pathise in every effort which is being made to extend the blessings of civilization, civil and religious liberty into Africa: and that you will aid, by every means in your power, every such effort to the end that her sons may be redeemed from their deep degredation. And I beg to say further, gentlemen, that I shall not fail to recommend, from time to time, such measures to the Legislature, as in my opinion may be necessary and proper to promote the interests of agriculture, commerce; and internal improvements. To enforce a strict accountability on the part of the officers concerned in the management of the affairs of the government; and observe the utmost economy in all public expenditures, shall be my constant care.

I have now only to add that our grateful acknowledgements are due to an all-wise Providence, for the state of improvement, which is everywhere manifest in our infant Republic, and for the great prosperity with which, in his goodness: God has blessed our country—let us then continue to trust in him, and not fail to invoke a continuance of that protecting care which has led us, step by step, from such small beginnings to the position we to day occupy.

J. J. ROBERTS.

Government House.
Monrovia December 3rd 1851.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

To the Hon: the Senate and House of Representatives,

Gentlemen

It is the business of the Executive on every occasion of the meeting of the Legislature to inform them of the condition of the Republic, and to recommend to them any public measure, which he may think expedient for their adoption. It is therefore my first, and indispensible duty to invite your attention to the Providential favors with which our country has been blessed during the past year.

In addition to the inestimable privileges of civil and religious liberty, which we are still permitted to enjoy—we have abundant cause for congratulation and thankfulness that our land has been exempted from the visitation of any pestilential disease, and that, in the general, a remarkable degree of health has been preserved to its inhabitants.

The agricultural departments of the country were never more encouraging than at the present time—commerce is also rapidly increasing, both in variety and quantity of the articles of export; and I am happy in being able to inform the Legislature that a decided improvement, in the several towns and villages of the Republic, is every where observable. Indeed every fundamental interest of the government, and people seems to bear the impress of Divine favor and approbation. These circumstances cannot fail to awaken in us a deep sense of the goodness of God—and inspire us with feelings of profound reverence and devotion to Him, who is the author of all good, and draw from us grateful acknowledgements for benefits so bountifully bestowed.

But, gentlemen, in the midst of so many gracious favors, we have not been wholly exempted from the evils incident to human nature; and from the innumerable difficulties and embarrassments, which more or less, surround all governments. And, as if to test our faith; or to remind us of our obligations to the Great Governor of the universe; or to convince us that in God alone, is strength, and that in him only we should put our trust—we have recently been called to experience a severe affliction in the sacking and burning of one of our villages as es in the county of Grand Bassa, and cold blooded murder of a number of its inhabitants, by a band of ruthless savages, headed by Fisherman Grando; who, ten days afterwards, having collected a formidable force, made a desperate attack upon the Township of Bassa Cove, but was happily repulsed with great loss on his side. This fellow Grando, for the last fifteen years has been hanging like an incubus, upon the skirts of the villages of Grand Bassa County, taxing his evil genius to the utmost, to invent annoyances by which he might distress them;—and by this last act, has crowned his diabolical purposes.

This, gentlemen, is, indeed, a distressing occurrence, individually or politically considered, and is truly calculated to arrest our attention, and impress us with the fact of the uncertainty of all human affairs, and teaches us how constantly dependent we are upon God for his protecting care over us.

And while we lament the occurrence, and especially the loss of so many of our fellow citizens—prematurely cut off in the vigour of life by barbarous hands—we can but bow in humble submission to Almighty God—acknowledging our entire dependence upon his infinite goodness—supplicate His Divine aid and protection—humbly entreating that He will deliver us from the machinations of all our enemies: and that He will bless us in the adoption of such measures as will be conducive to the good and welfare of our infant State

Gentlemen, it is with inexpressible concern, I have to inform you that among the evils likely to result from these attacks upon our settlements in Grand Bassa, there is every reason to fear; nay, I cannot see that it can possibly be avoided,—that we shall be involved in difficulties with several of the Chiefs in that neighborhood—who, influenced by their cupidity—Grando it appears, having divided with them the plunder he procured from the settlement at Fish-town—joined him in the attack upon Bassa Cove, and are now maintaining a hostile attitude; defying the authority of the government.

Foremost in these acts of rebelion, and threats of insubordination, is that miscreant Boyer of Trade town; who, actually sent a large force to aid Grando in his attack, and has now a number of men armed at Grando's barricaded town, to defend him against any attempt that may be made to arrest Grando and his associates.

It is well known to you gentlemen, that Boyer and Grando, are kindred spirits—both alike destitute of every honorable sentiment, and capable of any act however base and treacherous I have great satisfaction, however, in remarking that as far as I am informed, all the Chiefs, except those of Tobacconeé, New Cess and Trade-town, adhere strictly to their allegiance, and manifest the deepest concern at the treachery of Grando, and Boyer's participation; and several of them have sent me assurances of their readiness to co-operate with the government in maintaining its authority, and punishing the guilty parties.

