

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TO

THE TWO HOUSES OF CONGRESS,

AT THE



COMMENCEMENT OF THE FIRST SESSION

OF

THE THIRTY-SECOND CONGRESS.

PART II.

DECEMBER 2, 1851.

Read, and committed to the Committee on the Whole House on the state of the Union, and fifteen thousand extra copies, with the accompanying documents, ordered to be printed.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY A. BOYD HAMILTON.

1852.

335

Gay
Blind

REPORT

OF

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

November 29, 1851.

SIR: The following is the annual report of the public service under the supervision of this department.

The former organization of the vessels employed in active service on the ocean, into six separate squadrons, has still been continued.

The home squadron, yet under the command of Commodore Parker, consists of the steam-frigate *Saranac*, Commander Pendergrast, bearing the broad pennant of the commodore; the sloop-of-war *Albany*, Commander Platt; the sloop *Decatur*, Commander Green; the sloop *Cyane*, Commander Paine; and the steamer *Vixen*, Lieutenant Commanding Smith. The vessels of this squadron have been engaged in cruising among the West India islands, and along the coast of the Caribbean sea and of the Gulf of Mexico.

The commander of this squadron having been ordered to the north on special service, was not in position to prevent the late illegal and disastrous expedition from the port of New Orleans against the island of Cuba; but, hastening thither under the orders of the department, he was commendably active in preventing any repetition of the offence, whilst at the same time affording protection to American interests in that quarter, and giving assurance that the United States would in good faith observe their treaty obligations, and the law of nations.

Commander Platt, commanding the *Albany*, which happened to be in the port of Havana when the expedition landed, deserves, also, the commendation of the department for the propriety and delicacy with which he acquitted himself in the trying duties of his command; for his vigilance and industry in procuring and transmitting early and correct information of the progress of events in the island; and his humanity in visiting and interceding for the deluded persons, who, in violation of the laws of their country, had been induced to embark in an adventure of such serious consequence. These occurrences at the south detained the vessels of this squadron from a cruise to its northern limits, which was commenced and proceeded in, as far as Havana, when the invasion of Cuba took place.

The Mediterranean squadron, Commodore Morgan commanding, consisted of the flag-ship, the razee *Independence*, Captain Jamesson; the steam-frigate *Mississippi*, Captain Long; and the frigate *Cumberland*, Captain Latimer.

In June the latter vessel returned, by order of the department, to the United States, and upon her arrival the officers were detached and the crew discharged. Since that time the *Independence*, with the commander-in-chief on board, has visited Trieste, and other ports within his command, and the *Mississippi* has been generally employed in active cruising.

In compliance with a resolution of Congress to that effect, orders were in due season sent to the commander of the squadron, directing this vessel

to be held in readiness to proceed to the coast of Turkey, and receive on board the distinguished Hungarian, Governor Kossuth, and his associates in exile, and convey them to the United States so soon as information should be received from the American minister at Constantinople that they had obtained the Sultan's permission to embark. She accordingly took on board, at the Dardanelles, in September, the illustrious exile and his family and party, in number sixty persons, and brought them, on the homeward voyage, to Gibraltar. Here Governor Kossuth, having determined to visit England, took passage in a mail-steamer for that country, intending to come thence, by a like conveyance, to the United States; and the *Mississippi* sailed, with the remainder of her passengers, direct to New York, where she arrived early in November.

The *Independence* being the only vessel remaining in the Mediterranean, and from her large draught unsuited for winter cruising in that sea, this consideration, together with the fact that the enlistment of her crew and the term of the commander of the squadron will expire in the ensuing spring, induced the department to recall her also; and orders to that effect were despatched in October.

The new steam-frigate *San Jacinto*, destined for the squadron on the coast of Brazil, is preparing with all practicable expedition for sea, and will sail in a few days for the Mediterranean, to watch over our interests in that quarter, until the arrival of a new squadron early in the spring.

The squadron on the coast of Africa continued under the command of Commodore Gregory until the month of May, when, after an energetic and efficient service on that station, he was relieved, and it was transferred to Commodore Lavalette.

This squadron comprises the sloop-of-war *Germantown*, the flag-ship of the squadron, Commander Nicholas; the sloop *Dale*, Commander Pearson; the sloop *John Adams*, Commander Barron; the brig *Perry*, Lieutenant Commanding Foote; the brig *Porpoise*, Lieutenant Commanding Lardner.

These vessels have been assiduously employed in the duties of their cruise; and the observation of another year justifies the conclusion expressed in my last annual report, that the vigilance and activity of this squadron, together with that of Great Britain, have suppressed the slave-trade on the west coast of Africa, and that it is now carried on only on the south coast, more than a thousand miles distant from the station at the Cape de Verd islands, established and maintained since the conclusion of the treaty of Washington, in the year 1842.

