after their independence was established, got along under the confederation untill the time came for the constitution, when the necessity of it, secured its adoption, and when the condition of the whole country had wonderfully improved since the closing of the war. So here, the confederation will do for a season — and perform its function of preparing the Colonists for a more perfect form of government. If you will take the old articles of confederation and read them, you will see, that, with few alterations, they can be adopted for the settlements on the coast. There is but a single difficulty — and this will probably not be of long duration — there cannot be a majority, if there is not unanimity, where the vote is by States. This state of things might be provided for, by making the American Colonization Society the the greater strength and importance of the present Republic would be recognized in making Monrovia head quarters. The only call on the present Republic for action in consequence of confederation, involving expense, would be for military assistance. But, I presume, that, even in the existing state of things, if the Colony at Cape Palmas was attacked by the natives, the Republic would not refuse to grant assistance if called upon, for the purpose of preventing the extermination of a Colony of like elements, founded for the same objects, and weak and unprotected. A refusal would not be tolerated by the family council of nations, to the decisions of which, all the nations of the earth, possessing civilization & christianity, are amenable. I take it for granted, that Massachusetts, if it had had the means, would have sent assistance in men and arms, to Virginia long prior to the confederation — for reasons of the same sort as exists now on the Coast in regard to the Colonies there — You see then, that I place great importance on the idea of keeping our colored friends in Africa copyists. Where the copy book is in such fair round hand, and the first leaf has already been learned.

Again to make a federative republic, there should be circumstances, local in their character, sufficient to
330. obviate a natural tendency to Merger. It would be difficult to divide a people accustomed to live as one nation under

under the same laws, into two governments — they would have the same tendency to concentration that two globules of quicksilver have to unite into one. — Now between Monrovia & Cape Palmas, there are the very differences that are required. Their codes of law are different, as are now the laws of our several States, and as were the local laws of the Colonies at the time of the revolution in 76. "The States right doctrine", which has been of service to us on this side the Atlantic, would spring up in Africa to be of service there. It is unnecessary to run these views out. — It is only required to suggest them to you.

In your letter you speak of the State Govt — having something to do as a requisite to the adoption of the system I suggest — though, by the way I suggest none — only proposing the example of this Country for the imitation throughout of our friends on the other side. — These Govts would continue to do exactly what they are doing now — managing their local affairs — and sending Delegates once a year to the Congress at Monrovia which would recommend action — See old confederation of United States — This Congress would fix a common flag an uniform currency — uniform duties — post Office regulations. The delivery of fugitives from justice — and some few matters of this kind — leaving local matters where they now stand, and where they ought to be left. My letter has grown to be very long — mainly because written under frequent interruptions. I feel that the future of the Colonies in Africa may depend upon the course to be pursued by them now. The Maryland Colony will declare its independence from all I can gather anyhow. I dont want it to exist as a seperate Republic on the Coast. I want it to form part of a great Constitutional republic, one of these days. But I want that the future republic shall be federative. Not "one and indivisible". because I want a Republic that will live. Having thus put you in possession of my views — I will not trouble you further. If I have dawdled more than necessary, you will excuse me, I know, in my present character of a sick man. Not to sick however, to testify his gratification at the trouble you have taken, to enter into with him into the discussion

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

III. Correspondence Sent
D. Latrobe Letter Book

1. July 1836—November 1852

1852