This unprovoked and cruel outrage has aroused universal indignation; and every voice is raised to demand that a just retribution be visited on the perpetrators of so foul a deed And, gentlemen, the period is now arrived when claims from the legislative guardians of the nations' rights, the adoption of such measures, as will at once convince all within its jurisdiction, of the power and determination of the government to maintain its authority, and punish all crimes committed within its territorial limits. Every consideration demands this at your hands. To war against the dangers that assail—to guard against the dangers that threaten—to destroy or drive to a distance, every thing by which security might be invaded, is the purpose for which civil governments are formed; and the people have a right to require of the guardians of the public safety, the adoption of such measures as will secure these important ends Therefore, gentlemen, this subject will doubtless claim your first attention

The circumstances of the several attacks and massacre, are fresh in your memory—and I deem it wholly unnecessary to tresspass upon your valuable time, doubly so at this juncture, to recount them here.

With respect to myself, I find that my duty is plain before me—and however painful the being obliged to resort to military force—though justifiable by example and necessity, yet disagreeable in itself—and repugnant to my own feelings. I should certainly but all deserve the confidence of my fellow citizens, were I not on the present occasion earnestly to recommend that immediate and efficient steps be taken to apprehend Grando, and his associates, and bring them to justice; and also to punish those who, by their menacing preparations, and aspect of combination against the authority of the government, have placed themselves in a position which justly entitles them to the severest chastisement. That strong measures be immediately resorted to, is absolutely necessary to the permanent establishment of the authority of the government, in certain districts, and the future security of persons and property, as well also of the peace and harmony of our citizens.

The protracted moderation of the government towards certain Chiefs and Headmen in the Bassa Country, seems only to have had the effect of producing in them the belief, that the government will either continue its forbearance, or that it has not the power of maintaining the majesty of its laws. This latter, as you well remember, gentlemen, was the opinion of Gatomba for several years; who continued his depredations, tho' admonished again and again until arrested in his career by the strong arm of military power—since which time, no one has been more peaceable and scrupulously obedient to lawful commands. And this appears to be the only method of effectually arousing others from the same delusion Had this course been pursued, as his conduct justly deserved, in regard to Grando some years ago, we might have been spared the outrage he has committed, and the present necessity of punishing his guilt.

Besides the almost innumerable minor depredations of Grando, upon the inhabitants of Grand Bassa—this last, gentlemen, is the fourth capital offence of which he has been guilty—thus four times has his life been justly forfeited to the satisfaction of outraged law. That he procured the murder of Governor Finley, there is but little room for doubt; that he, at another time ordered the murder of two of our citizens, is also certain; that he soon afterwards assembled in arms and twice attacked the said village of Bassa Cove is a fact of history, and the cruelties he committed on those occasions will long be remembered by many of our citizens who severely suffered. And is his cup of iniquity not yet full?—Shall he be longer permitted to revel over the mangled corpses of our murdered fellow citizens?—It is for you, gentlemen, to answer.

I am satisfied, however, that you agree with me that the time is fully come when the government cannot longer suffer its authority to be trampled on with impunity; and that you will now take measures to put an effectual end to these cruel depredations, and establish permanent security to the persons and property of all within our jurisdiction. This is due not only to our own citizens, but also to strangers sojourning among us, peaceably engaged in mercantile pursuits And to neglect this duty longer, you will be assuming, gentlemen, an immense weight of responsibility

Under the existing aspect of our affairs, in the county of Grand Bassa—especially, information having reached me that the Chiefs of Tobaccone, New Cess, and Trade-town, were supplying themselves with powder and guns from vessels trading along that part of our coast—I have thought it not inconsistent with a just precaution to interdict all trade and intercourse for a time, with the inhabitants of the above named districts; and to require the removal of all trading factories established in said districts. It remains for the Legislature to determine how long this restriction shall continue

After the attack of the 15th. ultimo, it was thought advisible, at least to relieve the citizens from the fatigue of constant watching, to send down a smal detachment of men from this place; and on the 17th. a company of seventy five, was embarked on board the Government schooner "Lark," and was landed there the following day, where the company still remains on duty. I should not omit to mention here, that we are indebted to Captain Pearson, of the U. S. ship "Dale," for his prompt response to my application to be conveyed in his ship to Grand Bassa. The arrival of the Dale and Lark was very opportune, as we have every reason to believe that another attack, by the natives was contemplated, and that they were only detered by the presence of these vessels, and the arrival of re-inforcements. Up to the present time, nothing further has occurred there, except that the fishmen are rapidly leaving the country.

It affords me great satisfaction to be able to inform the Legislature that, excepting the difficulties in Grand Bassa, our relation with the tribes bordering on our territories, and those within our jurisdiction, have undergone no material change since your last session. And generally, from a conviction that we consider them a part of ourselves, and cherish with sincerity their rights and interests, the attachment of the natives is daily gaining strength. Constant application, are being made to the government to supply them with school teachers, and with other qualified persons to reside among them, to instruct them in the civilized modes of agriculture, and the mechanic arts. And it is a matter of deep regret that the government, for want of pecuniary means, has not been able to meet their wishes, but to an exceedingly limited extent.