This result has led to the consideration of the expediency of removing the depot of supplies for the squadron down the coast, to St. Paul de Loando, or other point on the southern coast; but since the inhibition by Brazil of the African slave-trade among her subjects, it is doubtful whether it is necessary to continue this squadron as a permanent force, anywhere along the African shore; and it is accordingly proposed that notice be given to the British government of the termination, on our part, of the eighth article of the treaty above mentioned, as therein provided. It is believed that Brazil and the Spanish West India islands are the only countries to which slaves have been imported, in any considerable numbers, for many years past; and by strengthening the squadron on the coast of Brazil, and requiring of its vessels periodical visits to the coast of Africa, the traffic can probably be more effectually checked, than by keeping up the squadron on the African coast; while in regard to the Spanish West Indies, the

vessels of the home squadron will suffice to prevent the use of our flag for its protection among them.

The climate of the African shores is notoriously insalubrious, and the health and comfort of the officers and crews would be greatly promoted by the change proposed.

The squadron on the coast of Brazil, Commodore McKeever still being in command, consists of the frigate Congress, the flag-ship of the squadron, Captain McIntosh; the sloop-of-war Jamestown, Captain Downing; the brig Bainbridge, Lieutenant Commanding Manning; and the store-ship Relief, Lieutenant Commanding Thatcher. Orders, however, have been despatched, directing the Bainbridge to relieve the brig Perry in the African squadron, which, owing to the approaching termination of the enlistment of her crew, has been ordered to return to the United States.

The general duties assigned to this squadron, in giving protection to our commerce and interests between the mouth of the Amazon river and Cape Horn; in preventing the use of the American flag to cover the African slave trade, and in enforcing our neutral rights and relations in the state of hostilities which have long prevailed between the Argentine republic and the Banda Oriental, and more recently between the former and Brazil, appear to have been zealously and faithfully performed; and the reports of its commander are quite satisfactory.

The Pacific squadron, Commodore McCauley commanding, consists of his flag-ship the frigate Raritan, Commander McKean; the frigate St. Lawrence, Captain Dulaney; the sloops-of-war St. Mary's, Commander Magruder; Vandalia, Commander Gardner; Falmouth, Commander Pearson; Vincennes, Commander Hudson; Portsmouth, Commander Dornin; Warren, unseaworthy and used as a store-ship; the steamer Massachusetts, Lieutenant Commanding Knox; the store-ship Lexington, Lieutenant Commanding Radford; and the store-ship Southampton, Lieutenant Commanding Turner.

The frigate Savannah, Captain Page, recently returned from this station in consequence of the expiration of the time of service of her crew, and the Falmouth is supposed to be likewise on her homeward voyage. These will be replaced, respectively, by the frigate St. Lawrence and the sloop-of-war Portsmouth, about to proceed to the Pacific.

The several vessels of this squadron have been constantly and usefully employed in appropriate service. The flag-ship and the Vincennes have visited the principal ports on the American coast from Oregon to Chili. The Vandalia has made several visits to the Sandwich Islands, at periods when the presence of a man-of-war was highly essential to our interests in that kingdom, and the Falmouth and St. Mary's, in addition to touching at ports on the main land and the Sandwich Islands, have extended their cruising to the Society, Marquesas and Fejee islands.

The necessity of maintaining at all times an effective fleet in that ocean, and of adapting our naval laws and system to the new requirements of the service, in consequence of our settlements in California and Oregon, was urged in my last annual communication, and cannot too early engage the attention of Congress.

The squadron for the East India and China seas, Commodore Aulick commanding, comprehends his flag-ship the steam-frigate Susquehanna; the sloops-of-war Plymouth, Commander Kelly; Saratoga, Commander Walker; and Marion, Commander Glendy. The two vessels last named

are on their station; the two former are on the voyage out. The Marion will be relieved on their arrival, and return home by way of the Cape of Good Hope, bringing, it is expected, valuable varieties of the seed or root of the sugar-cane, and also of the tea plant, collected under the orders of the department for distribution in the sections of our country adapted to their cultivation. The Dolphin, Lieutenant Commanding T. J. Page, which had been attached to this squadron, returned to the United States by way of Cape Horn in the month of June.

