
REPORT

OF

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

DECEMBER 4, 1852.

Part ii—19

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *December 4, 1852.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the annual report of this department, which will make you acquainted with the present condition of the naval service, and bring to your notice the several subjects which I have thought worthy of your consideration and the attention of Congress. I would beg leave also to say, that the many valuable suggestions for the improvement of the service, made by my predecessors, in previous reports, which yet remain open to the deliberation and disposal of Congress, have, in my opinion, lost nothing of their interest, and that I refer to them now as most appropriate subjects for commendation to the favor of the national legislature. If I have presented other views on the same topics, or proposed a different method for improving the organization of any branch of the service, I hope these will be received as contributions to the common effort which this department has ever felt it a duty to make towards the perfection of our naval system, and that they may be weighed in the deliberations of Congress with a full appreciation of what is deservedly due to the experience of those who have heretofore conducted the affairs of this department.

DISTRIBUTION OF SQUADRONS.

During the year now about to close, the vessels of the navy in commission have been assigned to the various employment deemed necessary for the protection of our commerce, according to the system of distribution heretofore adopted and found most convenient to the exigencies of the service.

This distribution has been made in a provision for six squadrons, each of which is required to serve on a cruise of three years, with the exception of that allotted to the coast of Africa, where, from a consideration of the peculiar character of the service, it is limited to two years.

The duration of the cruise is subject only to an occasional prolongation, when the public interest may render it necessary. Suitable provision is made in the enlistments for this incident, whenever it may occur.

The six squadrons are assigned to—

The East Indies,

The Pacific ocean,

The coast of Africa,

The coast of Brazil,

The Mediterranean, and

The coast of the United States.

In addition to these, a steamship is appropriated to the lakes upon our northern border; and a few vessels are kept for detached service.

The East India squadron has continued during the past year under the command of Commodore John H. Aulick, and has consisted of the steam frigate *Susquehanna*, being the flag-ship of the squadron, the sloop-of-war *Plymouth*, Commander Kelly; *Saratoga*, Commander Walker; and *Marion*, Commander Glendy. This vessel (the *Marion*) has recently returned to the United States, and is now assigned to the African squadron, and, being ready for sea, will very soon proceed to her destination.

The squadron has been lately reorganized and placed under the command of Commodore M. C. Perry, and Commodore Aulick only waits the arrival in the East Indies of an officer to command the *Susquehanna*, to return to the United States, which he will do in advance of his ship. Commodore Perry's command will consist of the line-of-battle ship *Vermont*, which is now in a course of rapid preparation for service, and it is expected will be ready to sail about the first of March. The Commodore himself has just sailed from the port of Norfolk in his flag-ship, the steam frigate *Mississippi*.

He will be followed in a few days by the steam frigate *Powhatan*, Captain McCluney, which vessel has been recently added to the squadron, in place of the steamer *Princeton*, originally detailed for it, but which, from some imperfection discovered in her machinery, after she had undergone a thorough repair, has been compelled to remain in port. This imperfection I have reason to hope will prove to be less serious than was at first apprehended, and that she may soon be in condition for service, when she will be assigned to other employment.

In addition to these two ships, the corvette *Macedonian*, Captain Abbot, the sloop-of-war *Vandalia*, Commander Pope, and the steamer *Alleghany*, Commander Sands, constitute the remaining force assigned to Commodore Perry. The two first of these, the *Macedonian* and the *Vandalia*, are now nearly ready for sea, and may be expected to take their departure during the month of December. The *Alleghany* is waiting only for the completion of her engine, and will be despatched as soon as it is finished.

The storeships *Supply*, Lieut. Sinclair, and *Southampton*, Lieut. Boyle, are also attached to the squadron, and are already on their way to their appointed stations.

The Pacific squadron, under the command of Commodore Charles S. McCauley, has been composed of the frigate *Raritan*, commanded by Commander McKean, as flag-ship of the squadron; the frigate *St. Lawrence*, Captain Dulaney; the sloop-of-war *St. Mary's*, Commander Magruder, *Portsmouth*, Commander Dornin, *Falmouth*, Commander Petigru, *Vandalia*, Commander Gardner, and *Vincennes*, Commander Hudson. The *Falmouth*, *Vandalia*, and *Vincennes*, and the two storeships, *Lexington* and *Southampton*, also attached to the squadron, have returned home within the last two or three months. The *Raritan*, with Commodore McCauley on board, is now also on her homeward voyage, and may be looked for in the course of the month of January.

This squadron has been actively employed in cruising near the Sandwich Islands, from the Straits of Fuca and Puget's Sound, in Oregon, to Panama, on the North American coast, and along the whole line of South America on the Pacific. It has also visited the Gallipagos islands

and the adjacent seas, whilst one or more of its vessels have been kept in constant intercourse with every port, familiar to our commerce, from California to Valparaiso.

In the new arrangement of this squadron, it will be put under the command of Captain Dulany; and the razeed Independence, the sloop-of-war Falmouth and St. Mary's, will be despatched with no more delay than may be necessary for their equipment. The storeship Fredonia having performed her service in this squadron, has lately been sent on a voyage to California as a transport of troops, and will, when released from that duty, be established at Valparaiso in charge of the public stores at that port.

The African squadron is under the command of Commodore Lavallette, whose flag-ship is the sloop-of-war Germantown, Commander Nicholas. Besides this vessel, it is composed of the sloop-of-war John Adams, Commander Barron, and Dale, Commander Lardner, and the brigs Bainbridge, Lieutenant Manning, and Perry, Lieutenant Page.

Commodore Lavallette having nearly completed the period of his cruise, will return to the United States in the Germantown as soon as he can be relieved by Commodore Mayo, who will sail in the month of December, in the frigate Constitution, with Commander Rudd in command. The Dale will be replaced by the Marion, Commander Howard, which is now ready to sail.

The steamer ~~Texen~~ will be added to this command, for such rapid communication with the coast and the trading points on the rivers as the duties assigned to the squadron constantly require.

The service on this station is arduous, and attended with many incidents to render it far from being acceptable to those employed upon it. Constant vigilance and frequent intercourse with a barbarous people on the coast, are the least of its discomforts. To these are added exposure to disease and the irksome seclusion of a long voyage, which finds but small relief in visits to a shore without attraction, and always dangerous to the stranger. The health of our ships on that station, I am happy to report, has in general been well guarded by the useful sanitary discipline which the experience of the service has, of late years, been able to suggest and enforce, and we have now no longer to complain of such ravage by the maladies of the climate as overtook those who were in times past consigned to this service.

The time has come, perhaps, when it may be properly commended to the notice of Congress to inquire into the necessity of further continuing the regular employment of a squadron on this coast. The slave trade may be said to be now driven into a comparatively narrow space on the southern portion of the coast, and confined to North and South Guinea; whilst the measures recently adopted in Brazil, encourage the hope that this infamous traffic will soon be abandoned altogether. A few small vessels added to the Brazilian squadron, and directed to cruise in the track of the slave ships, may be found effectual to suppress the last efforts of that forbidden commerce, against which the abhorrence of all Christian nations is awakened.

The squadron on the coast of Brazil is commanded by Commodore McKeever, and is composed only of his flag-ship, the frigate Congress, Commander Pearson, and the sloop-of-war Jamestown, Captain Down-

ing, with the storeship Relief, Lieutenant Hitchcock. It has rendered useful service to the public interests in that quarter, and been found adequate to all the demands of our varied and extensive commercial intercourse there.

Commodore McKeever will return in the spring with his ship, and his place will be supplied by Captain Salter, who has received preparatory orders to the frigate Savannah, to be commanded by Commander Mercer.

Commodore Silas H. Stringham has command of the Mediterranean squadron, in the frigate Cumberland, Commander Turner. His force consists of the steamer San Jacinto, Captain Crabb, and the sloops-of-war St. Louis, Commander Ingraham, and Levant, Commander Goldsborough. This squadron will probably be reinforced hereafter by the steamer Princeton or the Saranac, if either of these vessels may be spared from the service at home and the San Jacinto, which is now undergoing repairs at Trieste, in that event may be ordered back to the United States.

This squadron has been conspicuously engaged in various service connected with our important commercial and political relations to the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, and has performed its duties with a commendable zeal and the best results. We have been able, through the exertions of Commodore Stringham, to obtain a permanent arrangement for the accommodation of our ships at Sardinia, by the good will of the King of Sardinia, and all that the public interest and convenience require in a safe and commodious naval depot, we may now regard as secured.

The squadron on the coast of the United States, or the Home Squadron, under the command of Commodore J. T. Newton, consists, at this time, of the frigate Columbia, the flag-ship of the Commodore, and commanded by Commander Pendergrast; the steamer Saranac, Captain Long; the sloops-of-war Albany, Commander Gerry, and Cyane, Commander Hollins; and the steamer Fulton, Commander Jackson. The steam frigate Powhatan, Captain Mervine, was, a short time ago, attached to this squadron, and immediately despatched, with the Commodore on board, on special service, to the ports of Havana and Vera Cruz. Upon his return from this voyage, it was found necessary, in consequence of the disability of the Princeton, to change her station and place her in the East India squadron.

The steamer Saranac, detailed for duty in the Home Squadron, sailed on the 4th of October last for Rio de Janeiro, under the command of Captain Long, giving conveyance to the late Brazilian chargé d'affaires, the Chevalier de Sodr e, to the seat of his own government. Captain Long will be back, it is supposed, in a few weeks, to re-assume his position in the squadron from which he was detached, or for such other service as may await him.

The Cyane has been recently ordered to cruise in the neighborhood of the island of Cuba, and to visit the port of Havana. The Albany is ordered to the same quarter, and will for the present remain at Pensacola.

The steamer Mississippi having been in condition for her cruise to the East Indies some time in advance of the rest of the squadron, was

employed, in the month of August last, on a visit to the coast of the British provinces, upon our northern border, in a service connected with the question of the fisheries. She returned early in the month of September to resume her allotted station, and to await the period of her departure upon the long voyage in which she is now engaged.

EXPLORATIONS AND SURVEYS.

During the past year the attention of this department, in conjunction with the Department of State, has been directed to the employment of the East India squadron in an enterprise of great moment to the commercial interests of the country—the endeavor to establish relations of amity and commerce with the Empire of Japan.

The long interdict which has denied to strangers access to the ports or territory of that country, and the singularly inhospitable laws which its government has adopted to secure this exclusion, having been productive, of late years, of gross oppression and cruelty to citizens of the United States, it has been thought expedient to take some effective measure to promote a better understanding with this populous and semi-barbarous empire; to make the effort not only to obtain from them the observance of the rights of humanity to such of our people as may be driven by necessity upon their coasts, but also to promote the higher and more valuable end of persuading them to abandon their unprofitable policy of seclusion, and gradually to take a place in that general association of commerce in which their resources and industry would equally enable them to confer benefits upon others, and the fruits of a higher civilization upon themselves.