In conformity with the wishes of the Legislature, expressed in their resolution of December last, the government interposed its authority, and succeeded in putting an end to actual hostilities between the Vey and Golah Chiefs, but failed to effect a full reconciliation between the contending parties. They, however, pledged themselves to a perpetual armistice. Nevertheless, I regret to say, symptoms of an outbreak have manifested themselves, now and then, on both sides; but the government has kept them in check; and has not relaxed its endeavors to effect a pacification; and to accomplish this purpose strenuous efforts have been made to assemble the whole of the Chiefs at this place. And though both parties express a decided willingness to have their disputes and difficulties arranged and settled, and friendship restored; still owing to their natural jealousies and great propensity for war, as yet, this desirable object has not been effected. In obedience to the government, in September last, a part of the Chiefs assembled here, but in consequence of the absence of some of the Vey Chiefs, who had not been summoned, and whose presence was necessary to the adjustment of some of the diffialties, the council was adjourned till the 17th, ultimo. The Vey Chiefs, G. Cane and Boombo, were punctual in their attendance, and have remained here ever since, awaiting the arrival of the Golah Chiefs, Tom Gum and Dourabay. These dignitaries made their appearance late in the afternoon of Saturday last. The council assembled day before yesterday, and I engaged the assistance of several gentlemen to aid me in conducting the investigation of their numerous charges and complaints. The whole affair is exceedingly complicated, and as yet we have not been able to arrive at any settlement of their difficulties—I am happy, however, to inform you that there is every reason to hope that the meeting will result in an entire reconciliation of the parties, and the permanent restoration of harmony, and a good understanding among the tribes.

Gentlemen, I feel particular satisfaction in remarking that nothing has occurred during the past year, to disturb our amity with foreign powers. In the United States the cause of colonization seems to be gaining favor—and a growing interest in that country in favor of Liberia, is every where manifest. We have cause, however, still to regret that the United States Government, has not yet seen fit to acknowledge the Independence of this Republic. And though we are not insensible of the cause of this delay, still we had every reason to hope and expect, notwithstanding the peculiar institution of that country, it would have been among the first to extend to us the friendly hand, to welcome Liberia among the family of nations. I am happy to remark, however, that we have still grounds for hope that the United States Government will not much longer withhold this token of friendship. We have also good grounds for belief that she will even do more—that she will aid this infant State, pecuniarily, in her efforts to introduce into Africa the blessings of civilization and christianity.

It also affords me much plessure to observe that the kind feelings of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, towards Liberia, are unabated. We have recently had several proofs of the deep interest Her Majesty's Government, and the British people generally entertain for the future welfare of this infant State. And it is proper for me to mention here, that we are indebted to Her Majesty's Government for the hull and part of the machinery of Her Majesty's steam vessel "Lamer," presented to this Government by Commodore Fanshaw, &c. &c. in the name of Her Majesty. I have also the satisfaction of communicating to the Legislature, that I am informed in a dispacth from Viscount Lord Palmerston, &c. &c, "that Her Majesty's Government, in order to evince its great desire to encourage the growth of cotton in this Republic, has given orders that five of the best kinds of cleaning machines shall be prepared and sent to Liberia." These machines, however, have not yet been received.

You will, I am persuaded, gentlemen, learn with no less pleasure than I communicate it, that I have received from His Excellency, Chevalier Bunsen, His Prussian Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary, and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James—through whom I had the honor of making the application to His Prussian Majesty's Government—a dispatch containing a formal recognition of the independence of this Government, by His Prussian Majesty.

I have also assurances that two or three other European Governments will soon follow the example of Prussia, in the recognition of our independence.

I have had the honor of receiving from the Board of Trustees for Education in Liberia—chartered, as you are aware, by the legislature of the State of Massachusetts, U. S.—a communication, requesting that this Government will incorporate and establish the proposed college, and endow it with such lands or funds as the government may be able to afford. This communication will be laid before you, and I feel satisfied, gentlemen, that you will give it that attention which its importance demands I have particular satisfaction in being able to inform the Legislature that the Trustees have received very flattering encouragements, from the friends of our race, to persevere in their efforts to carry forward the great work of christianizing and civilizing Africa I am advised that on the receipt of the charter and information of the organization and officers names of the Board of Trustees in Liberia, the American Board will be prepared for correspondence and immediate action with them, in regard to the erection of suitable buildings, and the selection of proper instructors, &c. &c.

It is proper likewise for me to inform you that I have received by the hands of Rev. Mr. Christy, Agent of the Kentucky Colonization Society, a set of statute laws of the State of Kentucky, presented to this Republic by the

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
B. Liberia Herald

February 1842(XI,4)--February 18,1857(n.s. VII,4)

1851

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