The Susquehanna, which is one of the new war-steamers built under the provisions of the act of Congress of the 3d of March, 1847, sailed from Norfolk in June last, by way of Rio de Janeiro, conveying to that place His Excellency M. Macedo, late minister of the Emperor of Brazil to this country; the Hon. R. C. Schenck, U. S. Minister Plenipotentiary to Brazil; and the Hon. J. S. Pendleton, chargé d'affaires to the Argentine republic. She arrived at Rio de Janeiro with some derangements in her machinery and equipments, but these were repaired without much delay; and when last heard from she was about to depart, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, for her ultimate destination.

A favorable impression for our interests and commerce is expected to be created in the peculiar countries of the East, by the addition of this new and well appointed steam-frigate to our squadron in that region.

The steamer Michigan, Commander Bullus, has continued to cruise on the upper lakes for the protection and assistance of our trading vessels on those waters, and has on several occasions furnished important assistance to the civil officers in arresting and bringing to justice combinations of persons charged with offences against the laws of the United States.

In this review of the sea service of our cruisers, I have the satisfaction to announce, that in all quarters of the globe their reception and treatment have been not only respectful, but cordial; and that not merely the interests of commerce, but international peace and friendship, are likely to be promoted by these visits of our armed vessels, and the display of our flag on foreign shores.

The expedition under Lieutenant Commanding De Haven, to the Arctic Seas, in search of the British commander Sir John Franklin and his companions, returned to the port of New York in October, having discovered only supposed traces of the objects of which it was in quest, and leaving in entire uncertainty their actual fate. The vessels of the expedition proceeded in the direction where, in the opinion of the best informed officers, the missing navigators are to be sought, and on which the traces in question were found. Though failing in the main object of their search, Lieutenant De Haven and his officers verified, by their explorations, many facts before unknown to science, but indicated in the course of the investigations carried on at the naval observatory, concerning the winds and currents of the ocean, and to which reference was made in the instructions for the expedition.

In this expedition, the officers and men were all volunteers. In its prosecution they encountered the greatest dangers and hardships. To mention a single example, their vessels were caught by the ice and frozen up in the open sea. In this perilous situation they were confined for nine months, and drifted to and fro in the ice for more than a thousand miles. By the skill of the officers, and the mercy of a superintending Providence, they were released from this cold imprisonment and restored to their country and friends—not a man having been lost in the expedition. They have

received no other pay than would have been their due on a cruise to Naples or the Levant, and I respectfully suggest that they be allowed the same pay and emoluments that were granted to those in like positions in the late exploring expedition to the South Seas.

Mr. Henry Grinnell, the owner of the vessels employed by Lieut. De Haven, has generously offered them for another cruise in search of Sir John Franklin, should Congress think proper to authorize a second expedition.

The act of Congress of March 3, 1849, authorized the employment of three small vessels of the navy in testing new routes on the ocean, pointed out by the superintendent of the Observatory on his wind and current charts, and in collecting information to enable him to perfect these charts. After the return of the brig *Dolphin*, as already mentioned, she was fitted out and detailed on this service, under the command of Lieutenant S. P. Lee, an officer of great experience and intelligence as a surveyor and hydrographer, and interesting and valuable results are expected from the cruise.

At the instance of the executive committee of citizens of the United States, desiring to send forward specimens of the productions of American genius, skill, and labor to the great industrial exhibition in London, this year, the frigate *St. Lawrence* was, with the approbation of the President, despatched thither from the port of New York, under the command of Commander Sands, to transport the articles for exhibition, free of charge. It is hoped that the triumphs of our countrymen in the competitions for prizes, in the inventions pertaining to agriculture alone, the most ancient and useful art known to man, will justify the countenance and liberality thus shown to them by the Government. On her return, the *St. Lawrence* conveyed our chargé d'affaires in Portugal from Southampton to Lisbon, and in the ports both of England and Portugal was received with demonstrations of respect and hospitality.

The number of officers of the navy employed during the present year on the coast survey, was ninety. Having communicated to Congress, at its last session, my opinion that, in consideration of the nature of this work and the connexion of the officers of the navy with it, the public interests would be promoted by the transfer of its conduct and supervision to this department, I have but to repeat the conviction then expressed, as strengthened by more mature consideration.

In pursuance of the intention expressed in my last annual report, a board of engineers of the army was, at my request, detailed to make a survey and examination of the Memphis navy-yard, with a view to overcome a difficulty which had been encountered in finding solid foundations for the buildings of the yard. The report of this board, of which a copy is appended, affords an interesting discussion of the question involved, and will merit the attention of Congress.

The large stone dock at the Brooklyn navy yard, which has been ten years in progress, was so far completed, with all its appendages, in August last, as to be surrendered up to the commandant of the yard. Its entire cost, as shown in the report of the chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, has been \$2,146,255 36.

