

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

December 1st, 1823.

The PRESIDENT of the United States:

SIR: In obedience to the request contained in your letter of the 10th ultimo, I submit, respectfully, the following statement of the administration of this Department, during the present year, comprehending the number of vessels commissioned; the number in ordinary, fit for service, or requiring repairs; the progress made in building vessels; with the disbursements of the Department, and the service in which the vessels have been employed; with such observations on the whole subject as are deemed proper.

Letter 1, from the Commissioners of the Navy, with papers A, B, C, D, and E, which accompany it, exhibit

1. The vessels of war in commission, with the service in which they are employed. See A.

2. The vessels in ordinary, on the Atlantic board, and on the Lakes, with the state of repairs of each vessel.—B and C.

3. The progress made in building, under the law "to increase the navy of the United States"—D. By this, it appears that four ships of the line have heretofore been built, and that five ships of the line, and five frigates of the first class, are now building; some of which *might* be launched in thirty days; and all, except one, in one hundred and twenty days.

4. A general view of the improvements at the several building yards. In some of the yards, additional improvements are now necessary for their comfortable and economical administration.

5. The disbursements of the Department during the three first quarters of the present year, up to the 30th September.(2.) The disbursements of the year 1822 appear by the report made to Congress in the month of February last. It appears that \$1,984,520 74 have been drawn from the Treasury between the 1st January and the 30th September, leaving, on the latter day, \$2,218,168 66 unexpended of the amount applicable to the service of the year. Of this unexpended balance, a large proportion will be used during the remaining quarter; and a minute statement of the whole will be furnished to Congress in the annual report required from this Department.

On paper A, it is to be remarked, that the frigate *Constitution*, sloop of war *Ontario*, and schooner *Nonsuch*, are in the Mediterranean, under the command of Captain Jones. No change in the amount of force, in that sea, has been made within the year. It has been found competent to all the purposes for which it is maintained. Our commerce there has been amply protected; the officers and seamen have enjoyed good health, and no circumstance has occurred worthy of particular notice. While our relations with other powers continue friendly, any large augmentation of that portion of our naval force will not be necessary. In the coming year, it is not proposed materially to increase or diminish it. The *Cyane* and *Eric* will, in a short time, relieve the *Constitution* and *Ontario*, that they may return home, discharge their crews, whose term of service will soon expire, refit, and resume their station. For this purpose, the *Eric*, Captain Deacon, sailed from New York on the 8th of November, and the *Cyane*, Captain Creighton, will sail in a few days.

On the same paper, A, it is to be further remarked, that the *Franklin*, ship of the line, and the schooner *Dolphin*, of 12 guns, are still in the Pacific Ocean, where they have remained for more than two years, under the command of Captain Stewart. By the presence of this force on the coasts of Chili and Peru, depredations on our growing commerce have been, in a great degree, prevented, and respect for our interests and flag secured.

Capt. Stewart will return to the United States in the course of this winter, or early in the ensuing spring; and, in the place of the *Franklin*, it is proposed to substitute the frigate *United States*, and the *Peacock*, sloop of war, of 18 guns. Such a division of the force, it is believed, will more extensively protect the flag and commerce of the United States, and permit the commanding officer, with the larger vessel, to be absent from the usual cruising grounds for a short time, should circumstances render such absence necessary. Captain Hull will sail, in a few days, from Norfolk, in command of these vessels.

The *Cyane*, Captain Spence, and the *Shark*, commanded by Lieut. M. C. Perry, have, for short periods, cruised upon the coast of Africa, to carry into effect the intentions of the government, in the suppression of the slave trade, and the protection of the agency for liberated Africans, established at Cape Mensurado.

While Captain Spence was at Sierra Leone and the Cape, he fitted out the *Augusta*, a small schooner, which was found on the coast, deserted and dismantled, and placed it under the command of Lieut. Dashiell, to cruise in the neighborhood of the Cape, with the conviction that its presence was at that time essential to the protection of the agency, and might be useful in preventing the traffic in slaves. It still remains upon that coast.

During the time that Captain Spence and Lieutenant Perry were cruising, they neither saw nor heard of any vessel, under the American flag, engaged in the slave trade. If citizens of the United States are still employed in that traffic, they seem to have been driven to conceal themselves under the flags of other nations.

The agency at Cape Mensurado, for receiving the re-captured and liberated Africans, enjoyed favorable prospects, until late last fall, when it was assailed by a large body of the natives, and in danger of being entirely destroyed. Some of the liberated Africans were killed in the contest. The extracts of letters from Captain Spence, Lieutenant Perry, and Messrs. Ashmun and Ayers, will shew the manner in which they were able to defend themselves, with the aid of a midshipman and several men belonging to a British vessel of war, then in the neighborhood. The establishment having passed through this trial, now promises to accomplish all the benefits anticipated from it. In order to afford it the necessary protection, and to continue our exertions to repress the slave trade, it is proposed, as the most efficient and economical arrangement, that the commander of the West India squadron, shall, from time to time, detach one or more of the vessels belonging to his command, to cruise along the African coast, occasionally touching at Cape Mensurado, and ministering to the wants of the people there; and following, in their return, the usual track of the slave ships.

Eleven Africans, none of whom could speak the English language, were, some months ago, brought by a Capt. Chase, as mariners, into the port of Baltimore, and were there taken into the possession of the officers of the government, and an investigation instituted into the supposed violation of our laws in introducing them. By means of an interpreter, who understood the languages of all, except one or two of them, it was, subsequently, discovered, that they belonged to tribes in the neighborhood of Mensurado, and that some of them were of the head men of their tribes. It was therefore believed, that their restoration by this Government, would produce a salutary effect; and an inquiry was directed to be made through the interpreter, whether they were willing to return to Africa. Such being found to be their wish, they were, in the early part of October, sent to our agent at Mensurado, with directions to permit their return to their several homes, by the best and most expeditious means.

So far as the Department is yet apprized of the expenditures for the agency during the present year, they have amounted to \$7,287 48 cents.

On the western side of the Atlantic ocean, and in the Gulf of Mexico, the operations of our naval force have been more active. Several vessels were in commission there, at the close of the last year. To these were added, under the authority of the law passed at the last session of Congress, "authorizing an additional naval force for the suppression of piracy," the Steam Galliot *Sea Gull*; eight small schooners, the *Greyhound*, *Jackall*, *Fox*, *Wild Cat*, *Beagle*, *Ferret*, *Weazel*, and *Terrier*; five barges, the *Musquito*, *Gnat*, *Midge*, *Sandfly*, and *Gallinipper*; and one transport ship, the *Decoy*.

Captain David Porter was appointed to the command of the squadron, and sailed from Norfolk about the 10th of February last. His station was at Thompson's Island, from which he despatched his ves-

sels, in such way as he judged best suited to attain his objects. The annexed extracts from his letters and reports exhibit the results.

The size of most of the vessels, the nature of the duties, and the exposure of the officers and men, called for a display of perseverance and fortitude seldom required of those engaged in our service—but the call was well answered. Every thing was accomplished, which was anticipated from the expedition. Piracy, as a system, has been repressed, in the neighborhood of the Island of Cuba, and now requires only to be watched, by a proper force, to be prevented from afflicting commerce, any further, in that quarter. The public authorities of the Island of Cuba manifested a friendly disposition towards the squadron, and rendered much assistance in the pursuit of its objects.

On the 5th March, as Lieut. Cocks, in obedience to the orders of Capt. Porter, was entering the harbor of St. Johns, Porto Rico, in the schooner Fox, he was killed by a shot from the castle. Extracts from the correspondence between Capt. Porter and the government of the island on this subject, are annexed.

The squadron was healthy and prosperous, until about the middle of August, when a malignant fever broke out at the station, and destroyed many valuable lives. The first reports of this calamity were brought to the Department on the 17th September. At the time they left the island, Captain Porter and most of the medical officers were sick, and there was great cause to fear that the squadron would be deprived of its commanding officer, and of the medical assistance necessary to its safety. Under these circumstances it was considered expedient to send to the station an officer of rank and experience, with a sufficient number of surgeons, to furnish, in any event, the aid necessary for the safety and proper conduct of the squadron, with power to remove it should that be found necessary. Capt. Rodgers cheerfully consented to encounter the hazard and responsibility attendant on such an expedition. He sailed from New York as soon as a vessel could be prepared for the purpose; but, before his arrival, Capt. Porter had become convalescent, and, with the greater part of the squadron, had returned to the United States. The reports of these officers will fully explain their views of the causes of the disease, and the means by which a recurrence of it may be prevented.

It is believed that the Florida station is incalculably important to some of the best interests of this Union; and that it ought not to be deserted until every expedient has failed to render it a secure and healthy position for our vessels. I feel great confidence in the opinion that it may be made such, without encountering great hazard of the evils we have heretofore suffered.

For the protection of commerce, and the suppression of piracy in the Western Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, it is proposed, in the ensuing year, to continue Thompson's Island as the station for the vessels employed in those objects; to place there a ship of the line, armed and manned as a frigate, for which purpose the Independence is well fitted; and to attach to the command the John Adams and

Hornet, and one other sloop of war, with four of the larger schooners, the Grampus, Porpoise, Shark, and Spark, one of the smaller schooners, and the barges. This force is competent to protect all our interests. The ship of the line, placed in a proper position, will afford comfortable accommodations to those who are obliged to remain at the station, and prevent the necessity of intercourse with the island, when danger is suspected. The cruises of the other vessels, except those which visit the coast of Africa, may be limited to four, five, or six weeks, and on their return, their crews may be exchanged for others, who, during that time, have been stationary. By these means, and a proper attention to cleanliness, both in the men and the vessels, and avoiding intercourse with places known to be sickly, the health of all will probably be preserved. For the proper execution of such a system, full reliance may be placed in our officers. The island itself, by clearing, draining, and cultivating, will, after a time, probably become more healthful.

It will be perceived, that this distribution of force includes only one of the small schooners. They were admirably calculated for the end for which they were purchased, and have effected it. But piracy being for the present repressed, and requiring only such a force as will prevent its revival, they are no longer necessary; and, being both very expensive, and utterly subversive of all discipline, it is respectfully recommended that they be sold, retaining one for the present season; after which it may be sold. The Porpoise and a small schooner have been employed under the command of Lieut. Ramage, in the survey of a part of the Florida coast. It is proposed that those vessels be placed under the control of the commanding officer of the Florida station; and if it be found proper to continue the survey, that the instructions for that purpose be given to that officer.

Many of the officers having died during the present year. It is thought proper to annex a list of the times and places of their deaths.

No observations on the organization and discipline of the Navy seem to be required. That subject has heretofore been presented for consideration.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be,
Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD.

NAVY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE.

13th November, 1825.

SIR: The Commissioners of the Navy have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 10th inst. and beg leave to submit the accompanying exhibits A, B, C, D, E.

A, presents a view of the vessels of war now in commission.

B, vessels in ordinary on the Atlantic board.

C, vessels on Lakes Champlain, Erie, and Ontario.

D, ships on the stocks—shewing the number built and building, under the “Act for the gradual increase of the Navy.”

E, a general view of the improvements at the several building yards.

With respect to the state and condition of the vessels in ordinary, and on the lakes, the Commissioners submit the latest information received by them upon the subject. It is presumed to be substantially correct; but, having, some days since, called upon the several commandants for special and detailed reports, they expect to have it in their power, very shortly, to afford minute information, not only as to the hulls of the ships, but as to the state of their masts, spars, sails, rigging, armament, boats, &c. &c.

I have the honor to be, &c. &c.

I. CHAUNCEY.

Hon. SAM'L. L. SOUTHWARD,
Secretary of the Navy.

A.

Vessels of War in commission, November 10, 1825.

Franklin,	Ship of the line,	Pacific.
United States,	44,	Preparing to relieve the Franklin.
Constitution,	44,	Mediterranean.
Congress,	36,	{ Carrying Ministers to Spain and to South America.
Cyane,	24,	Mediterranean.
John Adams,	24,	West Indies.
Ontario,	18,	Mediterranean.
Erie,	18,	Mediterranean.
Peacock,	18,	West Indies.
Hornet,	18,	West Indies.
Spark, brig,	14,	West Indies.
Neusuch,	12,	Mediterranean.
Porpoise,	12,	Surveying Florida Coast.
Dolphin,	12,	Pacific.
Grampus,	12,	West Indies.
Shark,	12,	West Indies.

RECAPITULATION.

1	Ship of the line,
2	44 gun frigates,
1	36 " do.
2	24 " ships,
4	18 " sloops
1	14 " brig,
5	12 " schooners.

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In commission, specially equipped for the suppression of piracy,
 1 steam galliot, Sea Gull.
 8 small schooners, viz. Greyhound, Jackall, Fox, Wild Cat, Beagle, Ferrett, Weazel and Terrier.
 5 barges, viz. Musquito, Gnat, Midge, Sand Fly and Gallinipper.
 1 transport ship, Decoy.

B.

Vessels in Ordinary.—Atlantic Board.

Independence, ship of the line,	}	The hulls of these ships are in good order; though it would be proper to examine their bottoms before sending them to sea. Their upper works and decks require some caulking.
Washington, do.		
Columbus, do.		
Delaware, do.	}	Have never been in commission; hulls in good order; bottoms would require examination before they go to sea, and their upper works and decks would probably require some caulking.
North Carolina, do.		
Ohio, do.		
Guerriere, 44,		Requires repairs.
Java, 44,		Very much decayed.
Constellation 36,		Requires some repairs.
Macedonian, 36,		do.
Fulton, steam frigate,		Used as a receiving vessel.
Alert, - - - - -	do.	in good order as such.
Asp. - - - - -	do.	much decayed.

RECAPITULATION.

6 Ships of the line
 2 44 gun frigates,
 2 36 - do.
 1 steam do. used as a receiving vessel.
 1 receiving ship, and the Asp.*

Navy Yard Tenders.

Gun Boat, No. 67. Tender to the Yard at Washington.
 Do. No. 95, Tender to the Yard at Boston.

C.

Vessels of War on the Lakes.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

		Guns.	
Confiance	-	- 32	} very much decayed.
Saratoga	-	- 24	
Eagle	-	- 18	
Ticonderoga	-	- 16	
	Galleys.		
Allen	-	- 1	} hulls in tolerable condition.
Burrows	-	- 2	
Boxer	-	- 2	
Centipede	-	- 2	
Viper	-	- 2	
Nettle	-	- 2	

LAKE ERIE.

Lawrence	-	- 18	} sunk and much decayed.
Detroit	-	- 24	
Porcupine	-	- 1	rotten.
Queen Charlotte	-	- 20	sunk and decayed.
Ghent	-	- 4	in bad condition.

LAKE ONTARIO.

Chippewa	-	- 74	} on the stocks, under cover, sound.
New Orleans	-	- 74	

*A small schooner, utterly worthless.

Superior	-	-	-	44	} sunk and decayed.
Mohawk	-	-	-	36	
Pike	-	-	-	26	
Madison	-	-	-	18	
Sylph	-	-	-	14	
Jefferson	-	-	-	18	} useless.
Jones	-	-	-	18	
Oncida	-	-	-	14	} in tolerable condition.
Lady of the Lake	-	-	-	1	

14 gun boats, in a state of decay.

D.

Ships on the Stocks.—Of the line.

1 at Portsmouth,	could be launched in	60 days.
1 at Boston,	do do	30 do.
1 at do	do do	90 do.
1 at Philadelphia,	do do	180 do.
1 at Gosport, Va.	do do	120 do.

Frigates of the First Class.

1 at Washington, (the Potomac)	could be launched in	30 days.
1 at do	do do	90 do.
1 at Philadelphia,	do do	30 do.
1 at New York	do do	30 do.
1 at Portsmouth, N. H.	do do	60 do.

RECAPITULATION.

5 ships of the line,
5 frigates.

NOTE.—The above vessels could, if required for service, be launched in the time respectively stated; but their equipment would take a considerably longer time.

These vessels are building under the law for the gradual increase of the Navy; and the following were also built under that law:

Columbus,	} ships of the line.
Delaware,	
North Carolina,	
Ohio,	

Making the number, "built and building," as follows:

9 ships of the line, and
5 frigates of the first class.

E.

General view of the improvements at the several Building Yards:

AT NORFOLK.

- A brick wall around the yard.**
- A comfortable dwelling house for Commandant.**
- A large and convenient brick smiths' shop.**
- Two large brick warehouses.**
- A few frame buildings, for joiners and coopers' shops:**
- Very convenient houses and quarters for marines.**
- One building slip and substantial house, for 74.**
- Mast sheers.**

AT WASHINGTON.

- A brick wall around the land sides.**
- A comfortable dwelling house for Commandant.**
- A house for the second officer.**
- Large and convenient smiths', anchor, chain-cable, and camboose shops.**
- Two large and convenient storehouses.**
- Quarters for marine officer and guard.**
- Block machinery and saw mill, worked by steam.**
- Plumber and brass founders' shops.**
- Armorers' shop and laboratory.**
- Quarters for laboratory officer.**
- Mast sheds and joiners' shops.**
- Timber sheds, rigging and sail lofts.**
- Inclined plane, with house over it.**
- Building slip, extensive timber docks.**
- A dock in progress.**
- Mast sheers.**

AT PHILADELPHIA.

- A wall on two sides.**
- No quarters for any officer in the yard, except the marine officer; good extensive barracks.**
- An extensive brick smiths' shop.**
- One small wooden building, used for hospital.**
- Four wooden buildings, used for officers and joiners' shop, and temporary storehouses.**
- A wooden mast shed.**
- Two building slips.**
- Two ship houses.**
- Mast sheers.**

AT NEW YORK.

Enclosed by a temporary wooden fence.

A house for Commandant.

A wooden smiths' shop.

Warehouses of brick, 130 feet long by 40 deep, are building, and will be enclosed this fall.

One other warehouse, old, and entirely out of repair, and so situated that it must be taken down, when the other storehouses shall be ready to receive the stores.

Some temporary wooden workshops and timber sheds.

Good marine barracks.

Two building slips; of these, one not yet finished.

One ship house for 74.

AT BOSTON.

Enclosed with a wooden fence, in great decay.

A comfortable dwelling house for commandant

A brick smiths' shop

Good warehouses, sufficient for the present

Wooden workshops and sheds

Good brick marine barracks

Two building slips

Two ships' houses for 74's

Timber docks

Mast sheers

AT PORTSMOUTH.

On an Island, not enclosed.

A house for commandant

A wooden building, used as marine barracks. &c.

Another, used as quarters for an officer

A new brick store, 75 by 40, building

A wooden store-house

Timber sheds and workshop, of wood

Wooden houses, which are used as quarters for the storekeeper, surgeon's mate, the warrant officers, except the master and ordinary of the yard

Two building slips

Two ships' houses, one of them new, the other slightly built, and requiring some repairs next summer

Timber docks

No. 2.

Papers F, G, H, I, J, K, L, and M, containing Correspondence of Captain Robert T. Spence, Lieut. Perry, Dr. Eli Ayres, and J. Ashmun, relating to the Establishment at Cape Mesurado.

F.

Mr. Ashmun, acting Agent at Cape Mesurado, to the Secretary of the Navy.

CAPE MESURADO,

November 26th, 1822, (morning.)

SIR: I had the honor of writing you by the Shark, on the 9th ultimo, and, subsequently, by the "Strong," in a very weak and sickly condition. We are now engaged in a bloody and perilous war with all the native tribes around us. On the morning of the 11th, were attacked by eight hundred, who were repulsed, after doing us some injury, with the loss of nearly one hundred killed on the spot.

Subsequently, we have been employed in a negotiation for peace, which I fear will fail. We expect another assault to be made on us in two or three days. The force is powerful in numbers, poorly armed, and cowardly. We hope, with God's help, to hold out till aid arrives from some quarter. Now, if a vessel of war lay in the road, all these hostile movements would probably have been prevented.

The spirits and health of our little number are much better than could be expected. We have six guns mounted on our lines, which we have supported by a musket shot-proof barricade. We have so constructed them as to include only about two-thirds of the town, the families without retiring within.

I am nearly reinstated in the enjoyment of health. We are obliged to increase our stock of provisions, ammunition, &c. by every vessel arriving in the road, provided she have them.

I have this day drawn on Mr. Beattie for \$272 10, and enclose you, sir, herewith, the bill of Captain Daily. We very much need an increase of our numbers; men with *no*, or with *small*, families; more hard shot, provisions and clothing, stone and other masons.

We can now, with difficulty, muster thirty men fit for duty. These are obliged to stand upon their arms night and day; but, with a sufficient supply of good provisions and clothing, the habit will eventually set easy, and occasion no waste of constitutional vigor.