The extension of the domain of the United States to the shores of the Pacific, the rapid settlement of California and Oregon, the opening of the highway across the isthmus of Central America, the great addition to our navigation employed in trade with Asiatic nations, and the increased activity of our whaling ships in the vicinity of the northern coasts of Japan, are now pressing upon the consideration of this government the absolute necessity of reviewing our relations to those Eastern communities which lie contiguous to the path of our trade. The enforcement of a more liberal system of intercourse upon China has met the approval of the civilized world, and its benefits are seen and felt not less remarkably in the progress of that ancient empire itself, than in the activity which it has already imparted to the pursuit of Eastern commerce. China is awaking from the lethargy of a thousand years to the perception of the spirit of the present era, and is even now furnishing her quota to the adventure which distinguishes and stimulates the settlement of our western coast.

These events have forced upon the people of America and Europe the consideration of the question, how far it is consistent with the rights of the civilized world to defer to those inconvenient and unsocial customs by which a nation, capable of contributing to the relief of the wants of humanity, shall be permitted to renounce that duty; whether any nation may claim to be exempt from the admitted Christian obligation of hospitality to those strangers whom the vocations of commerce or the lawful pursuits of industry may have incidentally brought in need of its assistance; and the still stronger case, whether the enlightened

world will tolerate the infliction of punishment or contumelious treatment upon the unfortunate voyager whom the casualties of the sea may have compelled to an unwilling infraction of a barbarous law.

These are questions which are every day becoming more significant. That Oriental sentiment which, hardened by the usage and habit of centuries, has dictated the inveterate policy of national isolation in Japan, it is very apparent, will not long continue to claim the sanctity of a national right to the detriment of the cause of universal commerce and civilization, at this time so signally active in enlarging the boundaries of human knowledge and the diffusion of comfort over the earth. The day has come when Europe and America have found an urgent inducement to demand of Asia and Africa the rights of hospitality, of aid and comfort, shelter and succor, to the men who pursue the great highroads of trade and exploration over the globe. Christendom is constrained by the pressure of an increasing necessity to publish its wants and declare its rights to the heathen; and in making its power felt, will bring innumerable blessings to every race which shall acknowledge its mastery.

The government of the United States has happily placed itself in the front of this movement; and it may be regarded as one of the most encouraging guarantees of its success, that the expedition which has just left our shores takes with it the earnest good wishes, not only of our own country, but of the most enlightened communities of Europe. The opening of Japan has become a necessity, which is recognised in the commercial adventure of all Christian nations, and is deeply felt by every owner of an American whale-ship, and every voyager between California and China.

This important duty has been consigned to the commanding officer of the East India squadron, a gentleman in every respect worthy of the trust reposed in him, and who contributes to its administration the highest energy and ability, improved by long and various service in his profession. Looking to the magnitude of the undertaking, and the great expectations which have been raised, both in this country and in Europe, in reference to its results, the casualties to which it may be exposed, and the necessity to guard it, by every precaution within the power of the government, against the possibility of a failure, I have thought it proper, with your approbation, to increase the force destined to this employment, and to put at the disposal of Commodore Perry a squadron of unusual strength and capability. I have, therefore, recently added to the number of vessels appropriated to the command, the line-of-battle ship Vermont, the corvette Macedonian, and the steamer Alleghany. These ships, together with the sloop-of-war Vandalia, originally intended to be assigned to the squadron, and with the ships now on that station—the steamer Susquehanna and the sloops-of-war Saratoga and Plymouth—a portion of which are now near to the term of their cruise, will constitute a command adapted, we may suppose, to any emergency which the delicate nature of the trust committed to the Commodore may present. It is probable that the exhibition of the whole force which will be under the command of Commodore Perry during the first year, will produce such an impression upon a government and people who are accustomed to measure their respect

by the array of power which accompanies the demand of it, as may enable him to dispense with the vessels whose term of service is drawing near to a close, and that they may be returned to the United States without any material prolongation of their cruise.

A liberal allowance has been made to the squadron for all the contingencies which the peculiar nature of the enterprise may create. The commanding officer is furnished with ample means of defence and protection, on land as well as sea; with the means, also, of procuring despatch vessels when necessary, transports for provision and fuel, and for such other employment as may be required. Special depots of coal have been established at various points, and abundant supplies provided. He has, in addition to the instructions usually given to the squadron on this station, been directed to avail himself of such opportunities as may fall in his way, to make as accurate surveys as his means may allow, of the coasts and seas he may visit, and to preserve the results for future publication for the benefit of commerce.

Somewhat allied in character and importance to these projected operations of the Japan squadron is the expedition now prepared for the exploration and survey of the China seas, the Northern Pacific, and Behring's Straits. The naval appropriation bill of the last session of Congress put at the disposal of this department one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars "for the building or purchase of suitable vessels, and for prosecuting a survey and reconnoissance for naval and commercial purposes, of such parts of Behring's Straits, of the North Pacific ocean, and the China seas, as are frequented by American whale-ships, and by trading vessels, in their routes between the United States and China."

Very earnestly concurring with Congress in the importance of this exploration and survey, I have lost no time in the arrangement and preparation of what I hope will prove itself to be a most effective and useful expedition. As the act of Congress has confided to the discretion of this department the selection of the vessels which may be found necessary for the prosecution of this enterprise, the equipment and distribution of the force it may require, and the organization of every matter of detail connected with it, limited only by the amount of the appropriation, I have thought I should best accomplish the object proposed, and gratify the expectation of the country, by giving to the expedition the benefit of such naval resources as the department could command, rather than confine it to such limited supply as would have resulted from either building or purchasing vessels, and providing for the other details of this service out of the fund intrusted to the department. With this fund, so applied, the department would have been constrained to organize the expedition upon a scale which I conceive to be altogether inadequate to the nature of the labor required, and which, indeed, would have been almost certain to end in the failure to accomplish such results as Congress had contemplated. Looking to the amount which it would have been necessary to reserve, in order to provide for the special contingencies of such an expedition, it would have been impracticable to procure, by the application of the remaining portion of the appropriation, more than one steamer of an inferior class, and perhaps two small brigs, to constitute the force to be used in the under-

taking: it is doubtful if even this equipment could have been obtained by such an appropriation of the fund. The absolute necessity of altering, strengthening, and arranging any vessel which might be purchased, so as to adapt it to the character of the service required, and give reasonable assurance of safety and success, would have drawn so largely upon the appropriation as to reduce the outfit to a limit quite incompatible with the object expected to be attained.

This cruise of exploration and survey, destined to equal employment in the tropics and the arctic regions, and required to traverse the broad expanse of the Pacific, among dangerous and unknown shoals, and in search of islands and rocks misplaced upon our charts, and therefore the more perilous to the navigator, will find enough, and more than enough, of labor to occupy it during the next three years. Its toilsome duties, exacting ceaseless vigilance and all the skill of seamanship, will be inevitably enhanced by the disease incident to varying climates and exposure to the peculiar casualties of boat-navigation, and contests with the savage islanders of the seas it is destined to explore. I have therefore deemed it indispensable, that at least one large vessel should be always at hand to afford a change of quarters to those who may be disabled, and to supply reliefs of fresh men, to take the place of those who may be broken down by sickness or accident. It is impossible to maintain the health of the crews of the small vessels in so long a service, without the comforts which such a change may afford. These surveys also require an extra supply of men beyond the usual complement destined to our cruising ships, there being constant occasion for detachments in boats to conduct the operation of measuring and determining the position and bearings of the shoals and islands, which it is the purpose of the enterprise to ascertain.

In consideration of all these conditions, and many others of a kindred nature, I have determined to give to this little squadron every facility which the resources at my command have enabled me to supply. I have accordingly put the Vincennes, one of our staunchest and best sloops-of-war, in the lead of the expedition. I have added to this the propeller John Hancock, which being found to have an engine of the strongest construction, needed only some alterations in her size and frame, and the addition of new boilers, to make her, in every respect, a most efficient contribution to the force required. She has, with this view, been placed in the hands of the naval constructor, who is now assiduously at work, and, I am happy to report, with all desirable success, in fitting her out with every accommodation which her future operations may demand. Besides these two vessels, the brig Porpoise has been detailed for the expedition, and put in condition for all the exigencies of her employment. A small pilot-boat, adapted to speedy navigation and shallow waters, will be added to the squadron. These vessels, fully manned and equipped, and furnished with all the necessaries appropriate to the hazardous nature of their cruise, constitute the material elements of the expedition.

To promote the scientific objects contemplated by the reconnoissance, I have supplied the squadron with an astronomer and hydrographer of known ability and accomplishment, and also with a naturalist and a botanist, who are charged with the duty of collecting and preserving

specimens of such natural productions as may be interesting to science and commerce.

The squadron is placed under the command of an officer already distinguished by his participation in a former exploring expedition, and well known for the valuable contributions he has made to the hydrographical survey of our western coast—Commander Ringgold, whose professional accomplishment and devotion to the service eminently qualify him for the duty committed to him. He will be able, I hope, to take his departure in a few weeks, and will sail directly to the Pacific, doubling Cape Horn, and proceeding by the Sandwich Islands to Behring's Straits, where he may be expected to arrive at the opening of the season for operations in that quarter. It is designed to employ the expedition during each year in the reconnoissance of these high latitudes from June until October, this being the only season in which the surveys may be prosecuted in these regions. The remaining portions of each year will be devoted to the prosecution of survey and exploration in the lower latitudes, along the coast of Japan, the China seas, and the routes of navigation between our ports on the Pacific and the East Indies. Particular attention will be given to the survey of the seas and coasts through and along which our whaling-ships pursue their perilous trade, looking carefully to the coast of Japan, the Kurile islands, the sea of Okhotsk, and the unexplored shores of Northern Asia.

The commander of the expedition is made fully aware of the necessity and value of an accurate survey of the various lines of navigation between California and China, and will bestow upon this undertaking an attention commensurate with its importance. He is directed to make frequent reports of his work, in order that no time may be lost in communicating to the country the results, together with descriptive charts of his survey, for the benefit of commerce and navigation. These will be duly published as often as they are received by the department.

Being persuaded that this department cannot better contribute to the fulfilment of the high expectations which the country has ever entertained as to the value of the navy, nor perform a more acceptable duty to the navy itself, than by imparting to this arm of the national power the highest spirit of enterprise, as well as the greatest efficiency of action, I have sought every opportunity to put in requisition for useful service the various talent, skill, and ambition of honorable adventure, which equally distinguish and embellish the professional character of the officers under the control of the department. Constant employment of ships and men in the promotion of valuable public interests, whether in the defence of the honor of our flag or in the exploration of the field of discovery and the opening of new channels of trade, or in the enlarging of the boundaries of science, I am convinced will be recognised, both by the government and the people, as the true and proper vocation of the navy, and as the means best calculated to nurse and strengthen that prompt and gallant devotion to duty which is so essential to the character of accomplished officers, and so indispensable to the effectiveness of the naval organization.