The floating sectional dock, basin and railway at Philadelphia, has likewise been reported as ready for delivery; but owing to the want of a sufficient depth of water immediately adjacent to the basin, the experiment required of raising a vessel for the purpose of testing these works, could not

be made. Dredging operations are now going on to remedy this defect, and the test is expected to be made within the month of December.

The floating balance dock, basin and railway at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, is also expected to be finished, and tested within a short time thereafter.

The balance dock, basin and railway at Pensacola, has not progressed as rapidly as was expected, and may not be in readiness for delivery before the ensuing summer.

Agreeably to the act of the last session of Congress, a modified contract was entered into with Messrs. Dakin & Moody, and Gilbert & Secor, for the construction of a floating sectional dock on the bay of San Francisco, to be completed and delivered for the sum of \$610,000. This work is understood to be in a course of speedy execution, the contract requiring its completion in two years from the month of May last. Its precise location cannot be determined until the selection of a site for a navy yard on the waters of that bay, for which purpose a commission will be sent out early in the ensuing spring. It will be necessary to provide a pier or basin to render this dock capable of use. The location of the dock having not yet been determined, the department postpones the question of preference between these two structures, until the report of the proposed board shall be received and full local information obtained.

It being generally expected and desired by the owners of American merchant vessels, that the use of the dock in question shall be allowed for the repairs of such vessels when not required for ships of war, it is proposed that Congress shall determine the proper regulations for the purpose, and direct whether the dock and fixtures shall be leased with that view, or whether the Government shall carry on the work through its own agents, and on what terms.

The necessity of a navy yard and station on that coast is so obvious, as well to secure and work the dock, as for general naval purposes in those waters, as to need no illustration. I therefore recommend that Congress shall authorize such an establishment there, and make adequate appropriations therefor.

According to the authority conferred on the department, and an appropriation of a sum not exceeding \$80,000 for that object, a contract was concluded with Messrs. Wells & Gowan, of Boston, to remove the wreck of the steam-frigate Missouri from the bay of Gibraltar, for the sum of \$59,000. Security was taken for the fulfilment of the contract, and the contractors are engaged in the work with no doubt, on their part, of success.

Of the four war-steamers, rated as frigates, directed to be built by the act of Congress approved March 3, 1847, the Saranac was put in commission during the last year, the Susquehanna and San Jacinto during the present, and the Powhattan remains unfinished. Measures have been taken to expedite the completion of this vessel, and it is now expected she will be ready for sea in the course of the ensuing spring. The Fulton and Allegany, steamers of the first class, have recently undergone extensive alterations and repairs, and are each nearly prepared for service; and steps have been taken to rebuild the Princeton, a steamer also of the first class.

The steam-frigate Mississippi, in her long cruise of near two years and a half in the Mediterranean, underwent no repairs, except such as were effected on board, but yet retained her entire efficiency as a man-of-war, and the general conduct and management of the vessel and her crew re-

fects the highest credit on her commander. She is to be transferred to Philadelphia for the purpose of testing the dock at that navy-yard, and to undergo such repairs and improvements as may be found necessary.

Having taken occasion a year since to review the legislation of Congress in reference to the gradual increase of the navy, and to demonstrate that no system of naval policy had been adopted defining the number and descriptions of ships supposed to be required by the wants of the country, I esteem it now only necessary to remark, that while I do not concur in the policy sometimes advocated, that the United States should apportion their naval vessels and force to those of the navies of the principal nations of Europe, with which, by possibility, they may have collisions, we should by no means omit to avail ourselves of all the aids afforded by science and experience in the improvement of our naval establishment, and at the same time enlarge our capacities for increase to any needful extent, whenever the public exigencies shall require it.

In everything pertaining to the building, armament and equipment of vessels of war, the scrutinizing and active mind of the present age has not been idle. Merchant vessels of large draught have been recently built and rigged in our country, which have sailed, by the force of the winds alone, one thousand statute miles in three days, and with an approach to the like rate of speed in long voyages. Improvements and discoveries in ordnance and gunnery have been introduced, by means of which, in the opinion of well informed officers, a ship of inferior rating, say of thirty-two guns, may be so built and rigged, and armed, as to prove more than a match for the stoutest line-of-battle ship of the old construction and armament. How far the power of steam may be added to increase the superiority of the modern vessel in speed, destructiveness, and other points of a man-of-war, is also a fruitful theme of speculation and experiment.