I shall endeavor to do my own duty, and make the people do theirs. Human weakness can reach no further. The two additional guns at Norfolk, twenty-five soldiers, and the fortifications spoken of in the preceding letter, (which, from the abundance of stone on the very

ground, can soon be erected,) in my opinion, would secure to us a peace as lasting and universal as could be desired; while the people of the agency could pursue the work for which they came to Africa, and improvements in husbandry and the arts rapidly extend their influence in this part of Africa.

I have the honor, sir, to be,

Your most obedient servant,

J. ASHMUN,

Acting Agent for liberated Africans.

November 26th, (Evening.)

SIR: Our negotiation with our perfidious enemies seems to have entirely failed of its object. They are bent on our ruin. We can only resolve to stand, and wait assistances. The presence of *one* vessel of war would deter them forever from attacking the settlement. Ten additional laborers, with one or two well acquainted with stone-mason work, united with what assistance we could give them, would, in four weeks time, complete a tower, battery, and wall, which, I beg leave to repeat, would so entirely command the whole surrounding country, as to ensure here, as it has invariably done elsewhere, perpetual peace, or something very nearly resembling it. We have only had time to begin the labor; and, while our people all lie on their arms nearly every night, never can finish it. Permit us, sir, in these circumstances, to hope for the aid asked, without being disappointed.

To aggravate our other losses, we have had seven of our children carried captive; the oldest about twelve. We hear from them daily; they appear to be as well treated as savage tenderness knows how to express itself towards them. According to a custom of the country, it may be confidently expected the children will be restored, of course, on the settlement of peace.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. A.

Loss on the American side, in the engagement of the 11th.

Killed, 1 man, 1 woman; mortally injured, and since dead, 1 man; desperately do. 1 woman and 1 man, by bursting his own musket; badly do. 2 men; slightly do. 1 woman; carried captive, 7 children. Whole number of sufferers, 15.

J. ASHMUN.

Hon. SMITH THOMPSON,

Sec'y Navy of the United States.

G.

Extract of a letter from J. Ashmun, Acting Agent of the United States for liberated Africans, to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

“ American Agency, Cape Mesurado, December 7th, 1822.

“ In haste, I beg leave to inform you that, on Sunday morning last, the 2d, we sustained, with the loss of 1 killed and 2 badly wounded, a second attack of the natives; their numbers are rated at 1,500.

The Africans sent here by the government of the United States are all still unhurt, with the exception of the one wounded by the bursting of his own piece.

Our whole fighting force, including 10 of the African youths, is now 25. We have lost, in killed and wounded, in the actions of the 11th November, and 2d inst. 7 of our best men. We are at present reinforced by 13 men, marines, under the command of a Midshipman, belonging to his B. M. ship the *Driver*, provisioned for six weeks; and whose detention here, for that time, will cause no charge to the American government. A promising negotiation has been opened by Captain Laing, Bt. Lt. Infantry, passenger in the schooner “ *Prince Regent*,” from whom we obtained our men, and a moderate addition to our ammunition. No bill of it has been presented. It consists of

2 bhls. (100 lbs. each) Cannon Powder.
28 do 6 lb. Shot.
1000 Musket Balls, and
1 keg of Musket Cartridges.

But Captain Laing’s exertions in negotiating a peace, and probably securing to us a *truce*, has laid the American government and Society under the greatest obligations. They positively refused even to treat, freely, with an American; but promised, on penalty of the severest visitation, to abide by whatever terms the English, through Governor M’Carthy, shall prescribe. I had begun to treat with them often before, but, invariably, they violated their promises, and, finally, assured us they would die in the struggle, or destroy us; and fully convinced me that all overtures for peace were fruitless, till they had suffered another repulse. This they have suffered, and, in this situation, Captain Laing found them. Be assured, Sir, that British mediation shall extend, in this business, to no improper length, if I live, and have wisdom to judge correctly on the subject. The calling in of their aid I believe to have been absolutely necessary to our existence here 20 days longer, and the promptness with which it came, evinced it to be the dictate of friendship, and sensibility of feeling.

I can, Sir, affirm, with confidence, that at least 2000 slaves are annually shipped from the Bay made by the projection of *Cape Mount* and *Mesurado*; an armed vessel stationed there, and 24 soldiers ashore, would divert the traffic at least to some other part of the coast, and greatly reduce its extent.”

H.

Extract of a letter from Lieut. Com. M. C. Perry to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

UNITED STATES' SCHOONER SHARK,

Norfolk, December 12, 1822.

"On the 25th of July, off Havana, I fell in with the U. S. frigate Macedonian, Captain Biddle, from whom I received orders to proceed (so soon as I could make arrangements) to the Coast of Africa; being at that time entirely destitute of provisions, stores, &c. I was partly supplied by Captain Biddle; but these supplies came very far short of the quantity required for so long a cruise, and it consequently became necessary for us to stop at some port in the West Indies, to complete the necessary requisitions. Therefore, after touching at Thompson's Island, where we overhauled and cleaned the vessel, and despatched the piratical prize schooner Bandara D. Sangare to the United States, we sailed on our cruise, putting into Nassau (N. P.) for the requisite supplies, whence we departed on the 14th of August, and arrived upon the Coast of Africa on the 23d of the ensuing month. After remaining on the coast until the 17th of October, I, in obedience to orders, directed my course towards the West Indies, and made Barbadoes in 15 days; there it became necessary to the health and comfort of the crew, that we should stop, for refreshments and provisions; these being procured, we sailed for the Mona Passage, thence to Jamaica, for convoy and water. From Jamaica we passed round Cape Antonio, through the Gulf of Florida, to this port."

"At the period of our departure from Mesurado (the 8th of October) the settlers were occupied in the improvement of their settlement, clearing the land, erecting houses, and perfecting their fortifications; and I am of opinion that the termination of the next dry season, will leave them in a state comparatively prosperous; they apprehended no hostilities from the natives, and appeared much pleased with their situation."

"During my stay upon the coast, I could not *even hear* of an American slaving vessel; and, I am fully impressed with the belief, that there is not one at present afloat."

I.

Extract of a letter from J. Ashmun to Capt. Spence, dated

Cape Mesurado, March 31, 1823.

SIR: Owing to the extraordinary reverses to which the establishment at this place, including an asylum for liberated captives, and a colony of free coloured people, from the United States, has been subjected; and the circumstance of no vessel arriving from America

with supplies, during this trying period; we are reduced to the necessity of applying to you for such relief and supplies as our more urgent wants require, and your situation may enable you to furnish.

The absence of a small armed vessel from the roads of Mesurado, certainly invited those aggressions of the native tribes, in consequence of which, all our improvements have been nearly suspended for several months, and the settlement surrounded with the horrors of a savage war.

A slight insight into the policy of these tribes, will discover, that they never will venture to assail an establishment on shore, which has the support of even the most inconsiderable naval force. Your foresight has produced for us this important means of security, by repairing, manning, and allotting to the protection of the establishment, the schooner *Augusta*; her presence at Mesurado will likewise have a most salutary influence in checking the sale and transportation of slaves in the neighbourhood of the Cape.

These inhuman practices, I regret to state, are to the present hour continued here, without restraint or disguise. Permit me to suggest the propriety of an application to our Government to have this vessel commissioned, to employ her force against such American vessels as may visit that part of the coast included between the capes Mount and Mesurado. This service she might, in my opinion, render the cause of humanity, without the least detriment to that to which she is specifically appointed.

I have already had the honor to represent to our Government my views, in relation not only to the utility, but the absolute necessity of an efficient and well constructed work of defence, both for our security against the insults and aggressions of the natives, and to add respectability to the establishment, in the estimation of foreigners. Since those representations were communicated, we have unhappily been able to add the corroborative testimony of experience to their truth and importance. The native tribes, lured on by the hopes of getting possession of our stores, and observing nothing formidable in our means of defence, have attempted, by the utmost exertion of their power, our extermination; and a ship of war was actually sent by the acting commander of a large naval force, employed on this coast, to erect a foreign flag in the midst of our settlement, and transfer the jurisdiction of the Cape and neighboring coast, and the allegiance of our people, to his own Government! To such insults and injuries the establishment must always consider to be liable while destitute of the work in question. A just regard to the character of the nation imperiously demands, in my opinion, that the agency which it has seen fit to establish on this coast, for the most benevolent of purposes, should enjoy such a protection. I am happy, Sir, to perceive that, on this subject, your views perfectly accord with my own; and was prepared on your arrival to ask for a part of the aid, which, in anticipation of any request on my part, you, Sir, so promptly offered from your ship, for the erection of a *permanent and powerful fortification*. The labor and expense which the

entire completion of this work will require, must necessarily be considerable—but its utility will be still greater; and I have that confidence in the wisdom and liberality of our Government, that I would cheerfully share any pecuniary responsibility incurred in its erection, although without the authority of a specific order.

Vitally connected with the welfare of the settlement, is the preservation of the lives, and, as far as possible, the health, of the agents of Government. Nothing will contribute more essentially to this desirable end than a comfortable habitation: several valuable lives have been unquestionably sacrificed for want of this convenience, and, in alluding to this subject, the recollection of an irreparable personal loss, powerfully intrudes itself upon my feelings. The accompanying circumstances were distressing: a female, of most delicate constitution, lying under the influence of a mortal fever, in the corner of a miserable hut, (to ventilate which in a proper manner was impossible) on a couch literally dripping with water, which a roof of thatch was unable to exclude; recovery under such circumstances was impossible: and the mortal struggle almost brought relief to the agonised feelings of surviving friendship.

A due regard to the preservation of my own life, and that of my successors, determined me to erect a comfortable house for the residence of the agents; but, destitute both of suitable materials and of good mechanics, I could hardly have effected my purpose without the aid, in both these respects, which has been received from the *Cyane*. Against the important advantages of having a commodious house erected at this time in the settlement, no judicious person will weigh the expenses incurred by the purchase of lumber, and the subsistence and pay of the workmen. The house is nearly completed, in a most airy situation, and commands one of the finest prospects in Western Africa.

The propriety of soliciting the aid of workmen from on board the ship under your command, will, I hope, Sir, be obvious, when I inform you, that, of our small company of laborers, consisting only of thirty individuals, seven of the very best were either killed, or entirely disabled, in our conflicts with the natives, and that, the want of mechanical skill aside, the remainder are, to the present hour, obliged to mount guard every second night. Without help from the ship, we must either have left these works unattempted or unfinished, or have accomplished them in a most rude and unappropriate style.

The other improvements, to which the industry of a number of your crew has been directed, are scarcely less important; and all together will afford us that security against external annoyance, and those domestic accommodations, during a rainy season of several months continuance, which we could not otherwise have hoped to enjoy.

To R. T. SPENCE, Esq.

Commanding U. S. Ship Cyane, off Mesurado.

J.

Extract of a letter from Capt. R. T. Spence to J. Ashmun.

U. S. Ship Cyane, Western Africa,

Mesurado, 1st April, 1823.

SIR: Your communication of the 31st ult. I have had the honor to receive. Arriving on the coast of Africa after a long cruise in the West Indies, with my crew enfeebled by the heat of that climate, my own health in a precarious state, and that of some of my officers equally so, I should have felt it my duty to return, after a short tarry, immediately to the United States, had it not been for circumstances the most unexpected. Informed of your destitute situation, occasioned by the disasters of a war brought on by difficulties growing out of the nature of your settlement; moved by a sympathy and commiseration which suffering ought always to excite; wholly regardless of all personal sacrifice, I assumed a responsibility the emergency doubtless will justify; and, in anticipation of your requisition, provided such a supply of necessary subsistence as will enable you to go through the approaching rains without fear of famine—*thereby ensuring, I trust, your final success.*

The officers and crew of the Cyane have been engaged, day and night, in repairing, and getting in readiness for the service for which she will hereafter be applied, the schooner Augusta, found at Sierra Leone, deserted, and nearly destroyed. I shall leave her on the coast when I go hence, in a condition not less good than when first launched, with exception of her copper, which, however, will be sufficient for several years to come; she is placed in charge of a careful officer, well provided, and suitably armed. I promise myself that much good will result from her continued presence, and trust that your own expectations will be fully realized, from her remaining in the vicinity of the Cape.

It gives me great pleasure to contribute to your personal comfort; not so much to your comfort in accommodation, as to rescuing you from a hovel, which a continuance in would almost forbid a hope of your recovery; and which, from the Surgeon's report, I am induced to believe would ensure your death during the ensuing rainy season.

The tower I have commenced, I trust will prove to you a "tower of strength;" the impression it is calculated to make, the security it cannot fail to afford, will produce a two-fold operation; and be of infinite importance in many respects, all of which are too obvious to require exposition.

K.

MONROVIA, June 18, 1823.

SIR: We arrived at Montserado on the 24th May, after a passage of thirty-two days from Cape-Henry. I find the Colonists have all been employed by Captain Spence, since his arrival here, on a fortification, which was not completed when I arrived. A few days after I arrived, about one-sixth part of wall tumbled to its base, and the rest has given way in every direction. I believe it will be less work to build a new one, than to repair the old. Previous to the attack of the natives, our people had got gardens enclosed, and vegetables flourishing finely; and, had it not been for this event, and they could have had a small part of their labor to bestow on their lots, they would have been amply prepared to have maintained themselves; but, when the enemy came upon them, they were obliged to take up their garden fences to make a palisade of defence. Their gardens were all destroyed, and not so much as a hill of beans is growing in the colony. The rainy season has now fully commenced, and very little labor can be done until the next dry season, which will be in November.

This will make it necessary to continue the laborers at the public expense longer than I had contemplated in my former report, as I had expected a much more favorable state of affairs here.

One of the captured Africans was killed in the battle, and there is much jealousy of the natives against them, for fear of retaliation for their being sold. I would therefore respectfully recommend to Government, not to send out any more captured Africans, until the requisite buildings can be erected, and a regular establishment made for them. Should it please God to restore my health and preserve my life, this will be accomplished in the dry season, and a regular system of management entered upon, when any number likely to be in the possession of Government could be managed. But, should I be called away by death, it would be highly dangerous, from the spirit which these have manifested, to multiply their number, without more efficient government being held over them than has been.

If it should please God to spare my life, I will endeavor to have the building erected early in the next season.

A fatality has attended every proceeding on this affair; but, if I live, and am supported so I can stay here, I hope soon to alter matters, and set them on a better footing; but, should any of the common casualties happen the trading company formed in Baltimore, that they should fail to comply with their contract, and I find myself neglected by both Government and Society, out of provisions, clothing, &c. I shall leave the place, and the cause, in despair.

The U. S. schooner *Augusta* has undergone a partial repair, but so slightly that she was thought to be hardly seaworthy; but Mr. Dashiell, who was left in command of her, has ventured in her to Sierra Leone, to get some further repairs, to enable him to ride out the rains. He was in a very bad state of health. This system of repairing, out here, is very expensive, and is so partially done, and

poorly commanded and manned, as to be of no service to the colony. I beg leave to press, with the utmost urgency, as a security to the captured Africans, and the success of this cause, that Government keep here a vessel prudently commanded and well manned.

There is but one man who came out with me, but what is down with the fever. I was taken a week ago, and have not* been able to see them since; but they are all doing well. We have five deaths, most of them from foolish obstinacy. I hope the worst is over with me. I have got so I can sit up a few minutes at a time, in which way this letter is written.

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient,

E. AYRES.

The Hon. SMITH THOMPSON,
Secretary Navy U. S.

L.

Extract of a letter from Captain Robert E. Spence to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

UNITED STATES' SHIP CYANE,
Quarantine Ground, New-York, June 27, 1823.

"After an absence of twelve months from the United States, in the West Indies and on the coast of Africa, I have the honor to announce my arrival at this anchorage; last from a cruise among the Windward Islands.

Up to the 24th of March, on which day my latest communications were addressed to you from Sierra Leone, you have been made acquainted with my official proceedings. Under that date, I informed you of the precarious situation of the colony at Cape Mesurado, and of my intention to take prompt and effectual steps for its rescue and preservation. The schooner *Augusta* having been speedily equipped and made ready for sea by the activity of my officers, and such supply of necessary articles as would relieve the immediate wants of the colonists taken on board, together with about forty Kroo men, (whose labor had been secured, free of any expense to the United States,) I proceeded without a moment's delay to the settlement, examining with due care the intermediate coast.

On my anchoring, after a short passage, at Cape Mesurado, I received from Mr. Ashmun, the resident agent, letter marked A. which, with other communications, hereto appended, disclose the indi-

* The word *not* is left out in the original, and inserted here, as it is apparent it should have been in the original.

gent and distressed condition of the colony, and forcibly show that my arrival was not only most opportune, and my anticipation of their wants provident, but, in every respect, essential to their future safety and preservation. The presence of the ship at this critical juncture, appeared indeed providential: for, without the succour it was my good fortune to afford, every thing might have been apprehended. A renewal of war was in agitation among the hostile princes; and, from all we could learn, and observe, the conclusion was unavoidable, that the entire extermination of the colonists must have been the consequence. The head men were in the highest degree exasperated, appearing in no manner inclined to be appeased; declaring that they had never entertained a design of selling the Cape; that they had been overreached; that they never possessed a full understanding of the agreement, (or "book.") and, finally, that they never had sold, and never would consent to give up, Cape Mesurado, the abode of one of their ideal beings, of superstitious veneration!

Having made such provision for the maintenance of the "agency," during the approaching inclement season of the "rains," (nearly at hand,) and by a friendly intercourse and other means mollified, as far as practicable, the excited temper of the neighboring chiefs; having afforded all the aid to the establishment, which, under other circumstances, might have been deemed sufficient; my own health much impaired, my purser's wholly gone, and that of my officers by no means vigorous; having also placed a suitable vessel in the immediate vicinity of the colony, a cautionary measure, which should not be relinquished; I should have felt justified, considering the sickly season was about to set in, (particularly as the stores and supplies of the ship, from extraordinary calls, had become inadequate for a full expenditure for any length of time,) in leaving the coast for the United States: but, sir, I could not persuade myself to adopt this course, while much remained to be done for the security of a settlement, the object of which appears to be fraught with such benefits to our common country; especially as your instructions enjoined on me to do every thing for the agent and colonists which they might require; and it being the object of an officer to acquire the Government's, rather than his own, approbation; to which end, I was ready to encounter any hardship, and to make any sacrifice.

The cause alleged, on the part of the chiefs, for making war on the peaceable settlers at Mesurado, is merged in the statement previously given: namely, their never having had any intention to sell the Cape, the spot consecrated to one of their deities, or beings of superstitious idolatry; that collusion had been practised in the purchase; that it was not a fair and fully explained contract, as they were ignorant of the paper they had signed; with others, equally absurd and fallacious, founded neither in reason or truth. Such, however, were the causes set forth by them, in the various interviews had with the officers of this ship, during our stay, for their inexcusable and unprovoked enmity. But other latent inducements existed, far more operative, which doubtless formed the true, and only cause of

hostilities, committed by them on an unoffending people. The most prominent of these may be discovered in the embarrassments thrown in the way of the slave traffic, by a contiguous active check, restraining, by its presence, a trade they never can willingly forego; as, also, in the hope they entertained of being able to obtain, without risk or loss, the spoil and plunder of a successful war: for they had been led to believe, by emissaries sent among them by slave factors, that there would be much booty of stores, goods, &c. In these alluring hopes and prospects, at all times cogent with beings of their propensities and uncivilized habits, may be seen the leading motives for attacking the establishment at Cape Mesurado.

