This subject was considered by the Board, at a meeting on the 25th of September, 1823; and it was resolved, "that considering the resources of the Institution, they could not make the appropriation for the salary which was required; but that they would make him a full and fair compensation for any services which he might be desired by Dr. Ayres to render to the affairs of the colony, as their funds would enable them to do; and that while residing with Dr. Ayres, and assisting him, he should be maintained and provided for, at the expense of the society." This resolution was communicated to Mr. Ashmun in December, just about the time that Dr. Ayres had determined to sail for the United States, on account of his declining health.

The vessel which had arrived from America, and in which Dr. Ayres intended to return home, brought eleven recaptured Africans, sent out by the government, who were speedily restored to their friends, residing at no great distance from the colony. The intelligence brought by this vessel, of the affairs of the society, was by no means encouraging. Their resources were very low; so that a bill drawn by Mr. Ashmun for articles of indispensable necessity, was returned *protested.* She had also disposed of nearly her whole cargo at Rio Pongas, and did not leave goods at the Cape, exceeding one hundred dollars in value.

Under existing circumstances, it became a serious question with Mr. Ashmun, whether, treated and dishonoured as he had been, he should now continue in the service of the Board. They had neither made any definite arrangements to remunerate him for his past services, nor made any definite proposals for his future support; and his bills drawn for the necessary expenses of the colony, had been returned, dishonoured. Certainly he was under no obligations to the Board; but he saw that his relinquishment of the colony now, must be followed by its ruin. The colonists were in a state of much discontent, in consequence of the manner in which the town lots had been distributed; and their confidence, both in the Board and their agents, was greatly diminished. Indeed, evident signs of insubordination began to be manifested. One individual declared, that neither he nor his associates would submit to government twenty-four hours after the Fidelity sailed. But Mr. Ashmun was the man for such an exigency. He declared that subordination should be enforced, even at the expense of life; and

compelled the person who had uttered the forementioned words, to revoke the threat, and pledge himself to the maintenance of the laws. Urged by the necessities of the colony, and forgetting or passing by his own injuries, he resolved to exert himself to the utmost to preserve the settlement from ruin, and to promote its best interests.

The provisions, when Dr. Ayres left the colony, were sufficient, with strict economy, to last four months, with such supplies as might be expected from the natives. The prospect however was not flattering. Many slavers were on the coast, in consequence of which, the price of rice was greatly enhanced; but the most alarming feature in the condition of the colony was, that several of the leading colonists were prepared to set at defiance the authority of the agent, and openly avowed their purpose, to aid in no survey of the lots, or in any public improvements; and to leave uncleared and uncultivated, the land which had been assigned them, until they should receive a reply to the remonstrance sent home to the Board. One of the regulations of the society was, that every adult male emigrant, should, while receiving rations from the public store, contribute the labour of two days in the week, to some work of public utility. Before Dr. Ayres's departure it had been announced, that on the 5th of June, 1824, all rations would cease, except in cases of special necessity, and it was now made known, that unless those who had appealed to the Board on the subject of their lands, would cultivate some portion of land designated by the agent, they should be expelled from the colony. About twelve of the colonists, however, persisted in their mutinous course; and not only threw off the restraints of authority themselves, but used their influence to seduce others form obedience. Mr. Ashmun, who was not the man to be intimidated, or driven from the plain course of duty, immediately published a notice, "That there then were in the colony, more than a dozen healthy persons, who will receive no more provisions out of the public store, until they earn them." The only effect of this was, to increase the irritation of the disaffected persons, which led them to express more seditious opinions, and more openly to violate the laws. Matters were now approaching a crisis. The agent, on the 19th of June, directed the rations of the offending individuals to be stopped. The next morning, they assembled in a riotous manner, at the agency-house, and

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XIV. Books

3.

A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa

by Archibald Alexander, Philadelphia, 1846