to this seem to be numerous. The first is that it increases the cost of the article to the consumer. This objection can only be gotten rid of entirely by admitting all articles free. But what is the extent of the tax upon the consumer - A yard of domestic which costs seven cents here is sold in Africa for fourteen - 10 per cent on the invoice price seven cents, would make ten yards sold in the Colony cost $1.47 instead of $1.40 - for the ten per cent is not on the price in africa, but the price in America. If the invoice cost here is doubled, as I have understood, to get at the selling price with you - the duty is in fact but 5 per cent on the selling price. Now can this be beyond the ability of the colonists to pay? Set a colonists clothing cost $50. per annum without the duty it will cost $52.50 with the duty at the african prices. Are not freedom and their present rights worth thus much to the colonists? I appeal to you as to one whom I have long recognized as a man of sound discretion in most things, to answer.

But you say that the masters of vessels have false invoices. Surely this will not hurt the Colonists, for the lower the invoice, the lower the duty, or rather the less in amount. If the masters will perjure themselves it is to be regretted. But the law authorises, if you will read it, a remedy for this, if you choose to apply it - and if as you say you are not strong enough yet, why you will probably let your discretion be tempered by the force at your command. The carrying a new system of laws into operation, is the Board, Know, a troublesome task, every thing depends on the officer in charge and their reliance was on you.

Again you say that the power of the colony is not sufficient to enable you to enforce the 2d Section of page 4. The Board understand perfectly that with their present feeble strength it would be impossible for them to enforce their laws against vessels visiting the colony to the full letter of them a matter which their Agent would understand also, and be governed by circumstances. But still, the law which is to be carried out in this respect hereafter, should be the law now. The fact of its being the law, will have some moral force, and hereafter it can be referred to as having been the law from the beginning. Let it not be said of us that we made laws because we had strength: rather let it be said of others that they disregarded our laws because we were. We can bide our time.

You say that the colonists are not so ignorant as not

to know, that masters add the duties to the goods - so increasing the cost to the consumer. It has been a mooted point lately between the two great parties in this country, whether a tariff added to the cost of the consumer, or took from the profits of the manufacturer - and the ablest men in America have been found to differ: certain it is that the foreign interests are all against our Tariff - But without arguing a disputed point and admitting the colonists to have ascertained the exact truth, I have already shewn the extent of the injury the tariff does them - I call it injury - Its proper name is rather the cost, paid to themselves, (for the revenue is their own) of the liberty they in reality enjoy.

I do not remark at length upon the Light house duty because it adds to the whole amount of sales of a ship of 200 tons, but $16.00 If it is too high the Board have no objection to lower it. You have been collecting an anchorage duty - therefore you can collect some duty on vessels visiting the colony. As to the amount it is a matter of little moment - If the duty, as it is, drives traders away this again shews that you have more power over them when in your harbor, - than the Board thought it probable that you might have.

You enquire in yours of the 24th August, what kind of money you are to receive. This is left to your discretion. In the laws of the United States foreign coinage is reduced to the dollar and its parts. - But on the coast of Africa a wide discretion must be given to the Governor; and the silence of the Tariff ordinance necessarily left the discretion in your hands.

I have thus, my dear Sir, gone over all the points that occur to me, and I have carried out in my communication thus far the views expressed by the Board of Managers of whose opinion I am as you are aware but the organ: for however I might be willing in a minor matter to make a suggestion as from myself, the present business is of too much importance not to have been submitted by the Board to whom is entrusted the Government of Maryland in Liberia. The Board see no reason to change the system they have established - They will have no excise in their colony - and they will not abandon the agricultural views which they have entertained from the beginning. Towards an excise they have gone as far as they will go in adopting the warehousing system, which postpones the collection of the duty on imports till the merchant to whom they belong finds a purchaser or purchasers for them. And towards the increase of trade they have done all that they intend to do, in authorising licenses on any terms - and which you know were refused by Dr Hall & Governor Holmes your predecessor

But, although the Board for the reasons already given, cannot

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III. Correspondence Sent
D. Latrobe Letter Book

1. July 1836—November 1852

1844