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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

AND SERVICES

OF

COMMODORE

CHARLES STEWART,

OF THE

NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.

PHILADELPHIA.
PRINTED BY J. HARDING.

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INTRODUCTION.

PENNSYLVANIA may justly claim the honor of having contributed as largely to the proud list of American philosophers, statesmen and heroes, as any other State in the Union; and yet, in consequence of the peculiarly unostentatious and unpretending character of her people, she has hitherto forborne to assume the rank, or lay claim to the honor, to which the merits and services of her sons justly entitle her. Reposing on the justice of this claim, and upon the concession that she is the "keystone" of the federal arch, and that her honest, industrious and patriotic yeomanry are unrivalled in all the attributes that render a State great, prosperous and happy, she has never singled out from the constellation of her sons, for especial commendations, the "bright and shining" stars with which that constellation is adorned.

What a galaxy of glory is concentrated in the names of Franklin,* Rittenhouse, Rush, Fulton, Morris, M^r.Kean, Wayne, Brown, Decatur, James Biddle, and Stewart! How proudly do we point to this array of illustrious citizens! The world will perceive in this list the genius who snatched the lightning from the skies; the man who went deep into the mysteries of creation, and

"Looked through nature up to nature's God;"

and he who, with a skill which has rendered him immortal, encountered death at the sick man's bed, and stayed his uplifted arm: and he who, by a certain modification of machinery, the result of his own all-conquering genius, has filled the waters with steamboats, and created a new agent in the application of steam power; he who rescued the country from impending bankruptcy, in the period of the Revolution; and he who rivalled the Cokes and Mansfields of England, and brought order, harmony and effect out of the confusion of the law; and he who was the hero of Stony Point, the hero of Fort Erie, and the conqueror of the Macedonian—the conqueror of the Penguin, and the conqueror of the Cyane and Levant, were all PENNSYLVANIANS. We are well aware that the fame of these men belongs to the State, and that the

* Though born in Boston, Pennsylvania was the theatre of his glory.

humblest of its citizens inherits a portion of their renown. The policy of Pennsylvania has been to appeal, not to her great men, but to her free institutions—her peaceful and prosperous people—to her stupendous public improvements, and her agricultural, and almost boundless mineral wealth, for the evidences of her lofty and merited rank and power in the Union. For herself, *as a State*, she has claimed much, and it has all been cheerfully accorded—yet she has been slow in forcing the claims of her distinguished sons, forgetting the beautiful example of the *Roman mother, who, when asked for her jewels, proudly pointed to her children.*

The writer of this sketch has deemed these observations due, not only to Pennsylvania, but to himself, and to the subject of this biography. In presenting to the public a brief sketch of the life of *Commodore Charles Stewart*, it is but simple justice to *him* to trace to the unobtrusive character of his native State, that apparent indifference to his history which has suffered a long life of faithful services, amidst the toils and perils of the sea, and of battles, to remain so long unwritten. We cannot doubt that the following hasty notices of the life of this distinguished *son of Pennsylvania*, which are designed to supply this deficiency, will be an acceptable offering to our fellow citizens, not of Pennsylvania only, but of the Union. The facts detailed belong to *history*, and the only objects aimed at, in their publication, is to disseminate truth, and perform an act of justice to a meritorious and successful vindicator of the rights of our common country, and a distinguished contributor to her renown—For,

“Thro’ fire and smoke, and wind and wave,
On every sea Britannia call’d her own,”

he has for forty years, gallantly and triumphantly borne the flag of his country.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, &c.

THE position of Commodore CHARLES STEWART has been, for many years, one of great distinction. His name and services are associated with many leading events in which the glory of his country, and his own fame, are blended. To find materials for a brief memoir of this distinguished citizen, we have had recourse to biographical sketches of his compatriots; to official documents, and to history. It is not our purpose to enter into a minute biographical detail of Commodore Stewart's eventful life, but to give to his fellow-citizens a summary of his public services.

Charles Stewart was born in the city of Philadelphia, on the twenty-eighth of July, 1778, the month after the British army evacuated the city. His parents were natives of Ireland. It was his misfortune to lose his father before he had attained his second year. He was the youngest of eight children. On the death of his father, his mother was left, in the midst of the Revolution, with four children to provide for, and with limited means for their support and education. Being a woman of talents and great energy, she was not found wanting in this arduous task.

At the age of thirteen, Charles sought and found employment in the merchant service, in which he gradually rose, through the several grades, from the situation of cabin boy, to the command of an Indiaman; and here, in the full tide of successful mercantile enterprise, he relinquished all that he had toiled for, and offered himself to the service of his country. On the ninth of March, 1798, he was commissioned Lieutenant in the Navy of the United States, and received orders to join the frigate *United States*, then in command of Commodore John Barry. He continued in this ship until July, 1800. Part of this time the frigate was employed in the West Indies, to look after and restrain the French privateers, and to protect our commerce against their depredations, in which service she was eminently successful. In the latter part of the year the frigate was engaged in transporting the commissioners for treating with France to that country, and was thus deprived of the opportunity which, under other circumstances, might have led to other and higher honors.

On the sixteenth of July, 1800, Lieutenant Stewart was appointed to the command of the U. S. schooner *Experiment*, of twelve guns, in which he sailed on a cruise to the West Indies, having under his command those distinguished officers, Porter, Caldwell, and Tripp. Arriv-

ing on the station assigned him, he fell in with, on the night of September the first, the French armed schooner *Deux Amis*, (Two Friends,) of eight guns, and brought her to action, which terminated in ten minutes: the *Deux Amis* having struck her colors, she was sent to the United States for condemnation. Being short of water, he proceeded to Prince Rupert's Bay, in the Island of Dominica, and while there, watering his vessel, his Britannic Majesty's ship ———, Captain Nash, accompanied by his Majesty's ship *Siam*, Captain Matson, arrived, and anchored; soon after which, Lieutenant Stewart received a letter from a citizen of the United States, named Amos Seeley, stating that he had been impressed on board the British ship *Siam*, and claiming an interference for his release. Although Lieutenant Stewart's power was inadequate to enforce his demand for the surrender of Seeley, the two ships mounting twenty guns each, his patriotic heart could not withstand the appeal of his countryman, and, prompted by that chivalry and patriotism which were destined to blaze out in after life so gloriously, he resolved on opening a correspondence with the British Captain for the release of Seeley. A polite note was addressed by Lieutenant Stewart, to the senior officer, conveying the request that Amos Seeley might be transferred from his Majesty's ship *Siam* to the schooner under his command; that he might be restored to his family and his home. The British captain demurred, but in answer requested a personal interview, wherein he remarked to Lieutenant Stewart that the war in which his Majesty was engaged was arduous; that the difficulty of obtaining men for his numerous fleets and ships of war was great, and that he should encounter great hazard of being censured by his government should he lessen his force by yielding up his men; urging, moreover, that the example would be injurious to the service. Lieutenant Stewart replied, in substance, that the British officers had too long trampled on the rights and liberties of his countrymen, and it was high time they had learned to respect the rights and persons of an independent nation; that, whatever power his Majesty claimed over his own subjects, he had no right to exercise it over a people who had forced him to acknowledge their independence; that to resume this power was to belie his own solemn act, and practice a deception on the world. It was stated in answer, that Seeley was impressed in England as an Englishman; to which, Lieutenant Stewart replied—"Then prove him so, and I have done; but if you cannot, I am prepared to prove him a citizen of the United States." Whereupon, it was agreed to surrender him; and Seeley was put on board the schooner.

The *Experiment*, having obtained her supply of water, left the Bay, and continued her cruise under the lee of Barbuda. At daylight on the thirtieth of September, two sails were discovered, bearing down on the *Experiment*, with all sail set, and English colors hoisted. The *Experiment* continued laying too, with the British signal of the day flying, until they approached within gun-shot, when, finding one to be a brig of

war of eighteen guns, and the other a three-masted schooner of fourteen guns, and that they would not answer the signal, Lieutenant Stewart determined to retreat from such superior force, and avail himself of any opportunity that might offer for cutting off one of those vessels. It was soon discovered that the *Experiment* could outsail them, and after a fruitless chase of two hours, on the wind, they gave up pursuit, hoisted French colors, fired a gun of defiance to windward, and kept their vessels off before the wind. He, being now satisfied of their character and force, manœuvred to gain their wake to windward, and thus became the pursuing vessel in his turn. Sail was crowded on the *Experiment* and at about eight o'clock at night she came up with the three-masted schooner, (then the sternmost vessel,) and taking a position on her larboard quarter, poured in a broadside. In a few minutes, the three-masted schooner struck her colors, and surrendered to the *Experiment*. She proved to be the French national schooner *Diana*, of fourteen guns, commanded by Captain Perandeu; Lieutenant de Vaisseau, with a detachment of thirty invalid soldiers, and a crew of sixty-five men, and General Rigaud, on board, on his way to France, under the convoy of the brig of war, which made her escape, and got into Saint Bartholomew. The prize was despatched to the United States, under the command of Lieutenant James R. Caldwell, and was restored to the French under an article of the treaty, but the captors were never compensated by the Government for this vessel, as others were in many cases.

After disposing of the prisoners at St. Christopher, Lieutenant Stewart continued on his cruising ground, and recaptured a number of American vessels which had been taken by the French, and thus rescued a considerable amount of valuable commerce from the grasp of their privateers—amongst which was the brig *Zebra*, of Baltimore, captured by the *Flambeau* privateer, of sixteen guns, and in her company at the time; the wind was so light, and the day so nearly over before he could approach, that he could only cut off the *Zebra*, and the *Flambeau* made her escape, under cover of the night, and reached Guadeloupe.

On the sixteenth of November, at midnight, he fell in with an armed vessel, and after repeatedly hailing and requesting her to heave-to that a boat might board her for the purpose of ascertaining her character, and receiving no answer or other satisfaction, he determined to bring her to action, and try his force to compel a compliance. The vessel kept up a running fight with great spirit and determination, for forty minutes, when she became so cut up and crippled by the *Experiment's* fire, that she was obliged to strike and submit to be boarded. She proved to be the *Louisa Bridger*, of Bermuda, carrying eight nine-pounders, with a stout crew of Bermudians. She was so much cut up that the officers and crew of the *Experiment* were occupied until three o'clock next day in repairing her damages; having two shot through her bottom, she was almost in a sinking condition, and when Lieuten-

ant Porter boarded her, was found to have four feet water in the hold. After putting her in the best repair that circumstances admitted, Lieutenant Stewart dismissed her on her cruise. The Experiment had only one killed (the boatswain) and two wounded slightly. The wind, during the action, was strong and squally, and the Experiment careened so much, that Lieutenant Stewart, to enable his guns to be sufficiently depressed, found it necessary to cut three inch planks into short lengths, and put them under the trucks of the gun carriages, to raise the guns sufficiently from the lower port sills.

On the return of the Experiment to St. Christopher, Commodore Truxton ordered Lieutenant Stewart to proceed with a convoy from Martinique to the island of St. Thomas, and thence to Curacoa, to look for the United States brig Pickering, and frigate Insurgent, but nothing could be heard of those vessels at that place; they had both foundered in the equinoxial gale, with a store ship under their care, and all hands perished. On leaving Curacoa, the Experiment was ordered to proceed to Norfolk. Standing in for the Mona passage, early in the morning, a vessel was discovered in distress, and beating on the reef off Saona Island. On nearing her, many persons were discovered to be on board. After anchoring the Experiment at a safe distance from the reef, he despatched Lieutenant Porter with the boats to their relief, who, with much difficulty and danger from the breakers on the reef, succeeded in rescuing from destruction about sixty women and children, with seven men of the vessel's crew. They were the families of the most respectable inhabitants of St. Domingo, flying from the siege of that city by the blacks. They had been on the rocks for two days, without any thing to eat or drink; and at the time of their rescue, only a small portion of the quarter deck was above water. After the sailors had recovered as much of the property as they could, by diving into the vessel's hold, the Experiment proceeded to the city of St. Domingo with the rescued persons, where they were all landed the next day, and restored to their friends. Their gratitude was unbounded, and the Experiment was most liberally furnished, gratis, with every refreshment the place afforded. The President of St. Domingo wrote a letter of thanks to the President of the United States (Mr. Jefferson) of which the following is a copy.

Translation of a Letter from Don Joaquin Garcia, Governor of the Spanish part of St. Domingo, to the President of the United States.

SIR:—The great humanity (the offspring of a magnanimous breast) of a military officer of the United States, deserves the greatest applause and consideration from me and my whole nation. It was displayed in his recent conduct towards two numerous families who were removing from this city to Porto Rico, and composed of many small children and ladies of quality.

This officer is Charles Stewart, Esq., captain of the armed schooner, *Experiment*, who, whilst the accidents of the sea threatened to overwhelm him, observed that near the Island of Saona, a schooner, with a multitude of women and children, cried out for help to save themselves from becoming the unhappy victims of the tempest, or of the want of nautical skill in Captain Christian Graneman, a Dane, who, in the hardness of his heart, strove to save his person and effects, by going on shore and leaving so many human creatures exposed to the turbulence of the waves, an extremity which presented to them a near prospect of death.

