Among the measures suggested by the Colonization Convention, none excited more interest than the establishment of a regular packet between Baltimore and Cape Palmas, and the Board of Managers have been diligently engaged in making collections for the purpose of building or buying a suitable vessel. It is believed, that notwithstanding the difficulties of the times, enough money will be raised to enable the Board to send out the fall expedition of the present year in a vessel of their own.

The colony having been founded, it is now the principal object of the Board to establish a regular intercourse between this state and Maryland in Liberia, as the best means of overcoming the prejudice that exists in the minds of the free coloured people to emigration—where this arises from ignorance and misrepresentation—using indeed for the purpose the same means which, in the case of the patriarch of old, were alone sufficient to overcome his incredulity as to the prosperity of his descendants in Egypt.

The Board are satisfied from their experience that the packet will not only enable them to carry out the emigrants from the state at regular intervals in a vessel manned by citizens of Liberia, but that it will materially assist in the trade, which has for some time past been gradually increasing, until it has materially aided in defraying the expenses incident to the colony. The Board believe that the colony in a few years will be wholly independent of aid from this country,—capable to defray the cost of its civil list—military defences, and internal improvements; and that nothing will aid in bringing about this desirable event more effectually than the Cape Palmas packet.

Appended to this Report is the balance sheet of the Society's operations from the commencement of the Society—from which it will be seen, that there has been contributed by individuals, and by the gain on the trade of the Society, the sum of $39,235 09 to promote the objects which the state had in view when it passed the law of 1831.

Since the last Annual Report the Board have been so fortunate as to secure the services of Dr. James Hall, as their general agent. Dr. Hall is well known by reputation as the founder of the colony and its Governor for the first two years of its existence. He is well and intimately acquainted with the trade of the Western Coast, the habits and customs of the natives, and the disposition of the colonists; and he therefore brings to the performance of his duties important qualifications which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find united in another individual. On Dr. Hall devolves also the editing of the Colonization Journal.

There remains a subject to be noticed in this Report, which the Board approach with reluctance and regret, but which it is necessary to explain fully, that the friends of colonization in the state may know the manner in which those to whom they delegate power perform their duties. It relates to a difference which has arisen between the Board and two of the Missionary Societies having missions at Cape Palmas. To its more perfect understanding it is necessary that the Board should go into some detail of their policy and views regarding the religious character and influences of the colony.

The Board look upon colonization, in its results, as a great missionary scheme, as well as one of deep political interest, by which a nation of christian men is to be introduced into a continent of barbarians, and along with it the blessings of the gospel and the arts and learning of civilization; and they feel themselves especially called upon to prevent in Africa a repetition of the experience of America in the cases where civilization pressed upon the savage.

It is hoped that, as the natives, by becoming civilized and being taught christianity, are elevated to the rank of the colonists in these respects, an amalgamation will take place between them as descendants of a common ancestry.

But not only in this, which may be termed the missionary view of the subject, have the Board desired to see a religious character given to their colony, but, looking at the matter politically, they have felt that the laws of the colony would be obeyed, peace with the natives secured, and the general and individual prosperity promoted and guaranteed, all the better by the prevalence of piety among the people.

It would be idle to pretend, that the emigrants who leave this country for the colony are all of them fitted to be the founders of a nation. Many of them are newly emancipated slaves, many are free coloured people who have gone like rolling stones for change sake, and but comparatively few of the whole number, had more than the most simple rudiments of education when they embarked for Cape Palmas. Many indeed, left this country from a firm conviction that here was not their appropriate home; that sooner or later they must seek new abiding places, and, counting the cost, they hesitated not to seek a new home beyond the Atlantic. Still, take the emigrants as a whole, they would have appeared ill-suited to the task which they have, under Divine protection, accomplished: and the fact that they have established a well ordered government, blessed with peace, and, speaking comparatively, remarkable prosperity, is a consoling testimony that His favor is upon the enterprize which these weak hands have gone forth from us to promote.

With these views, it is therefore with very great satisfaction, that the Board feel justified in saying that the colony is a religious community, nearly all of whose citizens of a suitable age are communicants of a christian church. And on a recent occasion, when it was asked, at a public meeting in Baltimore, of a person who had been a resident at Cape Palmas, and who was personally acquainted with nearly all the colonists, "How many church members are there in the colony?" The answer was, "that it was far easier to enumerate those who were *not* church members, as they were but few in number, and he believed he knew them all."

As may be readily supposed from what is here said, the Board have always encouraged the establishment of missions at their settlement, and one of their first acts after the colony was founded was to offer to all religious denominations every facility for missionary labour,—and now there are four christian churches represented by their missionaries in the colony, that is to say, the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, the Methodist Episcopal, and the Baptist—and the Harriet has just taken out two Catholic priests and a lay-assistant to found a mission of that church in the settlement.

The above missions are enumerated in the order in which they were founded. The Episcopal mission is however, the largest; and while its main object is the civilization and christianizing of the heathen, yet it still extends its labours to the colonists, to whom it offers both education and religious instruction. The Presbyterian mission confines itself exclusively to the natives, and the Methodist and Baptist to the colonists. The Catholic mission, it is stated, is intended to afford to the Catholics of the colony the opportunity of attending the observances of their church, which they have heretofore wanted.

If the Board have succeeded in expressing their opinion and action upon the subject of religion in the colony, and the influence of the colony, as a body of christian men, upon the natives, it will be understood how deeply grieved they are to find that any subject of difference and discussion should

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)—May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

1842