With these improvements, whether fully realized or only in prospect before our eyes, it were vain to rest content with the old models and armaments and appliances of vessels, which, however excellent in their day, may have been superseded by more recent inventions. While, therefore, all proper cautions are observed, and nothing, however specious, should be adopted without full investigation, it appears to be our obvious policy to continue to build ships not only to supply the places of those decayed or lost, but to test and keep pace with the improvements of the age. It has been suggested as a matter of economy, that such experimental ships be built of white oak instead of live oak, that being the cheaper material, and generally used in merchant ships. In illustration of one of the improvements in war-steamer, it is represented to the department that the boilers of the Mississippi, planned fifteen years since, and with the best intelligence of that day, may be reduced nearly one-half in their dimensions and weight, and at the same time made to double the power of the vessel with about the same expenditure of fuel as at present. The letter of the engineer discussing in detail this particular improvements and its recommendation on the score of economy, is herewith submitted.

I therefore recommend that authority be given to build every year two new vessels, one sail and the other steam, upon such models as shall be approved; and as old vessels may be found unserviceable, from fault of rudder or other cause, they may be sold or broken up.

In this connexion I invite the favorable consideration of Congress to the recommendation of the chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, that

machinery be erected in one or more of the navy-yards of the country, for the building of steam-engines, and construction of war-steamers complete.

A class of small vessels is much wanted to give employment in command to senior lieutenants, many of whom are kept in long and tedious inaction before their promotion to commanders; and would be highly useful as cruisers, especially those propelled by steam, by reason of their ability to penetrate into harbors and rivers, inaccessible to ships of larger class.

Having also in my last annual communication presented for the consideration of Congress, propositions to reduce the number of officers in the grades of captain, commander, and lieutenant of the navy, I beg leave respectfully to refer thereto for the review of the officers in those grades, and the commands and employments to which they may be called in the present state of the service.

While the number in these grades might be appropriately reduced, it is worthy of consideration whether the number of masters should not be enlarged and the grade of second lieutenant established. Although a master is recognised as a necessary officer on board of every vessel in commission, and at every navy-yard, to seventy-six vessels and eight navy-yards, there are borne upon the register the names of but thirty masters; and of these, nineteen are out of the line of promotion, and many of them are superannuated, or otherwise incapacitated for duty at sea. If the number of masters were raised to fifty, exclusive of those not in the line of promotion, (who must needs be removed by death in the course of a few years,) and the grade of second lieutenant interposed between them and that of first lieutenant, all of which could be arranged without adding to the number of officers below the rank of commander now in the service, it would not only be an improvement in the proportions of the different grades, but would exert a cheering influence on the younger officers, who are now doomed to linger in the inferior grade of passed midshipman until the ardor of youth is passed, and professional distinction has lost much of its attraction. The series of promotions held out to a naval officer, compared to that in the army, is exceedingly limited, without taking into the account brevet rank, with which distinguished service in the latter may be rewarded; and these additional grades cannot but be regarded as new objects of hope, and new incentives to ambition among the aspirants in the naval service. For reasons similar to the foregoing, as well as others of great cogency, I repeat the recommendation formerly made, to elevate the ranks of the service by legalizing that of commodore, and establishing two offices of rear admiral. As a reward for the gallant conduct of some of those surviving veterans, who more than a third of a century ago illustrated our arms in conflicts on the ocean, and as a stimulant to others to emulate their example, these superior ranks would be graceful distinctions on the part of the government, and the position we occupy among the naval and commercial powers of the world renders their immediate recognition a matter of undoubted policy. With one such officer employed near the head of the department in Washington, in the disposition and supervision of the *personnel* of the navy, and the other stationed at San Francisco, with power to issue orders to our squadrons in the Pacific and China seas, as well as to all officers residing west of the Rocky mountains, subject to general directions and supervisions from the department, much, it is believed, could be effected in giving promptness and vigor to the service in the remote regions of the world, in

imparting to it uniformity and system, and in relieving inferior officers from difficulties and responsibilities arising from unforeseen events.

I also most earnestly renew the recommendation to establish a retired list, to which officers may be transferred on reduced rates of pay who may be invalided, from time to time, on account of superannuation, or other cause. If it be objected, that this would burden the treasury with a new class of pensions, the answer is, that the evil already exists; the question being between full and half-pay, or even a lower rate; between denying to the vigorous, the willing and aspiring, who perform the duties, and must constitute our reliance in time of danger, the positions and emoluments in which they may improve their talents and extend their usefulness; and retaining and promoting, as of the effective force, all who have been admitted into the service, without reference to intervening disabilities, or disqualifications. No reform is of greater moment, as regards the efficiency of the navy, and none can be more obviously just.

The disputed questions of rank between the sea officers and civil officers of the navy, and between the several grades of officers of the army and navy, and the reports of the boards of officers summoned to consider these questions, were brought to the attention of Congress in a special communication at the last session, and are again recommended to its consideration.