This brave and generous officer, his crew, and all under his command, impelled by humanity, alertly strove to save these wretched ladies, and succeeded. A few moments after their safety was accomplished, the schooner sank. Amid thanks, vows, and lamentations, this worthy officer learnt that Captain Christian was on the mountain of Saona, with his effects. Without neglecting the ladies, he endeavored to secure a wretch, who ought not to live among mankind. This he effected, and, through the humanity of the ladies, used no greater severity towards him than to take him on board and bring him, well secured, to this capital. He treated the ladies with the greatest courtesy, accommodating them with his cabin, his table, and every convenience.

They have requested me to communicate these circumstances to your Excellency, and that in their names, I should present to you their cordial thanks, assuring you that it is an action which will remain forever impressed on their hearts. For myself, and in the name of my nation, and of all who know of the occurrence, worthy of so cultivated a nation and of an officer of the United States, I present you my thanks with that sincerity which belongs to my character; and I shall have the honor to render an account of it to my master, the king of Spain, in order that such an action may redound to the honor of this officer, of his flag, and of all his brave and generous crew.

God preserve you many years.

May it please your Excellency,

JOAQUIN GARCIA.

Santa Domingo, Jan. 21, 1801.

On the arrival of the *Experiment*, in 1801, at Norfolk, she was sold out of the service, under the act of Congress fixing the Naval Establishment. Lieutenant Stewart was amongst the thirty-six lieutenants retained under that law, and was placed in charge of the frigate *Chesapeake*, in ordinary, at Norfolk. In the following year, 1802, he joined the U. S. frigate *Constellation*, as first officer of Captain Murray, who was ordered to the Mediterranean to blockade Tripoli, then at war with the United States. This was a short cruise of one year, and afforded no opportunity for the ship or officers to distinguish themselves. On her return to the United States, Lieutenant Stewart was placed in command of the brig *Siren*, then being built at Philadelphia, and re-

ceived orders to superintend her. Her equipment was effected in seven days after she was launched, when she sailed for the Mediterranean to join the command of Commodore Preble. She was engaged giving protection to our commerce by convoy, and conveying the Consular presents to the Dey of Algiers. The squadron rendezvoused at Syracuse, in the island of Sicily. From that place the Siren was engaged in the expedition sent under Lieutenant Stewart to destroy the frigate Philadelphia, which had grounded off the harbor of Tripoli, and was surrendered to the Bashaw. Lieutenant Decatur was sent in the Intrepid, ketch, with seventy volunteers, to board and burn the frigate, which he accomplished in the most gallant manner; and, with the aid of the Siren's boats, under Lieutenant Caldwell, effected his retreat out of the harbor. After this successful expedition, the Siren, Lieutenant Stewart, with the Vixen, Enterprise, and Nautilus, under his command, were employed in a rigid blockade of the city of Tripoli and the adjacent harbors. During this period, the Greek ship, Catapolianna, and the British brig, Scourge, of twelve guns, were captured by the Siren, for a violation of the blockade. The ship was restored to the Greeks, and the brig put into the service of the United States by Commodore Preble. During this blockade, Lieutenant Stewart frequently led in the vessels of the blockade to the attack of the batteries and flotilla, to accustom the officers and men to the enemy's fire, and to force the Tripolitans to expend their ammunition; and on one occasion, they attacked and destroyed two batteries the enemy had erected to the westward of the city, for the protection of their coasting trade.

On the first of August, 1804, Commodore Preble arrived off Tripoli with the frigate Constitution, two bomb or mortar vessels, and six gun-boats—united with the Siren and Argus, brigs of eighteen guns, and the Nautilus, Vixen, and Enterprise, schooners of twelve guns, he determined to attack the town, flotilla, and batteries of Tripoli. On the third, the wind proving favorable, at meridian the signal was made to prepare for battle, when the whole force, forming a line ahead, led on by the brig Siren, Lieutenant Stewart, advanced to the attack, and when within reach of the enemy's fire, the gun-boats were cast off; and immediately boarded the gun-boats of Tripoli, twenty of which were moored in a line, outside of the reef which formed the harbor. Three of them were carried, and brought off under cover of the vessels of war, and added to the American squadron. On this occasion were issued the following

GENERAL ORDERS.

The gallant behavior of the officers, seamen, and marines of the squadron, in the action of yesterday with the enemies' batteries, gun-boats, and corsairs, claim from the Commodore, the warmest approbation and praise he can bestow.

Captain Stewart of the Siren, Captain Hull of the Argus, and Cap-

tain Smith of the *Vixen*, will please to accept the Commodore's thanks, for the gallant manner in which they brought their vessels into action, and their prompt obedience to signals—particularly that to cover gunboats and prizes.

Captain Somers will please to accept the Commodore's thanks for the gallant conduct displayed by him in attacking five of the enemy's gunboats within musket shot of the batteries, and obliging them to retreat after a warm conflict.

The very distinguished judgment and intrepidity of Captain Decatur in leading his division of gunboats into action, in boarding, capturing, and bringing out from under the batteries, two of their gunboats, each of superior force, is particularly gratifying to the Commodore, and Captain Decatur will be pleased to accept his thanks.

Lieutenant Commandant Dent, and Lieutenant Robinson, commanding the two bomb vessels, are entitled to the thanks of the Commodore for the judgment and bravery displayed by them in placing their vessels, and for the annoyance they gave the enemy.

Lieutenant Lawrence of the *Enterprize*, and Lieutenant Read of the *Nautilus*, (commanding these vessels in the absence of their commanders,) merit the Commodore's thanks for their active exertions in towing and protecting prizes.

The Commodore deeply regrets the death of the brave Lieutenant James Decatur, who nobly fell at the moment he had obliged an enemy of superior force to strike to him.

Lieutenant Bainbridge, in pursuing into the harbor and engaging the enemy, and his conduct through the action, merits and receives the Commodore's thanks.

Lieutenant Tripp will be pleased to accept thanks for the gallant conduct which distinguished him in boarding, capturing, and bringing out one of the enemy's gunboats of superior force, after having received eleven wounds.

I have now to tender my warmest thanks to the lieutenants, sailing masters, marine officers, and other officers of the *Constitution*, for the prompt support I received from them.

The conduct of the officers, seamen, and marines of the squadron, have, not only in the action of the third instant, but on every other occasion, merited the highest encomiums.

Given on board U. S. Ship *Constitution*, at anchor off Tripoli, the fourth day of August, 1804.

Signed,

EDWARD PREBLE.

For the whole of this month and part of September the city of Tripoli and the batteries were kept under the fire of the squadron, and the bombardments of the mortar vessels—at least whenever the wind permitted the squadron to approach and retreat: they were invariably attacked day or night until several of their flotilla were sunk, the town

and batteries considerably injured, and many of the enemy were killed and wounded. The squadron, however, were not without their casualties, whereby the *Siren* had three officers and eight seamen killed, and thirteen wounded. After this distinguished service, Lieutenant Stewart was promoted to be master commandant, and placed in command of the frigate *Essex*, which vessel, after the conclusion of peace with Tripoli, proceeded with the rest of the squadron, commanded by Commodore Rogers, to Tunis Bay, for the purpose of checking in that regency a rising disposition to commence hostilities on the flag and commerce of the United States. The hostile attitude of the squadron, while there, induced Mr. George Davis, consul of the United States, to leave the city and seek refuge on board of the fleet. The state of our affairs now drawing to a crisis so serious, it appeared to the Consul General, Colonel Lear, that the flag officer ought to strengthen his acts with the advice and consent of his principal officers; in consequence of which, the Commander-in-chief called a council, consisting of Captains Campbell, Decatur, Stewart, Hull, Smith, Dent, and Robinson, to whom the situation of our affairs with the regency was explained, and the opinion of the officers demanded whether hostilities ought not to immediately commence. It was at this council that the opinion of Captain Stewart carried with it the assent of all the officers, and preserved the peace of the country with that regency. It was on receiving that opinion, as delivered in the council, transmitted by the Consul General and the Consul, Mr. Davis, to the President of the United States, that Mr. Jefferson expressed to his cabinet, the high satisfaction he felt at having an officer in the squadron who comprehended the international law, the constitution of his country, and the policy of his government. Captain Stewart gave it as his opinion, that there was no power under the Constitution of the United States which authorized hostilities and war on others, but that which was lodged exclusively with Congress; that the President of the United States could not exercise this power, without the action and authority of Congress, much less a commander of an American squadron; that due respect for the laws of Nations forbade aggression, and only justified self defence by vigilance and convoy for the protection of our citizens, their property and commerce; but where hostile attempts were made on either, he would be justified in seizing all persons engaged in them, but no farther would his country sanction his acts. The policy of the United States was at all times pacific, and especially so with a people remote from our country, with whom we must war with every disadvantage: that we had just terminated a war with one of those powers, even more insignificant and assailable than Tunis, at considerable expense—the loss of one frigate and several valuable lives: it was true, the enemy had been punished for forcing war on us; but might we not be punished through disaster, by forcing war upon Tunis; that their threats were well calculated to put us on our guard, but would not justify aggression.

This sound reasoning and discretion prevailed; our Consul was restored to his post, peace was continued, and the Bey of Tunis sent a special minister (Melley Melley,) to the United States, who received every satisfaction at the hands of Mr. Jefferson. On the termination of this affair with the regency of Tunis, Captain Stewart took command of the frigate *Constellation* and returned to the United States. On his arrival he was promoted to a post captaincy.

Navy Depart., 24 April, 1806.

SIR:—It affords me real pleasure, to have it in my power to transmit to you, herewith, a commission, to which your honorable services so justly entitle you.

I am, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

R. SMITH.

To Capt. CHARLES STEWART, Philadelphia.

Navy Depart., April 30th, 1808.

SIR:—I herewith transmit to you an impression of the medal, presented to the late Commodore Edward Preble, in pursuance of the resolution of Congress of the 3d March, 1805.

This is given to you, as one of the officers of the navy, who honorably participated in the gallant achievement, the memory of which it is intended to preserve.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

R. SMITH.

Capt. CHARLES STEWART, Philadelphia.

During part of the years 1806 and 7, Captain Stewart was employed in superintending the construction of gunboats at New York, and was afterwards engaged in prosecuting mercantile enterprises to the East Indies, the Mediterranean, and Adriatic. During these voyages, he was fortunate enough, through his spirited intercession, to release several of his fellow citizens who had been impressed into British ships of war. On the declaration of war with Great Britain, in 1812, he proceeded, in conjunction with Commodore Bainbridge, to Washington, for the purpose of seeking service; but on presenting themselves at the Navy Department, they were informed by Mr. Goldsborough, the chief clerk, that it had been decided by the cabinet to place all the ships of war in the harbor of New York, for its defence, and thus deprive the marine of all opportunity for distinguished service. They saw at once the injurious consequences of such an order, the disheartening of the service, by such a withdrawal of confidence in the navy; the paralyzing effects, and the national humiliation it would produce in thus tacitly acknowledging the invincibility of the enemy, without an effort to arrest it. They immediately stated their apprehensions to the Secretary of the Navy, and asked him what the navy had done, that its members

were to be deprived of so favorable an opportunity of plucking trophies from their renowned enemy on his own element, the ocean wave. The Secretary of the Navy stated the anxieties of the government on the subject, and that nothing had perplexed them more—apprehending that our very limited marine would be immediately overwhelmed and crushed by superior force and numbers. The inexperience of our officers generally, the want of artillery practice in our seamen, who were not inured to scenes of blood, seemed to forbid their being opposed to a marine which had triumphed over every flag in every sea, with the advantages of twenty years' constant practice. To this formidable array of cautious reasons, they replied with arguments that convinced the Secretary of the erroneous position, and a spirited letter written to the President that night, by Captains Bainbridge and Stewart, convinced him also; he immediately directed the Secretary of the Navy *to send the vessels of war to sea, to seek their enemy, and he would take the responsibility on himself.* Mr. Goldsborough, who was acquainted with the contents of that letter, sought it in vain at the hands of Mr. Madison, for insertion in his work on the Naval History of the United States.* The brother officers of Captains Stewart and Bainbridge nobly sustained the opinions given on that occasion; by their gallantry on the ocean and on the lakes, they verified their predictions, and released those gentlemen from their pledges to the Executive Government.

It will be borne in mind by the reader that the declaration of war by the President's proclamation took place on the nineteenth June, 1812; on the twenty-first, Captains Stewart and Bainbridge presented themselves to the Government, and on the twenty-second, it was determined by the President, in conformity with the suggestions of these officers, that the ships should be sent to sea, and to sea they were forthwith ordered. Captain Stewart was appointed to the command of the brig *Argus* and *Hornet* sloop of war, which vessels formed a part of the squadron of Commodore Rogers, but were ordered to be withdrawn for the purpose of allowing Captain Stewart to make a dash with them amongst the British West India Islands.† This command was accompanied by a private letter, dated 23d June, 1812, from the Secretary of the Navy. We only extract the last sentence of it to show his feeling towards Captain Stewart.