Acting in conformity with this opinion, I have availed myself of events that favored the object, to set on foot two other expeditions which may be classed with those which I have just presented to your notice,

and from which I have every reason to hope much good is to be derived hereafter. My attention has been invited by the Colonization Society of Pennsylvania to the necessity of prosecuting some researches into the character of the continent of Africa, and especially that portion of it lying eastward of the settlements of Liberia. It is supposed that an exploration of this region would lead to the discovery of a broad tract of fertile and healthy country, well adapted to the extension of that system of colonization which, for some years past, has greatly interested the public attention, and more recently attracted the favorable consideration of Congress.

The proposition submitted to my view by the society, and referred to your approval, I regard as one which may be rendered productive of great public advantage, and in regard to which you might confidently bespeak and anticipate the approbation of the country. I have, therefore, not hesitated, with your concurrence, to give it the aid which it was in the power of the department to bestow. As I could not, however, without some special appropriation to the object, organize a full and effective expedition for the prosecution of this enterprise, I have thought that, by the employment of such means as have been provided for the ordinary exigencies of the service, I might profitably prepare the way for such an expedition as Congress might hereafter think fit to authorize. I have accordingly directed a preliminary investigation to be made by an officer of the navy, whom I have attached to the African squadron, with orders to devote the months of the coming winter to an examination of the necessary conditions which this undertaking may require.

In Commander Lynch, to whom the country is already indebted for important service in another field, I have found a prompt and ardent volunteer for this employment. He is now on his way to the African coast. He will land at Liberia, Cape Palmos, and other points, and will pursue his inquiries as far as the river Gaboon, with a view to the ascertainment of such localities on the margin of the African continent as may present the greatest facilities, whether by the river courses or by inland routes, for penetrating with least hazard to the interior. He will collect information touching the geographical character of the country; its means of affording the necessary supplies of men and provisions; the temper of the inhabitants, whether hostile or friendly; the proper precautions to be observed to secure the health of a party employed; and all other items of knowledge upon which it may be proper hereafter to prepare and combine the forces essential to the success of a complete and useful exploration of the interior. In the performance of this duty, under the most favorable circumstances, he will encounter the perils of a climate famed for its unwholesome influence upon the white man, and may hardly hope to escape the exhibition of hostility from the natives. The spirit which has prompted him to court this perilous adventure, so honorable to his courage and philanthropy, I trust will enable him to brave every hazard with success, to overcome every obstacle in his progress, and to reserve himself for the accomplishment of the great object to which these preparations are directed. In the mean time, I most earnestly commend the subject of the exploration to the early and favorable attention of Congress, with the expres-

sion of my own conviction that there is no enterprise of the present day that deserves a higher degree of favor, or that will more honorably signalize the enlightened policy of this government in the estimation of the present or of future generations. It will require a liberal appropriation of money, and an enlarged discretion to be confided to the Navy Department, for the organization and arrangement of a plan of operations which must embrace the employment of a number of men, the supply of boats, armaments, and tools, and the enlistment of such scientific aid as a long and laborious inland exploration, beset with many dangers and difficulties, will suggest.

With a view to the preparatory operations of Commander Lynch, and also in consideration of the need which the African squadron has, at all times, for such an auxiliary, I have directed the small steamer *Vixen* to be prepared without delay and sent to that coast, to constitute a part of the force under the command of Commodore Mayo, who is about to take charge of the squadron. He will be instructed to furnish Commander Lynch with every facility which his position may allow. A small sum of money has also been placed at the disposal of Commander Lynch for the contingencies of his present service.

The second expedition to which I have referred has grown out of the recent decree of the Provisional Director of the Argentine Confederation, which has very lately reached this country, and which now throws open to navigation that long sealed and excluded country lying upon the tributaries of the river La Plata. The Uruguay and the Parana are at last opened by this decree to the access of all nations who may choose to seek the new associations which they offer to the spirit of adventure. A vast territory of boundless resource, proverbial for its treasures of vegetable and mineral wealth, extending, like the Mississippi, from south to north, and reaching through twenty-four parallels of latitude, with every climate between the temperate and torrid zones, and with every variety of product which may be gathered from the alluvial plains of the ocean border to the heights of the Andes—this is the field into which the liberal decree of President Arguiza has invited the enterprise of our country, as well as of other nations, who will be equally prompt to pursue it. We have waited with anxiety for the occasion to add this new resource to the industry of our people; and I am sure it will gratify the commercial pride, and please the emulous ambition of the nation, not less than it will secure great and permanent advantages to its trade, to have the American flag and a national vessel the first to receive the greetings of the population who, at the foot of the Andes and along the navigable waters of inland Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay, are ready to welcome the first messenger of commerce and throw their treasures into his hand.

Anticipating the near approach of this opportunity, with your approval, I admonished Lieutenant Page, before it arrived, to hold himself in readiness for an exploration of these rivers, and directed the steamer *Water Witch* to be put in condition for the service. She is now nearly equipped, and Lieutenant Page will be ready to take his departure at the first moment that the steamer may be fit to receive him. He is provided with an able crew, well adapted to the nature of his expedition, and seconded by officers chosen for their efficiency both

in the sphere of seamanship and scientific labor. A few boats are provided, adapted to the navigation of the upper streams above their falls; and the equipment, though of simple and unexpensive kind, will be in all respects such as may enable Lieutenant Page to accomplish the duty assigned to him.

These four expeditions, each of them of a highly interesting character, and likely to be productive of results which will be beneficially felt and acknowledged long after the men who may procure them shall have passed away, constitute, in great part, the chief and most important topics which have engrossed the care of the Navy Department during the past year.

It gives me pleasure to report, in connexion with these, the return of Lieutenant Herndon, to whom was consigned, in conjunction with Passed Midshipman (now Lieutenant) Gibbon, an exploration of the valley of the river Amazon and its tributaries. These officers were directed to cross the Cordilleras, in Peru and Bolivia, and by a selection of the most judicious routes of travel, with a small company of men, for the employment of whom means were furnished by this department, to explore the valley of the Amazon, and to descend that river to the sea. More than a year has been spent in the active prosecution of this duty. Lieutenant Herndon reached the United States in July last, bringing with him a large amount of interesting and useful facts industriously collected by him in the course of his long and hazardous journey, embracing many valuable statistics of the country, and adding most important contributions to the hitherto unknown geographical character of the country. He is now engaged in preparing a full report of the incidents and discoveries of his travel, which will be communicated to you as soon as it is placed in possession of this department. I beg to commend Lieutenant Herndon to your special approbation and thanks for the intelligence and ability, and yet more for the high professional zeal, he has exhibited in the performance of his difficult and honorable duty.

Lieutenant Gibbon having taken a different route from that of Lieutenant Herndon, has not yet arrived, but may be expected in the course of the winter. When he returns to this city, the result of his work will be submitted to your notice.

The brig *Dolphin*, which was employed during the last year, under the command of Lieutenant Lee, in a survey of portions of the Atlantic, for the purpose of ascertaining the position of some dangerous rocks and shoals which were known to exist in the routes of navigation between the United States and Europe, has performed useful service, of which the results will be communicated to Congress. This work being yet incomplete, the *Dolphin* has again been despatched on a second cruise of the same character, under the command of Lieutenant Berryman, and may be expected to accomplish a work which will tend, in no small degree, to lessen the hazards which have heretofore embarrassed the voyages of our merchant marine.

Lady Franklin, whose devotion to the cause of her unfortunate husband has excited so large a sympathy in the United States, has been encouraged to make another effort to determine the fate of the gallant navigator of the Arctic sea, and is now intent upon the organization of a new expedition, under the auspices of our countrymen, Mr. Henry

Grinnell, and Mr. George Peabody of London. Their endeavor will be directed to an exploration of the upper coasts of Greenland, by land as well as sea, and will furnish occasion for valuable scientific observation, tending to the ascertainment of the magnetic poles and the intensity and dip of the needle, and interesting, also, to geological questions connected with the supposed existence of an open polar sea, and other subjects of much importance in the natural history of our globe. Apart, therefore, from its main object, there is much in the projected expedition to excite a high degree of interest in its results, both in Europe and America.

The distinguished lady whose sorrows have inspired this zeal of adventure, and whose energy has given it an intelligent and hopeful direction, has done no more than justice to a meritorious young officer of our navy, Passed Assistant Surgeon Kane, in asking his co-operation in this hazardous exploit. Dr. Kane has already won a high praise from his countrymen by his intrepid perseverance in facing the extraordinary dangers of the last expedition, on the same errand, to the Arctic sea, and still more by the diligence which, guided by scientific accomplishment, has enabled him to contribute a valuable fund towards the illustration of a subject that now engrosses an unusual share of learned investigation.

The request of Lady Franklin to enlist Dr. Kane in the new expedition has been communicated to me, and I have not delayed to give him the necessary permission, and to confer upon him all the benefit he may derive from his position in the navy, by an order which puts him upon special service. If it should become requisite, in the field of operations to which he is destined, to provide him with means for the prosecution of scientific discovery beyond those which may be afforded by the department, and the liberality of the distinguished gentlemen who have assumed the charge of this expedition, I would commend it to the enlightened regard of Congress, with the most confident hope that that body will respond to the suggestions of this necessity with a prompt appreciation and generous support of an undertaking so honorable to humanity and so useful to the enlargement of liberal science.

THE NAVAL ACADEMY.

The Naval Academy at Annapolis presents to the regard of Congress an institution worthy of the highest encouragement.

Under a judicious and energetic administration, it has now reached a stage in its progress which may enable the government to form a satisfactory estimate of its influence in promoting and sustaining the future efficiency of the navy.

The school has grown up to its present stage in the progressive expansion and improvement of a design which, in its origin, forbade the adoption of a comprehensive and permanent system of naval education. It was at first contrived to supply nothing more than the opportunity of prosecuting a few useful studies to a class of occasional students who were subject to all the interruptions of details for service at sea, and who were therefore not in a condition to conform to the requirements necessary to a regular course of professional instruction. The obvious insufficiency of this mode of study soon suggested the

necessity for a more methodical arrangement. A plan was accordingly devised in 1850, to take effect at the commencement of the next term of October, 1851, by which all the acting midshipmen of the date of that and subsequent years should be inducted into the school in its lowest class, and proceed in due order through a prescribed course of naval education, which is specifically adapted to a term of four years. The series of studies appropriate to each year was defined, the practice of gunnery and seamanship established, and the whole organization, as it now exists, completed. The classes were so contrived, also, as to receive, according to an appointed succession, the acting midshipmen of dates prior to 1851, who, by this provision, will, in the space of the next three years, have had the opportunity of graduating in the school.

