

The Government of Liberia did not for a moment believe, that the Government of His Imperial Majesty would sanction the course of M. Chevalier, nor such a course in any other person acting under the authority of the French Flag. Indeed, the Treaty subsisting between the two Governments was a guarantee that such would not be the case.

In March 1857, M. Chevalier returned to the Liberian Coast in continuation of his system for the procurement of free laborers. He not only had a French officer of Marine on board his vessel the (Phoenix) as before, but he was accompanied by the French Steam Ship of War "Euphrate" Commander Laporterie. On your arrival at Cape Mount last March, you found M. Chevalier there with his Ship,—having arrived two days previously—prosecuting the same business between Cape Mount and Gallinas, (both inclusive,) and had refused to allow a boat sent off from the settlement of Robertsport to board him. Captain Cooper, by your direction, despatched Midshipman Harris of the "Lark" to M. Chevalier's Ship with your compliments, to inform him that it was legally and indispensably requisite that he touch at Monrovia and procure of the Secretary of State passports for all emigrants obtained within the jurisdiction of this Republic, as also to settle the duties accruing on all merchandize landed or disposed of by him within the same. You also addressed him a note to that effect by the same conveyance; with all of which he assured you there would be a faithful compliance by him. In about ten minutes after Midshipman Harris left the emigrant ship on his way back, and when about a hundred yards distant from her, he espied and overhauled a canoe near to, and making for said ship, with a man on board securely bound with cords, whom Mr. Harris released and carried on board the "Lark;" and whom, you subsequently brought to this city on your return in the "Lark." This man reported that he had been unexpectedly seized on shore that morning at Sugaree—distant only five miles from Robertsport—bound with cords, thrown into a canoe, and was being involuntarily taken off to Mr. Chevalier as an emigrant. He was incessant in his expressions of gratitude to his rescuers. M. Chevalier preceded you some four or five days to Monrovia, and had left before you returned. On his arrival here he called on the authorities, and they complained of his violating the laws on his last voyage: and they again made known the requirements of the law regulating Commerce Navigation and Revenue, and the provisions of the law regulating Passports.

M. Chevalier strongly contended that the Government of Liberia had no just grounds for the issuing of the Proclamation in connection with his operations on the coast—that he had not done or caused to be done any wrong; or committed any injustice whatever; and that all such information coming to Monrovia, was fabricated by evil minded persons. Nothing was to be gained in a controversy with M. Chevalier, and it was hoped that the presence of a

French National vessel would deter him from again violating the laws of Liberia, and prevent a recurrence of the lamentable and deeply regretted disturbances among the aborigines of the Country, which so indelibly marked his former visits to the coast. It was, however, soon ascertained that M. Chevalier would have a strong and powerful supporter in Commander Laporterie, in any future violations of the Liberian laws, instead of finding in him a ready and willing agent to see that the laws of Liberia were respected and adhered to, especially by subjects of his own country, with which this Government is on terms of peace and friendship. It was, and is now, a deep source of regret to find Commander Laporterie giving encouragement and support to M. Chevalier in his unjustifiable pretensions, to carry out his own system for the procurement of emigrants on the Liberia coast, without caring whether the laws of Liberia were violated or not. There can be no doubt but that M. Chevalier claimed the interference of Commander Laporterie against being compelled by the Liberian authorities to submit to the operation of the law regulating Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue, and the requirements of the law regulating Passports, and hence a communication addressed by him to this government, through the French Consul.

Here is a literal translation of the communication.

"Note to the Consular Agent at Monrovia. The fiscal and other claims which the authorities at Monrovia have issued with reference to Captain Chevalier, give rise to the following observations.

It does not appear that M. Chevalier ought to acquiesce in any payment whatever of ad valorem duties on the merchandize of exchange, since they are not for the purpose of commercial operations with the natives. He offers them as gifts to those who facilitate his business of enlistment, and at first cost; both remain on board without communicating with the shore, and besides, this use of the goods being subordinate to the enlistment is essential.

The Hon. Secretary of State, would have assumed the right of placing on board of the "Phoenix" a fiscal agent and an officer for inspecting the engagements on the coast pertaining to the Republic of Liberia.

M. Chevalier operating under the inspection of a French administrative Agent who is, himself placed under the control of the Commander of one of His Majesty's vessels, that would be to subject to suspicion that which France is accustomed to see respected.

He does not appear to have any thing else to do in this matter than to furnish to the Secretary of State written assurance that those ships, operating on this coast, in engaging free laborers renounce the liberty of bartering or of prosecuting any other commercial operation thereon.

Captain Chevalier consents to this, and the mandatories or proxies of the Commander-in-chief adhere to it. This ought to satisfy the question.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XIII. Colonization Pamphlets

6. Message of the President of Liberia,  
...January 6, 1859 Monrovia, 1859