[EXTRACT.]

You know not how you have risen in my mind by the *magnanimous* conduct you exhibited yesterday. May God Almighty bless you, and crown you with success and honor.

Signed,

PAUL HAMILTON.

* The author presumes the President thought this letter too important a cabinet secret to be divulged.

† In consequence of the squadron under Commodore Rogers having left the waters of New York, this order was not carried into effect.

In December, Captain Stewart was appointed to the command of the frigate *Constellation*, then repairing at Washington. In November, the Secretary of the Navy addressed to him the following letter.

Navy Department, 11th November, 1812

SIR—The naval committee are desirous of possessing the most comprehensive information upon naval subjects, in particular as to the description of marine force best adapted to our defence, and the relative efficiency of vessels of different rates; I have, therefore, to request of you, as a professional man, your opinions at large upon the following points:—

FIRST. What, in your opinion, is the relative efficiency of ships of the line and frigates—say seventy-fours and large frigates?

SECOND. What, in your opinion, is the relative efficiency of large frigates and sloops of war?

THIRD. What description of naval force do you think best adapted to the defence of our coast and commerce?

FOURTH. What description of force do you think best calculated to prosecute the present war, and any future war in which we may be engaged?

FIFTH. Would not the erection of docks for the repairs of our vessels produce a great saving in expense, labor, and risk? Would not docks greatly expedite the refitting of our ships?

Be pleased to favor me with answers, assigning your reasons at large for your opinions, as early as may be in your power.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir,

Your obedient servant,

PAUL HAMILTON.

Capt. CHARLES STEWART, of the Navy.

To which the following reply was given:—

[COPY.]

United States' Frigate *Constellation*, Nov. 12, 1812.

SIR:—I have received your letter of the eleventh inst., in which you state that it is “the desire of the naval committee to possess the most comprehensive information upon naval subjects, particularly the marine force best adapted to our defence, and the relative efficiency of vessels of different rates.” In compliance therewith, I have the honor to answer the questions you proposed as follows:—

QUESTION FIRST. What, in your opinion, is the relative efficiency of ships of the line—say seventy fours and large frigates?

ANSWER. The relative force of a seventy-four gun ship and large frigate is as one to three.

COMPARATIVE FORCE.

Frigate of 50 guns.

Gun Deck,	30	24 pounders.
Quarter ditto,	14	32 lb. carronades.
Forecastle,	6	32 ditto.
	—	—
Guns,	50	1360 lbs. each round.
Men,	430	

480 Guns and Men.

Ship of the Line, 74 guns.

Lower Gun Deck,	28	42 pounders.
Upper ditto,	30	24 ditto.
Quarter ditto,	16	42 lb. carronades.
Forecastle,	8	42 ditto.
ditto,	2	24 pounders.
Poop,	4	68 lb. carronades.
	—	—
Guns,	88	3224 lbs. each round.
Men,	650	

738 Guns and Men.

ARGUMENT. By the above comparison it appears that a seventy-four gun ship discharges at one round 3224 pound shot, and a frigate of the first class 1360 pounds; it therefore clearly proves the position of relative force in point of metal to be one to three, or thereabouts. When this circumstance is considered jointly with the following, it must appear to others as it does to me, that as you increase the class of the ship, you increase the force in proportion of one to three, and diminish proportionately the expense of building, equipping, and supporting them in commission, which may easily be established by estimates from the Department and the experience of all other marine nations.

Ships of the line are much stronger in scantling, thicker in the sides and bottom, less penetrable to the shot, and consequently, less liable to be torn, or battered to pieces, or sunk: the additional room being more in proportion to the additional number of men, leaves greater space for water and provisions, and admits of her wings being kept clear, that shot, penetrating through below the water, the holes can readily be plugged up from the inside, and her sinking thereby prevented. Hence, we have seen ships of the line capable of battering one another for several hours, and if not too much crippled in the spars and rigging, enabled to renew an action on the following day. I am aware that some are of opinion that a more divided force is better calculated for action, from the advantageous position that would be given to a part. Suppose three frigates of fifty guns were to undertake to batter a seventy-four

gun ship, and that two of them were to occupy the quarter and stern of the seventy-four, (this is placing them in the most favorable position,) the other frigate engaged abreast—every thing then would depend upon the time that the frigate abreast could maintain that position, to enable the other two to act with effect upon the stern and quarter.—But it must be evident to all acquainted with the two classes of ships, that the frigate abreast could not withstand the fire of so heavy and compact a battery many minutes, and in all probability, would be dismantled or sunk the first or second broadside. This would decide the fate of the other two. Much might be said of the superiority of ships of the line over frigates, in the attack of batteries, or their defence; on the security of valuable convoys of merchant ships, or troops sent on an expedition; but their advantages, in these respects, must be evident to all, however unacquainted with nautical affairs.

QUESTION SECOND. What, in your opinion, is the relative efficiency or force of large frigates and sloops of war?

ANSWER. The relative efficiency of large frigates and sloops of war is, at least, one to two.

COMPARATIVE FORCE.

Sloop of War.

Gun Deck,	16	24 pounders.
Quarter ditto,	8	24 lb. carronades.
Forecastle,	4	24 ditto.
	—	—
Guns,	28	480 lbs. of shot.
Men,	180	

—
208 Guns and Men.

Frigate.

Gun Deck,	30	24 pounders.
Quarter ditto,	14	32 lb. carronades.
Forecastle,	6	32 ditto.
	—	—
Guns,	50	1360 lb. Shot.
Men,	430	

—
480 Guns and Men.

QUESTION THIRD. What description of naval force do you think best adapted to the defence of our coast and commerce?

ANSWER. Ships of the line are best calculated for the defence of our coasts, and for the protection of our commerce, inward and outward, when engaged in war with a foreign maritime power.

ARGUMENT. It cannot be supposed, in a war with a foreign maritime power, that that power will only send to our coast frigates and smaller cruisers because we possess no other description of vessels. Their first

object will be to restrain, by ships of the line, our frigates and other cruisers from departing and preying upon their commerce. Their next object will be to send their smaller cruisers in pursuit of our commerce, and by having their ships of the line parading on our coast, threatening our most exposed sea-port towns, and preventing the departure of our small cruisers, they will be capturing what commerce may have escaped theirs, and recapturing what prizes may have fallen into our hands.— Thirdly, they can at any time withdraw their ships of the line, should a more important object require it, without hazarding much on their part, and return in sufficient time to shut out our cruisers that may have departed during their absence. Fourthly, they can at all times consult their convenience in point of time and numbers, and will incur no expense and risk of transports for provisions and water, but can go and procure their supplies at pleasure, and return to their station ere their absence is known to us.

QUESTION FOURTH. What description of force do you think best calculated to prosecute the present war, and any future war in which we may engage?

ANSWER. For the prosecution of the present war with most effect, a mixed naval force of the following description, in my opinion, is the best calculated.

Ships of the line, to rate, in honor of the year of our independence, seventy-sixes, to mount as follows.

28 42-pounders, on the lower gun deck.

30 24 ditto, upper ditto.

24 42-pound carronades on quarter deck and fore-castle.

2 24-pounders on fore-castle.

4 68-pound carronades on poop.

—
88 Guns.

Frigates to rate forty guns, to mount as follows :

30 24-pounders on gun deck.

20 32-pound carronades on quarter deck and fore-castle.

—
50 Guns.

Frigates to rate thirty-two guns, to mount as follows :

26 18-pounders on gun deck.

16 24-pound carronades on quarter deck and fore-castle.

—
42 Guns.

Corvette ships to rate sixteen guns, to mount as follows :

18 32-pound carronades.

2 12-pounders.

—
20 Guns

ARGUMENT. By having a proportion of these classes of ships of war, the inner squadron, or "*garde di costa*," may be composed of the ships of the line, and a few of the thirty-two gun ships for repeaters and look-out ships—hence it would produce one of two results, either that the enemy would be obliged to abandon our coast, or bring on it a much greater force, at least double our number, out of which they would be obliged to keep on our coasts a superiority at all hazards of the sea, and at great additional expense and risk of transports for provisions and water. But should they, from other circumstances, be unable to keep up this superiority on our coast, the door will be kept open for the ingress or egress of our cruisers and their prizes, while our other classes of ships may be sent in pursuit of their smaller cruisers and commerce. These observations will apply to all future wars in which we may be engaged with maritime powers; but as we might more frequently be engaged with the Barbary powers, the frigates and sixteen gun ships would be better adapted to that species of warfare. They have no ships of the line. Our ships of the line could then be laid in ordinary, dismantled and preserved at a small expense.

QUESTION FIFTH. Would not the erection of docks for the repairs of our vessels, produce a great saving in expense, labor, and risk, and would not docks greatly expedite the refitting of our ships?

ANSWER. A dry dock, agreeably to a plan I furnished the department some time since, to be freed from water by pumps or drains, will be indispensable for the repairs of ships of war, and will be the least expensive way of repairing the bottoms of our ships, and will expedite the outfits, in point of time, one to ten.

ARGUMENT. A ship of war, wanting repairs done to her bottom, or coppering, must be turned down, one side at a time, to undergo that repair; therefore, to prepare a ship for that process, requires that all her upper masts should be taken down, and all her guns, stores, water-casks, ballast, ammunition, &c., should be taken out, which leads to great loss, waste, and labor, and the time occupied in the process, will be from two to three weeks, and as much more time will be required to re-rig, re-equip, and re-place her guns, stores, and other materials. The preparation to dock a ship of war can be done in *twelve hours*; all that is necessary to be done, is to take out the guns, and pump the water out of the water-casks; and when in dock, the repairs of her bottom can progress on *both sides* at the same time. Should a ship of war require a thorough repair throughout, it can never be effectually done but in a dock: for instance, in repairing ships of war in the water, they are liable to have the fine form of their bottom spoiled by hogging, spreading, or warping, which will materially affect their sailing. Ships wanting thorough repairs, require all the plank ripped off inside and outside, their beams, knees, and clamps taken out; these are all they have to bind their frames together, and thereby preserve their shape; but when stripped of these to make room for the new, they are liable to

logg from the greatest weight and body of timber being in the *fore and after end*, at which places there is no pressure upwards, caused by the water, as those ends are sharp; the two extremes of the ship are liable to sink in the water, while the body or middle of the ship rises with the upward pressure of the water. The next consideration in repairing the bottoms in the water, though not of such vital importance, is not unworthy of serious attention: the bolting into the bottom ought to be driven from the *outside*, but when repaired afloat, they are under the necessity of driving them from the inside, hence the bottom will not be so strong nor so well secured.

The time for answering the several questions propounded to me in your letter of the eleventh inst. being very short, and a great deal being required by my other avocations, will, I trust, be a sufficient apology for my not going more largely and minutely into the subject, as also for any inaccuracies which I may have committed. I will, therefore, close this communication with an expression of my hopes that whatever may be proposed by the naval committee to Congress on the subject, they will strongly recommend to their consideration the necessity of having what they propose for the increase of the navy of the best seasoned materials, which will be by far the cheapest, and be longer in a state for active service. I trust their past experience will prove this position to their satisfaction, that the best materials are always the cheapest, and that a slow increase is better than a hasty and temporary one.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 Signed, CHARLES STEWART.
 HON. PAUL HAMILTON.

We agree with Captain Stewart, in the within statement, in all its parts.

Signed, } ISAAC HULL,
 CHARLES MORRIS.