Seeing these to have been their incitements; apprehending their present inaction was merely a truce for more vigorous preparation; finding that the chieftains were far from being inclined to abandon either their claims, or intentions, but waited only for a season better suited to further both; convinced, also, that the defenceless condition of the colony invited aggression; I determined, in despite of the plausible objections my own mind furnished to a longer continuance on the coast, to exert myself, during the short period I was permitted to remain, with a view of placing the settlement in the best possible state of defence. This wish became strengthened by information received from Dr. Dix, (whose friendly and social interviews with the Princes, enabled him to obtain much useful matter,) that another attempt on the colony was positively meditated, when the season inimical to the health of its defenders should set in; that they were sanguine in the hopes of *then* accomplishing their object, by the combined operation of war, sickness, and famine. My determination, on this point, received also additional strength, from a perspective of the fatal consequences which would inevitably result from renewed incursions on the part of these barbarians; while the means of security were inadequate to inspire confidence on the side of the assailed, or apprehension on the part of the assailants, expulsion was certain. The entire extermination of a remnant of colonists, who, confiding in promises made them previously to embarking, had consented to leave the happiest country in the world, to sojourn in the land of their forefathers, was not only possible, but too probable; added to which, the loss of a footing, happily acquired, in a situation second to none on the whole line of coast, after leaving Sierra Leone, and the consequent extinction of all future prospect of ever being again able to effect an establishment at a place so eligible, on terms so advantageous to the Society, and creditable to those who negotiated the purchase. **A Martella Tower** I conceived well suited to effect the object in view: a fortress of this character was desirable on many accounts, nay, appeared indispensable, not only to the end of affording protection, and giving security in the hour of invasion, but as being also the best calculated to produce a change of policy on the part of the natives, and well suited to make such an impression, as would deter them from a renewal of aggression, and thereby prevent the calamitous consequences justly to be apprehended; at all events, the consequences of

harassing and vexatious predations. Again, I considered it expedient to make also a proper impression on the minds of foreigners, jealous of an establishment, whose continuance and prosperity threatens an annihilation of the Slave trade, in that particular section of country lying adjacent to the river Mesurado: this, with me, was a consideration not without its influence. The foundation of the fortress being commenced, with the assistance of the Kroo-men, its progress was rapid; alacrity gave animation and activity, and promised a speedy completion of a competent defence. In fifteen days, a circular massive work of stone, measuring 112 feet in circumference, eight feet in thickness, and ten feet in elevation, was seen to tower above the surrounding heights, commanding the site for the town, and a wide range of the circumjacent country; capable of intercepting, by its position, any movement, made either within or without the bar of Mesurado river. In my expectations I was not disappointed. During the time this work was progressing, I had frequent opportunities of discovering its effect in neutralizing, in no small degree, the menacing designs of the natives. Every day brought me additional proof of a change in their intentions, wrought by an amicable and conciliatory conduct, conjoined with preparations for defence—formidable to any eye, but with them, to all appearance impracticable. I was happy in perceiving this revolution in their sentiments, this change in their designs: as a friendly understanding with the powerful chiefs of the neighboring villages, is the true policy to be observed on the part of the emigrants at Mesurado. While this fortress was advancing, other operations, calculated in an eminent manner to improve the settlement, were also undertaken and carried through: indeed, nothing was left undone which I had the power to do; conceiving that both the spirit and letter of your instructions required the performance of every thing which a limited means rendered practicable, tending in any way to ensure the success of an establishment instituted for colonizing the free men of color of the United States, and for the reception of captured emancipated slaves: objects commanding the approbation of every humane heart, and the benedictions of thousands, who are to be benefited by their accomplishment. While I witnessed with satisfaction these laudable undertakings drawing to a completion, I felt no small impatience to leave the coast before the commencement of the "rains"—frequent tornadoes, warning me of their approach, leaving impressions on my mind by no means tending to reconcile me to a stay of many days. The health of my crew was, at this time, comparatively good, considering the length of time we had experienced the debilitating effect of tropical heat, and I felt no small anxiety to preserve them in this state, for the service they were yet to encounter in the West Indies—a hope fondly indulged, but in which I was cruelly disappointed.

Our labors were nearly at a close, when my Surgeon was suddenly taken down, and on the sixth day was no more! The sick list received several names in the course of a few days; cases at first apparently slight, speedily assumed the symptoms of the coast fever!

The appearance of this disease determined me, especially as the castle was finished, to delay no time in removing from the coast. In pursuance of this resolution, the crew were forthwith embarked, and the ship immediately put to sea. This measure, carried into effect with promptitude, encouraged a hope that there would be an end to a malady understood to be peculiar to the African coast, generated by the miasma and poisonous exhalations from vegetable decomposition and a deleterious atmosphere, thrown from waters which, after the annual deluge has subsided, become stagnant and pestilential.

Such was my expectation, from so salutary a change; this expectation doubtless would have been realized, had the winds been sufficiently fresh and favorable to have enabled us to reach, in a short time, a higher latitude. It was not, however, our good fortune to be thus propitiated—but the reverse was our lot—fogs, calms, with an alternation of rains and intense suns, rendered our situation truly deplorable, and rapidly increased our sick list, so that, on the 25th of April, seven days after putting the ship to sea, the sick report contained the names of sixty of my officers and crew, and was for some time diminished only by death—not in fact diminished, for death but made room for others, brought down with similar symptoms, and threatened with a similar fate. The extreme humidity of the atmosphere, and the confined state of the ship, in consequence of torrents of rain, had changed, in a great degree, the character of this distemper, giving it all the features of the typhus. The symptoms were not altogether exclusively those attendant on this fever; they assumed a compound and multifarious appearance, not always equally violent, but in most cases equally fatal. In many instances, a general suffusion took place, the body exhibiting a deep yellow tinge, together with a highly discolored tongue—delirium, madness, instant prostration of strength, with convulsive contortions, carrying the victim off suddenly. In other cases, the symptoms were wholly different, vital decay producing a slow and destructive debility, resulting in extinction of life.”

M.

From Dr. Ayres to the Secretary of the Navy.

MONROVIA, AFRICA,

July 18, 1823.

SIR: A few days after landing in Africa, all the new comers were taken ill; there has but one escaped the sickness; we have lost eight of our number. The colonists who were out before, have been very healthy; there has not been a case of fever among them since I have been out. We are now all on the mend, but attended with a great degree of debility.

The captured Africans have been constantly employed in the defence of the colony, during the late war with the natives; and, since that time, the urgency of the affairs of the colony have been such that they have been constantly employed in preparing a defence for the place, which has deprived them of the opportunity of acquiring that information of agriculture and the mechanical arts which would benefit them in acquiring a livelihood in civilized life, according to the humane intentions of the President, expressed in his message to Congress, and approved by them.

Owing to this circumstance. I thought it my bounden duty to retain them a year longer, at the charge of the United States, to accomplish this purpose. I have placed them under the care of the Rev. Lot Carey, a colored man. A part of each day they are to attend, and the remainder of their time to labor, under the immediate care of Mr. Carey, in clearing and cultivating the land, whereby they will acquire a knowledge that will benefit them through life. Their labor is always to be under my immediate direction.

I have not been able to settle the accounts of Mr. Macauley yet. The *Augusta* left here, a few days after my arrival, for the North, and has not returned, and probably will not, until after the rains—so that I am without the possibility of communication with Sierra Leone, and unable to accomplish it.

The goods received in the Colony from the Trading Company of Baltimore, will enable me to dispense with the necessity of drawing bills on London for necessaries, but can draw directly on the Government.

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient humble servant,

E. AYRES.

The Hon. SMITH THOMPSON,
Secretary U. S. Navy.

Copies of Correspondence of Commodore David Porter, and Officers of the Squadron under his command, in relation to the suppression of Piracy.

Commodore Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

St. Thomas, March 3, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you, that I this morning arrived at this place, with all the squadron under my command, except the *Grey Hound*, which vessel separated in a gale.

I have despatched Lieutenant Commandant Perry, with the *Shark* and three small schooners, to scour the south side of Porto Rico, and shall sail to-morrow with the rest of the squadron for St. John's, where I have been informed several privateers have been fitted out, which have done considerable injury to our commerce.

I am also informed, that there is a large British naval force in those seas, a squadron of which, apparently on the look-out, I fell in with this morning.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

Honorable S. THOMPSON,

Secretary of the Navy.

Commodore Porter to the Governor of Porto Rico.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

March 4th, 1823.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to inform you, that, in pursuance of orders from my Government, I have taken command of all the United States' naval forces in these seas, for the protection of the commerce of the United States against all unlawful interruptions; to guard the rights, both of property and person, of our citizens, whenever it shall become necessary; and for the suppression of piracy and the slave trade.

As great complaints have been made of the interruption and injury to our commerce by privateers, fitted out from Spanish ports, I must

beg your Excellency to furnish me a descriptive list of vessels, legally commissioned to cruise from Porto Rico, with a set of the blank forms of these papers, that I may know how and when to respect them, if I should meet with any of them.

I must also beg your Excellency to inform me, how far they have been instructed to interrupt our trade with Mexico and the Colombian Republic, and whatever instructions or authorities they may have, affecting our commerce generally.

As the suppression of piracy, the principal motive for my visit to these seas, is an object that concerns all nations, (all being parties against them, and may be considered allies,) I confidently look to all for co-operation, whenever it may be necessary, or, at least their favorable and friendly support; and to none, more than to those most exposed to their depredations. I therefore look with confidence to your Excellency for the aid of such means as may be in your power for their suppression; and, in the absence of means, I beg to assure your Excellency, that, whatever course may be pursued by me, to destroy these enemies of the human race, it will have no other aim; and I shall observe the utmost caution, not to encroach on the rights, or willingly offend the feelings of others, either in substance or in form, in all the measures which may be adopted to accomplish the end in view.

It will afford me sincere pleasure, should I be so fortunate as to fulfil the expectations of my Government, and at the same time preserve harmony and a good understanding with those, with whom I may be so unfortunate as to come into collision or discussion, in relation thereto; indeed, it will add much to my happiness, if it can be avoided altogether.

That such is my sincere wish, and that the objects set forth by me, are the only ones which brought me to these seas, I beg leave to assure your Excellency in the most positive and unequivocal terms.

With the highest respect, I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's very obed't and humble serv't,

DAVID PORTER.

His Excellency the GOVERNOR OF PORTO RICO.

Commodore Porter to Captain John Porter.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

March 4, 1823.

SIR: You will proceed to the port of St. John's, in the harbor of Porto Rico, and deliver the accompanying letter to the Governor.

You will there wait, if necessary, two days, for the answer, apprizing him of your intention so to do; and at the expiration of that time, you will proceed to join me, either off the harbor, or at the port of Aguada, at the west end of the island, where I shall water the squadron.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

To Captain JOHN PORTER,

U. S. Schooner Greyhound.

Captain General of Porto Rico to Commodore Porter.

Office of the Captain General of Puerto Rico.

MOST EXCELLENT SIR: I have this moment received the very estimable letter of your Excellency, dated the 4th of the present month, in which your Excellency has been pleased to communicate to me the important commission, which has been entrusted to you by a Government, that claims the respect of all the territories within its influence.

I have the satisfaction of forwarding to your Excellency, a nominal report of the privateer vessels, which have been armed and despatched, for the purpose of cruising, by the competent authority in this Island, agreeably to the request which your Excellency has made me in the letter of that date; and I am extremely sorry to find myself so situated, that I cannot comply with the wishes of your Excellency, in regard to my transmitting to you a set of *blank forms*, for the purpose of enabling your Excellency how and when to respect their commissions. The diplomas which they receive come from our court, already signed, by his most Catholic Majesty and the Minister to whom this office pertains; leaving, in these cases, the naval authority here, limited only to the filling of the blank spaces in them, with the name of the Captain and of the vessel. Thus situated, it is impossible for me to accede to your circumspect views in this particular object. But, nevertheless, if it should, on occasion, appear requisite to your Excellency, the said diplomas or commissions can be examined, together with a blank signature of the Captain of this Port, in order that a sufficient ground may be established for comparing this signature with those which may be presented, keeping in view the prospectus of those with which the said privateers are cruising.

I am, likewise, asked by your Excellency for information, how far my instructions are extended, for interrupting the commerce of

the United States with Mexico and the Republic of Colombia; and, for your gratification, it is my duty to declare, that I find myself sufficiently instructed to state, that the blockade, which was established on all the coasts and ports of the provinces of Venezuela, has been raised. Under these circumstances, I consider the commerce of the United States to be in free capacity for an intercourse with that of the places formerly blockaded; reserving, however, for lawful capture, the vessels of any nation which shall be found conveying implementations of war to the insurgents or people disposed to co-operate with them in their military resistance. I can give your Excellency no certain information concerning Mexico, but it is my opinion, that the circumstances and condition, are to be found the same as those of Venezuela.

The very important objects to which your commission into these seas is directed, and your good intention and views, afford me the greatest satisfaction, and hasten me to manifest myself to your Excellency, as at the instant I now do, in order to assure you, that all within the scope of my authority and faculty in this Island, as one of the places most interested in the flourishing of commerce, and the revival, if possible, of good faith and due respect to the property of the citizens.

Trusting that your Excellency may be able to fulfil the desires of your Government in this important charge, and that they may be ever more and more happy in their election:

I have the honor of being, with the greatest respect, your Excellency's most attentive and sure servant, who kisses your hands.

Excellentissimo Señor.

MIGUEL DE LA TORRE.

Puerto Rico, 6th March, 1823.

*Most Excellent Sir, Commander of the Squadron of the United States,
in the office of this Port, D. DAVID PORTER.*

Office of the Captain General of Porto Rico.

MOST EXCELLENT SIR: At noon, this day, just as I arrived from the village of Caguas, where I received, at 8 o'clock this morning, the official letter of the King's Lieutenant Commandant of this place, advising me of the arrival of the squadron under the command of your excellency, with a disposition to enter this port, I have been inauspiciously informed of the misfortune occurring in the death of

the commander of a schooner of war belonging to the squadron, which, it seems, persisted in entering the port, notwithstanding his having been warned by the fort to desist from his undertaking, by a discharge of two cannons, the first with a blank cartridge, and the other at an elevation, with a ball. But the garrison, in seeing his obstinacy, followed, with an extraordinary rigor, the orders for hindering the entrance of the squadron till my arrival, according to the determination formed by the said Lieutenant of the place yesterday. I wish to persuade the mind of your excellency into a consciousness of the sorrow which this event, so mournful and unfortunate, has caused me: so much the more painful, inasmuch as it has happened in a place in the district under my command, and on an individual under the orders of your excellency, and a citizen of the United States—of a nation, with whom, in all acceptations, the Spaniards of both hemispheres are found united.

So unexpected a misfortune, which, it seems, ought never to be feared in friendly establishments, appears to carry on itself a character of criminality, which more and more aggrieves my feelings.

But the juncture of the circumstances which have conspired towards this fatality, according to the information received by me, is such, that, if your excellency will be pleased to examine it with impartiality, you will perceive, that, if the facts are not sufficient to mitigate the regret, they are, at least, enough to prove, that there has been no intention of failing in regard to your excellency, nor of offending any citizen of the United States, and much less their Government.

The Lieutenant of the King, and commandant of the place, grounded on various reasons, of which it is not important to trouble your excellency with a citation, but of which, however, I will point out a few, believed that he ought not to permit the entering of the squadron until my arrival. One of his motives arose from his recollecting that, during the last year, an expedition was armed in the ports of North America, against this Island, and placed under the command of a man named Decoudray Holstein, which expedition actually went into the port of Saint Bartholomew, under the American flag. And, among his other reasons, were the following: It has been reported here, that another similar expedition is this year in preparation; that the schooners alluded to, on their entering, yesterday, would not receive the pilots on board unless they practised with particular plans of the harbor, and the lead in their hand, of which the captain of the port made his complaint; that, when the officers came on shore, a rumor was spread that they were saying Spain had ceded this Island, and that of Cuba, to the English, which relation they confirmed to the Lieutenant of the King, as he himself has assured me; that their not having presented to him the writing, nor any expression from your excellency, he suspected he had found something alarming in these rumors, and not sufficient proofs that these were national vessels, merely by the uniforms in which the officers were dressed.

These are some of the reasons which he has informed me he had in view in not consenting to the entrance of the squadron until my arrival; and, in consequence of them; he despatched his orders to the Castle of the Moro, not for the purpose of committing hostilities, but merely preventive orders. He sent an adjutant, at half past 6 o'clock in the morning, accompanied by an interpreter, on board one of the schooners under the command of your excellency, to entreat her commander to be so good as to call on the Government, in order to agree with them on the means and form of making known to your excellency this their determination. Unfortunately, the commander of the American vessel deferred, in the first place, his seeing the Lieutenant of the King until one o'clock in the afternoon; and, provoked by the adjutant to view it as an urgent case, and to consider duly the cause of his being disturbed, and of which he was fully informed, this commander promised the adjutant that he would go to the Government as soon he could dress himself. By an unheard of fatality, he did not accomplish this promise until after his hearing the firing of the cannons at the Moro, which might have been avoided, had he only presented himself for an interview with the commandant of the place.

The remissness of this officer, and the pertinacity of him who commanded the schooner, in his not suspending his entering, in spite of the cannon that was fired without a shot, and without waiting for a pilot; but, notwithstanding this, and the second discharge of a gun, at an elevation, to crowd sail, in order, at all events, to gain the port;—these acts, most excellent sir, have been the means of depriving the United States of a citizen, your excellency of an officer, of filling Puerto Rico with mourning, and myself with inexpressible sorrow. I feel it to be my duty to assure your excellency, that the orders issued by the lieutenant of the king, and commandant general of the place, were by no means intended to commit hostilities, or offence against the vessels; but as the firing was made at an elevation, either the tumbling of the sea, or perhaps some bad pointing, must have been the cause why the fourth discharge should produce such a fatal effect.

Immediately on my return to this place, I gave orders, that all the vessels under the command of your excellency, of whatever description, may enter freely into this harbor, as into a port of friends, where they will meet that reception which the law of nations assigns to those who claim a title to civilization, and other privileges, secured by the treaties of friendship existing between the two nations. In this act, I anticipate for myself the satisfaction of being able to manifest, personally, all the consideration which your person merits from me, and my regret for so mournful and disagreeable an event.

May God preserve your excellency many years.

Excellentissimo Senor.

MIGUEL DE LA TORRE.

Puerto Rico, 6th March, 1825.

*To the most excellent Commander in Chief of the Anglo American Squadron.
In the office of Puerto Rico, D. DAVID PORTER.*

Office of the Captain General of Puerto Rico.

MOST EXCELLENT SIR : One of the first objects of my attention, as soon as I was informed of the mournful accident, concerning which I wrote to your excellency in my letter of yesterday, was to acquaint myself with the actual condition of the wounded individual, in order that he should be located where the duties of friendship might be exercised for his accommodation and comforts; but, being certified that he had died, during the transaction before related, I could do no otherwise than give my orders, that his funeral should be conducted with all the decorum and manifestation of respect due to an honorable officer of his character and station; and causing his corpse to be attended to the grave, by a procession, composed of the principal chieftains, authorities, and other officers of this garrison. In this act, I could wish that your excellency might recognize an expression of the lively sorrow which has been excited in me by this misfortune.

May God preserve your excellency many years.

Excellentissimo Señor.

MIGUEL DE LA TORRE.

Puerto Rico, 7th March, 1825.

*To the most excellent Commander in Chief of the Anglo-American Squadron,
in the office of this port, D. DAVID PORTER.*



Commodore Porter to the Governor of Porto Rico.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

Aguada, March 8, 1825.

To his Excellency the Governor of Porto Rico.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: On the 5d of this month, I despatched from the squadron under my command, the United States' schooner Greyhound, commanded by Captain John Porter, of the United States' Navy, who was the bearer of a letter from me to your Excellency, written in strict conformity with instructions which I had received from my Government, propounding certain inquiries, to enable your Excellency to put me in possession of such information, as would place it in my power to fulfil the benevolent intentions of the government of the United States, without infringing on the rights of Spain as a belligerent.

The commander of the Greyhound was directed to remain in St. John's two days, for your Excellency's answer, and then to join me off the port, or at this place, where I proposed watering the squadron under my command.

On the second day after his arrival at St. John's, I directed the

commander of the United States' schooner Fox to proceed there with his vessel, to ascertain what time it was probable your reply would be obtained, with orders to return immediately, and apprise the commander of the United States' schooner Beagle, another of my squadron, of my intention to come to this place.

On the arrival of the Fox within gun-shot of the castle, I was much surprised to observe that six guns were fired at her; but, knowing of no cause to justify such an act of violence, I should have thought, that, perhaps, I might have been mistaken, had not the commanders of all three of those vessels failed to obey my instructions, which could not have happened, but for some violent detention by the authorities at St. John's.

Until I am better satisfied of the fact, however, I shall refrain from the expression of my sentiments on the subject, and shall, for the present, merely observe, that their character could not have been misunderstood: as my squadron, at the time of the departure of the Fox, was laying in full view of the castle, with their colors flying, and a British squadron, under the command of Sir Thomas Cochrane, which had several times communicated with me, and well knew the vessels, arrived there the day previous to the last mentioned vessel, and on the day previous to my arrival off the port.

I know not whether my suspicions are correct, but I have, in the event of their being so, directed the senior officer to abandon the vessels, and leave the Island of Porto Rico, as soon as possible, leaving it to my country, to whom I shall make known the facts, to resent the outrage as it may think proper, and which it will, no doubt, do promptly and effectually.

Your Excellency must be aware, that it is always in my power to retaliate, and even in this place; but it would be a poor return for the friendship and hospitality I have received from its inhabitants, and I cannot reconcile it to myself, that the innocent should be made to suffer for offences not their own.

With great respect, I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's most ob't humble servant,

D. PORTER.

Commodore Porter to the Captain General of Porto Rico.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

Aguada, March 11, 1823.