The admissions of acting midshipmen to the navy, and consequently to the academy, have been regulated and limited by several laws, of which the combined import now is, to give to each State and Territory its relative proportion of appointments, determined by the ratio of representation in Congress, and its relation to the whole number of acting and passed midshipmen allowed to the navy. To this determination of the quota of appointments appropriated to each State and Territory, there has been added an allotment of a fractional share to each congressional district, and the nomination for each district has been conferred upon the member representing it.

The whole number of midshipmen, including passed midshipmen, allowed to the navy, is four hundred and sixty-four. The number of representatives and delegates, according to the last census, is two hundred and thirty-nine. Each representative, therefore, is entitled, by the existing law, to the nomination of one candidate and a fraction equal to $\frac{225}{239}$.

No provision has been made for the disposition of these fractions, and I have therefore thought myself bound, in the absence of any other regulation, to consult the wishes of at least a majority of the representatives entitled to the fractional part, in receiving a nomination to supply the vacancy.

As the school does not contain more than a fourth of the midshipmen belonging to the navy, and as the vacancies in the number of students are dependent altogether upon the promotions to the grade of lieutenants, and upon the resignations, dismissals, and deaths in each year in the corps of midshipmen, the annual nominations to the school must, when the entire complement of midshipmen is regularly filled, be comparatively but few in number. The present condition of the service supplies but a small ratio of promotions; and if it were not for the operation of the resignations, dismissals, and deaths, it is manifest that the yearly recruits to be added to the school would be so inconsiderable in numbers as to forbid any hope of extensive usefulness, whilst the fluctuating character of these causes which produce the vacancies tends to a result scarcely less injurious.

It is, indeed, the most obvious defect in the present organization of the academy, that its supply of students is liable to these contingencies; for while the classes are advancing, by regular steps, through the course of four years' study, to the term at which they must leave the school and enter into the fields of active service, the vacancies which

they create are dependent upon such a limited fund of supply as must ultimately reduce the number of pupils below the quota which is essential to the administration of the system.

That this defect has not already been visible in the career of the academy is to be ascribed only to the fact that, up to the present time, the members of the institution have been recruited from the grade of midshipmen who have been employed at sea previous to the new arrangements adopted and commenced with the class of 1851. The classes heretofore have been furnished out of this corps, in addition to the annual nominations. When this resource is exhausted, and the school is dependent on the yearly nominations alone, the defect to which I have referred will be fully seen and felt. It will then be manifest that the whole number at the school cannot exceed, at any time, the number of promotions, added to the occasional vacancies occurring in the corps of midshipmen and passed midshipmen in four years.

It is to remedy this defect, and to give the school an inherent power necessary to its own perpetuation, and to make it what I am sure the country desires to see it—a vigorous and healthful institution, completely adapted to the useful ends for which it was ordained—that I propose, with your approbation, to submit to Congress the following change in its fundamental structure.

The academy should be composed exclusively of cadets, or young men, who are received as candidates for admission to the navy. Its design should be that of a preparatory school to qualify these candidates for appointments, and they should only be in condition to be selected for midshipmen when they had successfully passed through this probation.

If this principle be adopted as the groundwork of the plan, then the whole number of cadets to be nominated for the school may be established by law. For the present, I suggest that this number may be fixed at two hundred and forty-eight. It may be altered as future experience may require. Of this number of two hundred and forty-eight, who are to be furnished to the academy every four years, one-fourth, or sixty-two, should be nominated for admission at the commencement of each yearly term, to constitute the first or lowest class of the school. Of this whole number of two hundred and forty-eight, two hundred and twenty-eight might be allotted to the nomination of members of Congress, apportioning them to each State according to the ratio of representation, and requiring the nomination to the vacancies to be made, not by the representatives singly, but by the united counsel and action of the whole representation of each State, including senators and representatives. The remaining twenty of the two hundred and forty-eight may be given, with advantage, to the President.

By this arrangement, Congress would be called on to nominate fifty-seven cadets every year, and the President five.

The classes would thus commence their career with sixty-two members; and this number, or so many of them as are not dropped in the progress of the four years, would represent the annual number of graduates. Provision, of course, should be made for the gradual absorption of all those acting midshipmen, who, under the present system,

are not yet disposed of. In a few years they must disappear, after which the organization of the cadets would be undisturbed.

In addition to this number of sixty-two nominations to be made in each year, Congress and the President would also have the appointment to such vacancies in the new class as might arise out of the failure of the first candidates to pass the preliminary examinations required at their admission. The vacancies occasioned by subsequent examinations, and by the other causes operating during the progress of the classes through the term of the four years, I propose should not be filled, but the classes, after their commencement, should advance to the end of the term of study, subject to all the incidents of their career, which may reduce their numbers. The propriety of this provision will be recognised when it is observed that a vacancy occurring in any class after it has become advanced in its studies, could not be supplied, at that advanced stage, by a new appointment to the school. The class would still go on in its reduced state, whilst the supply of a vacancy occurring in it could only operate to the undue increase of the lowest class of beginners, and would thus produce a periodical and inconvenient increase of graduates for whom no allotment could be made in the navy.

Assuming sixty-two as the number which shall always be supplied to the lowest class, or beginners, of the school, we have reason to believe, from the data afforded by the experience of West Point, that the annual number of graduates would not exceed some twenty-five or thirty, it being found, in the general operation of the system, that the graduates do not bear a greater average proportion to the admissions than forty per cent. Upon this basis it may be estimated that these twenty-five or thirty may be looked to as the ordinary yearly resource for the supply of young officers to the navy.

I propose, in the next place, that the law should establish the corps of midshipmen for the service at two hundred and fifty. These should be recognised as midshipmen only, and be subject to all the understood and appropriate duties of that class of officers. They should then be consigned to service on board of ships-of-war; and after six months' employment at sea, should, upon examination and approval by a competent board, be entitled to the midshipman's warrant, bearing the date of the graduation at the school; and after three years' service at sea and another examination, they should be noted for promotion to a higher grade, which I propose should be created by law, and denominated *masters*. The grade of passed midshipman should be abolished as soon as the gradual promotion of the corps may allow. It is an anomaly in the naval service, presenting a class of officers to whom no duty is specifically assigned, and constantly engendering discontent when the duties of ordinary midshipmen are required of it. This class now perform the duty of masters, and I think it but proper that the duty and the rank should be associated by law. The change would require no increase of pay, and would, I have no doubt, be productive of good effects.

The grade of masters might be established at one hundred, and might at once be filled by appointing to it that number of passed midshipmen. The ultimate result of this plan would give, when all the

present passed midshipmen shall have been absorbed in the regular course of promotion, two hundred and fifty midshipmen and one hundred masters, to occupy the space now filled by the corps of four hundred and sixty-four officers—a reduction of one hundred and fourteen. This reduction, of course, would increase the ratio of promotion to the corps of lieutenants, and would leave a sufficient complement for all the demands of the service, estimated by the present size of the navy. A future increase of the navy would suggest a proportionate increase of officers of every grade.

The promotions incident to this organization of the corps—that is to say, of two hundred and fifty midshipmen and one hundred masters—would supply about twenty-five vacancies a year. The present number of higher officers furnishes something near this yearly average, and there is no reason to suppose that it will be reduced in future: the more active service of the navy, even on the present establishment, may rather increase it. The school, therefore, may be regarded as subject to an annual demand for this number of its graduates to be advanced into the regular line of service. Estimating the number of graduates at twenty-five, the whole of them would thus find position and employment. An increase to thirty would, of course, give a remainder of five, which may also be disposed of.

I propose, in further organization of this system, to construct a scientific corps in the navy, to be established as the hydrographical corps—this corps to be designed, in its first formation, upon a basis which shall provide for thirty masters, thirty lieutenants, fifteen commanders, and five captains, making eighty in all. It should be especially educated for that scientific professional service in which some portion of the navy is constantly employed. Its chief duties should be connected with hydrographical surveys, astronomical observations, construction of charts, preparation and improvement of ordnance, the supervision of naval architecture and machinery, and the direction of civil engineering in the construction of docks and other structures requiring scientific knowledge and skill.

The corps should be entirely separate from, and independent of, the regular naval service. Its line of promotion should be confined to its own organization, and its government should be under its own proper officers. In addition to the duties assigned to it on shore, and in hydrographical surveys, some portion of it might be appropriated to service at sea; and one or more officers of the corps might be introduced into the complements of squadrons on foreign or home service. An experienced officer of this corps would find useful and active duty upon every cruise. It should be left to the Navy Department to regulate the character and contingencies of this service, and to make all the necessary rules and orders for its application.

This corps should be built up under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy, from the material afforded by the academy, with such additions to it, in its commencement, from the regular line of naval service, as in his judgment the qualifications of the present officers might enable him to make with advantage.

With a view to the supply of this corps from the academy, I propose that, upon the yearly examination of the graduates, the Board of Ex-

amination shall be directed to bestow a close attention upon the class submitted to them, in order to ascertain the particular adaptation of any of the graduates to this species of service, and that they shall report to the department the names of such as they may find qualified, by study, talent, and acquirement, for admission to the corps; and if, upon this report, the students so designated shall consent to enter the corps, they, or so many of them as the established complement of the hydrographical corps may require, shall be appropriated to that service; and upon being so appropriated, they shall be returned to the academy for an additional course of study of two years, during which they shall be employed in obtaining a thorough knowledge of the higher branches of civil engineering, hydrography, astronomy, mechanism and gunnery, in conformity with the best system of instruction which the academy may be able to furnish. At the end of this probation of two years, they shall be subjected to a final examination, and, upon a recommendation to that effect, shall be admitted to the rank of masters in the hydrographical corps. Five years' service in this grade should entitle them to be promoted to lieutenants, as vacancies may happen, and the promotions thenceforward should await the ordinary incidents of the corps which may supply the proper occasion.

If the department should be able to contribute any members to the corps from the present officers of the service, I think such appointments should not exceed twenty to each grade of masters and lieutenants, and ten commanders, and that no captain be appointed until after five years' service in the corps: there may be found the proper officers to occupy the vacancies in this grade. It should also be well understood that the Secretary of the Navy, in assigning present officers to the corps, should be governed alone in his selection by high qualification and accomplishment in the science required, and not by seniority in the service; and that no appointments should be made unless there be found officers of approved reputation for their acquirements in reference to this service, who may be willing to enter the corps.