In December, 1812, this ship was equipped, and ready for sea, and Captain Stewart embraced the occasion to give a splendid entertainment on board that vessel, to all the branches of government, and the citizens of the district: there were upward of eight hundred ladies and gentlemen on board, where they passed without accident a most agreeable day, and returned to their homes at night, delighted with the entertainment and hospitality of the captain. Soon after the citizens of the district gave a return ball to Captain Stewart, and the officers of the navy; it was *at this ball room*, about *ten o'clock at night*, that Midshipman Hamilton, the son of the Secretary of the Navy, and the aid of Captain Decatur, arrived with the flag of the Macedonian frigate, and the despatches of Captain Decatur, giving an account of his having captured her with the frigate United States. The dancing ceased, the flag was spread on the floor, the despatches read to the President, and the assembled ladies and gentlemen; to describe the scene which fol-

lowed would require a more graphic pen than we hold. The reader might well be left to his own reflections and feelings, and glorious sympathies. Nor will he, we are certain, omit to recur to that gallant impulse which led Stewart and Bainbridge to Washington, to remonstrate against the inglorious policy that had been adopted, of shutting up our ships, and the way to those brilliant scenes which lighted up the ocean and the lakes, with such unfading glory! We cannot resist the impulse to say something of that memorable occasion. The building, large and commodious as it was, as the flag lay in the midst of the brilliant assembly, literally trembled to its foundation with the plaudits. Ladies were seen laughing and weeping with joy; gentlemen embracing one another; members of Congress who were opposed to each other in the morning, on questions concerning the war, were found in each other's arms; the opposers of the war recovered, for the moment, their lost patriotism, and in the arms of their democratic colleagues, their hearts beat in unison with each other over the glory acquired for their country, while the tears of gratitude streamed from their eyes, and fell on the prostrate flag of Britain. *The venerable Macon*, forgetting his stern consistency, exclaimed, "I never behold an officer of our navy, without the expansion of my heart making me feel as much affection for him as I could for a brother." In the general confusion, and the loss of *all* personal distinction, through the patriotic feelings of the moment, the *President* himself received the fraternal embrace of a federal senator. In this ball room, and on this occasion, the Secretary of the Navy, (Mr. Hamilton,) stated to those assembled, "IT IS TO CAPTAINS BAINBRIDGE AND STEWART YOU OWE YOUR NAVAL VICTORIES." We do no more than repeat the history of the times, when we say, that *it was to the victories of our brave tars, on the ocean, over the English, that the first impulse and success of the war are to be fairly ascribed.*

Unprepared, at its commencement, the *nation divided* on the question, and the fleets of the enemy hovering on our shores, doubt and darkness enveloped *its* declaration, and made the boldest hearts quail. Who that remembers that day, will ever forget the shouts of joy which rang through the land, as victory upon victory was announced, and flag after flag of the proud mistress of the deep bowed to the star spangled banner of freedom! The national pulse beat high in every bosom; and every valley, and every hill top, sent forth its song of praise. Our cities, towns, and hamlets blazed with illuminations, and our armies marched joyfully to battle. The spell was broken! The foe had been confronted, on his *own* element, ship to ship, man to man, and gun to gun, and never had the stars and stripes of our country come down. The heart of the traitor shrivelled up within him, and the notes of despair died upon his lips. Our foe was struck aghast at his defeat, and trembled as he grappled with us, on sea and land. Mr. Madison's administration acquired strength, his friends confidence, the people hope, and the army and navy assurance of victory and fame. Such were the

results of the noble counsel of Captains Stewart and Bainbridge, and such the glorious fulfilment of their predictions! One only of these chivalrous heroes lives to witness the deep and lasting gratitude of his country. Death has set his seal upon the other, and *sanctified his memory in the affections of his countrymen*. The fruits of their generous patriotism will long be seen in our elevated national character, in the glory of our arms, in the potency of our influence, and in the arrest of the ruffian hand of impressment, from touching the humblest head that seeks shelter beneath our "*striped bunting*," once so contemned and despised. American decks are now as inviolable as the American soil, and the proudest foot in the enemy's rank *dare* not tarnish them with rudeness or insult. The last American sailor has been long since dragged into foreign bondage, on the high seas.

Amongst the assembled fashion and beauty on the memorable occasion referred to, we observed Mrs. Madison, Miss Mayo, (now Mrs. Gen. Scott,) the Misses Caton, Mrs. Jerome Bonaparte, and many others.

Captain Stewart shortly after proceeded to Hampton Roads, in the Constellation, preparatory to going on a cruize, but unfortunately, the morning after anchoring there, he discovered the enemy approaching his anchorage with a superior force of two seventy-fours, three frigates, and several small vessels of war: he lost no time in preparing to retreat. It being calm with him, he commenced kedging his frigate towards Norfolk; the enemy's vessels approached rapidly with a fine breeze, which they fortunately lost off Willoughby's Point, and they were, in consequence of the ebb tide, compelled to anchor. The Constellation was kedged up on the flats off Sowell's Point, where she lay aground the rest of the day; Captain Stewart continued to press the river craft and lighten his vessel. In case the enemy, by kedging up their seventy-fours, or by means of a breeze, had reached his position, he was prepared for burning the Constellation: the night flood, however, made; when about eight o'clock, his ship floated, sail was made on her with a fine breeze, boats with lights and pilots were sent to point out the shoals, and at eleven o'clock, P. M., the Constellation was safely moored between forts Norfolk and Nelson, where she afterwards contributed to defend that place, and with her cannon and her crew, repulsed the enemy's attack on Crany Island, and defeated the expedition sent to capture Norfolk and its dependencies.

In the summer of 1813, Captain Stewart was ordered to assume the command of the frigate Constitution, then undergoing repairs at Boston. In December following he proceeded on a cruize. After exhibiting that ship on the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina, about the Bermuda Islands, off the coasts of Surinam, Berbice and Demerara, to windward of the islands of Barbadoes, St. Vincent, Martinico, off St. Christopher's, St. Eustatia, Porto Rico, and Santa Cruz, and destroying the Picton of sixteen guns, a merchant ship of ten guns, the brig Catherine and schooner Phoenix, he chased several British ships of war, and the fri-

gate La Pique, in the Mona passage, without being able to overtake any of them, in consequence of the worn out state of the sails of the Constitution. Capt. Stewart determined to return to Boston, and replace them, for the old sails had served throughout the periods of Captain Hull's and Captain Bainbridge's former cruises. In April, the Constitution arrived at Marble Head, in Massachusetts bay, having with great difficulty escaped from the British frigates, the Junon, and La Nymphe, of fifty guns each.

In December, the Constitution proceeded on another cruize, under the command of Captain Stewart, having been refitted with great care, and furnished with new sails. On the twenty-fourth, he captured and destroyed, to the eastward of the Bermudas, the brig Lord Nelson; off Lisbon, he captured the ship Susan, with a valuable cargo, and sent her to New York; and on the twentieth of February, 1815, after a sharp conflict of forty minutes, he captured the British ships of war, the *Cyane* of thirty-four guns, and the *Levant*, of twenty-one guns, having three men killed, and thirteen wounded; the British ships having in all thirty-five killed, and forty-two wounded.

The following is the official report of that action.

United States Frigate Constitution,
At Sea, 23d February, 1815.

SIR:—On the twentieth of February last, the Island of Madeira bearing W. S. W., distant about sixty leagues, we fell in with his Britannic Majesty's *two* ships of war, the *Cyane* and *Levant*, and brought them to action about 6 o'clock in the *evening*, both of which, after a spirited engagement of forty minutes, surrendered to the ship under my command.

Considering the advantages derived by the enemy from having a divided and more active force, as also the *superiority* in the weight and number of their guns, I deem the speedy and decisive result of this action, the strongest assurance which can be given to the Government, that all under my command did their duty, and gallantly supported the reputation of American seamen.

Enclosed you will receive the minutes of the action, and a list of the killed and wounded on board this ship: also, enclosed you will receive for your information, a statement of the actual force of the enemy, and the number killed and wounded on board their ships, as near as could be ascertained.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Signed,

CHARLES STEWART.

To Hon. Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

Captain Stewart proceeded with these prizes to the Island of St. Jago, one of the Cape de Verd Islands, with a view to divest his ship of the numerous prisoners, consisting of the officers, seamen, and marines

of both ships of the enemy, amounting to nearly four hundred. While making arrangements for despatching them at Port Praya, for Barbadoes, the British squadron, consisting of the ships of war the *Acasta*, of fifty guns, the *New Castle*, of sixty-four guns, and the *Leander*, of sixty-four guns, under the command of Sir George Collier, reached his position under cover of a thick fog. Notwithstanding their near approach, Captain Stewart determined to retreat, and immediately the *Constitution* and her prizes cut their cables and crowded sail to escape. He was fortunate in being able, by his skilful management and manœuvres, to save from their grasp his favourite frigate *Constitution*, and the *Cyane*. The *Levant* was captured by the squadron, and sent to Barbadoes.

After this escape, he proceeded with the *Constitution* to Maranam, in the Brazils, and landed the prisoners, refreshed his crews, refitted his vessel, and returned to Boston, where he and his officers were received with the usual courtesies by their fellow citizens. On his way through New York, the Common Council honored Captain Stewart with the *freedom of their city*, in a gold box, and extended towards him and his officers the courteous hospitalities of that great city, by a public dinner.

New York, June 21, 1815.

SIR—In communicating to you the enclosed resolution of the Common Council of the City of New York, I beg leave to add the expression of my highest respect, and to request information when the Common Council can have the pleasure of meeting you, for the purpose of carrying into effect the object of the resolution.

The delay of this communication has arisen from the daily expectation of your arrival in this city.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JNO. FERGUSON.

CHARLES STEWART, Esq., Com. U. S. Frigate *Constitution*.

On his arrival in Philadelphia, the legislature of his native State (Pennsylvania) voted him their thanks, and directed his Excellency the Governor to cause a gold-hilted sword to be presented to Captain Stewart, in testimony of their sense of his distinguished merits in capturing the British ships of war of superior force, the *Cyane* and the *Levant*.

Philadelphia, August 8th, 1817.

SIR:—Charged by his Excellency, Simon Snyder, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with the presentation to you of a sword, and other testimonials of the grateful sense entertained of your distinguished services, I will thank you to apprise me when and where I can have the honor of an interview with you for that purpose.

With sentiments of high consideration and esteem,

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

WM. DUNCAN, Aid-de-Camp.

Captain CHARLES STEWART.

On the meeting of Congress, the assembled representatives of the nation passed a vote of thanks to Captain Stewart, his officers, and crew; and resolved that a suitable gold medal, commemorative of that brilliant event, the capture of the two British ships of war, the *Cyane* and *Levant*, by the *Constitution*, should be presented to Captain Stewart, in testimony of the sense they entertained of his gallantry, and that of his officers, seamen, and marines, under his command on that occasion.

Navy Department, February 10th, 1820.

SIR:—In compliance with a resolution of the Congress of the United States, the President directs me to present to you a gold medal, in testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of your gallantry and good conduct and services in the capture of the British vessels of war, the *Cyane* and *Levant*, after a brave and skilful combat.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

SMITH THOMSON.

Commodore CHARLES STEWART, U. S. Navy.

The war having terminated with Great Britain, the *Constitution* was put out of commission, and laid up in ordinary. In 1816, Captain Stewart was placed in command of the *Franklin* ship of the line, of seventy-four guns, and in 1817, she was fitted out at Philadelphia as the flag ship of Commodore Stewart, who was directed to take command of the American squadron in the Mediterranean sea. In November, 1817, he sailed for England, to convey the Hon. Richard Rush as minister to the court of Great Britain, who was landed there in the latter part of December, after which the *Franklin* proceeded to the Mediterranean, and Commodore Stewart took command of the forces of the United States in that sea.

In a profound state of peace with all the world, there was no farther field for the Commodore to exhibit his talents, skill, and chivalry, which a state of war calls forth; but here we must view him in a new and different situation from the former, controlling a formidable force, preserving its discipline amongst the officers and crews, corresponding with various governments, their most distinguished men, our own ministers and consuls in Europe and in Africa, preserving our relations with all the Barbary powers in particular, placing his forces in such attitudes as effectually kept them in check, and restraining any disposition in the king of Spain to retaliate on our commerce the seizure of his possessions in Florida by our national troops under General Jackson—conveying to our government the earliest and most important intelligence, growing out of the revolutionary disposition of the Spanish and Italian (Neapolitan) reformers and patriots; cultivating the good disposition of the surrounding governments and people, protecting their commerce and our own from piratical depredations, and relieving their vessels and

crews from disasters and distress; receiving and entertaining on board his magnificent ship, the princes, nobility, and monarchs of the adjacent kingdoms—all this called forth an energy and diversity of tact and character which few men are fortunate enough to combine, but was, in this instance, fully developed, to the lasting advantage of his country, the honor of the navy, and the approbation of his fellow citizens.

Commodore Stewart proceeded to Naples Bay with the squadron under his command, at which city the Emperor of Austria had arrived, with his court, on a tour through the south of Europe. The Marquis Chercheli, prime minister to the king of the Sicilies, sent an invitation to the Commodore to attend a grand fete to be given the Emperor, at the king's villa. This was accepted, and the opportunity was embraced by the Commodore, to invite their majesties to visit the ships of war under his command, to which they readily assented. They came on board the Franklin seventy-four, where they were received with manned yards and a royal salute, and were entertained in the most courtly manner by the Commodore and the officers of the squadron.

They visited every part of the ship, and expressed themselves highly gratified with their reception; when they were about to depart, the Grand Master of the Empress, mistaking one of the wind sails for a mast, attempted to support himself against it while stepping over one of the hatchways; the wind sail, yielding to the pressure, the poor gentleman was precipitated to the lowest deck—his ankle was unfortunately broken, and he was otherwise severely injured. Immediately, all was consternation with the party; he was taken into the wardroom, and his ankle set by Doctor Salter, the surgeon of the ship, with a rapidity and skill which called forth the admiration of their majesties, who were much attached to the unfortunate member of their household.

The delay caused by this untoward event detained the party after night, when they all returned to the shore. It was on this occasion that the Emperor manifested his gratitude for the attentions and skill of Doctor Salter, and directed a purse of gold to be tendered to him, which the Doctor politely declined receiving for a professional act in the cause of humanity. This conduct contributed to raise the American character for humanity and disinterestedness as much as the exhibit of the high order and discipline of the squadron had done to impress on their majesties and their courts, the progress the American people had made, and were making, to future naval renown. After Commodore Stewart had thus cultivated the kind feelings of those distant nations towards his countrymen and their commercial enterprises, the squadron left the bay of Naples, and proceeded to exhibit themselves to the Barbary powers, with a similar view.