To his Excellency the Captain General of Porto Rico.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your several favors, of the 6th and 7th of this month.

That which is in reply to the letter I had the honor to address you, on the 4th, is perfectly satisfactory in all its details, and the prompt-

ness with which you have been pleased to attend to it, as well as its contents, will, no doubt, be highly gratifying to the government of the United States.

I know not how to touch on the melancholy subject of your other letters, without giving vent to some of those feelings which operate at this moment on my mind. I shall endeavor, however, to treat it coolly and dispassionately, and hope, by a few facts, to convince your Excellency, that there was not the shadow of an excuse for interdicting the entrance of my squadron into the harbor of St. John's. That nothing can justify the order issued by your second in command, to fire upon any of the vessels composing it; and that the act of firing, was, to say the least of it, an act of the most unpardonable cruelty and barbarity. It is painful to me to see that your Excellency has labored to justify the act, and to throw the blame on the commander of one of the United States' vessels, then in port.

A statement in the *Echo* of the 8th, drawn by the same hand that penned your letter to me, is given to the public, with the same object in view. Your Excellency may have reasoned yourself into a belief of the correctness of the inferences you have in both cases drawn from information given you, or both may have been considered as necessary and proper to prevent excitement; but I must be excused for saying to your Excellency, that the charge is only an aggravation to the outrage which had already been committed. It was not the duty of that officer to move at the beck and call of the king's lieutenant, or to leave the duty unexecuted, which I had sent him to perform, to communicate to me the hostile intentions of a subaltern, which, had they been fully explained to him, he never could have believed he would have dared to have carried into effect; but they never were explained, and no such conversation took place between the king's lieutenant and the American officer, as is related by your Excellency. Your Excellency has been misinformed on the subject; and had it taken place, and had it been the duty of the American officer to have communicated to me the intention, to prevent my coming into port, it would have been impracticable for him to have executed it, as the sea raged with such violence, at the time, that no vessel or boat could possibly have left the harbor.

It is not magnanimous in your Excellency, to resort to such means to excuse the bad conduct of those under your command.

The officer you would implicate, was the bearer of a despatch from me to your Excellency, apprising you of the benevolent intentions of my Government in fitting out the squadron I have the honor to command.

He had been two days in your port, and was possessed of a copy of my letter to you, which had been seen by your second in command, at the moment of his presenting himself to him, which was on the day of his arrival; and, if any doubts existed as to his character, or the character of the vessel under his command, being in the power of the authorities of Porto Rico, they could easily have satisfied themselves. But he had been received and treated as an

American officer; and it is only to endeavor to palliate, or excuse the conduct of the offending individual, that your Excellency has sought for facts, which would never have been brought into notice, but for the lamentable circumstance which gave rise to these painful remarks.

He informed your second, of the character of my squadron; a British squadron was then lying in the port, which knew me, and there cannot be a doubt had communicated intelligence of my intentions to visit Porto Rico.

The sloop of war on board which my pendant was flying, with some small vessels of my squadron, were lying in full view of the castle, with their colors hoisted; the schooner which was fired into, was standing directly into port, in open day; she could not have escaped, after the first shot was fired, or have given up her intention of going into St. John's, had she been so disposed, or had she understood what was intended by the firing. But, let me ask your Excellency, who for an instant could have supposed, that a small schooner, of scarcely forty tons burthen, mounting only three guns, with a complement of twenty-five officers and men, would have occasioned any alarm to the city of St. John's, surrounded as it is by fortresses, rendered as impregnable as nature and the art of man can make them? Was it not more natural to believe, that the firing was intended to compel her approach? And, even if the intention was not complied with, ought not her feeble condition to have claimed from those in your fortress some mercy? But, no! the vessel, after the death of her lamented commander, was compelled to anchor between the forts, where a tremendous sea was running, which jeopardized the lives of every one on board; to send the small boat on shore, where the young midshipman who commanded her was insulted, by having a heavy gun pointed at the boat, and threatened with destruction if he attempted to move from his position. He was then taken, like a criminal, and placed under guard.

These are facts, your Excellency, and incontrovertible ones.

Let me ask your Excellency what better proofs you have of the character of my squadron now, than were produced on the first day of the arrival of the officer you wish to implicate? What further examination has been made, that the authorities of Porto Rico are better satisfied of our being Americans now, than they were before? None.

I repeat it, that the character of my squadron was well known in St. John's. Even in this obscure place, I found American newspapers containing all the details respecting it; and, at St. Thomas's, I saw persons direct from St. John's, who informed me that its equipment and object were well known there. There has, in fact, been a degree of publicity given to the expedition, and an interest felt in it, that have been rarely equalled. The whole of the civilized world was interested in its success. It is in vain, then, to say, that we were taken for lawless invaders; and it is unjust to endeavor to stain the character of my country, by a charge of the frequency of hostile expeditions against the Spanish possessions, or offer them as an excuse for

the conduct of the offender. Bad men escape sometimes the vigilance of the most rigid authorities, and no Government deserves reproach when it does its utmost to detect and bring them to punishment.

I find your coasts lined with troops, since my arrival here. I find reinforcements daily coming in, as I am informed by your order, to protect the inhabitants from my resentment. I have found every precaution taken to keep me in profound ignorance of the lamentable occurrence, but these things were all in vain. I saw the insult offered to the flag of my country. I have satisfied your military commanders that their force is despicable when compared to that at my disposal, and I have convinced the inhabitants that, although they are at my mercy, they will not be made answerable for the offences of an individual.

It is not, then, becoming to the character of your Excellency to resort to subterfuge, in order to divert the odium of the act from one officer, to attach blame to another.

I will further ask, why a rigour should be exercised towards vessels bearing the American flag, that was not extended to the British squadron, or to the French frigate which arrived subsequent to the attack on Lieut. Com. Cocke? In the one case there was only a small schooner to fire at; in the other, there were vessels of force!

Had he fallen in battle, and by the hand of a declared enemy, we should have been reconciled to his fate by the proud satisfaction that he died in the performance of his duty to his country: but, to be thus cruelly torn from us, and by the hand of a dastard, whose aim was the more sure from a confidence in his own safety, and the defenceless condition of his object, admits of no consolation.

Your Excellency, in conversation with the officer you wish to implicate, adverted to the affair of the *Panchita* as some palliation for the offence; and there is too much reason to apprehend, that the officer who gave the order to prevent the entrance of my squadron, as well as those who executed it, thought this a fair opportunity to retaliate. Otherwise, why heat shot in the furnaces to destroy my squadron? Why open two batteries on the schooner, and why fire round shot and langrage while the lamented victim was hailing the fort? And why the remark of the man who pointed the gun, that the shot was intended to avenge the *Panchita*?

Your Excellency will recollect, that, in the case of the *Panchita*, there was an equality of force. Such an occurrence would not have taken place had there been as great a disparity as in the present instance. The cases are not, therefore, parallel; and if the satisfaction of retaliation was sought for, the offenders have failed in their object: it is yet to be obtained.

I shall leave the island to-morrow morning, with a heavy heart, and shall, without delay, communicate to my Government the melancholy result of my visit here, which was intended for the benefit of the civilized world in general.

With the highest respect, I have the honor to be,

Your excellency's most obedient humble servant,

D. PORTER.

Commodore Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK.

Matanzas, 28th March, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you, that I arrived here on the 26th, after giving to the north coast of St. Domingo and Cuba as thorough an examination as was practicable, with the two schooners, and the boats of this ship, with the greater part of her crew; while all the keys off shore, pointed out to me as the rendezvous of pirates, were examined by the ship.

The service has been very fatiguing to those employed, for more than a week past, in open boats, and in the most dangerous and intricate navigation in the world; but it has been performed cheerfully, and I wish I could say successfully; but we have not, in this long route, been able to detect a single pirate, although our suspicions rested on many; nor can I conceive how we shall ever be able to detect them; for they are one day fishermen, another dyvoguers, wood cutters, salt gatherers, or pirates, as best suits them. Every Spaniard is armed with a knife, and this weapon, according to their mode of warfare, is enough for them. Were we to apprehend every suspicious Spaniard and vessel, their coasting trade would soon be entirely broken up. Since my arrival here, I have heard of the most horrid atrocities committed by them. They now spare no one; whole ships' crews are indiscriminately burnt with their vessels; and there has been an instance recently of the murder of a crew under the wall of the Moro.

I have written to the Captain General a letter similar to the one I wrote to the Captain General of Puerto Rico, calling on him for information and co-operation, and await his reply, which I expect tomorrow or next day, and shall then proceed to Thompson's Island, to make arrangements for the most energetic operations. I shall there meet all the force which I despatched from Agundilla, with the exception of the Shark.

On my arrival here, I found a fleet of American vessels, waiting for convoy, some of which had been ready for sea twenty days, and was surprised and mortified to find that all our vessels of war had left this coast, and our commerce here entirely unprotected.

The only protection I can give them is the two small vessels, which will convoy them beyond the reach of pirates, and after examining a bay to windward, which has been their resort for some time, will join the squadron at the place of rendezvous.

The departure of those vessels of war stationed here for the protection of our commerce, and which I calculated on finding here, has caused me some embarrassment; as it becomes necessary to employ part of the force which was intended for the pursuit and destruction of pirates, to give that protection to our trade which it has a right to. The reasons for their departure are unknown to me, and I must leave it to their commanders to make the necessary explanations. Five piratical vessels have for some weeks been watching the fleet in the

bay, which I shall cause to be examined; and since our arrival, as you will find by the enclosed copy of a note from a highly respectable source, they have dispersed and disarmed. I shall do all in my power, with whatever force may be at my disposal, to give protection to our commerce, and effect the destruction of the pirates; and protection shall be the primary object; but, to fulfil the expectations that have been formed, we shall want at least two or three of the large schooners, in addition to those we now have.

I was surprised to learn, on my arrival here, that circulars had been written by the Captain General to the governors and commanders of the different districts of the island, forbidding the entrance of my squadron into any of its ports, or the landing of any part of my forces in pursuit of pirates. The island appears at present in a very agitated state, and the Government appear to think that the United States would consider it a very desirable acquisition. I shall use every means in my power to satisfy them that my objects are totally unconnected with any thing of a political nature.

All vessels ordered under my command, I beg may be directed to report to me at Thompson's Island.

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

D. PORTER.

Hon. SMITH THOMPSON,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington city.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have heard of a pirate to leeward, and have despatched the two schooners, and boats after her. I shall know the result of the expedition in the course of a few hours, and have good reason to believe it will prove successful.

Commodore Porter to the Captain General of Cuba.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

Off Matanzas, 26th March, 1823.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to inform you, that, in pursuance of orders from my Government, I have taken command of all the United States naval forces in these seas, for the protection of the commerce of the United States against all unlawful interruptions; to guard the rights both of property and person of our citizens, whenever it may become necessary; and for the suppression of piracy and the slave trade.

As great complaints have been made, of the interruption and injury to our commerce, by privateers fitted out from Spanish ports, I must beg your excellency to furnish me a descriptive list of vessels, legally commissioned to cruise from Cuba, with a set of the blank forms

of their papers, that I may know how and when to respect them, if I should meet with any of them.

I must also beg your excellency to inform me, how far they have been instructed to interrupt our trade with Mexico and the Colombian Republic, and whatever instructions or authorities they may have, affecting our commerce generally.

As the suppression of piracy, the principal motive of my visit to these seas, is an object that concerns all nations, (all being parties against them, and may be considered allies,) I confidently look to all for co-operation, whenever it may be necessary; or at least their favorable and friendly support, and to none more than those most exposed to their depredations. I therefore look with confidence to your excellency, for the aid of such means as may be in your power for their suppression; and, in the absence of means, I beg leave to assure your excellency, that, whatever course may be pursued by me, to destroy those enemies of the human race, it will have no other aim; and I shall observe the utmost caution not to encroach on the rights, or willingly to offend the feelings, of others, either in substance or form, in all the measures which may be adopted to accomplish the end in view.

It will afford me sincere pleasure, should I be so fortunate as to fulfil the expectations of my Government, and at the same time preserve harmony and a good understanding with those with whom I may be so unfortunate as to come in collision or discussion in relation thereto. Indeed it will add much to my happiness, if it can be avoided altogether.

That such is my sincere wish, and that the objects set forth by me are the only ones which have brought me to these seas, I beg leave to assure your excellency in the most positive and unequivocal terms.

With the highest respect, I have the honor to be,

Your excellency's very obedient and humble servant,

D. PORTER,

*Commanding U. S. Naval forces in the West Indies
and Gulf of Mexico.*

To His Excellency the Captain General of Cuba.

[TRANSLATION.]

HABANA, *March 29, 1823.*

I feel much satisfaction in your arrival into these seas, with the commission, explained to me in your official letter of the 26th of the present month, which I am now answering; and I offer you at once a hearty welcome.

You are pleased to manifest, that there have been great complaints

on account of the mischief committed on your commerce, by corsairs fitted out in the Spanish ports, and wish me to furnish you with a *description list* of the vessels lawfully authorized at the island of Cuba, for cruising; also, a set of blank forms of their papers, in order that you may know how and when to respect them, if you were to fall in with any of them.

In answer, I must state, that, as this business pertains exclusively to the *General Marine Command*, at this station, you will be pleased to address this Department for these objects of your requisition.

This Government, Commodore, [Señor Comodoro] anxiously desires, and loses none of the means in their disposal, to prosecute those enemies of the human race, even to annihilation; and you can be well assured, that, on all occasions, it is, and will be, ready to lend every aid that is compatible with the territorial rights and privileges, to the nations co-operating for the extermination of these freebooters.

Deign to accept the considerations of my respect and friendship.

God preserve you many years.

SEBASTIAN KINDERLAN.

Señor Don D. PORTER.

Commander of the Naval Forces of the U. S. in this sea.

Extract of a letter from Commodore Porter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

U. S. STEAM GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Matanzas, April 16, 1823.

SIR: For the last two weeks, our movements and occupations have been so various, that, to enter into a full detail, would swell too much this communication; to be brief, therefore, I shall merely state that, within that time, we have built our store houses on Thompson's Island, landed all our stores, collected together all the schooners of the squadron, and stationed them at different points on the coast of Cuba; fitted out all the barges which were also on the coast, and captured one pirate, a pilot boat schooner, formerly the Pilot of Norfolk, armed with one long twelve pounder, and commanded by Domingo, the notorious head of this horde of desperadoes, who formerly commanded the *Saragarian*—the vessel, in the attempt to capture which, the gallant *Allé* fell—Domingo, and two of his crew, only escaping to the shore with their lives, and one was taken.

The Pilot had been in possession of the pirates eight days; I had heard of her capture on my first touching in at Matanzas with the

Peacock, and left the two schooners the *Wild Cat* and *Beagle*, to look out for her and the *Saragariana* to windward, while the *Peacock* shaped her course toward Havana; but, not finding her, I hastened to Thompson's Island, and two of the barges being got ready, and manned from her fine crew, I despatched Capt. Cassin with them and two of the schooners, which soon arrived, to examine from Havana down to Cape Antonio, and thence to Trinidad, on the south side of the Island. A piracy having recently been committed near the latter place, Captain Cassin left Thompson's Island on the morning of the —, and next morning received information that the *Pilot* had been seen off the *Moro*; he, consequently, sent Lieut. Stribling to windward, along shore, with the barges, while he kept a look-out for her near Havana; on the same day, the *Wild Cat* and *Beagle* fell in with her to leeward of Matanzas, chased her within gun-shot the greater part of the day, giving and receiving from the *Pilot* a smart fire; but night coming on, she eluded them by getting close under the land, hauling down all sail, and getting off with her sweeps. In about an hour after this, Lieut. Stribling ran along side of her with his two boats, one commanded by himself, the other by Midshipman Kelly acting as Lieut. of the *Fox*, and took possession of her; after a fire of ten minutes, in which time, all the crew, except the Captain and three others, one of whom is taken, were killed—the pirate having time to fire his long gun only once; and what adds to the satisfaction I feel in giving these particulars, which I have obtained from Lieut. Skinner, who fell in with Lieut. Stribling and his prize next morning, is, that no one was even wounded on board our boats, so sudden and effectual was the attack, which does great credit to Lieut. Stribling, and all those concerned with him in this gallant affair.

I have with me, here, the *Sea Gull*—three barges, and one of the boats belonging to the *Peacock*, besides the vessels intended for convoy. The barges I have placed under the command of Lieut. Cassin, of the *Peacock*; which ship, as well the *Decoy*, I have been compelled to lay up, in order to obtain men to man the barges, not having found a single vessel on the station on my arrival.

I shall despatch Lieut. Cassin to windward, so soon as the weather will permit, where I have strong expectation, from information received, of breaking up a nest of these vagabonds. Two schooners, under Lieut. Com. Kearney, are stationed off Havana, to give convoy; two are now refitting to relieve some of the others, and we are now in full operation. But it is greatly to be regretted that I should have been compelled to employ for convoy those small schooners, which were intended solely for the purpose of hunting the pirates out of their hiding holes; but, notwithstanding I have not, including the crew of the *Peacock*, the number of men required to man one of our large frigates, I hope to effect the object for which I was sent here, and, for a time, give protection to our commerce by convoy. Yet the duty is severe, and more than men can long bear; some respite will be necessary. But it would be unjust in me if I did not say, that every officer and man under my command enter with the utmost alacrity and

zeal into the severe duties which this novel service imposes on them; and, although most of them have scarcely put their feet on shore from their cramped vessels since they left the United States; although they have suffered all that men could suffer in crossing the Gulf Stream, in heavy gales, in open boats; still, not a murmur has been heard from any one. Some, from sickness, and finding themselves unequal to the fatigue, have asked leave to return, and I have indulged them; but, in general, the squadron enjoys uncommon health, and there is every prospect of its continuance.

Domingo, the captain of the Pilot, was in this place yesterday, the day of my arrival, and has since disappeared. He acknowledges the death of all his crew, except those before mentioned.

The Pilot is a remarkable sailer, was a constant trader to Havana. Domingo had long set his heart on having her, and, immediately on capturing her, armed and took the command of her. I hope soon to give you some further account of him and the Saragariana. There was one act of politeness in this singular character, which I cannot omit mentioning. There were a large number of letters for myself, and the officers of the squadron, on board the Pilot when she was taken, together with many for merchants in Cuba. Domingo possessed himself of all the mercantile letters, and delivered to the captain of the Pilot all those for us, desiring him to send them to us, as he did not wish to deprive us of the opportunity of hearing from our friends. He said he had no ill-will against us; we were but doing our duty.

The Peacock, sir, is too fine a ship to keep in a state of idleness; and without her crew, I should not have been able to man the barges, by far the most efficient force we have.

In the present state of the establishment at the Island, it will be in vain to look for those comforts which the fatigues of the kind of life we now lead, make more necessary to us than they would be at other times, without the conveniences which a ship affords. I do not make this remark so much on my own account as on account of others. The accommodations of the Peacock are small. We have been a great inconvenience to her officers; and it has been the source of great pain to me to witness how much myself, and those who necessarily accompanied me, have been to Captain Cassin and his officers, who have made every sacrifice of their own comfort for our accommodation.

It would be extremely satisfactory to me, and I am persuaded, would be highly advantageous to the public interest, if I could have a ship and crew for the accommodation of myself and those with me. The Eric would suit me extremely well if she had a poop on her. I want no larger or better ship, and I beg I may not be refused, for, at present, I am completely on the parish, not living as I could wish, but as I can. This is the only request I have made since I embarked in this enterprize, in which I am individually concerned; and it would not have been made, were I not satisfied that the public interests would be more benefitted than my own comfort would be promoted. If I cannot have the Eric, I beg that I may have the Macedonian, or some

one other of our frigates; but, whatever ship may be sent, I hope she may be furnished with a poop. It is essentially necessary in this climate, and on such a service.

I have the honor to be,

Your very obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

Captain Cassin to Commodore Porter.

UNITED STATES' SCHOONER FOX,

Off the Havana, April 9th, 1823.

SIR: Agreeable to your orders of the 5th inst. I proceeded with the schooners Fox and Jackall, and the barges Gallinipper and Musquito, off this harbor, and despatched Lieut. Comd't Stephens, in his small boat, into the port. On his approaching the Moro, he was ordered by the guard to return, as his boat would not be permitted to enter, but that his schooner might. As it was important that we should communicate with the Consul, I ordered the Jackall into the harbor for that purpose. She was suffered to pass; and returning, brought an urgent request from Mr. Warner, and the entreaty of numerous merchants and ship masters, to afford convoy to eight or ten American vessels, then ready to sail, they having been waiting a convoy a considerable time:—such was the alarm created by piratical depredations, many atrocious acts having been committed in the very mouth of the harbor, and one only the evening before our arrival, by the noted schooner Pilot. Capt. Stephens also informed me, that this pirate was then supposed to be in Escondido, or hidden harbor. Under these circumstances, I thought myself justifiable in giving convoy, and sent Captain Stevens in to make known to vessels of all nations that I would afford them protection as far as the Gulf, and proceed with them at day-light on the 7th.

