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THOMAS J. LEMAY, Editor.

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REPORT OF SECRETARY OF 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 *Saracoe*, Commander Pendergrast, bearing the broad pendant of the command; the sloop-of-war *Albatross*, 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 coasts 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 *Albatross*, 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 interesting for the delinquent persons who, in violation of the law of the 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 *Race Point*, Captain Jackson; 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, 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 draft, 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 Lavett.

This squadron comprises the sloop-of-war *Germania*, the flag-ship of the squadron, Commander Nicholas; the sloop *Adams*, Commander Peck; the sloop John A. Dale, Commander Barron; the brig *Perry*, Lieutenant-Commanding Foster; the brig *Porpoise*, Lieutenant Commanding Lander.

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 Verde 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 con-

siderable 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 of this squadron.

The squadron on the coast of Brazil, Commodore McKee commanding, consists of the flag-ship of the squadron, Captain McIntosh; the sloop-of-war *Jameson*, Captain Downing; the brig *Bainbridge*, Lieutenant-Commanding Manning; and the storeship *Relief*, Lieutenant-Commanding Thatcher. Orders, however, have been despatched directing the *Bainbridge* to relieve the brig *Ferry*, 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 McTearny commanding, consists of his flag-ship, the frigate *Raritan*, Commander McKean; the frigate *St. Lawrence*, Captain Dudley; the sloop-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 storeship; the steamer *Massachusetts*, Lieutenant-Commanding Knox; the storeship *Lexington*, Lieutenant-Commanding Ranford; and the storeship *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 mainland and the Sandwich Islands, have extended their cruising to the Society, Marquesas, and Fijee Islands.

The necessity of maintaining, at all times, an effective fleet on 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 *Suequehanna*, the sloop-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 *Suequehanna*, 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, United States 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 equipment, 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 Bulfinch, has continued to cruise on the upper lakes, for the protection and assistance of our trading vessels in 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, Lieut. De Haven and his offi-

cers 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 their cold imprisonment, and were restored to their country and friends—not a man having been lost on 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 Lieutenant 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 visit 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 Sander, 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 Charge d'Affaires in Portugal and the Viscount of 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 35.

The floating sectional dock, basin, and railway at Philadelphia, has likewise been reported as ready for delivery, but, owing to the want of 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 and Moody, and Gilbert and Seavey, for the construction of a floating sectional dock on the bay of San Francisco, to be completed and delivered for the sum of \$601,000. 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 or without the harbor, and 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, and on which the traces in question were found. Though failing in the main object of their search, Lieut. De Haven and his offi-

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 and 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 fulfillment of the contract, and the contractors are engaged in the work, with no doubt, on their part, of success.

Of the four war-steamer, rated as frigates, directed to be built by the act of Congress approved March 3, 1847, the *Saracoe* was put in commission during the last year, the *Suequehanna* and *San Jacinto* during the present, and the *Powhatan* remains unfinished. Measures have been taken to expedite the completion of this vessel, and it is now expected that she will be ready for sea in the course of the ensuing spring. The *Fulton* and *Allegheny*, 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 reflect the highest credit on her commander. She will 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 description 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 appropriate 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 useful extent whenever the public exigencies shall require it.

In every thing pertaining to the building, armament, and equipment of vessels of war, the serutinizing and active mind of the present age has not been idle. Merchant vessels of large draft 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 vessels 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 wood, or of iron, or of some other material, being the cheapest 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 the 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 improvement, 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 old models, and that such vessels, as old models may be found unserviceable, from fault of model or other cause, they may be sold or broken up.

In this connection, 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-steamer 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 provisions 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 major is recognized as a necessary officer on board of every vessel in commission, and at every navy yard—twenty-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 twenty of them are supernumerary, 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 midshipmen, 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 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 urgency, I repeat the recommendation formerly made to elevate the ranks of the service by legalizing that of commodore and establishing two officers of rear-admiral. As a reward for the gallant conduct of some of our 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 a graceful distinction 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 unshaken 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 supervision 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 increasing 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 question 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 order thereon proposed 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 the conveying 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 squadron "acting out of the United States" who has power to order such courts, and approve 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 material 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 the case of a court-martial, 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 despatched on distant service, and are often separated from the flag-ship and from home for many months, it is apparent that the duty of justice, the accused being menial in confinement, is a serious grievance to him. But, when it is remembered that the order of punishment on shipboard 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 obstatute, 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 fulfillment 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 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 company from disaster at sea, as well as the honor of the 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 supernumerary men, the service cannot, without injury, spare from duty those officers 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 they are 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 delinquency overlooked or disposed of by discharge, honorable or dishonorable, there have been nearly one hundred trials of enlisted men by courts-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 approved method, is referred to the determination of Congress.

The buildings of the Navy Academy, at Annapolis, are in the course of completion, and 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 on 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 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 in 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 Stirling, it is hoped that these advantages will be fully realized.

The report of a board of examiners, appointed according to regulations, to supervise 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 appointments of two midshipmen to be made "at large," by the President, in analogy to the regulation respecting cadets in the Military Academy, over and above those appointed among the Congressional districts.

The Naval Observatory and Hydrographic Office have been in active and vigorous operation during the year. A second volume of Astronomical Observations has been published, and already laid before you. The wind and current charts planned by Lieutenant Milroy, 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 Gillies, 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 conditions 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 to

motive power in the mechanics will be found in his report, which is submitted.

The last experiments of Professor Edgely, 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 1st, 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 reaffirmed 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 farther opportunity to submit his case to the decision of Congress; and it is therefore recommended to early consideration.

The line of mail-steamer 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; 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 settlement. 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 open for further consideration, upon the production of further evidence by the contractors.

I append the reports of the several Heads of Bureaus 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 30th of June, 1852; together with an aggregate of the appropriations required for all objects under the control of this Department, presenting aggregate of \$5,540,095 08. From which deduct special objects

Leaving for the support of the Navy and Marine Corps	\$5,555,473 19
The amount estimated for this purpose last year being	5,000,031 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 estimates, 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 amounts 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 these objects.	

I avail myself of this connection, to repeat the recommendation contained in my last annual report, that the appropriation for the support of the Navy and Marine Corps be appropriated from that 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
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