In 1820, the Franklin returned to the United States, and remained in ordinary until the following year, when she was again fitted for service in the Pacific, and Commodore Stewart placed in command. Out

of the revolt of the colonies of Spain, in South America, there had arisen danger to our commercial and whaling enterprises in the Pacific and on its coasts, which seemed to admonish the government that nothing but an imposing force would avail; yet such was the nature and delicacy of the service, originating in the attitude of the hostile parties, the obligations of the United States towards Spain (one of them) under the laws of nations and treaty stipulations, and on the other hand, the sympathy of the people of the United States for the struggling patriots and their cause, whose independence and power had not yet been acknowledged; with a disposition, on their part, to seize on neutral commerce under every frivolous pretext, and thereby acquire the means of carrying on the war; while, at the same time, the United States were not disposed to hazard their peaceful attitude with either belligerent—this situation called for the exercise of great discretion, and imposed on the commander a necessity for exhibiting great prudence and firmness in giving efficient protection to his fellow-citizens, their commerce and their property; while, at the same time, he had to guard himself against the misrepresentations of those who, in their enthusiasm for the cause of either party to which they became wedded, through feelings or interest, had lost sight of their own honor, and involved, in some measure, that of their country.

Thus, placed between these excited and hostile parties, opposing the interests of the one, and the high policy of the other, in giving advice, countenance, and protection to his countrymen, and the interests of the state; with no orders, save the crude and undefined laws of nations as his guide, which one of the parties held at naught, as they were not yet admitted into the great family of nations, and the other opposed by their policy and their laws of the Indies, the Commodore could not be long in discovering the very critical attitude he had been placed in, the arduous duties he had to encounter, and the reputation which he risked on the occasion.

To yield protection was an imperative duty—that complaints would ensue there was no doubt, and that the prejudices and sympathies of his countrymen, their agents, and the press, would join in the general clamor, there was every probability; and that this would lead to unpleasant results, he could not question, knowing how much the Executive Government lacked firmness when the general voice impugned the acts of their officers, and how willingly they avoid every responsibility of the acts of their national forces.

In thus casting a glance at his perplexing position, he determined on his course—that which patriotism, duty, and honor alone could point out. To yield every protection, to break down lawless blockades, and with them the Patriots' *pretexts* for plundering and sweeping our commerce from the Pacific sea, to interpose his forces and efforts in the restraining of the piracies and robberies of the buccaneers claiming the protection of the Spanish flag.

The following letter was written in conformity with the foregoing principles, to General Sucre, the Civil and Military Commander-in-Chief.

[COPY.]

U. S. Ship Franklin, Callao Bay, July 14, 1823.

*To His Excellency, General Sucre,
Civil and Military Commander-in-Chief, at Callao.*

The letter your Excellency did me the honor to write me on the eighth instant, in reply to mine of the thirtieth ultimo, has been duly received. It does not, perhaps, belong to me to discuss the principles your Excellency contends for, with respect to the declared blockade of the western coast of Peru by the Patriot Government; it may only belong to me to notify my respectful protest against its illegal and injurious operations, so far as the commerce of the Republic of North America is concerned, and in compliance with my orders to guard it against those effects, leaving the principles and points contended for to the discussion of the two Governments. But the Government of Peru may have been led into an error on that subject, by the infraction of those principles of the laws of nations, during the late wars in Europe, between France and England, and then for the first time adopted by Great Britain, and, as your Excellency states, not opposed by her commanders on this station. If I bring to the notice of your Excellency some important facts, out of the strict line of duty attaching to my command, I hope and trust your Excellency will do me the favor to believe that it only originates in a strong desire to guard our respective rights, and to preserve a lasting harmony between the Governments.

After the commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and France in '92, so long as it was the interest of England, and during the existence of the marine of several European powers, that Government observed and applied the principles of the laws of nations to all the blockades instituted. But when she had destroyed, in turn, the marine of the other European powers, her policy was then changed. International law was rejected, honor and common honesty were abandoned; power gave right, and a war of destruction was waged against the unoffending neutral; commerce was given up to its cormorant rapacity, and that which escaped its talons, she forced her open enemies to prey on, under pretext of retaliation. Against such principles, I need not now remind your Excellency, the United States resisted, even with England, successfully, and as the Republic of the North was the first to contend for just principles in the late war, she was also found the last in the field defending them.

The conclusions your Excellency has drawn from the tacit conduct of the British Naval Commanders on this station, are not applicable to the United States, and perhaps those commanders may not be instructed to interfere with any kind of blockade the Patriot Government may deem

proper to impose, especially one founded on principles so lately and newly exercised by themselves. England, the most politic nation, has always been guided in her conduct towards others, by principles of policy and interest often times just, but as often at variance with justice and previous conduct. She may reserve to herself the right of discussing, and demanding indemnification of the Patriot Government hereafter, for any violation of her rights, to preserve a future cause of quarrel with these governments, to obtain some exclusive commercial advantage as indemnity hereafter, to apply the same rule to the commerce of this country in her future wars. Whatever infraction of her rights she may deem proper to tacitly acquiesce in now, does not and can not constitute a reason that the government of the United States should also yield theirs. Your Excellency very justly observes that a blockade declared by the commanders of a ship of the line or a schooner, legally commissioned for war, does not import less in the one case than the other, and it will be but just to add, that the declaration of a blockade, originating in their will, imports nothing.

The commander of a ship of war, or commander in chief of a squadron, can institute a blockade in very distant seas—the urgency and necessity of the case renders it legal. The act of a belligerent involving certain rights of a friend is an act of sovereignty; it belongs to that authority to declare it, and only to the commanders to carry it into effect. But the belligerent's right, and will, to do so, and the declaration of it, does not constitute the act, unless combined with an object that is legitimate, and a force competent to sustain it. With respect to the legitimacy of the object, that can only exist in depriving your enemy of all external means of annoying you, and external resources of continuing the war, and is in a great measure dependent on their actual situation; hence the right of the neutral to introduce all articles of a perfectly innocent nature, and which do not contribute any thing towards carrying on the war. It would be preposterous to blockade a port, by sea, against the entrance of provisions, which has an extensive and abundant country adjoining to supply it. In such a case the belligerent would only be injuring a common friend, without prejudice to his enemy: this the law of nations forbids his doing; but on the other hand, where a possibility exists of your reducing your enemies to terms, by excluding such provisions, your right is legitimate to do so, and the injury done the neutral is accidental.

With respect to the competency of the force, it will depend on the localities of the port or ports blockaded, and not on the size of the vessels, or the weight or number of their guns—with this neutrals have nothing to do; it is sufficient for them that the place is susceptible of being blockaded, and the force applied is of such description and so stationed, as to render it extremely hazardous to enter: so also with respect to the force of your enemy; if he possess a thousand ships of war more than the blockading power, and does not see proper to drive

it from his ports, it is effectual against the neutral so long as that blockade preserves and does not voluntarily abandon its stations.

A blockade originally legitimate and legally instituted, may derive an opposite character from the conduct of the belligerent blockading. Thus the forces stationed to carry it into effect, negligently and partially executing it, the Government contravening its legitimate object, and by partiality or licence permitting one or two neutral flags to trade while all others are excluded, thereby rendering it a subject of convenience to themselves, or a source of *tribute* to their *coffers*. Admitting, in consequence of the localities of the Western coast of Peru, that it be susceptible of blockade by as small or a smaller force than the same extent of coast in any other part of the world, yet the whole naval force of Peru, even if actually engaged in that service, is not a competent force for the blockade of a coast, eight hundred miles in extent, and containing very many ports and harbors. I, however, believe very little of the naval force of Peru has been employed on that service, and in fact this extensive blockade has often been left for months, with no other vessel beyond a schooner; and also there can no doubt exist, of exclusive privileges having been given by the Government of Peru to particular persons and flags, to trade by licence, with this coast declared under blockade.

The principles here contended for, the United States are also contending for with Spain in the North Atlantic, where they operate in favor of the Patriot Government. It would be absurd for the government of Spain, to declare under blockade, and the operation of the laws of the Indies, the whole coast of Chili, Peru, and Mexico; and as the most susceptible and convenient mode of sustaining that declaration, to cause a naval force, superior to that of the Patriots, to cruize to the westward of Cape Horn, and there arrest every vessel coming or going, under pretext of violating the laws of the Indies and blockade of the coasts—yet this conduct on their part, would not be less effectual or more absurd than the blockade of an extensive coast by the Patriots, without any thing like an adequate naval force to sustain it.

I pray your Excellency to accept the assurance of the high respect and consideration, with which

I have the honor to remain,
Your Excellency's most obedient,
Very humble servant,

Signed,

CHARLES STEWART.

On the receipt of the foregoing letter, the blockade was immediately annulled.

The reader will here contrast, by the following address of his countrymen residing abroad and on the very coast where Commodore Stewart's command extended, the difference of their opinion of his acts and conduct and that entertained of him by some of his countrymen at home.

Lima, May 2d, 1824.

To Commodore Charles Stewart,
 Commander-in-Chief of the
 U. S. Naval Forces in the Pacific.

SIR:—Impressed with a high sense of the zeal and ability you have manifested in the cause of your country, during a period of upwards of twenty-six years of public service, the undersigned citizens of the United States, at present residing or transacting business in Lima, beg leave respectfully to express to you their sense of your conduct in the command on this coast you are now about to leave. The duties you have had to perform have been no less arduous than various, from the peculiar situation of the countries to which your command extended. You arrived at a time when the revolutionary governments of Peru and Chili, intoxicated with success, and regardless of every principle of national law, preyed upon the unoffending neutral at will. By your firmness, their rapacity was restrained, and by your skill, their friendly relations, which our government is so anxious to maintain, has remained unimpaired.

We are grateful to acknowledge the readiness with which you have at all times listened to the complaints or wishes of your countrymen, and the promptness with which you have afforded them all the protection your situation would permit.

With these feelings, which are as sincere on our part as they are well founded, we look with peculiar regret to your departure; and especially at this moment, when circumstances so strongly demand rather the increase than diminution of force on this station.

Within a few days, an unauthorized blockade has been declared under the flag of a country which, in reality, has no longer any existence, and which, therefore, leaves us without the smallest hope of future reparation for any wrongs it may inflict on us. The experience you have acquired during your long command in this ocean, and the imposing force of the Franklin, would obviously be of the greatest utility to the distinguished officer who has come to succeed you, and your remaining here a very short period would greatly facilitate his future operations.

With these views, and under the urgency of circumstances which have so recently arisen, we most earnestly hope that you may be induced to delay your departure for a short period; since, by so doing, the new danger that threatens the extinction of our commerce may in all probability be removed. The amount of interest at stake, the distant position of our country, and the threatening evils to which we allude, all seem to us to require it; and we have, therefore, no doubt they will justify to our government your remaining a few weeks longer. Perhaps a few days only may dissipate the dangers that are gathering. You may in this case probably have the satisfaction of having contributed to save a large amount of property to your fellow-citizens, of which, if they

are despoiled, neither they nor their government have any power to look to for future compensation.

Whatever may be your determination, we offer to you our most cordial wishes for your safe return to your country, where, we feel satisfied, you will receive the approbation from your government and fellow-citizens, which your long and efficient services so justly merit.

We have the honor to be, sir,

Your friends and fellow-citizens,

Daniel W. Coit,	J. A. Stevenson,
Wm. H. Conkling,	Joseph M'Comb,
Jno. C. Green,	Rosman Lawrence,
Samuel Erwin,	Jos. James,
Russell Baldwin,	James Bradley,
Moses Gibbs,	J. M. Sebor,
Ambrose H. Burrows,	Jno. Donnell,
Perry Bowers,	Charles Manchester,
William Johnson, Jr.	J. Jones,
Henry L. Dekoven,	Nixon & M'Call.
Hiram Putnam,	

On returning to the country he had so nobly served, Commodore Stewart was subjected to a degrading arrest for one year, and to the costs of an expensive court martial. An acquittal, more honorable than the records of any naval tribunal can furnish, was the result accorded him, under the oath of twelve of his brother officers, distinguished for their patriotism, valor, experience, and fidelity to their country and their corps.

Navy Department, 5th September, 1825.

Sir:—I inclose to you the judgment of the Court-martial, which the President of the United States has approved, acquitting you most honorably of all the charges which have been made against you, and of which the government has been apprized, while you commanded the squadron in the Pacific. The number and nature of the charges, and the character of those who presented them, were such, that an inquiry was demanded by your own honor, and the duty, which the government owed to itself and the interest of the nation. The result of the investigation has been satisfactory to the Executive, will be useful to the public, and honorable to yourself. It has furnished a conclusive answer to public and private accusation, and redeemed your fame from reproach—a fame heretofore dear to your country, and hereafter to become still more precious.

I am, very respectfully, &c.,

SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD.

Captain CHARLES STEWART,
U. S. Navy, Washington.

