Lib: Govt: Schr. Lark,

Off Trade Town, October 22nd, 1851.

Sir,

We have the honor to inform your Excellency, that in accordance with your instructions, we embarked on board this vessel for Trade Town on the 15th, inst: and the day after, we anchored at that place.

On the afternoon of the da of our arrival, we despatched a note, and a messenger to Prince Boyer's town, informing him of our arrival, the object of which he well knew, and requested him to come down in the morning, and the boat would be sent to the beach for him. We reminded him in our note that we had come down at his request to arrange the difficulties which had existed for years between him and Jim Flaw and that it was the wish of the Government that amicable arrangements should at once be entered into between him and Flaw. In reply to our message he sent word that some of his family were sick and he could not leave them, so as to be down on the morrow; besides he would have to consult with his Chiefs *again*, before he could talk about a reconciliation with Flaw, or to visit us. The day following we despatched one of the Factors residing on shore, a Liberian, to Boyer's town to ascertain how matters stood—he informed us that Boyer's excuse was groundless—that a brother of B's was ailing, but not dangerously so. Boyer learned from this Factor that we had brought a fine suit of clothes as a present for him, which would be given to him when he came on board the vessel—on this information he sent us word, that he would be at the beach the next morning, and if we would meet him there he would accompany us on board. Early next morning we landed and found him waiting for us. We reiterated the object of our mission, and reminded him of his request and promise made last April; and that we had been sent down agreeably to his wishes—all which he readily agreed were true; but he said, himself and Flaw had agreed to settle their palaver according to their country usage. We said to him that the Government would have had no objection to their doing so; and that course would have saved considerable expense and trouble to the government—but as they had not agreed on the terms of future good understanding, and as James Flaw, his antagonist, still desired the interposition of the Liberian Authorities—the Government had determined to maintain peace in the country, at all hazards, with or without his consent.—We persuaded him to go on board with us, where James Flaw would meet him, and in a couple of hours the difficulties would doubtless be arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. He tried to excuse himself from going on board, saying, he had not brought with him his official habiliments and was therefore not prepared to visit the vessel. He said the difficulty between him and Flaw, could be easily settled, as he only required Flaw to give him five articles amounting to about fifty dollars—which articles, he insisted, must come from James Flaw and from no other person. We said to him that he and Flaw were Chiefs and relatives—that they had been fighting each other three years, and neither had conquered that their case had never been adjudicated, to determine who was in fault; and for this reason an interview was necessary to determine, which of them had a right to ask for reparation; and we further said to him, that his refusing to meet Flaw in presence of the Commissioners, was a strong argument that his cause was a bad one and if he persisted in refusing to have the difficulties settled, there could be only one opinion of him and his cause; which was directly against him. We told him, we had no time to spend unnecessly he must tell us in plain words what he intended to do; and if he still remained opposed to a reconciliation, the Government would not hold any further communication with him; but would take measures to have justice done in the premises, and in future would recognize Jim Flaw as the principal Chief of Trade Town, acting under its authority. And if he Boyer, again attempted hostilities in the country he would be severely chastised. Boyer then said if such was the determination of the government he would remain at the factory of Mr. Lawrence, on the beach, until the next day, and if we would send him the suit of clothes, he would come on board. This promise he repeated several times. We returned to the vessel and sent the suit of clothes to him. The moment he received them, he left for his town. Having waited till noon the following day for him to come off, we despatched another messenger with a note to him—his reply was, that he did not intend to come on board—that he had told us what he required of James Flaw and if we would get them from Flaw, he would agree to make peace—and that it was useless for us to send any more messages to, or after him until that was done, as he did not intend to leave his town. On the morning of the same day James Flaw came on board as we had requested him—he came five miles by sea and spent the day and night on board waiting for Boyer, in which time, we had much conversation with him; and we found him not only intelligent but apparently well disposed. It appeared he had often the better of Boyer in the war so far, and would have possibly driven him out of the country had not hostilities ceased in obedience to your orders in April. "Since when, tho' the contrary had been reported by others, there have been no outbreak of hostilities—for tho' Boyer had threatened, his heart failed him. James Flaw wishes to distinctly understood; that he has given the entire matter into the hands of the Government of Liberia, and will cheerfully abide any decision, the Commissioners would make after hearing the statement of both parties. He further told us, that he came on board because we had invited him to do so: but he was certain Boyer would not come to an interview. He said Boyer," had been sending him secret messages; and had been geting others to exert their influence with him, since the understanding last April not to allow the Liberian Government to have anything to do with the settlement of the difference between them, and tried to instil, into him James Flaw, prejudices against the Liberians. He further said, that the instigators of Boyer were foreignors, (he would not call their names but would show us a note that he had received, from which, any reasonable man, could draw pretty correct conclusions. We read the note and the following is a true copy.