The yearly graduates of the academy will, according to this system, be assigned to the two branches of service I have described—that is to say, to the regular naval service, and to the hydrographical corps. The graduates required for these two branches should be selected from those who are adjudged by the board of examination to stand highest on the roll of the class; and if, at any time, it should happen that the requisitions should not embrace the whole number of graduates in each year, then those whose services are not required, being the lowest on the roll, should receive an honorable discharge from the school. These would return to the occupations of private life, well educated by the bounty of the government, and qualified for useful employment in the many important vocations connected with commerce and navigation, and especially in the various service of steamships, which create so large a demand for expert and accomplished officers. In whatever situation they may be placed, they will find abundant occasion to rejoice in the advantages they shall have obtained at the school, and, by the proper use of these advantages, indemnify the country for the care and expense it may have bestowed upon their culture. These conditions and incidents of an admission to the academy being understood in ad-

vance, both by the cadet and his friends, it is presumed, will prepare them to regard the discharge in its true point of view, as the necessary contingency of a most important good conferred, and not as a disappointment which should occasion regret. If, on the other hand, it should turn out that the annual number of graduates should not be adequate to the demands of these two branches of service, the basis of sixty-two in the class of beginners may be increased to the number at which experience may show that the desired result may be obtained. It will be easy, after the experiment of a few years, to ascertain this number with sufficient precision; and as, in the mean time, the hydrographic corps is to be filled, the extra supply of the classes for the next three years, by the admission of the midshipmen of dates prior to 1851, will very opportunely enlarge the classes to a number which will satisfy that requisition.

In arranging the complement of officers to the hydrographic corps, I have proceeded upon a conjectural estimate of what I suppose may be found necessary to the service required of it. I submit this to the judgment of Congress for such alterations in the grades and numbers as their investigation of the subject may suggest. I have thought it safest to propose a number rather below what I think the service may ultimately demand, as it is easier to increase this complement than to reduce it. It is proper for me to say, also, that, in assigning five captains to this corps, I may have exceeded the number which may be appropriate to the organization. But, as no captain, according to this plan, could be appointed before the lapse of five years, the experience which may be gained in the interval may enable Congress, before that period has gone by, to adjust this grade to its proper number, and assign to it its appropriate duties. It may be hereafter looked to for the supply of the head of the engineer department, the superintendents of naval architecture and construction, the general supervision of hydrographical surveys, and the management of the Naval Academy. If these functions may be efficiently discharged by it, the number I have assigned will not be too large.

These are the general views and considerations which have induced me to submit this plan to your approval, and to the consideration of Congress.

It will afford the annual appointment of sixty-two candidates for the navy.

It will give greater permanency and efficiency to the school.

It will quicken promotion in the navy, and give to the younger officers hope of useful command whilst they yet possess the vigor and ambition of youth.

It will establish a valuable corps of scientific officers, who will bring to the service equal devotion to the prosperity of the navy, and the highest attainments to promote it.

And it may occasionally give to the country, men carefully educated in useful knowledge, and bound, by the strongest obligation of gratitude and honor, to requite this public bounty by laudable service in the employments of civil life.

I think it proper, in presenting this new organization of the school, and of the officers which it is intended to supply, to ask of Congress

that the grade of master in the service shall be entitled to a commission, and recognised in that character by law. The masters are ward-room officers, and should be placed among the commissioned officers of the navy. No change of pay is necessary; and in that respect, they may be left upon their present footing.

It must be observed that some years will elapse, if this organization be now authorized by law, before it can be rendered complete; and the sooner, therefore, it is adopted, the better.

The present class of passed midshipmen numbers two hundred and sixteen. These are to be disposed of. One hundred of them may be commissioned as masters, and the grade may be at once established at that number by law. The remaining hundred and sixteen would be gradually absorbed by the grade of masters in a few years; after which the system will work according to its permanent regulation.

The present number of acting midshipmen is two hundred and six, of which the school contains, by the last report, eighty-one. Five appointments have been made for the next term, and there are yet thirty-seven vacancies. To the nominations already made for the new class of beginners to the next term of October, 1853, may be added at once, with the thirty-seven vacancies, as many as may be necessary to make sixty-two. The classes should then advance regularly to the end of their respective terms without additions, and the law may provide for the annual supply henceforth, of sixty-two, in the manner I have indicated. The grade of midshipmen might be at once declared to be limited to two hundred and fifty, and the filling of that complement should await the supply it may hereafter obtain from the graduates.

If any of the present grade of passed midshipmen and masters should be found qualified for admission to the hydrographic corps, the vacancies which may be made by their appointment to it may be filled by promotion, and so hasten the period at which the new organization may be brought into full operation.

The school has yet to receive some classes of midshipmen of the date previous to 1851. When admitted, they will constitute an extra portion beyond the quota allowed to the academy; and I would suggest in regard to them, that they should be permitted, as heretofore, to constitute a part of any class for which they may be qualified, and upon their graduation, to be entitled to their advancement to the proper grade; it being mainly important to provide, at present, that each yearly class of new admissions should be constituted of the appointed number of sixty-two, and in no event to exceed that number. The future organization of the school will necessarily follow upon the observance of this provision.

In proper connexion with this subject of the academy, it is my duty to apprise you that I have recently adopted regulations for the government of apprentices to be admitted at the several navy yards and workshops under the control of this department. The propriety of these regulations has been suggested by the Bureau of Yards and Docks, and I am indebted to the intelligent labors of three distinguished officers of the department, Commodores Morris, Shubrick, and Smith, to whom I referred the subject, for a report, which I have received, and which will be found among the documents accompanying this communication.

The report presents the regulations which I have approved. The number of apprentices, as established for the present by this system, is eighty-three. They are required to undergo an examination twice in each year, and after the first year those most distinguished in the previous trials are to be subjected to another of a still more extensive and rigorous character; upon which, such as shall be reported as worthy of the highest approbation and reward, and as demonstrating talent adapted to eminence in the public service, are to be commended to the Secretary of the Navy for such further advantages of instruction as he may have it in his power to confer.

I regard it as a most salutary power to be invested in the Secretary of the Navy, for the beneficial performance of the duty thus assigned to him, that he should have authority to admit into the Naval Academy those apprentices whose good conduct and capabilities shall have earned this distinction, and to provide that they should there be conducted through a course of study appropriate to their intended future vocations, and calculated to advance them in mathematical and mechanical science, under such regulations, in regard to the term of their application, their duties and deportment, as the Navy Department might think it expedient to adopt. Having completed this course of study, they should be returned to the yards from which they may have been received, or allotted to suitable employments in the service.

It would be a useful provision in this scheme to give to the young men so educated a preference in the admissions to the corps of engineers for steamships, for which appointments their education would particularly qualify them; their admission into that corps, nevertheless, to be dependent upon successful examination, and a favorable certificate to moral and intellectual character.

In the operation of this scheme the navy would derive the benefit of best talents and acquirement for the supply of engineers, naval architects and constructors, and superintendents in the various departments of mechanical employment connected with the service.

I take great pleasure in presenting this subject to your approval, and to the attention of Congress.

In view of this reorganization of the academy, I submit also, as a question worthy of consideration, whether it would not be a salutary provision to require that the officers of the marine corps should be prepared for that service by an education at the school. My own opinion is, that it would be attended by manifest advantage, both as respects the necessary accomplishment for naval service in that corps, and the personal character and deportment of the officers belonging to it. It is among the incidents of their employment that they are sometimes required to perform important military duties on shore, in which a necessity is found for that species of knowledge only to be gained in the military or naval school; and in every service to which they are called, it is quite apparent that this knowledge, and the spirit to appreciate the duties of command that is inseparable from it, must increase the efficiency of the officer, and elevate the character of the corps to which he is attached. If these considerations should influence the opinion of Congress as they do my own, they will suggest the expediency of making the provision to which I have invited their attention.

In concluding this notice of the Naval Academy, it is due to Commander Stribling, who has charge of the institution, and to the officers, professors, and assistants under his command, to say that the assiduity and intelligence with which they have performed the laborious and complicated duties assigned to them, merit the highest approbation; and that the prosperous condition of the school, and admirable arrangement of its details, particularly manifested in the deportment and proficiency of the young men confided to their care, eminently entitle it to the favorable opinion and encouragement of the government.

I particularly commend to the notice of Congress the consideration of the appropriations asked for by the Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography for the improvements necessary, to purchase the grounds, and complete the buildings required by the academy.

ORGANIZATION AND DISCIPLINE OF SEAMEN.

There is no subject connected with the prosperity of the navy that, in my estimate, better deserves the attention of Congress, than that relating to the condition of the corps of mariners which constitutes the great working force in the navigation and management of the public vessels.

In obedience to a sentiment which is prevalent throughout the country, and which is naturally suggested by those impulses that distinctively characterize the opinions and habits of our people, Congress has been recently led to the consideration of the ordinary mode of punishment, which it had heretofore been supposed was necessary to the preservation of the discipline of the navy. The result of this consideration has been the passage of a law for the entire abolition of corporal punishment on board of our ships, both public and private. This punishment, which for a long time has been practised in the navy and commercial marine, not only without question as to its efficacy in maintaining the proper observance of duty on ship-board, but which, indeed, had become so incorporated in the sober conviction of both officers and men, as an indispensable necessity of the service, that it had grown to be the most unquestioned usage and generally-received incident of naval discipline, many judicious persons believed might be dispensed with, not only most acceptably to the feelings of the nation, but also without disadvantage to the service. The adoption of this opinion by Congress, in the passage of the act of September, 1850, which forbade the accustomed penalty without providing a substitute for it, has afforded the navy the opportunity to make the experiment. I very sincerely regret to say, that the records of this department, as well as the almost entire concurrence of facts and opinions brought to my notice from authentic sources, and vouched by intelligent and experienced observers, all tend to indicate a most unsatisfactory result. The omission of Congress to provide for the punishment of what may be called minor offences against discipline and good order on shipboard, may perhaps account, in part, for the failure; but the fact of the most serious detriment to the efficiency of our service is so unhappily forced upon my attention, as the effect of the recent change, that it becomes the gravest of my duties at this time to lay the subject once more before Congress, and to ask its

attention to the consideration of such a corrective to the present condition of the service as I am confident it must find to be indispensable to the proper government of the navy.