On a belief of finding the pirates, I despatched Lieut. Stribling in the Gallinipper, accompanied by the Musquito, Lieut. Kelly, of the Fox, at 7 o'clock in the evening, to Escondido. On the morning of the 8th, I fell in with the Wild Cat and Beagle, who had been run off their cruising ground in chase of the pirates, but lost sight of them during the night. As it would not be detaining those vessels more than a few hours, I determined to keep them with the convoy until well off from the land, and run in myself with the Jackall and pick up the barges. At 6 o'clock on the 8th I received a large fleet of vessels of several nations, who claimed our protection, and proceeded with them to windward. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, discovered the barges returning, with a stranger in company, which proved (very much to my satisfaction,) to be the noted schooner *Pilot*, which was taken by our

barges after a long running fight, for the particulars of which I refer you to the report of Lieut. Stribbling.

I directed the *Wild Cat* and *Beagle* to continue with the convoy until morning, the *Wild Cat* then to return to her station, and *Beagle* to return to Matanzas for your despatches, and proceed with them to Thompson's Island. I called in the *Jackall* and barges, and with the prize stood in for the *Moro*.

As the *Pilot* will be of considerable importance to the expedition, I shall keep her with me, and have made the necessary arrangements, and this evening will proceed from this on my cruise.

As I believed it would have a good effect, I sent the prize into Havana to shew her, and to get a little water.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

S. CASSIN.

Com. D. PORTER.

Lieutenant Stribbling to Captain Cassin.

LATE PRIVATEER Schooner PILOT.

Off Havana, April 8th, 1823.

SIR: In obedience to your orders I proceeded, at half past seven o'clock last evening, with the barges *Gallinipper* and *Musquito*, to examine the coast to windward, as high as *Esccondido*, for pirates. In consequence of the lightness of the wind, we were compelled to make use of our oars most of the time. This morning, at daylight, several small sail were in sight. We boarded a number, and found them coasters. At seven A. M. discovered a schooner about three miles to the eastward, of a suspicious appearance, and immediately gave chase: the stranger apparently full of men, and sweeping in shore. At 8 15, fired two muskets to bring the chase to. On firing the second gun, she commenced firing with round and grape, and musketry. We returned it with our muskets, at the same time making every exertion to get alongside of her. At 8 50, the schooner succeeded in gaining the shore. In an instant we were on board of her, and succeeded in getting on shore. We however secured one man, and found two of her crew killed, one on board, the other on shore. We have every reason, however, to believe that several were wounded. I landed the marines, with some of the seamen, but the thickness of the underwood rendered it imprudent to pursue them. We succeeded in getting off the schooner (late the *Pilot* of Norfolk) without her sustaining any material injury. I am happy to state that not one of our men have been injured. This I consider the more remarkable and providential, as the pirate had every advantage of being in a large vessel, where he could load and fire with quickness and certain-

ty. It may be proper to mention that the schooner, on commencing her fire, hoisted Spanish colors.

The armament consisted of one double fortified six pounder, 20 muskets, 21 blunderbusses, 10 pistols, six fowling pieces, 1 swivel blunderbuss, with a number of cane knives, swords, and dirks. From the prisoner, I have ascertained that her complement consisted of 26 men.

I cannot, sir, conclude, without expressing my thanks to acting Lieut. Kelly, Lieut. Walker, of the marine corps, Midshipmen Carr and Bispham, with the crew of both barges, for their steady and gallant conduct in this affair.

I have the honor to be, sir, respectfully, yours, &c.

C. K. STRIBLING.

To Captain S. CASSIN,

Commanding the division of schooners and barges.

Commodore Porter to the Captain General of Cuba.

HAVANA, April 20, 1825.

YOUR EXCELLENCY : Having been informed that an order has been issued by your Excellency to the military commanders of districts in this island, forbidding the entrance into the harbors thereof of the squadron under my command, I have therefore to repeat to your excellency, that I came by the orders of the government of the United States, in aid of the local authorities, for the suppression of piracy, and for no other object, as I have always assured your Excellency, and I have to beg of you, to prevent any unpleasant consequences from the existence of an order so hostile to the interests of Cuba, and so opposed to the friendly and benevolent intentions of my government, that your excellency will be pleased to cause it to be revoked as early as practicable: and that you will furnish me with a paper, bearing your excellency's signature, whereby the friendly character of the forces under my command may be made understood by the aforesaid military commanders, as well as by all others in authority, with whom I may come in contact: and your excellency will pardon me for urging, with great earnestness, this request, as the knowledge of this order has been the source of great uneasiness to me, particularly since an admission on the part of your excellency confirms its existence.

I have the honor to be, with the highest respect,

Your excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

D. PORTER.

To his Ex. the CAPTAIN GENERAL
Of the Island of Cuba.

Commodore Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. STEAM GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Matanzas, April 24, 1823.

SIR: In my last, I informed you, that I had despatched the barges to examine a Bay to windward of Point Yeacos; and, having intelligence of three piratical schooners in the river Palmas, I left this place on the 19th, joined the barges next day, near Key Blanco, and, after a laborious search of two days, discovered the river, where we found the remains of the vessels which the pirates had burnt, evidently a short time before our arrival there; I consequently returned to this place, sending three of the barges along the coast to Havana, to which place I shall proceed, after giving convoy to the vessels in this place, having found it necessary to send the two vessels employed here on this service, to Thompson's Island, to refit.

I believe, sir, I can now say with safety, that there is not a pirate afloat on this part of the coast of Cuba, larger than an open boat; and even that is doubtful, the Saragoziana, in her flight, from here, having been taken by two British sloops of war at the east end of the Island.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

HON. SMITH THOMPSON.

Extract of a letter from Commodore David Porter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated U. S. Galliot Sea Gull, Allenton, Thompson's Island, May 10, 1823.

"Since I last had the honor to address you, I have returned to this place, with the Sea Gull and barges, and found here Captain Cassin, with the schooners and barges that accompanied him.

"The report of his cruise is enclosed. Our last cruise has been altogether a most arduous and fatiguing one; and, although we have not many trophies to show, it has not been without effect: the result has been, the capture of a piratical schooner and a very fine felucca; the destruction of one on shore, the burning of three schooners in the Rio Palmas, and about a dozen of their houses in the different establishments to leeward of Bahia Honda, and inside the Colerados Reef; the complete dispersion of all their gangs, from Rio Palmas to Cape Antonio; and, what will be of no little importance in all our future operations, a most thorough and intimate acquaintance with the whole line of coast, from Cayo Blanco to the east, down to Cape Antonio, in the

west. We have taken only one prisoner, and I shall endeavor to use such information as I can squeeze out of him to advantage. I shall despatch the Peacock to-day for La Vera Cruz, to relieve the Shark, and shall now be left with only my small vessels, two of which, with two barges, (which I have found great difficulty in manning from the Sea Gull and Store Ship.) I shall send off this evening under the command of Lieut. Comdt. Watson, on an expedition among the Keys in the Old Straights, and thence, around the Island, to return by the way of Cape Antonio.

“Two schooners, under the command of Lieut. Comdt. Rose, are making the circuit by the other route, commencing at Point Yeacos, going round Cape Antonio, and returning by the old Straights; two, under command of Lieut. Comdt. Skinner, are convoying from Havana; and the remaining two are careening, and will, in a few days, sail for the protection of our commerce; and the three remaining barges are hauled up, for the want of men.

“I beg you, sir, to take into consideration the uncomfortable situation of myself and those with me, and, as early as may be possible, send me a frigate, or a large sloop of war fitted for the climate, or I shall otherwise, most reluctantly, on account of health, be compelled to relinquish a service which I set my heart on accomplishing—the total suppression of piracy in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico; it has been effected about the north side of Cuba, and, with suitable means, I have no doubt of effecting it elsewhere.

“Not one of the vessels of war belonging to the West India Station, except those which I brought with me from the United States, have yet shewn themselves, nor can I get any intelligence of them, by which I can be enabled to command their services.

“When I left Matanzas, the country was alarmed by large bands of robbers, well mounted and armed, who had plundered several estates, and committed some murders in the neighborhood of the city. Bodies of horse had been sent in pursuit of them, and the militia were all under arms; some prisoners had been taken, and it was said that those bands were composed of the freebooters which lately infested the coast, and who, being compelled to abandon the Ocean, had taken up this new line of business.”

Captain Cassin to Commodore Porter.

U. S. SHIP PEACOCK,

Thompson's Island, April 28, 1823.

SIR: I had the pleasure to inform you, by a sloop from the Havana, bound to this place, on the 10th instant, of the successful beginning of my cruise, by the capture of the piratical schooner Pilot. After having shewn the Pilot in Havana, and obtained a small quantity of wa-

ter, I proceeded with the division to Cayo Blanco. We entered within the reef, and proceeded westward, making an average of about twenty miles per day, leaving no bay, inlet, or suspicious place, unexplored. On the 10th a sloop boat was observed standing to the eastward. The *Musquito* was ordered in chase; the sloop directly altered her course for the land, was run on shore, and abandoned by her crew, who escaped into the bushes. She was found to have arms of different descriptions, shot, and other articles of a suspicious nature, which satisfied me of her piratical character; and I took possession, with an intention to destroy her, as she was rotten, and an encumbrance to us.

At 10 A. M. on the same day, we anchored in a noted harbor for pirates, intending to examine it thoroughly. Our anchor was scarcely gone, before a felucca was discovered standing out for the *Gallinipper*, who was ahead, sounding. On opening our vessels, she immediately hauled down her sails, and pulled around the point of an Island. The barges were ordered in chase, accompanied by all the boats we could muster. On their getting to where the felucca had disappeared, several houses were discovered, and a number of men busily employed carrying things from them, and, at the moment, were supposed to be fishermen. It was some time before the felucca was discovered, and, when found, was dismantled and covered with bushes, hastily thrown over.

When the pirates (which they proved to be) found she was discovered, they fired a volley of musketry at our boats, which fortunately proved harmless. The officers and crews immediately landed, and pursued them through the bushes, when a running fight of more than half a mile took place, the pirates frequently turning, for a moment, and firing, which was returned occasionally, but without effect, from the eagerness with which they were pursued. So closely were they pressed, that they threw off shoes, clothes, and other incumbrances; but, from the thickness of the bushes, and knowledge of their path, all made their escape. Their establishment, which consisted of five houses, was set on fire, and the felucca brought off. She is a fine boat, coppered, pulls sixteen sweeps, and is, in every respect, equal to any of our barges. She appears to have been recently fitted, and, I presume, was on the eve of making her first cruise. The old boat, which was taken in the morning, I gave to a fisherman, who was serviceable to us as a pilot, she being an incumbrance.

On the 17th, we proceeded, examining all places very minutely; and, from the intricacy of the navigation, did not arrive at Cape St. Anthony until the 21st. From the moment we passed within the reef, until getting to the Cape, we were obliged to keep the barges ahead, sounding. The vessels were all trimmed by the head, and every precaution taken, yet we frequently grounded. Many places, for several miles, we found only seven feet water, and frequently less than six, when we were obliged to run out anchors, and heave through the mud. I learnt, on the passage, from the fishermen, that the English attempted the same, but succeeded only part of the way. I also found

the British sloop Scout cruising off the Cape, from the commander of which we learnt they had numbers cruising in that quarter, and on the south side.

The passage within the Colerados, from beginning to end, I found extremely intricate; but I am much gratified by knowing we are the first who accomplished it. We suffered much for water, and the small quantity we were enabled to obtain, was such as I apprehended would create disease amongst us. And, for the successful termination of the cruise, I tender to Lieuts. Commandant Stephens and Vallette, Lieut Stribling, and their officers, my sincere thanks.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, &c.

S. CASSIN.

Com. DAVID PORTER,

Comd'g U. S. Naval Forces in the West Indies.

Extracts of a letter from Commodore David Porter, to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

SEA GULL, Allenton, May 11, 1823.

"We are very much in want of one hundred seamen and ordinary seamen, in addition to our present number, to enable us to carry on our operations: and if we do not obtain them, I shall be under the necessity of discontinuing the employment of the barges: at present, I can only man two of them, and to do so, am compelled to lay up this vessel and the Decoy.

We shall also want a number of officers, of every class, how many I am unable to say yet, but, from present appearances, I am induced to believe that many will (in not a very long time) wish to return to the United States. The service we are employed on is a very harassing one, and, if it should not occasion much waste of life, it will, at least, try the strength of our constitutions, and our capacity for the endurance of fatigue and privations.

The commanding officer of marines states to me that he requires, in addition to his present force, fifty officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates: and from the difficulty of supplying the guards which I require, I should presume that a larger number would be necessary.

From the importance of the trade of Cuba and the Gulf of Mexico, the whole of which is now completely protected from this place, with a force not equal to one frigate, I presume my requests will not be considered extravagant. The arrivals and departures of American

vessels from the port of Havana alone, average about thirty per week, and those from Matanzas about twenty. Not a day elapses but that great numbers of American vessels are to be met passing through the Gulf, and since an establishment here, they daily in numbers pass in sight of us.

I mention those facts, to give you an idea of the importance of this station, and to show the propriety of augmenting the force by the additions which I have asked.

A frigate, or a large sloop of war, is indispensable to us, and we cannot exist with any thing like comfort without one.

Thrown as we are on a barren and desolate Island, that does not supply even water, I hope our situation may be made as free from sufferings as the Department can, without inconvenience to the public interest, make it."

Commodore Porter to the Captain General of Cuba.

U. S. STEAM VESSEL SEA GULL,

Allenton, Thompson's Island, 16th May, 1823.

YOUR EXCELLENCY : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 10th, with the circulars accompanying it; and beg leave to return my sincere thanks for your prompt and satisfactory reply to my application of the 4th of this month, as well as assurances of the high sense I entertain of the favorable disposition of the higher authorities of Cuba, towards the squadron under my command, which has been manifested by various acts that have greatly facilitated the execution of the duties entrusted to me; and it is the cause of great regret, that I should have been under any erroneous impression, with regard to orders of any kind, issued by your predecessor in office, in any way concerning the operations of my forces; and beg leave to offer as my apology, the assurances of those, who had stated to me that they had seen the orders: the admission of the Captain General, as understood by [the] officer whom I sent to him on this subject, that orders of a restrictive nature had been issued; the conduct of the Commandants of Mariel and Porto Cabanos; and information received from the Commandant of Bahia Honda, that some orders with regard to the forces under my command, had been received by him. The assurances of your excellency have put the subject forever at rest; and your circulars have relieved my mind from the serious apprehensions under which it labored.

Permit me to embrace this opportunity to felicitate your excellency on your arrival; to assure you, that nothing but a severe indisposition

has prevented my paying my respects in person; and to offer you my best wishes for your health and happiness.

I have the honor to be, with the highest respect,
Your Excellency's very obedient servant;

D. PORTER,

*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces in the W. Indies
and Gulf of Mexico.*

To His Excellency Don FRANCISCO DIONISIO VIVES,
Captain General of the island of Cuba and its dependencies.

The Captain General of Cuba to Commodore Porter.

[TRANSLATION.]

HABANA, 10th May, 1823.

In the last conference, which you had with His Excellency my predecessor, you, no doubt, became satisfied with the friendly demonstrations and sincere offers of this Government to that of the United States, unequivocally expressed by that chieftain, with explanations of the subjects of your doubts relative to his official letter of the 29th of March, in his last paragraph in answer to one from you, dated the 26th of the same month.

Having gained an understanding of this case, I have now the satisfaction of declaring to you, that this government has not issued any order for prohibiting the entrance of the vessels, in the squadron under your command, into the ports of this Island: but, on the contrary, your squadron will meet with every aid and co-operation, on the part of the local authorities, in the pursuit of pirates, who may shelter themselves in the uninhabited coasts, compatible with the territorial privilege, conformable to the laws of nations. And I can do no less than assure you, that the Spanish government, always a faithful observer of the rights pertaining to each nation, as well as jealous of their own, never would take measures of the kind to which you allude, without proclaiming their intention, with that frankness and clearness, which are its strong characteristics: and, in the present case, it has had no motive for acting contrary to the sentiments which it has heretofore expressed to you.

And that you may remain satisfied and convinced, I enclose to you circulars for the different commandants of the military stations on this island, in order that they may afford you all the assistance necessary for the attainment of your important commission. With this, I consider your official letter of the 28th of last month, as answered.

This opportunity allows me the pleasure of offering my services to you, with the highest consideration.

God preserve you many years.

FRANCISCO DIONISIO VIVES.

Commodore **DAVID PORTER,**
Commander of the U. S. squadron.

Translated copy of a circular letter from the Captain General of Cuba, to the Commandants at the several military stations in that island:

Office of the Captain General of the Island of Cuba.

An American squadron, under the command of Commodore David Porter, being destined to cruise about the coasts of this island, in aid of our forces, who are engaged in a like enterprize, namely, the purpose of exterminating the pirates who infest our seas, and cause so much injury to commerce in general, without respecting any flag whatever: And it being an obligation of every civilized nation to annihilate such banditti, who, heedless of their duties in society, employ themselves in such execrable practices: I have thought it proper to give orders, that, wherever this squadron may arrive, and present itself to the constituted authorities, they must afford it every aid, which may be compatible with the territorial privilege and respect.

God preserve you many years.

FRANCISCO DIONISIO VIVES.

Habana, 10th May, 1823.

U. S. GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Allenton, Thompson's Island, May 19, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you, that not a single piratical act has been committed on the coast of Cuba, since I organized and arranged my forces.

I have the honor to be,

Your obdt. servant,

D. PORTER.

HON. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

Extracts from a letter of Commodore D. PORTER, to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

U. S. GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Allenton, May 22, 1823.

SIR: We have a vastly important commerce to Havana and Matanzas, which is now left to the protection of a small schooner of three guns, at each place; all the others, with the exception of two, coming in to repair, are cruising for pirates on the south side of the island, and in the old Strait of Bahama.

"I am at present left with only the Sea Gull: as the store ship is on the point of sailing for a load of water for us, the lagoons on the island having dried up.

"I beg, sir, that our situation may be taken into consideration, and that some means may be speedily employed to ameliorate it. The principal thing wanting, is a large vessel, and the aid and comforts which she would afford: At present, I have no place to shelter me but the awning of this small vessel. I cannot obtain hands enough for my use to man a boat. I have no comforts whatever, and I find my health gradually sinking. I would be the last to complain without cause: but the rainy and sickly season is now coming on, and I should fail in my duty, were I not to acquaint you with our true situation.

"Allow me to suggest, that this appears to me to be the most suitable place to give protection to the commerce of the Gulf of Mexico, and that all the forces now employed at New Orleans, could be much more advantageously employed here."

Extract of a letter from Commodore DAVID PORTER, to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

SEA GULL, *Allenton, June 4th, 1823.*

"I yesterday was informed of a piratical schooner on the south side of Cuba, which had captured two vessels, and I immediately despatched the Greyhound in pursuit of her.

It is with regret I inform you, that I am compelled to discontinue my convoy from Havana, as my forces are now so scattered, that it cannot be done without neglecting the main object of the expedition. When our cruising was on this side the island, I found less difficulty in the thing.

We are greatly in want of larger vessels, and more men, and I sincerely hope that they may be sent as early as possible."

Commodore Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Allenton, June 6th, 1825.

SIR : We are greatly in want of medical aid on this station. Doct. Williamson, in charge of the hospital, and Doct. Edger, in charge of the sick in the harbor, have both been taken seriously ill, within a few days, which leaves me with only one surgeon's mate. The small vessels are equally in a suffering condition, having but one acting mate between two of them : and, had it not been for the few acting appointments given by me, they would have been entirely destitute.

I beg, sir, that our situation may be taken into consideration, and as the sickly season is fast approaching, I hope that several surgeon's mates may be sent out to us. Six, at least, in addition to our present number, are required.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

Honorable Secretary of the Navy.

Extracts from a letter of Commodore D. Porter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

SEA GULL, *Allenton, June 24th, 1825.*

“ Sir: By the *Hornet*, just arrived, I am informed of the capture of two piratical launches by the *Ferret*, Lieut. Com'dt. Newell, a few leagues to the west of Matanzas.