Trade Town, Sept. 27th, 1851.

Mr. Murray, Sir.

I am desired by king Boyer to inform you, that I have had a letter from Mr Lawrence calling him down to inform him the Americans are coming here to settle the palaver between him and James Flaw; but he will not allow them to interfere and he hopes that Jim Flaw neither will, but he says he will leave it entirely to you and Mr. Lawrence, who has gone to Cape Monsterado, but will return in a few days.

I remain most Respectfully.

James Travis

This Mr. Murray is the well known Capt: David Murray, the avowed enemy of Liberia—and James Travis, the writer, is a white Englishman serving as clerk for Mr. Lawrence at Trade Town—the letter refered to, by this Travis as having been received by him from Mr. Lawrance, was written by Mr. L. while at Bassa, on his way to Monrovia—the Lark was then lying at Bassa waiting to take the commissioners down. Mr. Lawrence at that time told Hon: H Teage and Capt: Cooper, that no one but himself could settle the misunderstanding between Boyer and Flaw—that if the Lark went down, she would go to no purpose. Mr. Lawrence may be clear of exerting an opposing influence to the authority and intention of Government. He do not presume to condemn him, but as these facts, so corroborative, have come to our knowledge, we deem it our duty to make them known to you. Mr. Lawrence we hope can and will throw some satisfactory light upon them. Your Commissioners have been treated very kindly by Mr. Lawrence, especially at his establishment at this place, during the prosecution of our mission.

James Flaw informed us, that notwithstanding the many efforts made to withdraw him from the authority of the Liberian Government, and to disaffect him towards it, he is determined to keep to the arrangement made last April; and if the government did not have the difficulties settled, or could not do so, he would renew hostilities. We said he knew why Boyer prefered the interference of foreignors. First because he know his cause is bad, and if justice was awarded him, he would be obliged to pay very heavily; and he knew the Liberians would decide in consonance with justice—but foreign traders are guided *only* by their commercial interest, and would be governed in their decision accordingly—and which he Flaw, would NEVER NEVER, NEVER, submit to. And secondly, if Liberians decided the difficulty they would bind Boyer to future good behavior—and compel him to strict observance of his agreement. Boyer, he said, is not fond of keeping his word, or standing to his engagements—he is like Grando, who lived at Bassa Cove.

James Flaw after having remained on board the "Lark" a day and a night returned home—before leaving, he signed an agreement, which it was hoped Boyer would also have signed in which he pledges himself, for himself and people to submit all their difficulties to this government. He begged the Commissioners to see that he would not be permitted to remain much longer in suspense—that he considered his hands tied, and must remain idle, unless it became necessary to act in self-defence—that his people were obliged to confine themselves at home—they could not go about the country, and hoped the President of Liberia would adopt speedy measures to compel Boyer to reasonable measures. He requested us to say; that you may consider himself and subjects, and the entire country at your command, to assist in carrying out any order you may desire.

The following day Capt: Pannel arrived at Trade Town in the English cutter "Zepher," also a Liberian vessel from Bassa. We had concluded if Boyer continued to presist in his obstinacy, the Liberian factories had better be removed from his place, as a mark of indignation at his unprincipled conduct; consequently every thing was shipped off while the "Lark" was present. Meanwhile we thought we would make another effort, by writing to Boyer, and giving him more fully to understand the degree of indignance we viewed his conduct, and the displeasure he would incur from our government—First, that no Liberian vessel would land anything at his place until he changed his course, that our Government would perhaps stop further intercourse at his place by foreignors, until he gave satisfaction—that likely his folly in listening to foreign traders would terminate in the appointment and recognization by government of James Flaw as Chief of the entire Trade Town Country—that our Government was determined to maintain peace among his and every other tribe within Liberia; and tho' much patience had been and would be exercised towards them, owing to their ignorance, yet the severest measures would be resorted to, if pacific ones failed. We reminded him, how many chiefs had foolishly suffered themselves to be thus imposed on by unprincipled foreignors, and who could render them no assistance when trouble come on them.