We have evidence furnished to this department, in the history of almost every cruise, of acts of insubordination that not only impair the usefulness of our ships, but which tend, also, to the gradual development of habits among the seamen that threaten to lead to extensive and uncontrollable mutinies. The multiplication of courts-martial, and all the consequences of an increase of disorder and crime, are among the least of the apparent and growing evils of the new system. The demoralization of both men and officers is a yet more observable consequence. The absence or prohibition of the usual punishments known to seamen, has led to the invention of new penalties of the most revolting kind, in the application of which, full scope has been given, and the strongest provocations administered to that exhibition of temper and passion, which, however natural it may be to men of hasty and excitable natures, is seldom indulged without leading to cruelties that must disgrace those who practise them, and, what is more to be feared, raise a sentiment in the public mind hostile to the navy itself. The seaman, believing himself exempt from the speedy penalty of disobedience or neglect of duty, and looking with indifference to the remote and uncertain proceeding of a court-martial upon his delinquency, grows habitually contumacious to his superiors, and infuses the same sentiment into his comrades; and in the very fact of the diffusion of this spirit of insubordination, finds ground to hope for immunity from punishment, naturally enough believing that what has grown to be common and frequent, will also come to be more lightly considered when he is summoned to a trial at the end of his cruise. It may excite some surprise in the statement of what I learn to be true, that the most frequent complaints against the abolition of corporal punishment are made, in great part, by the seamen themselves. The difficulties arising out of its abrogation, and the absence of any substitute for it, now constitute the most prominent obstacles to the ready supply of our squadrons with seamen. This department is familiar with complaints from the recruiting stations, of the difficulty of enlisting the better class of seamen. Of that large number of men who have heretofore constituted the pride of our navy, by their good seamanship and highly respectable personal deportment—composing, I rejoice to say, the great body of the mariners who have sustained the honor and glory of our flag in its most perilous as well as in its most useful career—of these men, it is a fact which invites the deepest concern of Congress, we are daily deprived, by their refusal to enter again into the service, until, as they ask, they shall have some assurance that a better system of discipline may be restored. They reasonably complain that, whilst the worst portions of the crew are placed under arrest, and are exempt, in consequence, from the severe duties of the deck, they find their toil increased by the constantly recurring exigencies which compel them, for weeks and months during a cruise, to perform the extra work which the reduction of the force of the ship inevitably throws upon them. So oppressively is this evil felt, that I have reason to believe, if the best seamen, who have heretofore been accustomed to man our ships, could find an occasion to express

their wishes to Congress, a majority of the whole number would be seen to prefer a restoration of that form of punishment which has been forbidden, rather than be subject to the severities imposed upon them by the present condition of disorder in the naval discipline.

Looking at this state of things in the navy, I think the occasion propitious to the adoption of a new system for the organization and government of the whole material constituting the crews of our ships; and I take advantage of the present time to submit to your consideration the outline of a plan, which I trust will engage your attention, and receive the approbation of Congress.

The supply of our navy with seamen has heretofore been obtained by a system of enlistment, modelled, in its principal elements, upon the plan adopted in Great Britain, from which nation we have derived, by old habit and national descent, the general features of our marine. Like England, we have looked to our commercial navigation for the re-inforcement of the men of the navy. We enlist the mercantile seamen for the national cruise, discharging and paying them off when it is finished, and returning them to the merchant service. The navy, in general, has been sufficiently attractive to the sailor to be able to secure his service when needed; and this mode of enlistment being an easy and accessible resource, but little consideration has heretofore been bestowed upon its effect, either on the navy itself or upon the seamen. To the navy it has given a large and meritorious class of mariners—not unmixed, however, with many of a different character; and from that mixture itself, requiring a prompt and effective system of punishment adapted to secure a ready discharge of duty in every emergency. The effect of the system upon the men of the navy has been overlooked; or if regarded at all, it has not attracted the attention of the public authorities. The sailor is, in general, upon shore a helpless being. Between himself and all around him there is a palpable incongruity. He has come off a long cruise, and has earned some three or four hundred dollars. He has no home—often no friends but his comrades. He knows no thrift—no saving economy; has no adviser. His only out-look is for some pastime, and his idea of that is confined to sensual enjoyment. Every one is familiar with his history in his brief sojourn on shore. He is a victim to that class of persons who pander to his appetites, and who plunder him of his earnings. Necessity and inclination very soon drive him back to the sea, where he finds his natural home, and the only friends who can understand his character and sympathize with it. It is very apparent that a man so organized and circumstanced stands very much in need of better culture than this course of life affords. A discreet attention to his condition by the government, with a few salutary regulations that may teach him more thrift, and furnish him guidance and encouragement, will make him more useful as a citizen, or, at least, more self-dependent and respectable in his individual character, and render him, at the same time, certainly not less useful in his profession.

I propose, for the consideration of Congress, a plan for the reorganization of this portion of the navy; which, if matured by such experience as the future practise of it may afford, will, I am confident, enhance the respectability and value of our seamen, and secure to the

country a most efficient corps of men permanently devoted to the public service.

I think it cannot be doubted that the successful application of the navy to the purposes for which it is designed would be better assured by the services of a well-disciplined and carefully-maintained body of seamen, permanently attached to the public naval establishment and incorporated with it, than it ever has been, or is ever likely to be, by the fluctuating and variable resource of frequent enlistment and discharge. The constant changes which this corps undergoes is unfavorable to the growth of that sentiment, so essential to the service, which makes a sailor proud of his flag. It is still more unfavorable to the acquirement of that peculiar adaptation of habit and training to the duties belonging to the employment of a man-of-war, which all officers regard as the test and indispensable element of an efficient seaman in the navy. In a large navy like that of England, where all the seamen of the mercantile marine, in a certain sense, belong to the government, the difference between the man-of-war's-man and the seaman of civil employment is not so apparent or significant as it is in our service, in which the seamen bear so small a proportion to the whole body of mariners of the nation. Every English sailor has generally more or less service in the navy, and passes so frequently from the private to the public employment as to give him, to a great degree, an actual incorporation in the national marine: the one service is so connected with the other, that the seamen of both assimilate more in their training and education than the correspondent classes in this country. Our navy, for obvious reasons connected with these considerations, is much more dependent upon a body of men nurtured by the government and attached to the service, than that of England. It is, therefore, a fundamental purpose in the plan which I submit to Congress, to provide for the ultimate establishment of a permanent and recognised body of seamen, connected with the navy by the strongest and most durable bonds of attachment and interest.

Whilst providing for the gradual and eventual organization of such a body, my attention has been directed also to the procurement of men of the highest character in personal and professional quality, in whose good deportment and faithful service will be found the most satisfactory reasons for protecting by legal enactment their whole class against the form of punishment which has of late so much excited the sensibility of the nation. The successful accomplishment of such an object, I trust will commend the plan to the regard of all who desire to preserve that exemption, and who have hoped to find it in practice not incompatible with the highest efficiency of service on shipboard.

The general outline of the plan may be exhibited in the following regulations:

With a view to the commencement of this system, and to organize a body of efficient seamen of the most meritorious class, I propose that every commanding officer of a squadron, or of a single ship when not with a squadron, shall, on his return from a regular cruise, report to the Navy Department, in the muster-roll of the men under his command, a statement of the good or bad general deportment of each man, with a special designation of those whose conduct has merited that degree of approbation which shall entitle them to be admitted into the navy.

That this report be submitted by the department to the President, who shall thereupon issue a general order, to admit into the navy the seamen who have been distinguished in the report for good conduct. And the President shall transmit, with this order, to the commanding officer of the squadron or ship, a certificate to each seaman, written on parchment and stamped with the signature of the President himself, expressing his approbation of his conduct, and his permission to admit the subject of it into the navy, which certificates shall be delivered by the commanding officer of the squadron or ship to the men entitled to them, before they are discharged from the ship. This delivery to be made in the presence of the crews, and with suitable formality, to attract public notice.

That each seaman to whom this certificate shall be awarded, shall, if he accept it, register his name in a book, to be provided for that purpose, and kept on board of the ship, by which registry he shall become a registered seaman of the navy of the United States, and be entitled to all the privileges, and be bound to all the obligations, of that character. This registry-book shall be transmitted to the Navy Department, where it shall be preserved, and the entries made in it copied into a general registry, alphabetically arranged, and kept in the department.

The obligations incurred by every seaman who signs the register shall be those of faithful service and due performance of all seaman-like duty under the flag of the United States, good moral deportment and prompt obedience to all orders that may be issued by his lawful superiors, so long as he shall continue to be a member of the navy.

The privileges attached to this registry shall be—

1. For every five years of actual duty on board a public vessel, an increase of one dollar a month over and above the established rates of ordinary pay: that is to say, for the first five years of such service, one dollar per month; for a second term of five years of such service, an additional dollar per month; for a third term of five years, another dollar; and for a fourth term of five years, making a total of twenty years' service, another dollar: amounting in all for such twenty years' service to four dollars a month, after which no further increase to be made. This additional monthly pay, so earned by service, to be paid to each man so long as he may continue to be a registered seaman of the navy; and after twenty years of service, to be paid, whether he continues a registered seaman or not.

The right to this additional pay to be liable to forfeiture at any time within the twenty years' actual service, by the resignation of any seaman on the registry, or by his being struck off the list of registered seamen, which may be done at any time, and shall only be done by the order of the Secretary of the Navy, or by the sentence of a naval court-martial upon charges of misconduct; in either of which events, resignation or discharge by sentence of the Secretary of the Navy, or of a court-martial, he shall cease to belong to the navy, and shall lose all the privileges of such a character.

2. Every registered seaman to be entitled to resign his post in the navy at any time after three years' service, if not engaged on a cruise. When engaged on a cruise and absent from the ports of the United

States, he shall not resign without the consent of the commanding officer of his ship. A record of all resignations to be duly kept and reported to the department.

A registered seaman of more than twenty years' service, continuing in the navy, only to forfeit his additional pay when such forfeiture shall be adjudged by a court-martial, as a punishment for grossly immoral or insubordinate conduct. By such sentence, also, for such offences, his additional pay may be suspended by a court, for such time as they may adjudge.

3. No registered seaman of the navy to be subject to any corporal or other punishment of a degrading character, and to such only as may be ordered by a court-martial, on charges duly preferred and tried. This prohibition not to prevent the punishment, without a court-martial, of such minor delinquencies in conduct and discipline as may be corrected by withholding the usual indulgences of the service, stopping portions of the ration or increasing ordinary duty.

4. Every registered seaman to be entitled, after any term of three years' sea-service, to a furlough of such reasonable length as may enable him to make one or more voyages in the merchant marine, not extending, without special permission, to more than six months. Such furlough to be granted by the commanding officer of the squadron, or the commandant of the navy yard nearest to the port at which his cruise may terminate; and only to be granted, in any case, with an express reservation and notice, that the seaman to whom it is given shall report for duty in the navy when any public emergency shall render it necessary so to order him; the order for his return to duty to be issued by the Navy Department, or by such officer as may be authorized by the department to do so. A failure to report in accordance with this provision, to render him liable to be struck off the registry by the Secretary of the Navy. Every registered seaman reporting for duty within three months of his last cruise, and being thereupon ordered to duty, to be entitled to pay from the date of termination of his last cruise.