“ It appears that they were chased into a small harbor, where there was not water sufficient for the schooner; and on the approach of her boat, (carrying only four persons,) they, (about forty,) commenced a fire on her from behind the rocks, and nearly sunk her. The schooner then opened a fire on them with her nine pounder, drove them from their skulking places, and took possession of the launches.

“ Such is the account I have received from Lieut. Shubrick, of the *Hornet*, whose ship fell in with Lieut. Com. Newell on his passage.

“ There is good reason to believe that these are the boats which plundered the American brig *Mary Joan*, Captain Hubbard, inside the Bay of Matanzas, twelve days since.

“ It appears that these launches were captured about the 19th inst. ; that their cruise has been only of six days' duration ; and that they were taken in not more than three days after I received information respecting them.

“It is expected that this prompt detection and punishment of the first attempt at piracy, since the arrangement of my forces on the coast, will deter them, at least for a time, from fitting out any new expeditions.”

Lieut. Com. Newell to Commodore Porter.

U. S. SCHOONER FERRET,
Thompson's Island, June 25th, 1823.

SIR: Pursuant to your instructions, I left this place on the 14th inst. on a cruise to Trinidad: on the south side of Cuba, in company with the *Beagle*, Capt. Newton. On the second day, we parted company, and on the third day I made the Havana. (on my way to Matanzas,) from thence I commenced a diligent search in all the by-ports and bays. On Tuesday sent my boat into Canised, and obtained information that some pirates were still lurking about the coast: during that night, I kept close in with the land, and on Wednesday, at 10 A. M. discovered an armed barge, with 16 oars, and well manned, in a small bay, called Bacuna Yeauga; I immediately sent Lieut. Dorning, with five men, the most my boat could carry, to examine all the boats, there being seven in number. He approached within fifty yards of the barge, when the crew shew their character, by opening a fire on him, with musketry and blunderbusses, which, fortunately, did no other damage than nearly to sink the boat, she having received a ball at the water edge—five other ones were found in the boat, which, being nearly spent, had struck the water and innocently jumped into her. My boat, at no time suitable for the transportation of men, and now rendered useless, induced me to take possession of a small coaster that was near, and manned her with fifteen men, and at that time intended to stand in, if possible, with the *Ferret*, in order to cover the men while they took possession of the barge, which then had the American colors, union down; but, on approaching, found that the channel would not admit of my entering. It then blowing very hard, and a heavy sea on, I deemed it proper to recal the coaster, which had like to have gotten ashore: for, had that catastrophe occurred, I question much whether the pirates would have had the gratification of butchering them, as they certainly would have been drowned. The sea was then breaking with great violence over the reef that covered the bay. I was then compelled to resort to making tacks, close in with the reef, and giving them long tom, with round and grape, in hopes to destroy the boats—as to killing any of them, it was impossible: for, on the approach of the *Ferret*, they would completely secure themselves behind the rocks and trees, which hung all around the harbor: but this I was frustrated in, by the enormous roughness of the sea; and, the wind being on shore, prevented me from taking any position, from which I could annoy them much.

Finding it impossible to do any thing, with the means then in my power, I stood out to sea, in hopes to fall in with some vessel from which I could get a suitable boat, (but I am sorry to say, that it was not until next morning that my wishes were obtained) and, if that could not be done, to push to Matanzas, to concert a plan with the Governor, by which the pirates, as well as their boats, may be taken. I, however, obtained a boat from an English vessel, and immediately bore up for the same place, which was then but a short distance off. I had not run but a short time, when I discovered a Spanish brig of war lying too, off the bay, which proved to be the Matae. On the report being sent to the Governor of Matanzas that one of the U. S. schooners was engaged with the pirates, he despatched this brig, and, at the same time, took with him a land force, and had cruised there a few minutes before me, and had taken possession of a small schr. boat, the pirates had abandoned, and which lay on the beach. I sent in my boat after he had left, and ordered a search, when two of the boats I had seen the day I attacked them, were found, well sunk, up a Lagoon, which, upon further examination, extended several miles into the Island, and have no doubt but that the large barge is now at the head of it; but, not being prepared with boats, I did not think it proper to send my boats out from the Ferret. The two boats I have brought over, and shall await your orders relative thereto.

On my arrival at Matanzas, I found my main-mast very dangerously sprung, which has made it necessary for me to return here, but not until I had given convoy to eight of our merchantmen from Matanzas and Havana.

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

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS M. NEWELL.

Com. DAVID PORTER,
*Commander of the U. S. Naval Forces,
 West India Station.*

The Captain General of Cuba to Commodore Porter.

[TRANSLATION.]

HABANA, 50th June, 1823.

I have received your official letters, one of which is dated on the 21st and the other on the 24th of the present month. In the latter, I observe a complaint of the conduct of the *provisionally appointed* Governor of Matanzas, towards an officer of the sloop of war Hornet. I have, consequently, already made arrangements for a close investigation of this subject, in order to convince you that no other sentiments animate this Government than what have already been manifested to you on several occasions, and from which it will never deviate: and, likewise, to satisfy you that its views are the same as those of the government of the United

States, in the extirpation of the enemies of the human race, who have invested the coasts of this pacific Island; and I wish you to be fully persuaded that it will never be able to view with indifference any intentional insult, committed by its subalterns, on the officers of any nation engaged in so laudable an enterprize.

In regard to your letter of the 21st, I would say, that I will accomplish the objects of its contents without delay, among those who are interested in their respective reclamations, applauding, at the same time, the just comparison which you make, of the rights of a strict neutrality towards the nation whom I have the honor of serving.

I renew to you my most distinguished consideration.

May God preserve you many years.

FRANCISCO DIONISIO VIVES.

To Com. DAVID PORTER.

A true copy.

P. WILSON, *Secretary*.

Lieut. Com. Gregory to Com. Porter.

U. S. SCHOONER GRAMPUS,

Thompson's Island, July 3d, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you, that this vessel sailed from the Balize, on the 24th of April, with a convoy for Tolasco, where she arrived on the 1st of May. Sailed thence again on the 6th, with convoy, towards Vera Cruz; parted with the convoy on the 9th, and arrived at Campeachy on the 13th, where I received information of several piracies committed upon the merchant vessels of the U. S.; and that the coast of Yucatan, from Cape Catouche to Lagona, was then infested by several gangs of pirates, who had been guilty of every atrocity imaginable. Finding there were a very considerable number of merchant ships at the several ports upon that coast, unprotected, and others arriving almost daily, I continued thereabouts until the 25th of June, scouring the coast up and down; and, occasionally, when any information was had, which offered the least chance of detecting those villains, the boats were employed, and sometimes were sent along the coast twenty and thirty leagues from the vessel. On the 22d of May, I chased a schooner ashore to windward of Sisal, which, I have no doubt, was a pirate, from his appearance and conduct; as it was in the night, and upon a part of the coast where I was not suf-

ficiently acquainted, and blowing fresh upon the shore, I had not an opportunity of completing his destruction. On the 11th of June, I seized a suspicious vessel in the harbor of Campeachy, and resigned her to the authorities there, on that account. This last vessel had just come from New Malaga, or Vigia de Chiguila, a little to the windward of Cape Catouche, where the pirates have a very considerable establishment, and came down to Campeachy for the purpose of procuring stores for a vessel then preparing for a cruise. Two seamen, who had been held as prisoners at N. Malaga, informed me that this gang were sometimes a hundred and upwards in number; that they held possession of a small fort, having two twenty-four pounders; and that an officer, named Molla, who had been placed there by the government, had joined them. This was corroborated by the authorities at Campeachy, who requested me to land and destroy the place. The pirates issue from their post in barges, small vessels, and in canoes, hover along the shores, enter the harbors, murder and destroy almost all that fall in their power. On the 2d of June, the American schooner Shibbolit, Captain Perry, of New York, being then ready for sea, was boarded by a canoe, having fourteen of those villains on board; the watch was instantly murdered, eight others of the crew were put in the fore-castle, the hatch spiked down, a ton or more of log-wood put over it, the head sails set, with the wind off shore, and fire put to the vessel in the cabin. By the most extraordinary exertions, these men broke out in time to save their lives. I arrived while the vessel was burning down. The same canoe then proceeded to windward, and, two days afterwards, took the schooner Augustus and John, off Sisal, and burnt her, having turned the crew adrift in a small boat, with every probability of their perishing. The people of the country were much exasperated, and turned out to hunt them from their shores. A party of dragoons having met them, a skirmish ensued, wherein the captain of dragoons, and several of his men, were killed, and the pirates, taking to their boats, escaped. One of the seamen I mentioned as having been amongst them, stated, that he belonged to an English schooner from New Providence, called the Flyer; that the crew, with the exception of himself, were instantly butchered. He was detained by them about two months, during which time they had captured nine vessels, some of which were brought in, but the principal part destroyed; and, in some instances, he was certain that the whole crews were murdered. When he left the place, (about twenty days since) they had a Guineaman, with two hundred slaves, and a large quantity of ivory; two small schooners, Americans. And an English cutter informed me, that the pirates had a direct and uninterrupted intercourse with Havanna, by means of small coasting vessels that ran regularly to the ports on the coast, and always touched at New Malaga. Frequently, some of them would go up to the Havana, and others of the gang come down.

That this infernal horde of villains have established themselves at New Malaga, I have no doubt; and, from the information given me by

men of the first respectability at Campeachy, Sisal, and other places on the coast, I believe the pirates have been guilty of all the acts as herein stated.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,
Your most obedient servant,
FRANCIS H. GREGORY,
Lieut. Com. U. S. Navy.

Com. DAVID PORTER,
Com. U. S. Naval Forces, West India Station.

Commodore Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.

SEA GULL, ALLENTON,

Thompson's Island, July 17, 1823.

SIR: It is with infinite satisfaction I do myself the honor to lay before you Lt. Comd't Watson's official report of the almost total annihilation of the crews of two piratical vessels, by the barges Galinipper and Musquito, under his command.

When we take into consideration the immense superiority of force opposed to him, the advantage and preparation on the part of the pirates, and the result of the action, we cannot but be impressed with the conviction, that nothing less than Providential influence and protection could have occasioned consequences so fatal to the pirates, and so exempt from injury on our side, as to appear almost miraculous.

The five surviving pirates, being desperately wounded, I have, in compliment to the favorable disposition and zealous co-operation of the authorities of Havana, sent to the Captain General of Cuba, to be tried by the laws of Spain.

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to him on the subject.

I cannot close this communication, without expressing a hope that the brilliant success of Lieut. Comd't Watson, and his excellent character as an officer and man, may induce the Department to promote him to a higher grade, as the most suitable reward for his services.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,
Your obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

Hon. SMITH THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.

Lieut. Commandant Watson to Commodore Porter.

U. S. GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Allenton, Thompson's Island, July 11, 1823.

SIR : Having had the honor to report the circumstances attending the cruise of the division under my orders, prior to our separation off St. John de los Remedios, I have now to communicate, for your information, my subsequent proceedings, in the barges Gallinipper and Musquito.

After a strict examination of the Coast and Islands, from Cayo Francis to Cayo Blanco, in the vicinity of Point Hycacos, whilst cruising in Signapa Bay, we discovered a large topsail schooner, with a launch in company, working up to an anchorage, at which several merchant vessels were then lying.

Being to windward, I bore up in the Gallinipper, for the purpose of ascertaining their characters, and, when within gun shot, perceiving the large vessel to be well armed, and her deck filled with men, I hoisted our colors; on seeing which, they displayed the Spanish flag, and the schooner having brailed up her foresail, and commenced firing at the Gallinipper, I immediately kept away, and ran down upon her weather quarter, making signal, at the same time, for the Musquito to close. Paving much the advantage in sailing, they did not permit us to do so, but made all sail before the wind for the village of Signapa, to which place we pursued them, and, after a short action, succeeded in taking both vessels, and effecting the almost total destruction of their crews, amounting, as nearly as could be ascertained at the time, to 50 or 60 men, but, as we are since informed, to seventy or eighty. They engaged us without colors of any description, having hauled down the Spanish flag after firing the first gun; and, on approaching to board, (our men giving three cheers and discharging their muskets) the pirates fled precipitately, some to their launch, (lying in shore, from whence a fire was still kept up) whilst others endeavored to escape by swimming to the land. A volley of musketry, directed at the launch, completed their disorder, and drove them into the sea, but the boats going rapidly through the water, cut off their retreat, with the exception of fifteen, eleven of whom were killed or desperately wounded, and taken prisoners by our men, who landed in pursuit, and the remaining four apprehended by the local authorities, and sent to Matanzas.

The larger vessel was called the Catilina, commanded by the celebrated pirate Diabolito, taken, some weeks since, from the Spaniards, between Havana and Matanzas, carried to Signapa Bay, where she received her armament—had captured nothing, this being the commencement of her piratical cruise.

I cannot close this communication without performing a most pleasing task, in reporting the active gallantry and good conduct of my officers and men, none of whom sustained the slightest injury in the

action, the result of which is, I trust, sufficient to satisfy you that all under my orders did their duty, particularly when it is considered that we had but twenty-six men, opposed to a force of piratical vessels well supplied with arms of all kinds, amongst which was one long nine and two six pounders.

I have much pleasure in naming, as my associates, Lieut. Inman, Acting S. Master Bainbridge, Dr. Babbit, Midshipmen Harwood and Taylor, and Messrs. Webb and Grice, who obeyed and executed all orders and signals, with a promptitude and zeal which could not be exceeded.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

W. H. WATSON.

Commodore D. PORTER,

Comd'g U. S. Naval Forces

In the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico.

Commodore Porter to the Governor of Cuba.

U. S. GALLIOT SEA GULL,

Allenton, Thompson's Island, July 13th, 1823.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: With a full confidence that they will be brought to condign punishment, I send you, to be tried by the laws of Spain, five pirates, taken on board two piratical vessels, by two of the barges of my squadron. I also send, by the same conveyance, two men, making part of the original crew of one of the vessels, when she fell into the hands of the pirates.

The witnesses being on the spot, will enable you to make the punishment prompt, and the example, I have no doubt, will be highly salutary.

With sentiments of the highest respect, I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's very obedient and humble servant,

D. PORTER,

*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces
in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico.*

To His Excellency Don Francisco Dionisius Vives,

Captain General of the Island of Cuba, and its dependencies.

*General Vives to Commodore Porter.**Office of the Captain General of the Island of Cuba,**HABANA, 24th July, 1823.*

I acknowledge the receipt of your official letter of the 13th of the present month, transmitted by the *Schr. Ferret*, with five individuals, under the character of pirates. These men were immediately put under the disposal of the Judiciary authority, in order that they might be judged in a manner accordant to our laws; and the Judge who was especially charged with the duty, has directed to me the following official statement of the result of his examinations:

“**MOST EXCELLENT SIR:** The commander of the American *Schr. of War the Ferret*, Mr. Thomas M. Newell, being examined, likewise the mariners whom he presented before me, and those whom he brought here as prisoners, by order of Com. D. Porter, of whom three were, by the disposition of your Excellency, committed to the jail, and two to the Hospital of Saint Ambrosio, *characterised as pirates*: an appearance has not resulted that they had an actual participation in the *invasions and robberies*: they being brought to their condition by compulsion. But, as I have information that those who escaped, are now apprehended and carried to Matanzas, where a process will be instituted against them, and where the most sure means will be adopted for discovering the plain truth, I have considered it expedient to send these prisoners to Matanzas, hoping that your Excellency will be pleased to facilitate their transportation, with the necessary provisions, affording to the disposition of the judge of that district the means of determining, with clear understanding, what has been done, and what is now actually doing.”

This copy is forwarded to you for your information and satisfaction.

FRANCISCO DIONISIO VIVES.

Com. DAVID PORTER.

*Lieut. Commandant Newell to Commodore Porter.*

U. S. SCHOONER FERRET,

Port Rodgers, July 23d, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor to report to you that, after delivering the pirates at Havana, I cruised down the coast of Cuba to the windward, as far as Cayo Blanco, and examined every creek and harbor. After searching and diving for sometime at Artigos, (a small hidden river) I found the guns you alluded to in your instructions; also, a new gun carriage, calculated for a twenty-four pounder, was taken from the mangroves, where the pirates had carefully hidden it: my vessel being so much lumbered up, I could not bring it; I therefore cut it up, and

saved the irons; the guns taken are five in number: one long six pounder, one short do. one nine pounder carronade, and two long three's; the latter well mounted, and appear to have been very recently placed there.

I then returned to the Havana, and, on Sunday last, gave convoy to six Americans, and one Danish ship.

I have the honor to be, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
THOMAS M. NEWELL.

Com. D. PORTER,
*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces
in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico.*

*Extract of a letter from Commodore DAVID PORTER, to the Secretary
of the Navy, dated*

On board the SEA GULL,

Allenton, Thompson's Island, August 1st, 1823.

"I have been engaged, since the return of the barges, under Lt. Com. Watson, in preparing them for an expedition to the piratical establishment at New Malaga, against the arrival of the expected vessels, from which I calculated on getting men; but I have lately been informed, by the arrival of a British brig of war at this place, (with every officer and man down with the yellow fever, except thirteen) that a sloop of war and several light vessels from Jamaica, have gone against that place. I shall, consequently, as there is much danger from sickness on that coast, delay my departure until I hear the result of the British expedition, and have directed the commander of the Hornet to take one of the small schooners, (now on the coast of Cuba) with him, to send back with such information as he may collect on the subject. There have been no captures, (except Spanish, by open boats,) by pirates, on this side of the island of Cuba, since I have been here, and no pirate has appeared, that we have not captured."

Lieut. Com. Kearney to Com. Porter.

U. S. SCHOONER GREYHOUND,
Thompson's Island, August 10th, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor of transmitting, herewith, for your information, the enclosed report of the cruise of this vessel, commenced under

circumstances of a vexatious nature, as the report will shew; but, terminating in a manner, I trust, somewhat satisfactory to you, although the principal object pointed out in your letter (respecting the pirates at the Isle of Pines) has not met that success you may have anticipated; but I have the satisfaction to inform you, that, although I have not been so fortunate myself, it has been the fortune of others to apprehend those very villains who committed the outrage upon the American vessels *Reuben* and *Eliza* and *Mechanic*, as mentioned in your orders.

They are now in prison, at Trinidad de Cuba. Having had a communication with the Governor of that place on the subject, I submit herewith my letter, with his answer, (together with some publications to be seen in Spanish newspapers,) for your information. Although I was not successful in getting the pirates into my possession,

the application made through the enclosed letter, and which, indeed, I did not expect; yet you will perceive, it has drawn an official acknowledgment of these pirates being in possession of the authorities; making it a matter of public notoriety, it becomes more obligatory to pursue their prosecution to a just and proper issue.

I take this occasion to express to you the high sense I entertain of the Governor of Trinidad, which his attentions demand. He tendered us every civility and aid in his power in the prosecution of our duties; offering to procure us a pilot, and, altogether, evincing a disposition of friendly co-operation, seldom met with on the island of Cuba.

For your better information on the subject of our visit to Cape Cruz, I beg leave to subjoin the detail of events, in a more circumstantial and particular manner than given in the enclosed report, viz.

On the 20th ult. cruising in company with the *Beagle*, Lieut. Com. Newton, Cape Cruz bearing S. E. about four leagues, brought too and examined a small armed schooner, of about 35 tons, having three prizes in company. She proved to be a Colombian, duly commissioned, commanded by a Frenchman, and manned by Frenchmen and some others, apparently natives of the country where she belonged. Her commission was dated at Carthagena, last December. Her prizes were examined by Capt. Newton, and found to be Spanish droggers, except one, a large canoe, calculated to carry about twenty men, which boat had been taken on shore, near the Cape, where she had been abandoned by a party they supposed to be pirates, on being chased by said schooner.

On the following day, we stood in, with the *Beagle* in company, and anchored under the Cape. Capt. Newton and myself—as well for recreation as to examine the Cape, landed with a small boat; but, finding the walking bad, we again embarked, and proceeded along shore in search of some settlement. Soon after getting out of sight of our schooners, (by doubling around the Cape) a sudden and quick fire was opened upon us, from among a thicket of mangrove bushes and rocks, with which the Cape is bordered.

The party was armed with muskets and blunderbusses, which were fired around us, alternately, without effect; at the same time, a firing upon us was opened from another quarter, from guns mounted on a

high point of rocks a short distance ahead. Thus situated, with a cross fire upon us, enabled only occasionally to return the fire of the party in ambush, as some of them would dodge from bush to bush, or rock to rock; having for our arms but a fowling piece and one or two muskets, we were induced to return to our vessels, which we did. It being late, we waited till next day.