We refered to the New Jess war of 1849, for the extirpation of slavers. A fact which he was cognizant of—and that the obstinacy of the natives and Spanish slavers against all persuasions and remonstrances of our government, originated principally with foreignors, whom we could name—but he knew the fact—he remembered that foreigners told him that Liberians had no right to drive those parties out of the country, and if they had the right they had not the power. We reminded him of foreignors having encouraged Grando, to resist the authority of our Government and to violate our laws—that they wrote letters of the most disgraceful and abusive character for Grando, while the English Commodore were lying in the harbour of Grand Bassa; but when trouble came on Grando, these foreignors could not be found, or they were unable to render him any assistance; and with these facts before him, why should he permit himself to be wrongfully misled. Upon the receipt of this note and message, Boyer came to the beach, with the intention, he said, of doing right—he desired to see one of us on shore, and he would come on board—we sent him word that he had so often deceived us, that we could not confide in him; but if he would now come off, we would overlook his past conduct. In about an hour after this, Capt: Pannel went on shore (perhaps was sent for by Boyer)—a Liberian factor on shore informed us that this Capt: P. and Boyer had a private interview immediately which continued most of the two hours he was on shore; and as soon as Capt: P. left for his vessel Boyer left also declaring he would never come on board, and it was nonsense to send for him any more, as he was done talking on the subject. Under these circumstances we concluded to leave for home; but before doing so, we sent letters on shore to the British traders at Trade Town, which we hope will meet your approbation.

Here is the copy of the letter.

Off Trade Town.

Lib: Govt: Schr. Lark. Octr. 22d 1851.

Dear Sir,

As Commissioners appointed by the Government of Liberia to reconcile the two beligerent Chiefs, Boyer, and James Flaw of Trade Town, who have been engaged in a state of war for some years to the great danger of the property, if not lives of both foreigners and Liberia traders, we are sorry to say, that owing to an opposing influence to our efforts, they have as yet proved ineffectual with one of the parties, in whose dominions as a petty chief you reside as factor, in person or by representative. We are also sorry to say, that from all we can gather this opposing influence originates from sources which have a right to ask protection and perhaps redress of the Governmont of Liberia, in the event of an aggression being committed on your persons or property by either of the belligerents.

Yours Respectfully

S. A. BENSON
J. HANSON

Commissioners

In concluding our report we beg to say that unless something be done to prevent foreign traders from interfering in matters that are belonging to this Government and from trying to lessen our influence with the natives by an unwarrantable expenditure of their owners' property, we will succeed but illy in suppressing the wonted cruelties & other evils existing among the natives of Liberia, without a resort to severe measures that are equally revolting to the feelings of Liberians—Americans and Europeans—It appear to us plainly that the object is to make the impression abroad that they possess more influence along the coast than Liberians and consequently as they have to settle war, and have to make peace for the security of their property, the Liberians should not exact duties &c, &c, of them. In fact Capt Pannel had the frankness to say to us, in presence of Capt Cooper, that he was instructed to collect all the information he could that would operate detrimentally to Liberia.

We have the honour to be
your Excellency's ob. servt.

STEPHEN. A. BENSON.
JOHN HANSON.

Commissioners

Remarks.—Our readers, will, we hope pardon us, for giving so much space in our present number to the report of Judge Benson and Hon. J Hanson of their mission to Trade Town. Indeed not to give the report entire, would be an act of injustice to the people—the people should know, and understand all the relations which exist between this government, and the African tribes residing within its jurisdiction, for it is to them the government look, to uphold and maintain its authority and dignity.

We have given the report an impartial consideration; and it is with regret, that we are obliged to coincide with the Commissioners in all their feelings—in all their disappointments and the recommendations they have thought it their duty, to make in view of all the circumstances. We applaud the Commissioners for the patience they exercised in their intercourse with Prince Boyer, and as strongly do we stamp the seal of reprobation on his insincerity and dishonesty. Prince James Flor is a man of a different character from Boyer—tho' a younger man, he is decidedly more deserving of notice than Boyer. We know these men; and we assure our readers, that our knowledge of the latter will place him in a very unfavourable position. He is deceitful, unfaithful to his engagements; and will put himself not to the slightest inconvenience to gain an honest reputation. Proclaiming himself a mighty Chief he defies the world, until the appearance of the least danger near his strong hold—then, he is as submissive and docile as one could wish.

