To the Editor of the Colonization Journal:

Sir,—I find that there is an opinion afloat among the coloured people in this city and state, that the Colonization Society intends to make the colonists repay back to them all the expenses of founding the colony of Maryland in Liberia as soon as they get able. When this ground has been taken in my presence, I have taken the liberty flatly to contradict it. Please give information through your Journal if I have erred in this matter, and if I have, I will desist—if I have not, it will save much useless disputation.

Very respectfully, yours, GARRISON DRAPER.

BALTIMORE, *Dec. 28th*, 1844.

Inasmuch as we have promised our friend Draper [and tendered the same to any other coloured man who may desire] as much room in our Journal as he can fill up, pertinent to the subject of colonization, we cannot forbear answering the above interrogatory, but at the same time have little hope of putting that or any other question to rest which has been mooted by the wiseacres of our city, or sown among them by the northern abolitionists, through their special agents resident here.

We can assure our correspondent that the opinion to which he refers, is not entertained by a single coloured man in this city who is sufficiently well informed to read and write, however instrumental they may be in spreading it among the more ignorant. It is one of the many stale devices of the enemies, not only of colonization, but of the whole African race, gotten up to alarm the more cautious and timid. Those who are able to read, and have taken the least trouble to examine into the matter, will find that the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society have had this very matter under consideration and published to the world their action thereupon, even before the purchase of the territory or the founding of the colony. The following is a copy of their legislation on this point, a copy of which, with the Constitution or Bill of Rights of the colony, is furnished to every emigrant for his consideration previous to his taking the oath of allegiance.

SEC. 42. *And whereas*, Although circumstances require, that the government of the said territory should remain in the state society for the present, yet the time is looked forward to, when the people shall assume the government to themselves exclusively; and as it is the desire of the state society, to prepare them for that period, in such a manner, as will best guaranty their prosperity, as an independent people; and whereas it is proper, that the course contemplated by the state society should be clearly explained in the beginning, for the satisfaction of those who may abandon their present country, for Africa, the country of their fathers, therefore,

Be it enacted and ordained, That, so soon as there shall be five thousand male inhabitants in the territory, governed by the state society, in Africa, upon giving proof thereof to the agent, they shall receive authority, with time and place appointed, to elect representatives to represent them in a general assembly; provided, that for every five hundred male inhabitants there shall be one representative, and so on progressively, with the number of male inhabitants, shall the right of representation increase, until the number of representatives shall amount to twenty-five, after which, the number and proportion of representatives shall be regulated by the assembly itself: *provided*, that no person shall be eligible to be elected as a representative, unless he has resided three years in Maryland in Liberia, and shall hold real estate in the territory, in his absolute possession; nor shall any person vote for a representative, who is not qualified, as prescribed for voters for the offices herein before enumerated.

The representatives, thus elected, shall serve for the term of one year, and in case of the death of a representative, or his removal from office, the agent shall cause a new election to be held by his constituents, for a member in his stead, to serve the residue of the term.

The general assembly or legislature, shall consist of the agent, legislative council, and house of representatives. The legislative council shall consist of five members, to continue in office three years, any three of whom to be a quorum; and the members of the council shall be nominated and appointed in the following manner, to wit: As soon as representatives shall be elected, the agent shall appoint a time and place for them to meet together, and when met, they shall nominate ten persons, not of their own body, having the qualifications of representatives, and return their names to the state society, five of whom the state society shall commission to serve as aforesaid; and whenever a vacancy shall occur in the council, by death, resignation, or removal from office, the house of representatives shall nominate two persons, qualified as aforesaid, for such vacancy, and return their names to the state society, one of whom the state society shall appoint and commission, for the residue of the term; and every three years, at least six months before the expiration of the time of service of the members of the council, the said house shall nominate the ten persons qualified as aforesaid, and return their names to the state society, five of whom the state society shall appoint and commission, to serve as members of the council three years unless sooner removed. And the agent, legislative council, and house of representatives shall have authority to make laws in all cases for the good government of the territory, not repugnant to the constitution of the territory, and the ordinances and decisions of the state society, until the government shall pass wholly into the hands of the people of Maryland in Liberia; and all bills passed by a majority in the house, and a majority in the council, shall be referred to the agent for his assent; but no bill or legislative act whatsoever, shall be in force without his assent. The agent shall have the power to convene, prorogue, and dissolve the general assembly, when in his opinion, it shall be expedient.

Besides this, there has been an ordinance passed by the Maryland Colonization Society declaring the colony absolutely free and independent; free from any claims of that society or any power whatever.

But supposing there had been no action whatever upon this subject, the case would still be the same. Each colonist holds his own land by a deed from the governor of the colony, and the sovereignty of the territory or ownership of the whole, is vested in the colonists as a people—a nation. Just ask your friends, when they again broach this subject, how they suppose the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society will attempt to enforce repayment? Will they write out to them a civil letter asking them to pay back what they have advanced? In that case they will get a civil answer, referring them to the understanding or contract at the beginning. Will they then write a saucy, scolding letter? If so, they will probably get a saucy answer. Will they send out a constable, (that peculiar terror of coloured people here,) to bring the colonists all back? or will the Board of Managers get into a ship themselves, and go over to chastise several thou-

Maryland Historical Society

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XII. Newspapers
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