On the morning of the 22d. Capt. Newton and myself again set off, hoisting our colors upon the boat: as it was a fair presumption, that, in consequence of a Colombian vessel being on the coast, some mistake on the part of the people on shore, might have been made in regard to our character. But that proved to be groundless: for, having reached within the distance of their guns, they opened upon us with more apparent spirit and determination than before, from a position inaccessible, apparently, in the rear, from the thickets of bushes and briars: and the same in front, from a precipice of rugged rocks: and, so commanding altogether, that, to prevent the loss of lives, I directed both vessels to be warped round the Cape, along an extensive reef, which almost encircles it, affording a smooth and shallow harbor. We did not succeed in getting within gun-shot of the establishment, until we had reached five and six feet water, when we anchored.

Lieut. Farragut, with the marines and some seamen, was ordered on shore, to endeavor to gain a position in their rear, to attack them, or cut off their retreat before the schooner moored, or their landing could be discovered by the pirates—as we had deemed the party we were about to attack. The officers of both schooners volunteered and accompanied the party on shore, one being only reserved in each schooner, and a sufficiency of men for the guns, hoping to attract the attention of the pirates from Mr. Farragut's party. Several shot were fired from the schooners, which drove the pirates into places of security behind the jutting rocks, where they seemed to be in considerable force; the shot being seen to strike among the rocks behind which they sat; and not until the boats were despatched to land in front, and Lieut. F's party was close upon them, did they abandon the advantageous position they occupied. They were pursued, but with so decided a disadvantage to the pursuers, from their want of knowledge of the passes, that none, unfortunately, were taken, except two old and decrepid beings, whose age and infirmities placed them beyond the merited chastisement their more active comrades, had they fallen into our power, would have received.

A four pounder, two swivels mounted on the heights, and some indifferent articles of small arms, were found; they, however, escaped with their muskets and blunderbusses, or else hid them in some of the numerous deep and intricate caverns to be found on the cape: in one of which, various articles of plunder were stowed, but of no value; however, enough to show the character of the wretches who infest that place, human bones were found in the cave. We found eight boats, but not of a large size; their principal one was, no doubt, the one taken by the Colombian cruiser, as before stated; and those men armed with muskets and blunderbusses were, no doubt, of her crew.

From information derived from the prisoners, we learn that the captain of the gang was in prison in the interior of the island, for having burnt an English vessel off that cape. As a singular instance of the growing propensity of the present age for piracy, I have to inform you that even a *woman* and *children* were of this gang, belonging to the captain of them—a second “Helen M Gregor,” and the old men, too—who can do nothing else, light up the signal fire, which was done in the present instance, on our appearing on the coast.

In another case, a captain of a vessel informed me that he had been plundered by a gang of pirates, who took him by surprise, under the following stratagem—viz.

“An old man, (his bald head and heavy locks exposed to view) and a little boy to steer the boat, pulled, or sailed along side of his vessel; when it was too late, discovered that a strong party lay concealed in the bottom of the boat, to whom he had to surrender.”

The female just mentioned was removed to some place of safety before the attack was made—said to be the wife of the captain.)

Finding our pursuit of the pirates promised no success, I considered it unimportant to remain longer at the cape, having destroyed their means of doing further mischief for a time; and, taking into consideration the state of our officers and men, worn down by fatigue from a long pursuit over one of the roughest countries I have ever seen, their clothes nearly worn off, from bushes of impenetrable thickness, and their shoes cut off their feet by sharp pointed rocks, over which they passed, I abandoned the place, bringing off the arms, &c. of any consequence, and setting fire to every thing else that would burn.

One large and well thatched house, and three smaller ones, were consumed, and a quantity of fishing nets; and their furniture, which I have always observed to be a part of the outfits of a piratical establishment; they are merely used for their immediate wants, in procuring sustenance, when their real profession proves unfruitful, and obliges them to it.

I have written you a very long and full account of this affair, in order that you may be possessed of every information in my power to give, in the event of a question arising as to the propriety of landing and burning property on a foreign shore; and should this case be noticed by the supporters of “territorial jurisdiction” (over uninhabited parts of Cuba, notorious only for murder and piracy,) it will be seen that your officers and men’s lives have been jeopardized, and the flag of their country made a target for the lawless villains to fire at, at their pleasure, and which will continue so to be, if any restrictions should be put upon our landing in similar places, where no authority exists than the will of the marauders themselves who inhabit those places.

I took the liberty of releasing the two prisoners, as there was no proof to establish them pirates; and I furnished them a boat, with an express condition that they should never appear again at the Cape, and that I should take and treat as pirates, any persons found there

hereafter, not furnished with a special licence from the present Captain General of Cuba, setting forth their character and occupation.

This was taking upon myself, perhaps, too much; but it is now submitted to you, whether such a measure would not be proper, not only in regard to that place, but all others of a like position.

That there is a chain of intercourse with fishermen who live in such places, and pirates, I have no doubt; and it must be obvious from several cases of late.

As regards those at the Isle of Pines, they affect to know nothing of the robbery of the vessels your order mentions to me having taken place there although the very articles of the cargoes of those vessels, I saw in their house.

At Cape Antonio, two years since, I found fisherman's huts filled with piratical goods, papers, and letters, robbed from different vessels, strewed about their floors.

That fishermen, as well as pirates, should be moved from all the capes, or rather uninhabited parts of Cuba, where the proper authorities can have no control, I think necessary, and will I hope be the case.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

LAWRENCE KEARNEY,

Lt. Com'dt U. S. Navy.

Com. D. PORTER,

*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces in the W. Indies
and Gulf of Mexico.*

P. S. In my report of the affair at Cape Cruz, I forgot to mention, that we were not either hailed, or was there any colors displayed by the party that attacked us, by which we could ascertain their character.

As regards our character, they could have no great doubt: for they had seen us communicating with an English ship of war, close off the Cape, on the same day of our arrival.

I was informed by the Governor of Trinidad, of pirates infesting the coast to the eastward of that place, and was induced to proceed within the keys in pursuit.

On my way, boarded a small schooner, belonging to the Grand Cayman island, and the information before received was corroborated by her master.

Under these impressions, I reached Cape Cruz, and our reception there induced a belief that we had met the party complained of.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

L. KEARNEY.

Com. D. PORTER,

*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces in the W. Indies
and Gulf of Mexico.*

Lieutenant Commandant Ritchie to Com. Porter.

U. S. SCHOONER FOX,

29th of August, 1825.

SIR: In compliance with your instructions, of the 8th ultimo, I proceeded to the coast of Yucatan, to ascertain the situation of a piratical establishment, said to be there. On the 14th, I arrived off the port of New Madrid, (New Malaga) and immediately sent a boat to obtain all the information possible, relative to the situation and character of the fortification.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you, that the establishment alluded to, is a fortification for the protection of the town of New Malaga, recently established there for commercial purposes, and that no pirates have been heard of on that coast, for some time.

The enclosed letter from the Commandant of that place, in answer to a letter addressed to him, by me, will, no doubt, fully explain their character; also, a letter from the commander of H. B. M. brig Scout, on the subject of the attack on the *Fort*, which, no doubt, gave rise to the report of its being a piratical establishment, and the answer thereto upon that subject.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN T. RITCHIE.

Com. D. PORTER,

Commanding West India Station.

Extract of a letter from Commodore DAVID PORTER to the Secretary of the Navy, dated

SEA GULL, *Port Rodgers, August 31st, 1825.*

“It is with the deepest regret, I have to inform you, the yellow fever has lately made its appearance among us, to an alarming degree, and has carried off several. For information as to the number of deaths, and the present situation of the sick, I beg leave to refer you to the enclosed medical reports, and to say, that we are badly off for medical assistance.”

The Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

Sept. 21st, 1825.

President MONROE:

SIR: I feel it to be my duty to represent to you the following facts, and to request the favor of your opinion respecting the course proposed.

On the 17th of this month, by the arrival of the *Beagle*, at this place, from Thompson's Island, the Department was furnished with reports from the commanding officer, and the surgeons at that station, up to the 1st of September, by which we learn, that the *John Adams*, and several smaller vessels, were at that place; that, about the 6th of August, the yellow fever made its appearance, with considerable malignity; that several deaths had occurred, among which were two Lieutenants, Potter and Somerville; two Midshipmen, Marshall and Reed; the captain's clerk, Thomas; a carpenter, two seamen, a gunner, a cooper, and a steward; that Com. Porter and twenty-one officers and men, were sick; the Commodore in a state of great debility, but good hopes were entertained of his recovery. By the arrival of Lieut. Boorman, yesterday morning, we have verbal information to the 8th of September, when Commodore Porter remained much as he was on the first; between the 1st and the 8th, there had been several deaths, and among them two Lieutenants and two Midshipmen; and the fever did not in any degree abate. All the *Surgeons* were sick, and four surgeon's mates constitute the whole medical skill at the station.

A careful examination of the reports of the sick, and minute inquiries of several officers who have been there, do not satisfy me that the fever originated on the island; but I incline to the opinion, that the infection may, in every instance, be traced to other places, but, whether it originated there, or be imported, the destruction of valuable lives is equally to be lamented, and the effects upon the service equally demand attention. Accounts from that place, some of them very exaggerated, find their way to the public prints, and create painful anxiety with the friends of those who are there, and will, it is to be feared, unless promptly corrected, produce feelings in the nation which will be essentially injurious to our important interests in that quarter.

The value of that station for the suppression of piracy, and the protection of commerce, is perfectly understood by you. It ought not readily to be deserted. It is very desirable to save it, while we take the most effectual means to protect the valuable lives of our officers and men. It is impossible to leave them there, especially, situated as the commanding officer is, without taking some decisive measure for their relief; and, to order their immediate removal, with our present information, would seem hazardous and improper.

Two or three surgeons and surgeon's mates have been ordered, and are on their way to the island. And, in order to obtain the best advice in my power, I have submitted to Doct. Cutbush, and four other surgeons, now in the city, all the information which I could procure; stated to them the time within which an order for removal could be executed, and required their opinion on the propriety of attempting a removal of the vessels to some northern port. Their report will be made to me at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, and I shall, probably, send you a copy. Their opinion must, necessarily, be less safe than if formed on the spot; but it may be a useful aid in determining on the course to be pursued.

The plan which I propose for your consideration, and which I shall adopt, if you do not disapprove it, is the following :

Prepare the *Shark*, now at New York, to sail to Thompson's Island, as speedily as possible: send in her one of the oldest and most experienced officers in the navy, with three of the most skillful and intelligent surgeons; direct them, in connection with Commodore Porter, (if his health will permit,) to investigate thoroughly the origin, causes, and progress, of the disease: the nature and situation of the island in reference to health, at this season of the year; the present state and probable health of the station: with authority either to retain the vessels there, or, if necessary, remove them to a northern port, until the advance of winter shall justify their return to that latitude.

The *Shark* can sail in less than ten days; will probably take ten more to reach the island; and a removal may be effected in five more, if it be found necessary. I presume the officers who go out, may return in about four weeks from the time the vessel sails.

I believe I should select Commodore Rodgers for this purpose, and have consulted him about it. He approves the plan, and with his usual promptness in the public service, expressed a wish to partake in its execution.

The following benefits would result :

1st. The best medical assistance will, in this way, be furnished to the sick, at that station, and many valuable lives may be saved.

2d. The public mind will be quieted by a precise knowledge of facts.

3d. A station, necessary to the objects for which the Government sent out the expedition, will probably be continued and secured.

4th. We shall obtain the safest information to guide us on all future occasions.

I shall be pleased if this plan meet your approbation, and shall make the necessary arrangements for it; not, however, giving any orders which will create difficulty, should you disapprove it. Please to favor me with an answer by the express.

I am, sir, very respectfully, &c.

SAM'L L. SOUTHARD.

The Secretary of the Navy to Com. Rodgers.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

29th September, 1823.

DEAR SIR: I enclose your orders. You are already well acquainted with the views of the Department, and of the President, in relation to your visit to Thompson's Island, and the motives by which it has been induced.

On your arrival there, you will, of course, communicate freely with Commodore Porter respecting them, should he still be there, and in

a situation to receive your communications. The uncertainty whether he be still living, the anxiety felt by the government and nation for his safety; the numerous reports of the sickly state of the officers and crews of the vessels, and of those who are on the Island; and the desire to furnish the most prompt and effectual relief; are among the principal causes which have created the wish that you should undertake the expedition. In its faithful execution, and beneficial results, I have strong confidence; and am, dear sir,

Very respectfully, yours,

SAML. L. SOUTHARD.

JOHN RODGERS, Esq.

Captain U. S. Navy, President Naval Board.

The Secretary of the Navy to Com. Rodgers.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, 29th September, 1823.

SIR: You will proceed, in the schooner *Shark*, from New-York to Thompson's Island, as speedily as circumstances will permit, taking with you Surgeons Marshall, Heerman, Harris, and Washington, who will obey your orders, and render all the assistance in their power in accomplishing the objects of your expedition. If either of them is prevented from joining you before you sail, you will require the attendance of Surgeon Hoffman, or any other of the surgeons at New-York, to supply his place.

If any officers be wanting to make up the complement of the *Shark*, you will select such as are necessary, at New-York. When you shall arrive at Thompson's Island, you will investigate, with the utmost care, the origin, progress, and present state, of the sickness, which prevails on the island, and in the squadron: the condition of all the vessels which are there; the localities of the station, in reference to health; and every matter which may be necessary and proper, to enable you to form a correct opinion, both of the propriety of continuing the vessels at that station, and of using it hereafter, during the sickly season.

After having made the necessary inquiries, you will either take such measures as shall seem proper, in reference to the health and comfort of the squadron, *leaving it where it is*; or you will order its removal, *for the present*, to Pensacola, Norfolk, or some more northern port. In either event, an early and minute report on the subject, to this Department, is desirable.

Uncertainty as to the present state of Commodore Porter's health, furnishes one strong motive for your visit. If his health permits, he will furnish the most safe information and best assistance in accomplishing your object; and if the squadron be left there, he will remain in command, if his health permit, and it be his wish. If his health

require a visit to the United States, you will place some other in command, and make report thereof as soon as practicable.

The surgeons who go with you will render to the sick all the aid in their power, consistently with the other duties they have to perform; and they will return with you, and join the several stations from which they are taken, reporting to this Department the time of their arrival.

You will be at liberty to return in the *Shark*, *Granopus*, or any other vessel at the station, which you shall think best for service. It is supposed you may accomplish the objects in view, and return to this place, in about five weeks from the time the *Shark* sails.

I am, very respectfully, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD.

JOHN RODGERS, Esq.

Captain U. S. Navy, President of the Navy Board.

The Secretary of the Navy to Com. Porter.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

Sept. 29, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR: This letter will be handed to you by Commodore Rodgers. The object of his visit to Thompson's Island will be fully communicated to you by him. The various, and in many points contradictory, reports, respecting the condition of the station, the uncertainty whether you still live, the deepest anxiety for your safety, the desire to furnish speedy relief, and acquire full information respecting the health of the station, and its fitness as a rendezvous during the sickly season, and the fear, that, debilitated as you are, you could not secure that information for us, have prompted the wish that Commodore Rodgers should undertake the expedition, and have induced him, cheerfully, and voluntarily to enter on its performance.

He will find united in it the sacred offices of private friendship and public duty. A report that your health is restored will give to me, individually, and to the nation at large, most sincere gratification.

I am, very respectfully, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD.

Capt. DAVID PORTER,

*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces,
West Indies and Gulf of Mexico.*

Com. Porter to Com. Chauncey.

WASHINGTON CITY,

October 27, 1823.

SIR: I have the honor to report to you my arrival here, in the U. S. galliot the *Sea Gull*, from Thompson's Island, in forty-three days; and from which place I was driven with the squadron, by a pestilence which made its appearance there, carrying off, in a short time, for the want of the necessary medical aid on the station, a great number of valuable officers and men. This circumstance induced me to order the large vessels to Hampton Roads, there to remain for a short time, where medical assistance, if required by them on their arrival, could be obtained. But I am happy to inform you that, with the exception of some intermittents, contracted since their arrival, they are perfectly healthy, as all the small vessels were which were left on the station.

The vessels on the West India station have never been more healthy than they have been this season, the disease with which we have been afflicted being altogether local, and originating in the decomposition of vegetable substances, after the heavy rains, and during the succeeding intense heat of the weather. My experience convinces me that, from the middle of July to the middle of October, the lee side of Thompson's Island is an unfit residence for man; for the rest of the year, no place within the tropics can be more healthy. Those who have resided on the weather side of the island, have at all times been exempt from the sickness with which those to the leeward have been afflicted. As a place of deposite for our stores, and of repair for our vessels employed on the coast of Cuba, no place can be better adapted; but, while the same cause for disease exists, and they must ever exist, it would not be prudent to make it a permanent station, where many men would be exposed to the baneful influence of the sickly season. As we are now happily situated, with regard to the authorities of Cuba, the inconvenience of an absence of three or four months from Thompson's Island would not be felt, and the excellent and healthy harbor of Matanzas, where we enjoy every facility and convenience from the local authorities, will obviate all the inconveniences which might otherwise be experienced. The short delay of receiving stores from on board the ships from the island, and the position they may take outside the harbor, free from the influence of the poisonous vapor which arises from the ponds, would render them secure from its effects. Should it be the design of the Government to keep a force there, I had proposed to myself this arrangement. Under all circumstances, however, it will be proper to have more medical men on the station; and had the necessary number been furnished this year, the squadron would have been, no doubt, in a great measure saved from the deplorable consequences which have resulted, as the disease, in the commencement, was completely under the control of medicine; but, I regret to say, that several perished without receiving any medical aid whatever, and without ever seeing a physician. The whole of the

medical men, with scarcely an exception, were, from their great fatigue and exposure, taken down with the disease, and we were left to perish for want of that assistance which we thought ourselves entitled to. I am well aware, however, of the difficulties the Department has labored under, to make the surgeons do their duty.

The *Sea Gull* will want coppering, and some other repairs; the rest of the vessels are in general in good order. Several of the officers of the squadron under my orders request leave of absence for a short time, and many applications are daily made to me on points of duty relating to my command. I beg to be informed by you, whether I am to act on these matters as I have done heretofore, or to leave them to the management of the Navy Department.

I shall hold myself, and the vessels, ready to return to the station, so soon as it can be done with safety to those on board. I must entreat of you, however, an additional supply of medical men for the vessels of the squadron, and for the establishment on shore.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

D. PORTER.

Com. ISAAC CHAUNCEY,

Senior member of the Board of Navy

Commissioners, and Acting Sec. of the Navy.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, 28th October, 1823.

SIR: Your letter of the 27th inst. has been received. On your recovery from a dangerous illness, produced by great exposure and much suffering, you will be pleased, Sir, to accept my sincere congratulations.

In conducting the movements of the squadron entrusted to your charge, you have displayed that intelligence, promptitude, and vigor, which effectually arresting the depredations of the freebooters, have afforded security to our trade, and justly entitle you to the unqualified approbation of this Department, and to the thanks of your country.

The conduct of the officers and men under your command, has been such as might have been expected, from the example of their chief; and you will be pleased, Sir, to assure them of the consideration in which their services are held, and the high sense entertained of their devotion to a most arduous and dangerous service.

The want of medical aid, of which you so justly complain, will claim the early and special attention of this Department.

If the state of your health will permit, you will take upon yourself the general superintending direction of the equipment of the vessels of your squadron, now at this yard and at Norfolk. Let their com-

manders report to you their wants, that you may make them known to the Board of Navy Commissioners, who will cause every requisite supply to be furnished.

I am, very respectfully,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

I. CHAUNCEY,

For the Secretary of the Navy.

DAVID PORTER, Esq.

*Commanding a Squadron in the West Indies
and Gulf of Mexico.*

Com. Rodgers to the Secretary of the Navy.

No. 1.

U. S. SCHOONER SHARK,

Hampton Roads, Nov. 16, 1823.

SIR: In the prosecution of your instructions of the 29th of Sept. last, you have already been informed of the time of my departure from New York, in the United States schooner Shark.

I have now the honor to inform you that, on the 23d of October, I reached Thompson's Island, accompanied by surgeons Harris, Washington, and Hoffman, of the Navy, after a passage of seventeen days, in which we experienced much rough disagreeable weather, it raining more or less every day but one, for thirteen days.

On reaching the Island, and not finding any of the public vessels of war except the Porpoise, the first objects to which I directed my attention, were, to ascertain the state and condition of the sick remaining on it: and, as far as practicable, the cause or causes which had produced such disastrous consequences to the health of the officers, seamen, and marines, stationed on the Island, and on board several of the vessels, which had previously had access to it as a rendezvous: for this purpose, I accordingly addressed a letter (of which the enclosed, No. 1, is a copy) to Surgeons Harris, Washington, and Hoffman. By their answer, (No. 2, herewith enclosed,) you will perceive that they do not consider the disease attributable entirely to any one cause, but to a variety of causes, such as they have described.

