has time to effect the system or influence the stomach, he experiences but little inconvenience from it. But should it remain on the stomach an hour or two, that organ, and the whole alimentary canal become highly inflamed, constant and violent vomiting and purging succeed and continue until the subject is completely exhausted. And to add greatly to his misery he is placed at the moment of taking the decoction under a guard of soldiers, who keep them constantly in motion, racing about on the sand beach in the hot sun hardly allowing them rest during his violent evacuations, when his strength begins to fail, they force him to continue his movements by sharp sticks, knives and bayonets. The poor wretch now becomes frantic, and vainly attempts revenge upon his persecutors; until completely overcome by the potency of the poison and his excessive exertions, he sinks upon the sand and expires in the most excruciating agonies. One of the natives who has frequently officiated as soldier of the guard in such cases, informed me that the torments of the victims were so great in the last stages, that the guard were frequently obliged to go to a distance and turn their backs, that they might not see their distortions or hear their wailing & blasphemies. Since our residence here, nine months four or five have been subjected to this ordeal, two cases of which have terminated fatally. But a few days since one of the headmen, & one who has uniformly befriended the Colony, was arraigned and found guilty, of bewitching (an) any (member of) the family of one of his rivals, & doomed to the trial of Saucy Wood. He had taken his first portion before I was informed of it. & they had commenced driving him about. It had a very severe effect upon the poor fellow, but he was quite comfortable at night. But the Grand Devil declared, that inasmuch as it wrought this hard with him, he must turn to, and take it again on the morrow. Being informed of this I went down early in

the morning, called a palaver, and endeavoured to have the man released. But all reason, entreaties, gifts, & threatenings were for no avail. They appeared to owe him a deep grudge, which nothing but his death could appease. On returning home I was informed, that they an ancient rule something like this. That in case a man is condemned to drink saucy wood, that any friend of superior rank or standing can clear him by taking him by the hand when the potion is about to be administered, but the one so doing, takes upon himself the responsibility, and is liable either to suffer his place or pay heavy damages. That in this case the King wished and had attempted to clear Polso (the prisoner) but he knew the consequence would be dangerous so great was the excitement against him. Upon hearing this I immediately set off for the sand beach, and arrived just as they were driving off his wives and children, who had been taking their last farewell. About five hundred people were collected & formed into a hollow square, in the midst of which was his Satanic Majesty, in full panoply, just raising a two gallon pot filled to the brim with the poisonous decoction, to the lips of the wretched Polso. Poor fellow! he was so altered from his yesterdays drenching, and the dismal prospect before him, that I should not have recognized him had he been mixed with the crowd, his countenance was despair itself. I briefly told them that if any one had any palaver for Polso, that I would satisfy him according to our laws, and would be responsible for all that they could prove against him, then taking him by the hand marched him off amid the mingled shouts & execrations of his friends and persecutors. This one circumstance will demonstrate to you the beneficial influence we even now begin to exert among the natives, & that our hopes of overthrowing their barbarous & cruel long established customs, are not visionary. The number that annual fall victims to the accursed machinations

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

II. Correspondence Received
C. Foreign Letter Books

1. January 1834--November 1837

1834