Perceiving that the laws for the government of the navy, passed more than fifty years since, were defective and unsuited to the present state of the service, I have caused them to be revised by a board of officers, with instructions to prepare proper amendments and additions, and am prepared to transmit their report for the examination of Congress, and respectfully recommend that the code therein prepared be taken as a basis of legislation on this subject. Or, if there be no disposition to adopt the report in general, it will be found to be highly necessary to accommodate the law to the new condition of affairs, arising from our settlements on the shores of the Pacific, the ports of California and Oregon being now within the United States. To require orders to issue from Washington, even for convening a court-martial in the Pacific to try any officer or seaman, and for summoning witnesses, must greatly delay and embarrass the enforcement of discipline. Yet it is only the commander of a fleet, or a squadron, "acting out of the United States," who has power to order such courts, and approve or disapprove their sentences. This is cited, however, as but a single instance of the want of adaptation of the present naval laws, to the actual state of naval affairs.

But the most natural defect in our naval code is that occasioned by the failure to provide any punishment, by way of substitute, when corporal chastisement was abolished. To supply, in some degree, this deficiency, I presented and recommended, at the last session of Congress, a substitute proposed by a board of officers to whom the subject had been referred. In the present state of the law, there is no power to inflict any punishment, except confinement in irons, or without, unless by the sentence of a court-martial. Such court must consist of not less than five, nor more than thirteen commissioned officers, and be ordered by the President of the United States, Secretary of the Navy, or commander of a fleet or squadron, "acting out of the United States." It is manifest, therefore, that there can be no other punishment, during a cruise, whether long or short, except in vessels within the immediate reach of the commander of the squadron; and

only then, if there be at least five commissioned officers superior to all legal exception, who can be detailed on a court. It being known that two vessels rarely cruise together, but that single ships are detached on distant service, and are often separated from the flag-ships, and from home for many months, it is apparent that the delay of justice, the accused being, meanwhile, in confinement, is a serious grievance to him. But when it is remembered that the ends of punishment on ship-board are not merely for the sake of example and reformation, but to secure a faithful and specific execution of the contract of enlistment with the government, at the very time when duty is required, and to protect the rights of the dutiful, the honest, the peaceful, and orderly, any punishment, to be effectual, must be speedy and certain. Confinement is ordinarily a means of securing the accused from escape, and of preventing a repetition of positive wrong: but to obstinate, indolent, or vicious men, some of whom will, perhaps, be found in every ship's company, notwithstanding any precautions of enlistment, it is not a sufficient remedy to enforce the performance of positive duties. In civil life, no provision is made by law for the specific fulfilment of contracts or duties, except in a few equitable cases where the time of performance is not material. The only remedy for failure, in all others, is by indemnification in money, to be awarded by courts of justice, held at periods regulated by the convenience of the community. In military affairs, at sea or on land, it is far otherwise. Time, as well as alacrity in performance, are of the very essence of the contract, and upon them may depend the safety of the ship and her company from disaster at sea, as well as the honor of her flag.

Again, theft, unlawful violence, and other wrongs, must be kept under wholesome restraints by the terror of punishment, at sea as well as on shore. But a public ship carrying no superfluous men, the service cannot, without injury, spare from daily duty those who commit offences during the time necessary for their punishment by imprisonment, even if that were the appropriate punishment, to say nothing of weakening the ship's company by this process, and the imposition upon good men of double duty, and the menial service of waiting on offenders while thus imprisoned. The consequences of the change have been thus far detrimental to the service, and it is apprehended will become more serious unless speedily remedied.

When vessels arrive in port after a cruise, it is found impossible to keep the men on board until a proper muster, exercise at quarters, and inspection have taken place, which are the means adopted to ascertain whether officers have done their duty in keeping their ships and crews in effective condition. And independently of numerous cases of delinquencies overlooked, or disposed of by discharge, honorable or dishonorable, there have been nearly one hundred trials of enlisted men by court-martial since the passage of the law in question.

These details are exhibited, not to contravene the policy of the legislature, but to demonstrate that the experiment of the abrogation of whipping cannot be effectually tried until Congress shall prescribe some substitute. Whether this shall be by the adoption of the system recommended by the board of officers above referred to, providing that courts-martial may be ordered by each officer in command of a ship, and summarily held to determine guilt, and then graduating punishments as therein stated, as well as holding out rewards, or by some other and more appropriate method, is referred to the determination of Congress.

The buildings of the Naval Academy at Annapolis are in the course of completion under the appropriations made at the last session of Congress, and the sloop-of-war Preble has been attached to the academy as a practice ship, for instruction in practical seamanship. After the examination in June, the pupils of the institution were embarked in this vessel, and proceeded on a cruise to our northern boundary, and thence, touching at the principal ports of the United States between Portland and the capes of Virginia, returned in the latter part of September.