That the reasons which they have assigned are correct, there can be but little doubt: but to which of them is to be attributed the most powerful agency in producing the disease, is still a matter of speculation, or, at least, very questionable.

The Island, it must be admitted, does contain localities of a character calculated, when assisted by other causes, and perhaps only slight ones too, to generate bilious, and probably malignant fevers: yet I

must confess that I still entertain doubts whether those causes have had, in the present instance, so decisive an agency in producing the late fatal malady, as they may, at first view, seem to have had.

From the little experience I have had, my opinion is, that the climate of Thompson's Island is similar to that of the West India Islands generally: that its air is perhaps less salubrious than some, but more so than others; and that, notwithstanding the objections which may be urged against it, on account of particular defects arising from its small elevation above the level of the sea, the unevenness of its surface, and the many salt and fresh water ponds which it is said to contain, still, that it is, from the excellence of its harbor, and its peculiar station on the map of this Western Hemisphere, too important an object, in a political and commercial point of view, to be suffered to remain unoccupied and unregarded: for, admitting its climate, in its present unimproved state, to be as unfriendly to health as even that of the colony of Surinam, it is, notwithstanding, susceptible of being so improved, or, at least, the dangers attending it so much diminished, by artificial means, (such as I will hereafter describe,) as to render the objections to it, if not harmless, at least comparatively small.

Previous to leaving the Island, on the 3d inst. I had sent, by the advice of Surgeons Harris, Washington, Hoffman, and Williamson, (as I have already informed you,) all the sick, whose situations appeared to require a remove to a more northern climate. Those who still remained at the Island, at the time of my departure, were all well, except some convalescents, and a few with mild intermittent fevers; all of whom, it was believed, however, would be restored to health again by the return of cooler weather: indeed, for the last three days previous to our sailing, the wind had prevailed with much force from the north, and had rendered the air comparatively much purer, cooler, and exhilarating, than it had been for some days before; so much so, as to induce a belief that the season of health had commenced, and that its salutary effects would immediately be felt by those who have suffered by the long continuance of heat.

Previous to leaving the Island, I made such arrangements, and saw things placed upon such a footing, as to warrant the most sanguine anticipation of favorable results, and such as might have been expected, had Commodore Porter's health permitted him to continue on the station.

For the few changes which I found it necessary to make in the disposition of the several vessels left on the station, permit me to refer you to the accompanying papers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

With great respect,

I have the honor to be,

Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN RODGERS.

The Hon. SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

Doctors Harris, Washington, and Hoffman, to the Secretary of the Navy.

No. 2.

UNITED STATES' SCH. SHARK.

Thompson's Island, October 29th, 1823.

SIR: In conformity with the instructions contained in your communication of the 24th instant, we have carefully inquired into, and deliberately considered, the various points to which you have directed our attention.

On examining this Island, we find that it is of a secondary calcareous formation, and is thinly overspread with a light vegetable mould. The shores are somewhat elevated above the interior grounds, by the surf continually throwing up pulverized shells, which give a concave form to its superficies. It is thickly covered with small trees and shrubbery, principally of the mangrove variety, and grasses of several species grow with great luxuriance.

So far as our observations have enabled us to determine, we are of opinion that nearly one-half of the island is occupied by salt and fresh water ponds.

It has been ascertained, that the surfaces of these ponds are on a level with the surrounding ocean, yet but one of them has any connexion with it, by reason of the natural embankments to which we have already alluded.

The purest water of the island is in some degree brackish: but has not, so far as we can learn, produced any unfriendly effect on the health of those who have used it freely as a drink.

During the dry season, which continues from about the middle of September to the middle of June, many of the ponds either dry up, or shrink considerably within the boundaries to which they are dilated during the rainy season.

The surface being thus imperfectly overflowed, presents a mass of vegetable and animal matter, to which the climate adds every other circumstance necessary to give miasm its most powerful effect on the human frame. The gales and retiring tides frequently deposite on the shores a quantity of sea-weed, which undergoes a rapid decomposition, and thus contributes, in a limited extent, to vitiate the atmosphere.

To these miasmatic causes of disease, were added others of equal, if not greater magnitude.

They have arisen,

1. From the sudden exposure of Northern constitutions to a tropical climate, at a period when the ordinary relaxing effects of a change from a cold to a warm season were aggravated by a difference of fourteen or fifteen degrees of southern latitude. From this cause, they were, in the space of two or three weeks, operated upon by an increase of temperature of at least fifty degrees.

2. From the great fatigue and exposure, by day and night, of the officers and crews engaged in the boat service, and from the want of comfortable quarters for those who had encamped on the island.

3. From irregular, and, frequently, intemperate habits.

4. From being often deprived of fresh and wholesome provisions.

5. From the continued annoyance of moschetoes and sand-flies, which deprived the men of their accustomed rest. So insupportable, indeed, became these troublesome insects, that the men were frequently obliged to retire to the beach, where they walked the greater part of the night. Others, we have been informed by the officers of the station, would row off in boats some distance from the shore, and thus expose themselves either to the heavy dews or drenching rains peculiar to this climate.

6. From being operated upon by the depressing passions, arising from apprehension, awakened by the prevailing epidemic, and by the obvious want of comfort of those who were affected with disease.

These fruitful sources of fever will abundantly account for their extent and fatality. Taking into consideration the great liability of persons from the higher latitudes, of disease, when even slightly exposed to hardships in the tropics, it ought not to be a subject of surprise, that the severely arduous service in which our officers and crews have been engaged, have occasioned so many sacrifices of valuable lives.

The squadron under the command of Commodore Porter sailed from Norfolk on the 14th of February, proceeded directly to the West-Indies, as far south as St. Domingo, and then, returning north, took possession of this island on the 3d of April.

The first cases of fever which presented themselves to the notice of Dr. Williamson, the Surgeon of the station, were of a bilious character, and which readily yielded to the agency of medicine.

On the 20th of April, a servant in the family of Mr. Symington was attacked with yellow fever. With the exception of this case, bilious fever continued the prevalent disease until early in June, when it assumed, in many instances, a highly malignant form. This disease now commenced on board the store ship *Decoy*, which was rendered unhealthful by the impurity of her hold. A quantity of ballast was put aboard from this Island, containing shell fish and seaweed, which, by the heat of a tropical climate, was thrown into a state of putriferactive fermentation. Two of the cases, however, which occurred on board this vessel, were contracted by imprudent exposure to a noon-day heat, in the streets of Havana.

About the latter end of July, the yellow fever prevailed, with great malignancy, at all the establishments on the Island. From the various causes already stated, the disease in very many instances necessarily proved fatal.

The malignant fever continued epidemic until about the first of October, when its type again changed to an intermittent.

We have been unable to ascertain the precise number of deaths, in consequence of the absence of the medical officers who had charge of the Allenton hospital.

It appears, from the report of Dr. Williamson, that there are fifty-nine persons now sick at the different hospitals on the Island. We

have visited these establishments, and have found the patients sinking under the influence of debility, despondency, and the ravages of disease. Such of them as recover, commonly relapse in the course of a day or two, after being restored to duty. As in relapses generally, each succeeding attack becomes more unmanageable.

It appears, then, that they cannot be restored to perfect health in their present situation; and being, in this state, only a burden to the public service, we do, from motives of policy, as well as of humanity, respectfully recommend their immediate removal to a more northern station.

We beg further to recommend, that the large brig, now in the harbor, and which has been already designated as a hospital, should be suitably fitted up for the reception of those who may be hereafter attacked. By anchoring this vessel some distance to the windward of the Island, the sick will inhale a pure atmosphere: will be protected in comfortable quarters: and, being without the reach of annoying insects, will enjoy such repose and tranquillity, as are essential to the successful treatment of their diseases.

We have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

THO. HARRIS, M. D.

B. WASHINGTON, M. D.

RICH. K. HOFFMAN, M. D.

Surgeons of the Navy.

Commodore JOHN RODGERS,

President of the Board of Navy Commissioners.

Com. Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.

BALTIMORE, November 19, 1823.

SIR: In conformity with your wishes, verbally expressed to me, I have the honor to submit to you a brief outline of my proceedings in the West Indies, with the squadron under my command, for the suppression of piracy, and for the protection of persons and property, of the citizens of the United States.

In order to take in as large a field for operation as possible, I proceeded with my squadron, consisting of a sloop of war, a steam gal-
liot, a store ship, and nine schooners, to windward, touching at St. Thomas's, showing my forces off the forts of Porto Rico, and although my presence there, was attended with the loss of a gallant young officer, it resulted in the raising of the blockade of the coasts of the Colombian Republic, and gave a check to a system of licensed piracy, which had for a long time previously been practised, from St. John's, and other ports of that island.

From thence, I continued to scour the coasts of the Islands of the

West Indies to Cuba, the place of our destination, where we found piracy in full force; but, by the extraordinary activity and vigilance of the officers and men, under my command, it was, in less than two months from our arrival, as completely suppressed, as it is at this moment, or will be for several years.

The actual presence of an active naval force, with a proper understanding with the authorities on shore, being the only means by which the hordes of desperadoes, which have so long infested the almost unknown coasts of this extensive Island, can be completely exterminated, happily, the utmost cordiality, and most perfect co-operation, has existed between the authorities of Cuba, and myself; and, from them, I have received every countenance which could aid me in effecting an object, so interesting to the whole civilized world, and so honorable to the character of our country; and from those under my command, a zeal and activity which have been rarely equalled, and, I will venture to say, have never been surpassed, in any Navy, or on any service.

Humanity will deplore the loss of the many gallant spirits which accompanied me, and which shared in this most arduous duty; but she will console herself in the reflection, that the whole world has benefitted by their exertions, and that numbers unknown have, by them, been saved from the knives of the most blood-thirsty monsters that ever disgraced the name of man.

The details of the operations of the forces entrusted to me have, from time to time, been communicated to you. I beg leave, therefore, to refer you to the archives of the office for more minute information. It will, I hope, suffice to say, that, at present, I have no knowledge of the existence of any piratical establishment, vessels, or boats, or of a pirate afloat, in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico. They have all been burnt, taken, destroyed, and driven to the shore, where the latter have, in most cases, been speedily captured by the local military.

Some severity has been exercised while the battle lasted, but the result has been beneficial, the examples having struck a panic which will, no doubt, long serve to deter others from embarking in similar pursuits.

The fixing an establishment at Thompson's Island for rendezvous and supplies, as my instructions required, has had the most happy effect in attaining the object in view. Its vicinity to Havana, placed, as it were, in the thoroughfare of vessels sailing through the Gulf, makes it, in many points of view, an object of great importance to the United States; and, although for three months in the year it must ever remain sickly, while existing causes continue, it is, from its extraordinary salubrity for the remainder of the year, worthy a closer examination, to ascertain whether they may not be eradicated. It is my opinion, that, by thinning the woods, and draining off the heavy rains of the month of June, thereby promoting a free circulation of air, evaporation and dispersion of the water rendered stagnant by the excessive heat of June, and which causes the rapid decomposition of the vegetable matter with which the Island abounds, the months of Au-

gust, September, and October, might be made sufficiently healthy for the residence of man; but, at present, the poisonous effluvia arising from these causes, is almost certain destruction to whoever breathes it. Had I been aware of its pernicious effects, I could, without any inconvenience, have guarded against them by an earlier removal of the ships; but it took us by surprize, and the malignity of the disease was unparalleled. It is certain that it originated on the Island, for our ships, with the exception of those sent to work on shore, have, in their crews, enjoyed uncommon health.

In my intercourse with foreign officers, in general, I have received from them every attention; and from none more than those of the British Navy. The Jamaica station had heretofore been commanded by an Admiral; but, when Sir Edward Owens, an officer of the same rank as myself, was charged with a force for the suppression of piracy, Admiral Rowley was recalled to England, that we might meet on equal grounds.

Offers for co-operation were repeatedly made to me, but, feeling that the forces under my command were fully adequate to the object, I declined confining myself to any general plan, leaving it altogether to the accidental meetings of our respective forces, and to circumstances. It affords me pleasure to say, that, whenever such meetings did take place, with a common object in view, they have been attended with the happiest results.

The law making appropriation for the suppression of piracy, limited the amount to be expended to \$160,000; and, in the expenditure, much latitude was given to me by the honorable Secretary of the Navy, and the Board of Navy Commissioners. In the exercise of the trust reposed in me, I have endeavored to observe the utmost economy; and, when all shall be deducted which has been charged to the appropriation for this object, and shall be charged under the proper heads, it will be found that a large unexpended balance will be remaining in the Treasury.

The improvements of Thompson's Island, transportation of stores for the general service, medicines, hospital stores, &c. &c. &c. are of this description; and, when the sale of the vessels purchased for this service shall take place, and their proceeds be returned to the Treasury, the expense of the expedition will be a subject scarcely worthy of consideration.

Should the gradual withdrawal of the small vessels take place, I beg leave to suggest, that a frigate, in addition to the two sloops of war now attached to the squadron, is due to the character of our service, to the respectability of our flag in that quarter of the world, and would, by the convenience she would afford to our open boats, in the pursuit of pirates, offer the most certain means of keeping them in check.

The moral effect produced by this expedition should not be overlooked. The system of privateering which has prevailed, has, from its looseness, been the cause of many vexations to our commerce. Our presence has occasioned the older Governments to recal vessels

of this description, and the new Governments of America to issue their commissions with more precautions, to guard against abuse; consequently, our commerce is free from interruption, and our flag respected throughout those seas.

I have the honor to be, &c.

D. PORTER.

HON. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,
Washington.

Commodore Rodgers to the Secretary of the Navy.

WASHINGTON, November 24, 1823.

SIR: In my communication to you, of the 16th instant, I informed you that, although objections might be urged to the climate of Thompson's Island, on account of the number of salt and fresh water ponds, and the abundant growth of timber which it contains, yet, even in its present state, and admitting such objections to be well founded, still they might be rendered harmless, or, at any rate, greatly diminished, by the introduction of artificial means.

By the official report of Surgeons Harris, Washington, and Hoffman, now in your possession, you have been made acquainted with their opinions respecting the localities of the Island, so far as regards the form of its surface, the nature of its soil, timber, and other particulars; in all which, they have given as minute a description as the most unremitting attention, considering the length of time they were there, and the means of information afforded them, would admit.

These, together with the high reputation which those gentlemen sustain for science and professional skill, leave no doubt in my mind that their report upon the subject has been judicious, and such as the time and circumstances under which they visited the Island, would seem to point out as being the most safe and discreet; but, after all that has been said, it must be admitted, notwithstanding their unremitting industry to find out the true causes of the disease, that they were, after considering the only facts presented to their view, obliged to attribute it to a variety of causes, and, among the number, those which are known to be inseparable from the arduous nature of the service in which many of the officers and men were engaged, and the consequent exposure to which they were unavoidably subjected.

This being the case, you will, sir, at once perceive, that it must still remain doubtful, whether the air of the Island contributed more, or even as much as other causes, in producing the disease; for which reason, I am led to remark, that it might be unsafe to condemn it as a suitable rendezvous for our vessels employed in the West Indies and

Gulf of Mexico, until we shall have had, under different circumstances, more experience of its climate than we have yet had.

As an auxiliary to an extensive and permanent southern naval depot, [perhaps at Pensacola] such as a proper security for our commerce, and the permanent union of the States, seem to render indispensable, it will be found, I am inclined to believe, that the Island in question will soon become an object worthy the serious attention and consideration of the Government.

Nature has made it the advance post from which to watch and guard our commerce passing to and from the Mississippi, while, at the same time, its peculiar situation, and the excellence of its harbor, point it out as the most certain key to the commerce of the Havana, to that of the whole Gulf of Mexico, and to the returning trade of Jamaica; and, I venture to predict, that the first important naval contest in which this country shall be engaged, will be in the neighborhood of this very Island.

Without further remark on this interesting subject, permit me, sir, to observe, that, whatever objections may be made to the Island as a rendezvous, in its present unimproved and uncultivated state, even these may be rendered harmless, or, at least, measurably unimportant, by substituting the following description of force, for that now employed in the protection of our commerce in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico:

The Independence 74, depriving her of her lower deck guns, and giving her a crew of 450 seamen, ordinary seamen, boys, and marines, with an extra complement of commission officers, and double the usual number of midshipmen; the sloops of war John Adams, Hornet, and such other vessel of that class as can, from time to time, be spared from other service; the brig Spark, and schooners Grampus, Porpoise, and Wild Cat, and five or six barges, such as are now at Thompson's Island, for occasional service.

The vessels particularly purchased for the suppression of piracy, have done all that could reasonably have been expected towards its suppression; indeed, they have searched every nook and corner on the whole coast of Cuba, from which a pirate might be expected to issue; and, besides capturing and destroying all that could be identified as being of this character, they have made impressions not to be erased from the minds of such monsters, so long as we keep a respectable force in their neighborhood, in readiness to chastise those whose temerity might induce them to renew their depredations, and which, in the present state of things, notwithstanding the scourging they have received, would be the case, in the absence of such a force as I have described.

On the adoption of the before mentioned force, the other vessels, purchased for the suppression of piracy, might be sold; a circumstance very much to be desired, as their longer employment would be found not only useless, and dangerous to the health and comfort of those employed in them, but subversive of that discipline by which

our navy acquired its character, and for which, at one time, it may be said to have stood unrivalled by any other.

I have the honor to be,

With great consideration and respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN RODGERS.

To the Hon. SAML. L. SOUTHARD,

Secretary of the Navy.

LIST of United States' Naval Officers who have died since 1st of January, 1823.

NAMES.	RANK.	WHERE.	WHEN.
John H. Dent - - - - -	Captain	Charleston, So. Ca.	Sept. , 1823.
John Shaw - - - - -	do.	Philadelphia	17, do.
William H. Watson - - - - -	Lieutenant	Thompson's Island	13, do.
William H. Cocke - - - - -	do.	West Indies	March 6, do.
John M. Maury - - - - -	do.	Ship Decoy	June, do.
Richard Dashiell - - - - -	do.	Coast of Africa	22, do.
George W. Hamersley - - - - -	do.	Thompson's Island	
Nathaniel Carter, jr. - - - - -	do.	do.	Sept. 6, do.
William H. Mott - - - - -	do.	New-York	July 4, do.
Richard M. Potter - - - - -	do.	Thompson's Island	Aug. 11, do.
Richard C. Edgar - - - - -	Surgeon	do.	
John Dix - - - - -	do.	Coast of Africa	
M. C. Atwood - - - - -	Purser	do.	
Benjamin F. Bourne - - - - -	do.	New-York	Nov. 10, do.
Andrew Hunter - - - - -	Chaplain	Washington, D. C.	Feb. 24, do.
David P. Adams - - - - -	do.	Thompson's Island	Sept. 20, do.
John Ireland - - - - -	do.	New-York	March, do.
George W. Somerville - - - - -	Midshipman	Thompson's Island	Aug. 28, do.
Arthur Bainbridge - - - - -	do.	do.	Sept. 15, do.

Edward Barnewell	Midshipman	Schooner Porpoise	Sept. 17,	do.
James A. Kirk	do	Coast of Africa		
James P. M'Call	do	Norfolk	Oct. 10,	do.
Joseph G. Smith	do	Ship Decoy		
George W. Simms	do	Thompson's Island	Oct. 4,	do.
Robert Steed	do	do	June 8,	do.
Robert Taylor	do	do		
Rolla Weems	do	Norfolk	Oct.	do.
Miles King	do	Thompson's Island	Sept. 2,	do.
R. M. Benbridge	do	do	6,	do.
John Drew	Sailing Master	Boston	April	do.
Edward Rumney	do	Drowned	Mar. 31,	do.
Samuel Rinker	do	Philadelphia		
Wm. L. Reynolds	Boatswain	Coast of Africa		
Wm. Cunningham	Gunner	do		
Samuel Morrison	do	Thompson's Island	Aug. 31,	do.
Samuel Marshall	Midshipman	do	24,	do.
W. M. Rittenhouse	do	do		do.
John Reed, jr.	do	do	29,	do.
Alfred Grayson	Captain Marines	Ship Decoy	June 27,	do.
George Cooper	Lieutenant do	Boston		
Stephen M. Rogers	do do	Thompson's Island	Sept. 27,	do.
Henry Gilliam	do	do		do.
Anthony Grice	Carpenter	do	Aug. 27,	do.
Henry Dyson	Midshipman	Brig Spark	Nov. 26,	do.
David Navarro	Sailmaker	Thompson's Island	Oct. 2,	do.
Benjamin Follett	Midshipman	do	Nov.	do.