All furloughs to be regularly reported and noted at the Navy Department.

5. Every registered seaman to be entitled to wear on his dress some appropriate badge by which he may be distinguished and known in the navy, which badge will be designated and provided by the Navy Department.

6. The petty officers of each ship to be selected, as far as convenient, from the class of registered seamen, and the appointment always to be regarded as dependent upon the merit and good character of the person selected; to be held, on good behavior, during the term of a cruise.

7. A record to be kept, under the direction of every commanding officer of a squadron or ship, of the actual amount of sea-service performed by each registered seaman while under his command; this record to be returned to the department at the end of every cruise, and to be transferred to the general registry of seamen. Upon the evidence of this general registry, the additional pay to be granted.

8. Every seaman to be admonished to give his true name, age, and place of birth, upon signing the registry; and to be required to engage

not to ship in merchant or other vessels, while on furlough, by any other name. His being convicted of violating this engagement, to render him liable to be struck from the list of registered seamen, upon the order of the Secretary of the Navy.

9. In every case of dismissal from the service as a registered seaman, the party so dismissed to receive whatever moneys may be due to him, unless the same shall have been forfeited by the sentence of a court-martial, imposed as a punishment for an offence committed by him. A seaman dismissed from the registry not to be entitled to be restored, but upon the permission of the head of the Navy Department, granted in consideration of the meritorious character of the applicant.

10. Seamen, ordinary seamen, and landsmen in the service, not belonging to the registry, to be subject to such discipline, duty, and penalties as Congress may provide in a code of regulations adapted to their government, under such restrictions or modifications as the department may think proper to make.

11. A printed book or circular to be made by the department, containing all the regulations and conditions relating to the establishment of registered seamen, giving a full description of the obligations to be contracted by them, and of the privileges to which they may be entitled. Copies of this book or circular to be furnished to every squadron or single vessel in commission; of which copies one shall be given to every seaman, in order that he may be fully informed of the nature of the engagements to be incurred by him on entering the service of the United States. These regulations to be read and explained to the several crews, and, as far as may be necessary, to every seaman before he signs the registry.

12. The department to be authorized to make, alter, and modify all rules and regulations, so far as it may be found expedient for the due establishment and support of this purpose of creating a corps of registered seamen, in accordance with the general objects intended to be promoted in the above plan, and for the supplying of any defect which experience may show to exist in it.

The term seamen, as used throughout this plan, is to be understood to embrace every class of mariners on board a public vessel, whether denominated seamen, ordinary seamen, or landsmen.

13. A limited number of boys to be received into the navy, upon obligations contracted, according to law, to serve until they arrive at the age of twenty-one years. Their number, the quota to be allowed to each vessel, and all needful and proper rules for their government and duties, to be regulated by the orders of the Navy Department.

This system of providing for a more effective marine, I respectfully submit to your consideration. There already exists power in the Executive to adopt nearly the whole of its details. It may be proper, however, to submit it to the approval of Congress, with a view to obtain for it a legislative recognition, and especially to procure such enactments as may be necessary to give the sanction of law to the establishment of the registry which constitutes the groundwork of the plan.

INCREASE OF THE NAVY.

In the activity and diversity of enterprise which the busy spirit of this time has exacted from the navy, it has now become manifest that the increase of the naval establishment of the country is not only recommended by the most urgent public considerations, but is also forced upon the attention of Congress as an absolute necessity. The honor as well as the successful adventure of the nation, and I might even say the indispensable obligation of national defence and the constantly recurring need for the exhibition of the national power, all combine to present this question to Congress as one of the first magnitude. During the past year this department has been impelled, by a due regard for the great public interests committed to its charge, to put in requisition nearly the whole disposable force of the navy. The details of this report will show that constant and various employment has been demanded of officers, ships, and crews. I trust that Congress will see in these requisitions how much the demands of necessary service engross the means provided to accomplish it, and will deduce from this fact an argument in favor of enlarging the naval resources for still larger naval operations.

Whilst other great maritime powers are strengthening and extending their capabilities for aggression and defence, and are bestowing a sedulous labor upon the creation of steam navies of singular efficiency, they have imposed upon us a new obligation, if not to track their progress with equal steps in an effort to bring ourselves abreast with them in their advance, at least to maintain that position of relative strength which it has been our policy heretofore to assume.

The actual exigencies of our own service, so conspicuously multiplied by the rapid extension of our domain, and the settlement of new marts of trade, and the establishment of new lines of commerce on the Pacific, cannot but present to every citizen of the United States an altogether irresistible argument to persuade the nation to a much larger provision of ships and men than we have heretofore kept in commission. The Pacific, during the next ten years, is likely to become the theatre of the most interesting events of our time. A nation is growing up upon its shores which will both attract and supply an amount of commercial enterprise, in the rapid growth and activity of which the world has yet had no parallel.

The discovery of America did not give such an impulse to this spirit as we now witness in the energy and occupations of these recent settlements.

At this moment we are without a public steamship in that ocean. Our various commerce, scattered along the whole coast from Oregon to Chili, and our citizens who are found in every port throughout that extended line, are left to the protection of but two frigates and two sloops-of-war, composing a squadron whose utmost activity can but half perform the duty assigned to it. Our new relations with Asia and the intermediate islands, which are constantly multiplying the resources of trade, and with them the hazards of collision, and the consequent increase of numbers, drawn from the population of every country, to the competition of this theatre, all indicate the commencement of an era of great

political significance, which will henceforth exact from the government more than its accustomed vigilance in noting the progress of events, and more than its usual energy in the duty of guarding our citizens who may be connected with them. It is, therefore, more necessary than ever that we should have a respectable force always accessible to our countrymen in this field of action, and capable of giving them protection against the perils of war, and popular outbreak, and revolutionary commotion, which in future, even more than in the past, may be expected to characterize many of the States and communities to which their business invites them. A steamer of a large class, adapted to the general duties of a cruise, and a smaller one, to be kept at hand at San Francisco, for use in California and Oregon, I regard as almost indispensable additions to the squadron assigned to that service.

Looking to the Atlantic, we find motives equally strong for the increase of our naval armaments, and particularly for the enlargement of the number of our steamships.

Whilst I am fully aware that the power of the United States happily consists more in their ability to provide for the contingencies of invasion than in the actual exhibition of an equipped force, and that we may dispense with much that is deemed requisite in the relations of European powers, still we cannot fail to recognise the fact that the respect due to the interests of our people requires the habitual and familiar presence of our flag in every region of commerce, sustained by such an amount of force, and of such a quality, as may give some significant token of the resources we command at home. A salutary conviction on this point is, to a great extent, inspired by the excellence of our armaments when brought into comparison with those of other nations. We cannot afford to lose or impair our reputation for producing the best ships and the best disciplined crews that navigate the ocean, however we may afford to exhibit them in smaller numbers.

The principal maritime nations are now diligently intent upon the effort to build up powerful steam navies. Most of them are already far ahead of us in this species of force; and it is very obvious, from the urgency with which the new marine of Europe is pressed to assume this character, that there is a deep and earnest conviction of an impending necessity in which the improved force will be mainly relied on as the efficient element of war. Are we so far removed from the occasion or the scene of apprehended conflict as to warrant any indifference on our part to the possible issue of a collision? Are our affairs so little exposed abroad, or concentrated at home, as to exempt us from all necessity to consider the effects which may follow the recent changes in the naval organization of Europe?

These considerations, and others which they suggest, induce me to ask the attention of Congress to the recommendations of the Bureau of Construction accompanying this report, and to invite them, with the most earnest solicitude, to provide for the building of three first-class screw-propeller frigates, and the same number of propeller sloops-of-war. To these might be added with advantage a few smaller steamers adapted to quick despatch and coast navigation.

Our navy yards are abundantly supplied with large quantities of the best timber in the best condition, which could not be better appropriated

than to this object. There are two frigates—the Santee and the Sabine—which have been housed on the stocks in Portsmouth and New York for the last ten years. These might be launched and fitted for service, and their places might be occupied, as well as the sheds now vacant in other yards, by the new steamships proposed to be built.

In connexion with this subject, I would call the attention of Congress to the necessity of authorizing the establishment of one or more factories for the construction of all the machinery necessary to the complete equipment of the largest class of steamers. The great importance of such establishments to the government is felt by this department, in the daily conviction, that only by the command of such a resource may the navy be promptly and surely supplied with the best machinery for the public vessels. The inspection and control of the work whilst it is in progress, the assurance of the best material, and the punctual compliance with the demands of the service, are advantages that may only be efficiently secured by having the workshop under the command of the government. The experience of the past will also fully demonstrate that this mode of supplying the machinery of our public vessels must be, in its general result, more economical than any other, and will certainly secure much the most reliable kind of work. The plans would be more uniform, failure of machinery less frequent, and the improvement of the models of construction more certain.

The mail contract law of 1847 contains a provision which authorizes the government to appropriate any of the vessels built under it to the naval service. I would recommend that one of these, of the first class, be selected and equipped with the proper armament. I make this suggestion from a persuasion that it is a matter of importance to the government practically to determine, by experiment, a question upon which much doubt is entertained, and which it is necessary to solve—whether these steamers are really adequate to the demands of the naval service, and may be usefully converted into ships-of-war. The determination of this question may settle a point of great moment, touching the reliance to be placed upon these ships in any sudden emergency—a point much more safely to be settled in a time of peace than in moments of excitement and pressure, when no other resource may be at hand to meet the consequences of a failure.

It is further necessary to make provision for an increase of seamen. The present limit of seven thousand five hundred men is insufficient even for the necessities of the service in its existing condition. If the full complement of men appropriated by the regulations of the navy were now on board of the vessels in commission, more than the whole number allowed would be required. I think it, therefore, indispensable to the proper efficiency of the service that an addition of not less than fifteen hundred be authorized to be made to the establishment, and that a correspondent addition be made to the yearly estimates of naval pay. It is equally necessary that provision be made for an increase of wages, either in monthly pay or in the shape of a bounty, to be given after enlistment. The amount of this increase should be regulated by some reference to the wages given in the merchant service, which are now so much higher than the naval pay as to increase the difficulty

to which I have heretofore alluded, in the procurement of the best men.

A reference to the report of the Bureau of Medicine will inform Congress of the condition of the medical service of the navy, and the pressing necessity that exists for an increase of officers in that department. Great relief would be afforded by an authority to appoint a number not exceeding twenty assistant surgeons, and to make a correspondent promotion of an equal number, or of so many as by proper length of service may be qualified for it, into the upper grades.