On a revision of the regulations it was determined to make an important change in the plan of education heretofore approved. This consists in requiring a continued course of study of four years at the academy, without going to sea, except that the vacation of three months in each year is spent on a cruise in the practice-ship, the former course requiring two years at the academy, three at sea, and then two more at the academy. A class of fifty acting midshipmen was admitted in October last, and will constitute the first class to which this new system will apply. It is now believed that for all the purposes of naval education, the academy affords advantages equal to those for military education at West Point; and under the efficient command of the present superintendent, Commander Stribling, it is hoped that these advantages will be fully realized.

The report of a board of examiners, appointed according to regulations to superintend the examination of candidates for promotion, and the general state of the academy in October last, is herewith transmitted.

With great deference to the opinion of Congress, I again suggest that it is highly expedient and proper to allow the appointment of ten midshipmen to be made "*at large*" by the President, in analogy to the regulation respecting cadets in the Military Academy, over and above those apportioned among the Congressional districts.

The Naval Observatory and Hydrographical Office have been in active and vigorous operation during the year. A second volume of the astronomical observations has been published and already laid before you. The wind and current charts, planned by Lieutenant Maury, the superintendent of the observatory, and prosecuted under his direction with much industry, are being extended to the Pacific and Indian oceans. This work is viewed with great interest and satisfaction by our seafaring communities, and all those interested in the safe and speedy navigation of the ocean. It has materially shortened the passage along the highways by which our commerce passes into and through the southern hemisphere, bringing the ports of those distant parts of the world some ten days, and some several weeks, nearer to us than before. A letter from the superintendent of the observatory, which accompanies this communication, states the important fact, that vessels sailing from the Atlantic to the Pacific ports of the United States, with the instructions afforded by these charts, make the voyage in forty days less, upon the average, than those sailing without them, and that there is reason to hope the time may be still further reduced.

The expedition for astronomical observations at Santiago de Chili appears from the reports of Lieutenant Gilliss to have been actively conducted, and will probably be brought to a close in the latter part of the next year.

The Nautical Almanac, under the superintendence of Lieutenant Davis, is also in a satisfactory state of progress, and the first publication of the work may be expected to be made in the course of the next fiscal year.

The commission appointed to examine condensers for supplying the boilers of marine engines with fresh water, has not yet completed its labors, as will appear from the letter of the commissioners hereto appended. It is, however, promised, in this communication, at an early day.

The further experiments of Professor Page, on the application of electro-magnetism as a motive power in mechanics, will be found in his report, which is subjoined.

The last experiments of Professor Espy in meteorological observations, under the appropriations heretofore made, and his expectations in respect to the completion of his labors, are set forth in his letter which is annexed.

My predecessor brought to the notice of Congress, in his annual report, dated December 1, 1849, the contract of Mr. Robert L. Stevens for building a war-steamer, to be shot and shell-proof, which he considered to have been abandoned by the contractor, and no longer obligatory on the department, unless re-affirmed by new legislation. Acting on this decision, I directed certain materials for this steamer, which had been purchased with the means of the government, to be sold; but at the request of Mr. Stevens, suspended the order until he should have further opportunity to submit his case to the decision of Congress, and it is therefore commended to early consideration.

The line of mail steamers between New York and Liverpool continues to be highly successful in the speed of its voyages across the ocean; and the Postmaster General has notified this department, that he deemed it expedient to increase the service of this line to twenty-six trips in the year, instead of twenty, or, in other words, to one trip every fortnight, at an increase of pay, *pro rata*, upon the present compensation. The subject will be by him presented to the consideration of Congress.

The number of steamers on this line, at this time is four only, a fifth being stipulated for in the contract with the owners. Under the provisions of an act of the last session of Congress to that effect, the officers of the navy who had acted as watch officers on this line have been withdrawn from it with the consent of the contractors.

Since the last annual report from this department, two steamers, the Ohio and the Illinois, have been inspected and received on the line between New York and Chagres. The mail service on this line is performed regularly in three steamers, built and completed according to contract, and a fourth which was accepted for temporary service; the contract requiring five.

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company, owning the line between Panama and San Francisco and Astoria, have added to their line a new steamer called the "Golden Gate," making six in all, and have fulfilled their contract, in the number of vessels and the performance of service, to the date of the last settlements.

According to the provisions of the act of Congress at the last session, in conjunction with the Postmaster General, I entered into a new contract with this company for a semi-monthly instead of a monthly service on this line, at seventy-five per centum per annum upon the old rate of compensation, and also allowed a compensation for semi-monthly service performed prior to the contract, according to the directions of the said act, the latter subject being left open for further consideration, upon the production of further evidence by the contractors.