At a general Court Martial, convened at the city of Washington, on

the eighteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-five, by virtue of a precept from the honorable the Secretary of the Navy, bearing date the seventeenth day of August instant:

Present—Captain James Barron, President; Captains William M. Crane, Robert T. Spence, John D. Henley, Jesse D. Elliott, Stephen Cassin, James Renshaw, Thomas Brown, Charles C. B. Thompson, Alexander S. Wadsworth, George W. Rogers, and George C. Reed, Members; and Richard S. Coxe, Judge Advocate.

This court, having fully and maturely investigated the matters submitted to it in the case of Captain Charles Stewart, and considered the charges and specifications, the evidence and the defence of the accused, proceeded this third day of September, in the year aforesaid, to which time the court had been adjourned, from day to day, to determine upon the same. And after such deliberation, it is of opinion that the first and second specifications of the first charge are not proved, that the third specification is so far proved, as it alleges that the said Captain Stewart did prevent the captain of the Peruvian brig *Belgrano* from taking and sending in for adjudication, the American ship, the *Canton*, then engaged in a lawful trade; that in so doing the said Charles Stewart was acting in strict obedience to his duty, as indicated both in his instructions and by the laws of nations; and that his conduct on this occasion was highly meritorious and praiseworthy. The court is also of opinion that the residue of the specification is not proved. The court is also of opinion that the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth specifications are not proved. It is of opinion that the tenth specification is so far proved as it alleges the purchase of the articles therein mentioned to have been made from the *Canton*, but the court is decidedly of opinion that there was no impropriety in the act, that it was proper and correct, and that the residue of the specification is not proved.

In relation to the eleventh specification, the court is of opinion that it is so far proved as it relates to the employment of the carpenters and other persons attached to the *Franklin*, in the manner stated, but it is also of opinion that such employment was, in all cases to which the proof reaches, proper, consonant to the practice of the service, and in every view perfectly unobjectionable; and that the residue of the specification is not proved. The twelfth specification is not proved. The thirteenth is so far proved as that it is shown by the testimony that the said Eliphalet Smith was on one occasion employed as a matter of convenience to Captain Stewart, and in aid of the public interests, to carry a despatch, which had no other than public objects, and that this employment of Captain Smith was designed for the public good, and had not the remotest reference to, or effect upon, any other interests, and that the residue of the specification is not proved. The court is also of opinion that the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth specifications

are not proved. The seventeenth is so far proved as it relates to the building of three small schooners, with the aid of the carpenters, &c. of the Franklin, but not out of government property; that this was in the judicious and faithful exercise of an unquestioned right, and that the individuals thus employed were thus employed by their own free choice, for their own benefit, and compensated for their labor. It is also of opinion that the eighteenth specification is proved, but the act therein alleged is in conformity with the practice of the service, in fulfilment of one of the duties which public vessels owe to the commercial interests of the nation, and essentially useful and necessary.

In the circumstances accompanying this particular act, it was wholly unobjectionable and not attended with any loss or injury to the public. The nineteenth specification is also proved in point of fact, but this likewise is deemed by the court one of those acts in which the convenience and comfort of those engaged in commerce may be essentially promoted without the slightest public injury, and that in this instance it was wholly unobjectionable. As regards the twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second and twenty-third specifications, it is the opinion of the court that the said Weaver was absent from the Franklin, with a permission granted on proper and sufficient grounds, till the arrival of the Franklin at Callao, on or about the first of August, 1822, that subsequent to this period he was absent without leave: that the muster rolls transmitted to the department did not precisely accord with that on board the Franklin, but the variances between them were wholly immaterial, such as could not have been designed, because not calculated to produce the smallest inconvenience or injury, and which the court believes were purely accidental: nor can the court perceive any grounds upon which to attribute this mistake, innocent and unimportant as it was, to any inadvertence of the accused. It is also of opinion that the muster roll, which was approved in November, 1824, was approved in a regular manner, and at a proper time; that the entry contained in it corresponded with the fact, and with the information previously communicated to the department. The court is likewise of opinion that the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth, the only remaining specifications of the first charge, are not, nor is either of them, proved, and it does adjudge and declare that the said Charles Stewart is NOT GUILTY of the first charge.

The court is also of opinion that the first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh specifications of the second charge are not proved, and that the second specification is only so far proved as is set forth in the opinion of the court upon the third specification of the first charge, and therefore does pronounce and adjudge that the said Charles Stewart is NOT GUILTY of the second charge.

The facts set forth in the first specification of the third charge have already been passed upon by the court, in its opinion upon the twen-

tieth specification of the first charge, and reference is therefore made to the finding of the court thereupon. The second and third specifications are not proved. The court does therefore adjudge and declare that the said Charles Stewart is NOT GUILTY of the third charge.

In relation to the specification of the fourth charge, it is the opinion of the court that the same is not proved, and therefore the said Charles Stewart is adjudged and declared NOT GUILTY of the said fourth charge.

In terminating a trial which has awakened so general and so deep an interest, and submitting the result to the Executive, the court trusts that the peculiar character of the accusations which have been investigated will furnish an excuse for appending to the record a few remarks.

When rumours and reports are widely and industriously disseminated calculated to impair the high standing and usefulness of an officer in whom great trust and confidence have been reposed, it becomes the duty of the Executive to afford to such officer, by the convention of a proper tribunal, an ample opportunity of vindicating himself before the world. To afford this opportunity and to preserve from the insidious effects of unmerited reproach, a reputation dear to the nation—won by the honorable services of seven and twenty years—to extinguish prejudices and suspicions created by misrepresentations or misconceptions of public agents and private individuals, and finally, to do all which the laws, which justice, and which honor exact, this court has been convened.

Charges and specifications have been preferred embracing all the accusations made against Captain Stewart; an investigation has been made into their truth; it has been conducted by the judge advocate in the most exemplary manner, yet with a minuteness and fulness calculated to leave no doubt or cloud of suspicion resting upon the character of the accused. This investigation has produced what was desired by Captain Stewart, and intended by the Executive—a development of all the important transactions attending the late cruise of the Franklin in the Pacific, and the principles and motives which guided the conduct of her commander. These charges and specifications the court has adjudged not to be proved; to be in some respects utterly groundless, and in others to have originated in a misconception or misrepresentation of the most innocent and meritorious acts; and Captain Stewart has been most fully and most honorably acquitted of every, even the slightest impropriety.

The court however conceives that the peculiar character of the accusation is such that it would not render that full measure of justice which is required at its hands by a simple judgment of acquittal. It is therefore impelled by a sense of duty to go farther, and to make unhesitatingly

this declaration to the world, that so far from having violated the high duties of neutrality and respect for the laws of nations, so far from having sacrificed the honor of the American flag, or tarnished his own fair fame, by acting upon any motive of a mercenary or sordid kind; so far from having neglected his duty, or betrayed the trust reposed in him by refusing proper protection to American citizens and property, or rendering such protection subservient to individual interests, no one circumstance has been developed throughout the whole course of this minute investigation into the various occurrences of a three years' cruise, calculated to impair the confidence which the members of this court, the navy, and the nation have long reposed in the honor, the talents, and the patriotism of this distinguished officer, or to weaken in any manner the opinion which all who knew him entertained of his humanity and disinterestedness. These virtues only glow with brighter lustre from this ordeal of trial, like the stars he triumphantly displayed, when valor and skill achieved a new victory to adorn the annals of our naval glory.

James Barron, President.

Robert T. Spence,

J. D. Elliott,

James Renshaw,

Charles C. B. Thompson,

George W. Rogers,

Richard S. Coxe, Judge Advocate.

W. M. Crane,

John D. Henley,

S. Cassin,

Thomas Brown,

Alex. S. Wadsworth,

George C. Read,

The proceedings and sentence of the court are approved; with the exception of the exclusion of Samuel Brown as an incompetent witness. The grounds of objection to his testimony apparent on the face of the record, being considered as going to his credibility and not to his competency.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Washington, 5th September, 1825.

On Commodore Stewart's return from Washington, where his trial took place, to his native city, (Philadelphia,) his friends greeted him with a public dinner, in approbation of his services in the Pacific. During the years 1825 to 1830, he was variously engaged in appropriate duties, such as examining Midshipmen, and sitting on Courts Martial, &c. &c.

In March 1830, Commodore Stewart was in Washington, and while there received from the Secretary of the Navy the following circular, enclosing a copy of the resolutions of the Senate of the United States.

[CIRCULAR.]

Navy Department, March 3d, 1830.

SIR:—I send you herewith a copy of a resolution of the Senate of the United States of the first instant, calling for information relative to the

necessity for employing marines on board our vessels of war, and whether seamen could not be usefully substituted in their place, &c. and have to request that you will, in conformity with the terms of the resolution, furnish me with your opinion in writing, upon the different points embraced by it, as early as practicable.

I am, respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN BRANCH.

Com. CHARLES STEWART,
United States Navy, Washington City.

[COPY.]

In Senate of the United States, March 1, 1830.

RESOLVED,—That the Secretary of the Navy be directed to furnish to this House, information on the following subjects :

Whether it is necessary to the armed equipment of a vessel of war, that *Marines* should compose a part of its military force.

Or whether marines may not be usefully dispensed with, and a portion of the seamen be instructed in the use of small arms, and perform all duties which can be required of marines, either in battle or in ordinary service.

Whether seamen are not now instructed and practised in the use of small arms ; and generally, any information which may elucidate the inquiry whether marines can or can not be beneficially dispensed with on board of our public vessels of war.

Whether the petty officers and seamen who have been in service, but from age or slight disabilities, are rendered unfit for the active duties of their calling on ship board, can be usefully and safely employed as guards at the navy stations, in lieu of the marines now assigned to that duty.

And farther, that the Secretary of the Navy obtain from the officers composing the Navy Board, and other naval officers of rank now in the seat of Government, their opinions in writing on the foregoing subjects, to be transmitted with his report to the Senate. Attest :

Signed,

WALTER LOWRIE.

Washington, March 8, 1830.

SIR :—I have had the honor to receive your letter of the third instant, covering a resolution of the Senate of the United States relative to the marine corps, requiring information on the following points :

FIRST. Whether it is necessary that “marines should compose a part of the military force of a ship of war?”

To this I answer, that I do conceive them proper, and necessary, to constitute a part of the crew of a ship of war.

SECOND. “Whether marines may not usefully be dispensed with, and a portion of the seamen be instructed in the use of small arms, and perform all the duties which may be required of marines in battle, or on ordinary service?”

To this I answer, that, for the mere purposes of battle, perhaps the seamen might be instructed, in a limited degree, in the use of small arms.

THIRD. "Whether seamen are not now instructed and practised in the use of small arms?"

To this I answer, that a portion of the crew (other than the marines) are now, and always have been, instructed and practised in the use of small arms; but that instruction and practice is very limited, as it necessarily must be.

FOURTH. "Whether the petty officers and seamen who have been in service, but, from age or slight disabilities, are rendered unfit for the active duties of their calling on ship-board, can be usefully and safely employed as guards at the navy stations, in lieu of marines?"

To this I answer, I think not; but as I have never had any command or control over a navy yard or station, I cannot speak to this question from actual experience. The foregoing answers would seem to comprise all the honorable the Senate of the United States require on this subject; and it would not have been proper to go farther, were it not for that part of their third question, requiring also any general information in elucidation of the object of the resolution, "whether marines can, or cannot be beneficially dispensed with on board our public ships of war?" Under this clause, I would beg leave to remark, that the marines are the only portion of the crew of a ship of war that is wholly military, and the only part which could be rendered such, by the nature of the service, as well as the nature of those comprising the other classes. If, then, it is at all desirable or useful to have a portion of the force of a ship of war wholly and completely military, that portion must be composed of a regularly organized infantry, for this reason—that the sea officers, from their employments and occupations in ships of war, differ materially from military officers, because the ideas and general habits of sailors unfit them, in a great measure, for infantry soldiers; and because the limited space in a ship of war would not admit of their training; and their general duty and employment would be too much deranged and interfered with. In order to ascertain the necessity and utility of having a portion of the crew of a ship of war organized as infantry, it will be necessary to inquire into the object and duties of such a corps.

The first object is, to instil into them these sound military principles—obedience, subordination, and respect, that they may be entitled to confidence in the discharge of their duties as sentinels to watch over your magazines, spirit-rooms, store-rooms, gangways, galleys, and look-outs; to preserve order, and prevent interruption to the cooking duties, and to guard your prisoners of war, who sometimes outnumber the crew. In port, they constitute the deck guard, and at sea they are (at least, a large portion of them,) always near their arms; thus they prevent surprise from without, and check mutiny within. In the ordinary

duties at sea, the marine watch perform the same duties on deck which would be required of any other body of men, except going aloft; consequently, their usefulness and force as men are not lost; for there must be some men kept on deck, in reefing and furling, to haul the rigging, and manage the cordage for those who are aloft. In battle, when the ship is engaged on both sides, or when otherwise necessary, they can be distributed among the carriage guns, for working the artillery.