With his own people, and strangers who may accidentally fall in his power, he is the greatest tyrant imaginable— his ignorance and cruelties are the theme of every African who are acquainted with him. Whilst Boyer is feared and hated, James Flor is respected, and admired for the consistency of his character, and for his friendly feeling to all who are acquainted with him.

We fully agree with the Commissioners that Boyer should be punished—and we advise the less expensive mode of doing it—and that is, to prevent all intercourse with him and his people by sea—let the restriction extend alike to foreigner and Liberians, and if we have not greatly misjudged him in a few months he will crave for a hearing, which he now, so insolently persists in declining.

In April last, Boyer and Flor agreed to leave the settlement of their difficulties with this Government. The President sent a Commission down to them in the hope of restoring peace to the country, neither Chieftian then, seemed indisposed to a reconciliation of the differences; and a definite period was agreed upon by them and the Commissioners for a final hearing of the matter;—and until then, hostilities would be suspended—the time named for this meeting has just passed, and according to the promise of the Commissioners the "Lark" was sent down; on board of which the interview between the chieftians were to take place. The report of the Commissioners will show how the pacific intentions of government were frustrated.

It is with deep regret that we are compelled to believe that foreign traders, still exert themselves to create difficulties between the native Chiefs and the Government of Liberia. What advantage they propose to derive from such a course, it is difficult for us to imagine; unless indeed, they wish to throw off every restraint of civilization, and follow the forms and fashions of the untutored aborigines. We know, that this mode is prefered by some of them, but we did not choose to believe, that for the gratification of an unbridled licentiousness, they would venture to create insubordination among the natives over whom, the government exercises jurisdiction. We have frequently called the attention of our readers to the ill-behavior of a few foreign traders on our coast—again and again have we warned them to attend to the business which brought them to our coast, and to cease their meddling with the domestic arrangements of our government. We had hoped that they would, in future, demean themselves as peaceful visitors should do; and not give the Authorities cause to arrest and bring them before our courts on charges for sedition. This course, we now beleive will have to be adopted before unprincipled men will learn the truth, that authority exists in Liberia for the punishment of every grade of crime.

It is but an act of justice to the respectable foreigners who trade on our coast, to say, that David Murray, and the masters of vessels under his direction—the Mr Pannel refered to in the Commissioners report included, are the persons our observations are intended to refer to. It is true that Mr. William Lawrence now appears to be somewhat mixed up with the difficulties at Trade Town. Hitherto he has kept himself free from all charges; and if he has changed from the correct principles which we have invariably given him credit for, and falling in with the factious movements of Capt Murray and his followers—then we admit we are greatly disappointed. We hope Mr. Lawrence will clear himself from the imputation of wrong doing. We have always entertained the best of feelings for him and we are unwilling to beleive he will be guilty of exerting an injurious influence among the natives, the appearances are somewhat against him.—HERALD.

For the "Liberia Herald"

God uses His own Means.

A few weeks since, a native of Grand Colah dreamed, that he saw the *All-wise* Being standing befor him, and said to him, go and tell *all* the Chiefs of the country, "that they must not labor on the Sabbath day, nor must they permit their people to do so.' The dreamer seemed deeply affected at the command and concluded to go and give the message. He did so—and it affords me great pleasure to say, that the Kings and Chiefs immediately ordered the people to refrain from any and every labor on the Sabbath hole. And that their should be no mistake in the day; sticks or small peices of boards were prepared, with seven holes in them, and to each peice a round stick was attached, so that at the end of every day, the small stick would be removed into the next hole, and on the Sabbath day—the stick woul reach the seventh day. Not only the natives of Grand Colah, but the inhabitants of the adjoining countries are adopting this plan; and I verily belive that in a very short time hence, none of the natives will be willing to trade, or otherwise violate the Sabbath day. Would it not be advisable at this time to send a teacher or preacher among these people—it might have a salutary effect. Indeed, the way seems open for religious instruction; and no other time, likely, would be as opportune as the present.

I do not think it necessary to say more. I have plainly stated facts as they have come to the knowledge of myself and others. Nor do I wish to be understood as believing in dreams. I only report what I have been told, and what I have seen.

Yours very Respectfully,
J. T. RICHARDSON,

October 1851.

For the Liberia Herald.

"*Watchmen, Watchmen, what of the Night.*"

Mr. Herald.—Will you be so kind as to inform us, and the world at large, what the missionaries are doing towards civilizing and christianizing the benighted heathen within the boundaries of the Republic of Liberia; and what are they doing towards

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

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