft & is easily detached from the stone by bruising in a large wooden mortar; it is then well rubbed in water with water & the oil rising on the top is readily skimmed off. Independent of the palm oil the tree produces an excellent wine & the palm cabbage much esteemed by all acquainted with it. The natives have made what they have Palm Butter, from the nut. It is not much like or good butter; more like the grease from meat, but I am sorry to say that the common melted butter as sauce for meat or other vegetables. I should hesitate admire that the newly arrived farming Colonist should first supply himself with with vegetables for his & family's subsistence as expedient by the plantain; this together with his dwelling & building a dwelling will take at least one year. I would then have him put in all the Cotton & Tobacco that he could well manage, at the same time take care to save all the Palms that should be on his lot & save a nursery of them if he has time. As I mentioned before I consider Sugar Cane as entirely out of the question with the Colonists at present, but if the Board of Managers wish it I will make a beginning at the probable expense on the farm, but it must be recollected that this labour cannot be performed by those condemned to labour for the public. As the Cane requires much care at one season & little or none at another & when to be planted cut & manufactured it must be done at once. It will require considerable machinery & good buildings & I doubt not but the Board will see fit to let it rest awhile. But Cotton I am anxious to get under way & therefore wish a good quantity & variety of the seeds sent out. Also some work or works upon the subject of growing cotton, tobacco & the Sugar Cane.

I have been thus particular in detailing my views upon this subject that the Board of Managers may understand wherefore I have not commenced the culture of the Cane & Coffee. & also that the man of colour who told them they both grow spontaneously in our territory should not expect to find plantations of them ready at hands. The mischief done by misrepresentations or wrong informers deduced from dubious & ambiguous statements, is incalculable. It is enough that the Colonist is forced by oppression from the lands of his birth, the protection of that lands for which (equally with the whites) his many ancestors have shed their blood; & for which he has by moral law become naturalized & by right can call his home; that the ties of consanguinity are severed & all that he holds dear, wife, parents & children are left to perpetual bondage; he an exile by enough that he sacrifices his all, all that could render life desirable, for the hope of Liberty, peace & plenty, & that that hope should not intirely be extinguished by the chilling blasts of disappointment.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

II., Correspondence Received
A. Letter Books

2. 1834--1835

1834