Should any operation, wholly military be required of them on shore, they would be more efficient and competent to its performance. Should the combined efforts of seamen and marines be required for the surprise of posts, or the escalade of a fortress, the marines, as a supporting column of regular infantry, would form a disciplined body, whereon to rest the security of the other classes who are appointed to make the grand effort, and would yield them a steady column and military support in case of failure, when they would constitute the reserve, and cover the retreat and embarkation of the seamen. The latter are a class of men, whose onset and first efforts are tremendous and formidable; but, if resisted and discomfited, they break into a hundred groups, which cannot be rallied, and they become a mere mob, who, without a body of regulars to sustain them, must fall a sacrifice. Seamen have a particular aversion to the infantry drill, and, generally speaking, can be brought to little more in that art than to load and fire. That strict subordination and obedience to orders, and the pride of feeling, intuitive in a regular soldier, cannot be attained by a seaman; hence the entire confidence of the officers, for the performance of the ordinary duties on posts, cannot be yielded them; frequent punishments would ensue for neglect and irregularities, and disgust to the service would follow. But, sir, there is another evil in attempting to make marines of sailors: the scarcity of seamen, and ordinary seamen, would embarrass more and more the manning of our ships of war, if those who act as marines be substituted from the other classes.

To take them from landsmen, no advantage would be gained as regards the increased nautical efficiency of our ships; but much would be lost with respect to the military portion—we should have the men without the seaman's or the soldier's profession. In the above observations, I have referred to the possibility of mutiny in our national ships of war. That mutiny has occurred in our navy, there is no doubt.—One instance took place on board the *Constitution*, in the Bay of Leghorn, in the year 1807. The mutiny broke out, I think, in July, and was near becoming serious. By the formidable appearance of a column of marine bayonets, supported by nearly a hundred gallant officers armed, it was not only suppressed, but twenty of the ringleaders were secured, and sent home in the ship, ironed, for punishment; but the Government deemed it most advisable not to punish them, *as they were right, and the commander was wrong*. It appeared that the period for which the men had engaged *had expired*. This practice of keeping

the ships of war absent beyond the period for which their crews are engaged, is becoming a fruitful source for mutiny. Commanders, anxious to execute all the objects of the Government in sending them abroad, lose sight of their obligations to *obey the law*, thereby rendering themselves liable to encounter death at sea, in the shape of mutiny, and *civil prosecutions* on shore, for detaining their men beyond the period for which they engaged. Their paramount duty is to return to the United States, and discharge their crews, after they have faithfully performed their part of the contract. The Government should as faithfully perform theirs, by returning them to their country and homes, and not suffering them to be discharged penniless in distant seas, to encounter starvation, or to beg, or become pirates.

Very many persons are under the impression that most of the mutinies in the British navy originate in their practice of impressment; but I believe there is scarcely an instance of the kind on record. Their mutinies originate from *oppression*, and not impressment. I also believe there is no case where the *marines*, as a body, participated in the mutiny of the seamen. If we refer to the very serious mutiny of the Channel fleet at the Nore, in 1797, I think we will find (I speak from impressions on the memory only) that nothing was stated by the *mutineers* as a grievance for redress on the part of the impressed men, except that sentence of death for desertion, committed by an impressed man, was urged on the King as too severe a punishment; and those who volunteered for the service, and took the bounty, insisted on being discharged every seven years. About the same period, a bloody mutiny took place on board the British frigate, the *Hermione*, on the West India station. This mutiny originated in the oppression and tyranny of the commander on that occasion. All the officers (except a master's mate) encountered death. Captain Pigot, the commander of that ship, was of such a tyrannical and intemperate disposition, as to wholly disqualify him for the command of men. If mutinies have not more frequently occurred in our ships of war, it has been owing to the mildness of our commanders, the good feelings of the seamen towards their officers, and the support afforded the latter by a steady column of bayonets. There are some who will say that marines are useless except for idle parade. But even form and parade, in a military system, is perhaps more essential, in aid of the preservation of discipline amongst republican citizens, than with the subjects of a king.

The whole business of life may be considered as little more than bent, so far as the desire of distinction goes, towards appearances. Men are at best but grown up children, "pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw." Take from military service its distinguishing trappings, the possible "pomp and circumstance of war," the probable vote of thanks of the National Legislature, and what will be then left them to aid their patriotism, in calling for the whole energies of the man, to support them

in the perils of the battle and the ocean, the deprivations of their homes and its comforts?

If we refer to the past services of the marine corps, they will be found to be among the most distinguished. Whether you take them at the charge of the bayonet, in unison with the seamen wielding the sabre and the pike, boarding the gun-boats off Tripoli, in their various actions on the ocean, or in their efforts with the seamen under Barney in resisting the advance of the British columns to your capital, you will find they have ever sustained a high reputation for discipline, conduct, and courage. Under these circumstances, I am decidedly of opinion that the *marines* cannot be beneficially dispensed with in our national ships of war.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

CHARLES STEWART.

The Hon. JOHN BRANCH, Secretary of the Navy.

In the month of August, 1830, he was appointed a member of the Board of Navy Commissioners, at Washington, where he remained until August, 1833; he then retired to his farm, in New Jersey. In the month of July, 1836, he received the following letter of instructions from the Navy Department, associating with him those distinguished officers, Commodores Dallas and Bolton, Commanders of the West Indian squadron, and of the Pensacola Navy Yard.

Navy Department, July 8, 1836.

To Commodores Charles Stewart, Alexr. J. Dallas, and W. C. Bolton.

GENTLEMEN :—Under the act of the third of March, 1827, the President of the United States was authorised to cause the Navy Yards of the United States to be thoroughly examined, and plans to be prepared and sanctioned by him, for the improvement of the same, and the preservation of the public property therein; from which plans no deviation is to be made but by his especial order. This has been done with all, except the Navy Yards at Pensacola and New York. You are hereby constituted a Board of Commissioners to make the examination, and prepare the plan agreeably to that act for the Navy Yard at Pensacola. Mr. William P. Sanger will report to you, and will act under your direction. His assistance as an engineer, will be serviceable in the discharge of the duty assigned to you.

The object of the law referred to, is to make such an arrangement of the improvements and buildings at the yards, and such plans for future expenditures upon them, as shall best promote economy, and best fit them for the public service, and the transaction of the public business, and save the necessity of charges hereafter, by which the public money would be uselessly expended. The plan to be adopted is designed to be permanent, and to embrace all the buildings and improv-

ments which will at any future time be necessary at the Pensacola Navy Yard.

For the discharge of your duty, therefore, it will be indispensable to look to the probable extension of this yard for future service. An enlarged view of all the matters connected with it as a dock yard and as a building and repairing establishment will be required, to enable you to make such a plan as will be permanently useful. To officers so experienced and intelligent, it is not necessary to enumerate the buildings and improvements which will be hereafter called for by the service.

You will be careful to provide for them all, and upon an accurate map of the yard, you will designate the position in which every building and every improvement is to be placed. In your recommendation for these improvements, you will, of course, consider the means of approach by water, as well as the location on the land.

I am, respectfully, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

M. DICKERSON.

In compliance with the foregoing instructions, Commodore Stewart proceeded to Pensacola, in the United States sloop of war, *Natchez*, Captain Mervine. The following joint report was made from Pensacola.

Pensacola, September 27, 1836.

SIR:—We have the honor to submit to you, (as commissioners to whom was assigned the planning of the Navy Yard at this place,) in compliance with your instructions of July the eighth, a plan of the Navy Yard, with all the docks, slips, and buildings, which, in all probability, will in future be required for the public service, and which appears to us necessary, at a station of such high national importance as this seems to the commissioners to be.

The commissioners have been obliged to keep in view some peculiarities attending this extensive bay, such as its almost constant and strong ebb-tides, the destructive effects of the marine worm, and the invariable sandy nature of the soil.

Under the influence of these considerations, they deemed it essential, and therefore projected on the plan, a sea wall, sufficient to afford all the wharfing accommodation for ships in ordinary, repairing, masting, or fitting for service, as well as all transports employed in bringing the necessary supplies for the establishment at any future time.

About a quarter of a mile in the rear of the Navy Yard there exists a constant fresh-water lake, adequate to the supply, at all times, of water for the wet dock which this sea wall will form, to furnish all that may be required in the Navy Yard in case of fire, and sufficient for watering the ships of war. Thus the fresh water in the wet dock will prevent the effect of worms on the dry dock gates, as well as all wooden structures in its vicinity; it will also furnish the means of destroying the living principle in grass, barnacles, and other fouling substances of ships' bottoms, and act as a cleanser to their copper on coming from sea.

as well as to preserve their bottoms from fouling while repairing, fitting, or lying in ordinary at the Navy Yard.

The rigging loft is placed near the rope-walk for convenience sake, on part of the sea wall wharf, and under it we contemplate having sufficient store room for cables and cordage, handy to be put on board ships in its neighborhood, or boats to convey to ships elsewhere, with as little manual labor as possible. The sail-loft is also conveniently placed on the sea wall wharf with the same view; and underneath store room will be found sufficient for all the pitch, tar, turpentine, rosin, and oil, where they will be convenient to water carriage, as well as for extinguishing those combustible articles should they accidentally take fire. On the opposite angle of the sea wall we have placed the building slips, boat and mast houses, with the heavy blacksmithery, anchor, and tank foundries, castings, and plumburies, from whence all those heavy appurtenances for ships of war can be conveniently boated and transported; and with a view to concentrate the necessary working fires as much as possible, we have located the cooper-shop, bake-house, and cook-house in the vicinity, with the accommodations for negro laborers, near the entrance gate, under the eye of the marine guard there stationed.

The commissioners, in obedience to the farther instructions of the department, of August tenth, made a reconnoissance of the grounds *contiguous to the Navy Yard* for a site for the marine barracks; and they find the ground to the right too unequal in its surface, and too many water-pools on and about it, to answer that purpose. On the left, the ground is more favorable, and would present an eligible position stretching along the front of the bay, open and airy, with a pleasant water view; but here the ground is, in part, occupied with settlements under lease from the Government, which might not be conveniently or easily got rid of; in which case, there only remains the rear of the Navy Yard about five hundred feet in depth, with the same extent as the Navy Yard; which would afford ample room to erect all the necessary buildings, accommodations, gardens, and parade ground, that may at any time be found necessary.

The commissioners, in compliance with your letter of August twentieth, have examined the two several places pointed out as eligible sites for a Navy Yard within this bay; that is to say, the Navy Cove, opposite the town of Pensacola, and a place above the town called Five Fathom Hole. The former, (Navy Cove,) the commissioners are of opinion would not answer the purpose at all, and is liable to very many objections; its location is beyond the reach of any immediate protection from the fortifications or their garrisons, for any small military expedition would be able to surprise it through the Santa Rosa sound; it is shut in from the advantages of the sea breezes, and, consequently, is excessively hot for laborers and mechanics; and, indeed, were those disadvantages removed, the extent of the flats is too great to be overcome without very heavy expenditures. With respect to the latter, (Five

Fathom Hole,) the commissioners cannot discover any advantages over the present location to induce their recommending a change; ships there placed would be much exposed to the great range of easterly winds, which are the strongest that blow in this quarter; it is, also, at the head of the deep water in the bay, and will be that portion of it most likely to fill up and shallow hereafter, when the surrounding country becomes cleared, cultivated, and liable to wash from the heavy rains of the summer season.

All of which is most respectfully submitted,

By your obedient servants,

CHARLES STEWART,

A. J. DALLAS,

W. C. BOLTON,

Commissioners.

To Hon. Mahlon Dickerson,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

During the stay of the Commodore at Pensacola, he made extensive notes, and observations, and shortly after his return to Philadelphia, he addressed the following letter to the Secretary of the Navy.

Philadelphia, November 20, 1836.

SIR:—In your instructions directed to me of the eighth of July last, relative to the plan for the construction of the navy yard at Pensacola, you direct that “All the buildings and improvements should be comprised in the plan which at any future time would be necessary at that yard;” and that “an enlarged view should be taken of all the matters connected with it as a dock yard, or a building and repairing establishment.” Having completed a plan for the improvements of the yard, and submitted it to you, I beg leave now to submit to you, also, some ideas which occurred to me in taking that enlarged view of this establishment which your instructions seem to aim at.