I append the reports of the several heads of bureaux of this department, and of the commandant of the marine corps, exhibiting the estimates for the

support of the navy and marine corps for the year ending the thirtieth day of June, 1851, together with an aggregate statement of the appropriations required for all objects under the control of this department, presenting an aggregate of-----\$8,540,693 08
 From which deduct special objects----- 2,684,220 89

Leaving for the support of the navy and marine corps----- 5,856,472 19

The amount estimated for this purpose last year being-----\$5,900,621 00

The sum estimated for special objects last year was----- 2,210,980 00

And it will be seen that there is an excess in the present estimate, over and above that sum, of \$473,240 89, which is occasioned by the addition of pay for increased service to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, directed by the act of the last session of Congress, the completion of the dry dock in California, and some additions under the head of improvements in navy yards, buildings and machinery. To these must be added such amount as may be appropriated for a pier or basin to be appended to the dock in California, and a navy-yard on that station, if Congress shall concur in the recommendation for the object.

I avail myself of this connection to repeat the recommendation contained in my last annual report, that the appropriations for the support of the navy and marine corps be separated from those for permanent improvements in navy yards and objects of a fixed and local nature, and more particularly from those for the mail steam-service and all other extraordinary objects.

The total amount drawn from the treasury during the fiscal year ending the 30th of June, 1851, as shown by the statement of appropriations for the naval service, prepared by the Second Comptroller of

the Treasury is-----\$10,318,031 98

From which deduct repayments----- 1,273,434 89

And there remains the sum of----- 9,044,597 11

as the total expenditure on all objects under the supervision of this department. Of this sum there was expended for special objects----- 3,158,817 91

Leaving as the true expenditure for the navy and marine corps 5,885,779 20

The unexpended balances in the treasury, of the appropriations for the naval service, marine corps and special objects, under the control of the Navy Department, on the 30th June, 1851, was \$4,182,296 23, all of which will be required to meet outstanding obligations, due on account of the objects for which these appropriations were made.

The recommendation of the chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing that a bakery be established at the navy-yard in New York, for the preparation of bread for the use of the navy, deserves the most favorable consideration. Under the contract system, which now prevails, it is impossible, by any inspection which can be adopted, to prevent imposition in this most essential of all articles of food. During the last two years, a quantity of bread has been condemned as unfit for use, nearly equal in the amount of its cost to the value of such buildings and fixtures as will be required for this establishment.

I likewise invite attention to his proposition to exempt certain other

articles of provisions from the operation of the law requiring supplies to be furnished on contract with the lowest bidder, and to vest in the department a discretionary power to change the navy ration in view of the scientific discoveries of the day, by which vegetables of various kinds may be prepared and preserved for any length of time at sea.

I respectfully advise the repeal of the act of the last session, prohibiting commutation in money for stopped rations. The amounts which, in this way, passed into the hands of the seamen, allowed the purchase of other articles of food than those embraced in the ration, and desirable, if not essential to health and comfort. The prohibition in question was improvidently recommended and passed.

The recommendations of the chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery for the investment in productive stocks of the navy hospital fund, and for retiring from the list of effective surgeons all the officers of that corps who are permanently unfitted for duty, and supplying their places by new appointments, a provision required in every grade of the service, deserve early consideration and action.

The commandant of the marine corps, it will be observed, has asked for an appropriation to commence the rebuilding of barracks for that corps, at the various stations, and the subject is commended to the consideration of Congress. If approved, estimates of the cost will be prepared and submitted in due season.

My experience in this department induces me to recommend the establishment of an additional bureau, to be termed the Bureau of Orders and Discipline, to which shall be assigned the communication of orders and instructions touching naval service and discipline, and the receipt and preservation, or distribution of returns and reports pertaining to the same, in analogy to the duties required of the Adjutant General's office in the Department of War. It would relieve the head of the department from much labor, which is merely clerical, belonging to routine duty, and insure important benefits to the service. With it should be connected the office of Judge Advocate General of the navy, similar in its function and duties to the Judge Advocate General of the army. Such an officer, with proper professional qualifications, is highly essential to give accuracy, uniformity and precision to the administration of justice and discipline, and has become almost indispensable since the alteration of the law already mentioned, which has occasioned the necessity for the trial of so great a number of enlisted men by courts-martial. The proposed bureau could be organized, it is supposed, without any material addition to the expenditure now incurred in this branch of the service.

With the greatest respect, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM A. GRAHAM,
Secretary of the Navy.

To the PRESIDENT.