I beg leave also to call the attention of Congress to the report of the commanding officer of the marine corps, which will show how inadequate is the present limitation of that corps to the ordinary demands of the service. The opinion of General Henderson upon this point, of itself entitled to great weight, is re-inforced by that of many of the most experienced officers of the navy, as will be seen in the correspondence accompanying the report, to which I invite a careful attention. In conformity with these opinions, I respectfully recommend to Congress the passage of a law to authorize the enlargement of the corps by the addition of eighty sergeants, eighty corporals, thirty drummers and fifers, and one thousand privates, and that the four captains, four first and four second lieutenants, conditionally allowed to the service by the proviso to the naval appropriation bill of March 3, 1849, be retained permanently in the corps.

The same necessity which has led to this representation of the embarrassments of the service, in those branches to which I have just alluded, compels me to ask for some addition to the corps of pursers. This important division of the naval organization is found to stand in need of more aid than the present allowance affords. The corps scarcely furnishes that proper rotation in service which the peculiar duties of the purser demands. It is necessary, after every cruise, to allow this officer a sufficient time on shore to settle his accounts—a period which will not always place him at the disposal of the department for an early return to sea, if it were even proper to compel these officers to a repetition of duty without some time for such refreshment on shore, as every officer requires.

If Congress should think proper, in consideration of this condition of the corps, to sanction an increase of its members, I would earnestly recommend the establishment of a grade of assistant pursers, to which only the new appointments should be made; that these assistants should undergo an examination as to their physical and mental abilities, previous to their appointment; that the age of admission should be regulated by the Navy Department, and that no applicant should be nominated for the corps without a satisfactory conformity to the preliminary condition. Promotion and pay should be regulated by law, and no promotion should be made but upon full evidence of the capability of the individual to comply with all the demands of service—this evidence to be obtained by such course of examination as the department may prescribe. With such conditions, I would recommend that Congress should at present authorize the appointment of twenty assistant pursers to be attached to the corps.

As a subject of great interest to the efficiency of the navy, I beg

leave to renew the recommendations heretofore made by this department for the gradual reduction of the number of officers who are incapable of useful service, by the adoption of some suitable plan for retiring all of this character from the sphere of ordinary duty. A well-organized naval system requires that the officers charged with its administration should, as far as possible, be maintained in a condition for whatever employment may be demanded of them, and should always exhibit the utmost alacrity in their obedience to orders. There is no better test of the spirit of the corps, nor no more commendable sign of a good officer, than his readiness to accept every call of his profession. This high character can only be maintained in the navy by exempting from command all who obstruct the path of duty. Those whose disability has been the result of long and faithful toil in the national service should be provided with an honorable retreat, in which old age and infirmity may find repose. They who, without service to plead for their incapacity, only stand in the way of more willing and more capable men, should be consigned to a retirement on smaller pay, by the operation of a law which should render their retirement compulsory.

It may be worth the consideration of Congress to make permanent provision for these two classes of officers. This might be advantageously accomplished, perhaps, by a law which should confer upon the first class a rate of retired pay, graduated from half-pay up to that allowed to leave of absence, according to the amount of sea-service they may have performed, and adding to this an honorary promotion of one degree in rank; and which should dispose of the second class by retiring them on half of leave-of-absence pay.

The details necessary to such a system may be easily regulated whenever Congress shall find occasion to take the subject into their deliberations.

I repeat, also, my concurrence in the views presented by my predecessor in his report of November, 1850, on the propriety of "recognising by law the office of commodore, and the creation of at least two officers of the rank of rear admiral." I can add nothing to the satisfactory arguments with which that recommendation is enforced, and therefore content myself with a reference to the report, and an earnest invocation to Congress to give it a favorable consideration.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The reports from the chiefs of the several bureaus of this department will make Congress acquainted with the details of the naval service in each branch of its administration. I respectfully ask their attention to the many valuable suggestions these reports contain for the better government of the navy. Among these, I select for a more special notice the recommendations of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, touching the mode of making contracts, in respect to which it is proposed that some discretion should be lodged in the bureau, to authorize its rejection of a contract when offered by a bidder who has on any previous occasion failed to comply with his engagement.

I particularly commend to the notice of Congress the representations of the Bureau of Yards and Docks in reference to the several navy yards

under its care. The yard at New York requires early consideration. A large portion of the land belonging to it has not yet been placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States, and is consequently subjected to onerous assessments for improvements by the city of Brooklyn, and exposed to the very inconvenient demands of that city in the opening of streets leading to the channel of the Wallabout, which, if opened, would seriously affect the security of the yard, and greatly incommode its operations. So important is it to the government that this difficulty should be removed, that I think it would even be advisable to transfer the works of this yard to some other convenient location, unless the jurisdiction over the land be fully conceded to the United States. Efforts have been made, and are still making, to obtain this cession from the legislature, and I trust will now be successful. If they should not, there is reason to believe a better site may be obtained for the yard, free from the present inconveniences, and that the expense of the new establishment might be defrayed by the sale of the old.

The floating dry dock in California, contracted for in obedience to the several acts of Congress heretofore passed, has been completed and delivered at San Francisco. No appropriation was made for the basin and railway, without which the dock cannot be safely or usefully employed. I submit it to the decision of Congress, whether these structures should not be made without delay.

The Naval Asylum at Philadelphia is well conducted, and is found a valuable refuge to the infirm and disabled seamen who have been admitted into it. I concur in the opinion expressed by the head of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, that its position is not the best adapted to its effective usefulness in the navy; and, as the property is believed to be very valuable, it may be worthy of consideration whether it would not be good policy to dispose of it, and re-establish this institution either at Annapolis or Norfolk, where its inmates would be removed from the temptations to disorder which the proximity to a large city throws in their way.

The Naval Observatory continues to pursue its appropriate labors with its usual good results, and is found to contribute the most important facilities to the improvement of navigation. I cannot better commend it to the regard of Congress than by a reference to the letter of Lieutenant Maury which accompanies this report.

The first volume of the Nautical Almanac, in charge of Lieutenant Davis, is now in press, and will be given to the public. His report will explain the progress and condition of his work.

Lieutenant Gilliss, who for more than three years past has been employed, in pursuance of the directions of Congress, in conducting in Chili the observations recommended to be made by the American Philosophical Society and the Academy of Arts and Sciences, has recently returned to the United States, bringing with him a rich contribution to science, in a series of observations amounting to nearly forty thousand, and embracing a most extensive catalogue of stars. He deserves great praise for his assiduity in this labor, which, in conjunction with similar observations in other quarters of the globe, will supply important aid towards the determination of the solar parallax, a problem of great interest to navigation and science. Upon the conclusion of

his work at Santiago, he was enabled to make a judicious sale of his observatory and its apparatus to the Chilian government, which has manifested a most friendly interest in his service and afforded him much useful assistance.

His full report will be made to this department, and, as soon as received, will be transmitted to Congress.

Professor Espy, during the past year, has been, as in the years before it, busy in the pursuit of his meteorological observations and his theory of storms, prosecuting his researches without abatement of zeal or assiduity. He promises soon to give the world another volume of facts and deductions, by which he hopes to bring the laws of the wind and the tempest into the category of an "exact science." His letter, appended to this report, will explain his progress and commend his industry to the friendly recognition of Congress.

By an enactment of the naval appropriation bill of August 31, 1852, this department was authorized and directed "to select a site for a navy yard and naval depôt in the bay of San Francisco, in California, or neighboring waters."

The board of officers who were despatched to make the necessary examinations for the selection of this site have performed the task intrusted to them, and have returned to this city. They have not yet entirely completed their report. It will be put in the possession of this department in a few days, when I shall make it the subject of a special communication to Congress.

I renew the recommendations heretofore made, and now again referred to in the report of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, in favor of such discretionary change in the navy ration as recent scientific research has proved to be useful, through the process by which vegetables may be preserved for consumption at sea. And I also adopt, and respectfully beg leave to urge upon the attention of the legislature, the suggestions of the head of that bureau in reference to a prescribed limit on the commutation for stopped rations in money.

Congress having, at its last session, made a retrospective provision for an increase of pay to the officers, petty officers, seamen, and marines of the navy, and to the officers and men of the revenue service who served in the Pacific ocean, on the coast of California and Mexico, since the 28th of September, 1850, it would seem to be but an equitable act, and strictly in accordance with the liberal design of this provision, to extend its operation so far back, in point of time, as to embrace the case of those who served on that coast from the origin of the war. Indeed, every consideration which could recommend the policy of the appropriation that was made, will be found to apply with increased cogency to those to whom I have alluded. Their service was more severe, their hazards greater, and the expenses to which they were subject in that quarter when the country was more unprovided than in the subsequent period, were still more onerous. An appropriation in their behalf, of a similar character to that which was made in favor of their successors, would be an acceptable and just tribute to a corps which has proved itself worthy of the high appreciation of the government.

The estimates for the support of the navy and the marine corps for

the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, 1854, and the statement of appropriations required for all objects within the control of this department, present an aggregate of.....	\$11,501,593 67
Deduct for special objects.....	4,031,921 98
Leaves for the support of the navy and marine corps.....	<u>7,469,671 69</u>

It is proper to remark that the large increase in some of the estimates made for the coming year, over the actual amounts appropriated for the service of the last two or three years, which it will be found are required for the improvements of yards and docks, construction, equipment and repair of vessels, the expenses of ordnance and the encouragement and support of the mail service, has become necessary by the reduction which Congress has hitherto thought proper to make from the estimates submitted for the expenditures which were thought essential to the public service in most of these branches of the naval administration. The appropriations now asked for, may, therefore, be regarded as the necessary consequence of such a subtraction from what was deemed but an adequate annual provision for the completion of works of indispensable use; and being viewed in the light of arrears due to the public wants, they furnish no index of what may be the future necessities of the department, if provided for as they arise.

The estimate for the mail service, also, being one with which the naval establishment has no proper connexion, should not be brought into the account of the expenditures of the navy.

The total amount drawn from the treasury during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1852, as shown by the statement of appropriations for the naval service, prepared by the Second Comptroller of the Treasury, is	\$9,726,251 42
Deduct repayments.....	813,132 70
Which shows the sum of.....	<u>8,913,118 72</u>
as the total expenditure on all objects under the control of the Navy Department; but of which amount there was expended for special objects the sum of.....	2,656,066 84
Leaving as the true expenditure for the support of the navy and marine corps, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1852.....	<u>6,257,051 88</u>

The unexpended balances of appropriations for the naval service, marine corps, and special objects under the control of the Navy Department, was, on the 30th of June, 1852, \$3,119,644 50; all of which will be required to meet the outstanding obligations due from the appropriations, to complete the objects as provided for by the appropriations for that year, in addition to the estimates for the fiscal years ending 30th June, 1853 and 1854.

Accompanying the reports and documents will be found the abstract or compendium of the reports of the chiefs of the bureaus, required by the resolution of the Senate of the 26th August, 1852.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN P. KENNEDY.

To the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.