Baltimore July 18th 1851

Private & confidential

Dr. Saml. Ford McGill
Monrovia

My dear Sir.

Among other letters by the Packet Dr Hall put into my hands one from you under several dates relating mainly to the difficulty with the natives at Cape Palmas growing out of the affair of Mr. Woods son. – I like many of your suggestions, and believe that one the most efficient auxiliary the Colony could have in bringing about a treaty for the removal of the native towns would be a perfect state of armed preparation for events, and I have written to Mr. Ruswurm to this effect – not that his despatches indicated any want of urging on the point, but rather to corroborate the views that he expresed.

Your removal from the Colony which I had before heard intimated as probable takes from us certainly a strong, usefull and good citizen. But perhaps you are now where at this time, you can render much more service to the Colony and the cause than you could have done had you remained at Cape Palmas.

I am quite satisfied that the prestige to me a french word almost untranslatable, is now with the older settlement – and that the name and reputation of a free Republic has brought this about. Now while I do not think that the Society here in Baltimore has exercised authority oppresively or injudiciously, and while there are occasional strong reasons why existing relations should not be changed, yet I am not one of those who do not see the propriety often of yielding to circumstances and I am disposed to believe that the duty of us here is to give to the Colony at Cape Palmas as fair a reputation as a free Republic as Monrovia and its dependencies. – Our Board have in fact have determined that this must be done, and we are taking time to put every thing as regards this upon a proper footing – looking forward to the next Voyage of the Packet, as the time at which all things will be in readiness

The idea is to declare in conjunction with the

Colonists that Maryland in Liberia is a free Republic – maintaining by treaty with our Society those relations which would facilitate emigration from the State, and induce the State to continue those contribution that are still so important

As it is not thought for many reasons adviseable to merge our Colony into a County one of the main of which is the certainty of the loss in that event of all that peculiar interest which has so long made the State of Maryland a large Annual contributor to the Society and through it to the Colony – it becomes necessary that weak as the Colony at Cape Palmas is it should take the position of seperate independance. Writing as I do in much haste I have not time to elaborate what your mind will doubtless carry out.

Independence being once established, the next thing is the relations with the present republic – and this alone finds a precedent in the old confederation of the states of the present Union – a confederation which carried them through the war of the revolution – which was efficient for their then condition and comparatively unexpensive, – the greatest expense being the pay of the Delegates to the Annual Congress – their numbers being fixed by the articles of confederations – The principal objects of the Congress in the present case would be the making of treaties – the Coinage – Customs – flag – naturalization – and perhaps some other matters – The meetings would be annual and held of course at Monrovia – Differences might be referred to arbitrament, say of the societies or arbitrators appointed by them here.

These are very general views. Hereafter, when necessary, a Union – with a general Govt might come – like our Union here under the constitution of 1789 – but this would be cumbrous and expensive now.

Now my dear sir, you at once see why it is I say you may aid us at Monrovia. Mr Ruswurm to whom I wrote fully on this head will probably visit Monrovia – where if there is to be any difficulty, the difficulty will be – and what I want you to do is, if posible and it jumps with your views and wishes, to aid in bringing about the agreement to confederate when the time comes that

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

III. Correspondence Sent
D. Latrobe Letter Book

1. July 1836--November 1852

1851