In studying the position of Pensacola, with reference not only to our own adjacent coast, and the great outlet of the Mississippi which it is so favorably placed to protect, but also to the neighboring countries of Mexico and the islands of Cuba, Jamaica, and St. Domingo, which are all liable at some future period to be occupied by nations at enmity with the United States, the national importance of the place could not but force itself on my mind, and excite some surprise that it had not hitherto attracted more the attention of the Government. In evidence how little has as yet been done there, I may mention the fact, that the revenue schooner Dexter had to resort to Charleston to get her sides caulked, and a few other trifling repairs which she needed. Yet, at the same time that the great section of our country, of which Pensacola must hereafter become the naval depot, has been thus overlooked, we find large appropriations applied to the construction of navy yards in the middle and eastern states. Casual observers unacquainted with the

lukewarmness with which the development of our naval energies has been prosecuted, might naturally conclude that this disparity had its origin in an indifference to our true policy, or in sectional selfishness; or how else could they account for the extraordinary fact, that our whole seaboard from Norfolk to the Sabine, an extent of nearly two thousand miles, does not afford the means of even repairing a sloop of war; whilst to the north and east, in less than one thousand miles of coast, the means not only for repairs, but for construction, are so singularly multiplied, that in the Chesapeake waters we have two—the navy yards at Norfolk and Washington; and in the bay of Massachusetts, two others—one at Portsmouth and one at Boston. There is great deficiency in the southern section of our country, as respects preparation for naval defence, where it may be most needed, to protect the rich and exuberant region which has its outlet in the straits of Florida. In the event of war, every means would be wanting to afford a permanent protection for its great and valuable products issuing forth through so many arteries, and now rendering all Europe tributary to us, and promoting the prosperity not only of the states which produce them, but at the same time the wealth, power, and aggrandizement of our whole Union. Through the Florida stream flow all the commerce and valuable productions of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois. All the produce of these various states, except that of South Carolina and Georgia, must pass through the straits of Cape Florida, the only practicable outlet of the great Gulf of Mexico, which is thus constituted for egress, a close sea, as much so as the Mediterranean, owing to the northeast trade wind which prevails to the south, and the island of Cuba and the Bahamas closing it on the east.

All the states enumerated are highly interested in the establishment of an efficient naval depot within the Gulf of Mexico, embracing all the elements necessary for the repairs, construction, and equipment of ships of war, and the gradual acclimating of troops for southern service.

By means of the strong current of the Gulf Stream, naval protection could be afforded to Georgia and South Carolina, with as much facility and despatch from Pensacola as from any of our northern naval stations; and, on the contrary, a naval force rendezvousing at Portsmouth, Boston, New York, or Norfolk, would be as unavailable for our coast and commerce in the Gulf of Mexico, as a naval force at Brest or Cherbourg would be for the protection of the south of France and her commerce in the Mediterranean. Indeed, the ships of our northern ports would be still less available than the French ships under those circumstances; for, owing to the circuitous navigation round the south of Cuba, which the strong currents of the Gulf of Florida render necessary, it would take from thirty to fifty days for a fleet to reach the Gulf of Mexico from any port on our north Atlantic coast. The Natchez

sloop of war, in which I took my passage in the fulfilment of the orders of the eighth of July last, took thirty-four days to get from New York to Pensacola; and the year preceding, the same ship was fifty-six days in conveying Commodore Dallas from New York to the same place.

France situated precisely, with respect to the Mediterranean, as the United States are to the Gulf of Mexico, found it necessary to establish her great naval depot at Toulon; and Spain, with her establishment at Ferrol, and another at Cadiz, immediately by the straits of Gibraltar, could not protect her Mediterranean commerce, without another formidable establishment at Carthagea. Thus must it be with the United States. The Gulf of Mexico is our Mediterranean, and Pensacola will become our Toulon; also, at no distant period, some port on the coast of South Carolina or Georgia must furnish the same facilities as Cadiz, for the protection of the exterior mouth of the straits of Florida.

However inclined some may be to pass over this important question, it does appear to me, that if our Government be true to the purposes of its institution, they will accord ample protection to every section of our Union. The period for according this protection may be delayed, to the injury of our interests, and the dishonor of our national character; but it cannot be always avoided, for, in some future maritime war—such as, sooner or later, must take place, and which we may be engaged in—the productions of that vast empire, which has for its only outlet the straits of Florida, will be effectually locked up, to the fatal injury of the country, or possibly to the dissolution of the Union.

It is not probable that an enemy will hereafter ever attempt to make permanent conquest of any part of our territory; yet past experience has shown us with what facility, an inconsiderable military force, sustained by a naval one, could agitate our whole seaboard, harass the militia, burn our towns and plantations, and arrest entirely our commerce and coasting trade, for the want of adequate means of defence, proportioned to the resources and real power of our country. At a later period, we have seen with what facility a handful of pirates, without territorial protection, skulking into and out of the harbors of the neighboring islands, could pillage and destroy our vessels trading to the Carribean and Mexican seas, and sacrifice the lives of our citizens with relentless barbarity.

Foreign powers, with whom we are liable, from conflicting interests, to be brought into collision, border on our territory, and occupy a chain of formidable posts, stretching along and overlooking our whole southern coast—such as Jamaica, Mexico, Cuba, Bermudas and the Bahamas; some of which are maintained at great expense, and might be the rendezvous for future means of annoyance and attack of our territory and commerce.

The Gulf of Mexico and Straits of Florida, constituting as they do the outlet of so many productions of a rich and valuable nature, thus

surrounded by various nations, bid fair to be the scenes of much future contention. Our own interests in that quarter are of immense and rapidly increasing value, and which being thus open to assault, it appears to me it would be a wise policy in our Government to provide the arsenals and establishments for ships of war necessary to the protection of our vast interests in that sea, and thus prevent its falling a prey to the rapacious grasp of future belligerents, as well as to avoid the necessity of our ships of war navigating (perhaps in a crippled condition) a dangerous coast of such extent, to procure the necessary repairs and refit, from the destruction of battle, the disasters of the elements, and the decay incident to our vessels, and subject to great loss of time in going from and returning to their stations at the south.

The new principles of European policy and reform in relation to their American colonies, aided by the fanatics spread over our own country, exciting an insurrectionary spirit among a numerous class of our south-western population, together with the cupidity which the rich productions of that country are calculated to create, seem to admonish us not to trust too far to our own peaceful habits and passive disposition, but to apply all the means in the possession of the Government for the permanent defence of that interesting portion of the Union.

If these impressions are just, it appears to me of the greatest importance that the construction of the dock and navy yard at Pensacola, should be pushed on with all possible despatch; and that the navy should obtain there every essential to its efficiency; and the Government and country should find at that place, on the first emergency, all the means of defence for the coast and its commerce. The best harbor in the Gulf of Mexico, accessible at all seasons of the year, enjoying an exemption from tropical diseases, and a mild climate, nature seems to have formed it for the great naval depot and rendezvous for our ships destined to protect the Mexican seas. This harbor admits, with facility of ingress and egress, the largest sloops of war and merchant ships; but this will not be "adequate to the future wants of the nation in the Gulf of Mexico. The deepening of the bar, or entrance, so as to admit vessels of the largest class, is essential to that port, and is an experiment well worth trying. Should, however, the experiment fail, a new channel could be cut through the island of St. Rosa, which I should think, would not be a work of much difficulty, as the island is very narrow, and has deep water close to the shore on the sea side.

The abundance of the finest timber for the construction and repairing of vessels of war, which grows on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, and immediately in the neighborhood of Pensacola, which now has to be transported to the northern navy yards at a great expense and labor, added to the facilities which the internal improvements in a state of progress in that country will afford for the transportation of every material for fleets of war, constitutes a strong reason for the early estab-

lishment of a school of workmen and mechanics, so essential to the ends proposed, of meeting "any future wants at that place," and developing its utility as a naval depot and rendezvous for the ships of war.

Considering the exposed state of this section of our Union from the causes before enumerated, and that the Gulf of Mexico and its outlet (the Straits of Florida.) is our vulnerable point, through which flows so large a portion of our national wealth, no time ought to be lost in rendering Pensacola the key to, and the defence of, the Mexican seas.

I have the honor to remain, very respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

CHARLES STEWART.

To the Hon. MAHLON DICKERSON,
Secretary of the Navy.

On the first of July, 1837, Commodore James Barron resigned the command of the Navy Yard, at Philadelphia, and Commodore Stewart was placed in command of that establishment.

By the most strenuous exertions, Commodore Stewart succeeded in launching the line-of-battle-ship *Pennsylvania*, on the eighteenth day of July. This ship, not only the largest in our navy, but the most magnificent in point of model and construction, was ordered by the Secretary of the Navy to be removed from Philadelphia to Norfolk, *to be coppered*, and Commodore Stewart was appointed to equip and take her to that place for the purpose.

The order of the Secretary of the Navy to transfer the *Pennsylvania* to another place to be coppered, produced a deep and universal dissatisfaction among the citizens of Philadelphia, and indeed of the whole State.

Large and spirited public meetings were convened to remonstrate against the measure, and to urge upon the Executive, the necessity of having her completed in the yard where her keel was laid.

In this just state pride of his fellow citizens, Commodore Stewart warmly participated; but the determination of the Department was irreversable, and he yielded with regret to the fiat of the department, which took from the State of Pennsylvania the honor of giving the finishing stroke to the noble ship that bears her own name.

The want of a dry dock at Philadelphia, was the alleged ground of justification for this procedure, and called the immediate attention of Commodore Stewart to this important appendage of a complete navy yard at this city.

The commercial importance of Philadelphia, its facilities for procuring timbers and other materials for building and repairing ships, and its central location, all combined to force on his mind the propriety of recommending the establishment of a dry dock, and enlisted the utmost

energies of almost all the public men and people of Pennsylvania in support of the measure.

As the Commodore enters into the matter with his characteristic vigor, it is hoped that in a short time this salutary object will be attained, and all agree that it will materially contribute to the benefit of the many industrious mechanics and laborers who will thus find employment, and to the advancement of the commercial interests and prosperity of his native city, as well as to the naval resources and strength of the country.

Should this undertaking prove successful, it will stand a monument, as enduring as the "right angled city" itself, commemorative of the public spirit and devotion to the navy, which have ever distinguished his career.

Commodore Stewart is about five feet nine inches in height, erect and well proportioned, of a dignified and engaging presence, and possessed of great constitutional powers to endure hardships and privations of all kinds. Although fifty-nine years of age, he is still as active as if he was but in the prime of life. His complexion is fair, like that of Mr. Jefferson, but bears the weather beaten marks of naval service. His hair is of a chesnut color; his eyes blue, large, penetrating, and intelligent. The cast of his countenance is Roman, bold, strong, and commanding, and his head finely formed. It has been pronounced by a phrenologist, the head of a man of great vigor and mind, high sense of justice, and inflexible resolution of purpose. It is well known that his character corresponds perfectly with these indications.

His mind is acute and powerful, grasping the greatest or smallest subjects with the intuitive mastery of genius. He not only fully understands his profession as a naval commander, but all the various interests of commerce, the foreign and domestic policy of his country, the principles of government, and the "law of nations," are as familiar to him as "household words."

Let any person consult his numerous official letters and reports, embracing a wide range of subjects; or sit down and converse with him upon the political and social relations of our country, its internal resources, and the *true* policy of developing them, and he will be astonished at the extent and accuracy of his information. Often has the question been asked, how did this man, amidst the rapid events of a life spent in the active service of his country, acquire so much useful knowledge beyond the apparent line of his profession? The answer is,—Commodore Stewart has always been an observer, a reader, and a thinker.—Nothing has escaped his vigilant attention. He has devoted himself to the service of his country, and he holds that whoever would serve his country well, should understand its government, its laws, and its interests, in order to uphold, represent, and sustain them.

His control over his passions is truly surprising, and under the most irritating circumstances, his oldest seamen have never yet seen a ray of

anger flash from his eye. His kindness, benevolence, and humanity are proverbial amongst those who know him, but his sense of justice and requisitions of duty are as unbending as fate.

That this is not the strained language of panegyric, recur to the account, in the preceding sketch, of his noble rescue of the women and children from a watery grave, for proof of his humanity. Recur to his invention of our cannon sights, an event which added so much to our superiority in gunnery, for proof of his mechanical genius. Recur to his able and masterly letter to General Sucre, among many others, the principles of which have now become the guide and rule of our government, on the subject of blockades, for a proof of his knowledge of the Law of Nations. Recur to the magnanimous stand taken by him in conjunction with Commodore Bainbridge, on the employment of the navy at the outset of the war, for proof of his chivalric patriotism; to which circumstances alone are justly attributable—according to the Secretary of the Navy—our glorious victories on the ocean, victories which covered the flag of the nation with imperishable honor, and inspired the drooping hearts of our countrymen with that confidence and valor which enabled them to vanquish the foe, wherever they met him on sea or land. Recur for proof of his skill and bravery to the many actions in which he fought and commanded, and especially to his victory over the *Cyane* and *Levant*, a victory unprecedented in naval history, by which he reduced to practice his own prior theory, that one large ship could capture two ships of combined superior force.*

Recur to his numerous reports to the Navy Department, and to the President of the United States, at different periods, for proof of his intimate and comprehensive acquaintance with the domestic policy and interest of his country; and, if farther proof be needed of his ability and patriotism in the service of his country, every President, from Mr. Jefferson down to Mr. Van Buren, has conferred upon him his emphatic approbation, and some testimony to his satisfactory discharge of every duty.

Such is a brief outline of the character of Commodore Stewart, a son of whom Pennsylvania, as well as the entire Union, has just reason to be proud. His counsels and his services have contributed so much to the glory of the Navy, that they must be gratefully remembered, as long as the star spangled banner affords protection against foreign aggression to those over whom it floats, and is honored and respected throughout the world.

Long may he live to serve his country, and to behold the navy, with which he has been so long and so honorably associated, hoist her flag in every breeze, and protect her commerce and her rights on every sea.

* See his Letter, twelfth of November, 1812, to the Secretary of the Navy.







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