For the Maryland Colonization Journal

## Sass Wood palaver

Sunday April 30, the little village of Harper was all serenity. Every body was strictly observant of the Holy Sabbath. The bell had scarcely to give notice to prepare for morning service, when Cape Town the adjacent native village governed by King Freeman appeared to be in an uproar. It was evident that something serious was the matter. The most doleful cries were heard from several directions of the town. The general enquiry was what is the palaver? They have given three men "Sassy Wood" and they are dead, and the soldiers of the town are in pursuit of others to serve in the same way. The Governor Mr Russwurm sent a messenger to the King in order to put a stop to such murderous conduct, - but the King had disappeared; and but few of the headmen could be found. They were however induced to stop for that day. It seems the natives believe that no man among them dies a natural death, and when one dies he has been bewitched or poisoned. On such occasions the great or head doctors among them are sent for & consulted, who after working with his fetish or greegree & using several ceremonies fixes on some individual or individuals in the town or perhaps in the nearest town, persons as guiltless as to the supposed crime as I am this moment in which I am writing, who is forthwith brought to trial and openly and positively accused of having made witch. In vain he pleads innocent. In such a case the accused has no way to test his innocence but to submit to drink the sassy woods, as an Ordeal. It is said by some of the first settlers here, that the

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