

the 12th, November with the intelligence, that the French Ship "Phenix," Captain Chevalier, had arrived off that port, and was then lying at Sugaree, engaged in the procurement of emigrants—that he was landing goods at that place in contravention of the Laws of Liberia—that he had not entered his vessel &c &c—and unless steps were immediately taken to arrest Captain Chevalier in his illegal proceedings, the country would soon become the scene of contention and strife. Several of the chiefs had already commenced depredations upon the weak and inoffending, and many of the poor creatures had abandoned their villages and their all, and sought refuge in other parts, from the rapacity of their more powerful neighbors, who sought every means to entrap them for the purpose of supplying M. Chevalier with laborers. Fortunately, on the arrival of the intelligence, Her Britannic Majesty's Steam Sloop "Alecto" was in this port, and at the solicitation of your Excellency, Commander J. Hunt consented to receive on board of her, the Attorney General of Liberia, whom you had instructed to go up and ascertain the truthfulness of the report and to take such further action as the law and prudence might dictate. This officer through the kindness of Commander Hunt visited Robertsport and subsequently went on board the "Phenix." At Robertsport the fact was learned, that M. Chevalier had broken bulk and landed cargo without complying with any of the requisitions of the Laws, and that he had already received on board his vessel several emigrants. Captain Chevalier refused to admit the Attorney General to board his vessel, but as it was his duty to ascertain the nationality of the vessel, he did, with the assistance of an officer of the "Alecto," go on board. Captain Chevalier denied being in the waters of Liberia, although he was in sight of the Town at Robertsport; and requested to learn of the Commander of the "Alecto" if he was in Liberian waters. Commander Hunt gave him the information sought, when he promised to cease all operations, and to discontinue intercourse with the Chiefs on shore, until the arrival of the French Commodore who was daily expected. Colonel Payne, the Attorney General, asked and received permission to see the emigrants then on board. One of them he readily recognized, as having been an apprentice of Mr. Cyrus Willis at Millsburg, who represented, that he had been violently seized and kidnapped by Tom Cole, a chief of Manna, and sold to Captain Chevalier. Colonel Payne demanded, and obtained the liberty of this man by paying Captain Chevalier \$28,50, which he said was the sum he had paid for him. He gave Colonel Payne a receipt for the amount. Others of the emigrants represented that they had been forcibly seized and hurried on board the ship.

The Liberian *Guarda Costa*, not being on the coast, the Attorney General had no means of arresting Captain Chevalier and his vessel and bringing them to this port for trial, but he obtained through the

kindness of Commander Hunt, a well armed Launch to watch the further movements of the "Phenix" and to prevent any of the Chiefs from going on board of her. The Colonel then returned to Monrovia, and your Excellency then ordered a regular police to be stationed all along the beach from Sugaree to the Gallenas, to intercept and prevent any intercourse between the natives and Captain Chevalier. Captain Chevalier seeing himself thus vigilantly watched, and finding that he could not continue his nefarious proceedings, sailed away the next day. We know not where he is gone, we hope however, that he has left our coast. Annexed is a copy of the report of the Attorney General.

MONROVIA, NOV. 14. 1858

HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT BENSON.

SIR,

Pursuant to your instructions, I went on board of Her Britannic Majesty's Steam Sloop "Alecto," Commander James Hunt, on the 12th, inst, at 7 o'clock P. M. and at 10, o'clock the same evening we proceeded to Cape Mount in search of the French vessel which was reported to be in that neighborhood contravening the Laws of Liberia, by purchasing slaves.

On the morning of the 13th, inst, we arrived at Robertsport, (Grand Cape Mount) and learned, that the vessel we were in search of, had not been entered at the Custom House at that port, but according to information received upon oath by two Justices of the Peace of that place, she had broken bulk and landed rum fire-arms, cotton goods, and other articles of merchandize, and it was believed that she had come on this part of our coast to procure slaves—alias emigrants. See affidavit herewith accompanying. The said vessel was seen at anchor, between Sugaree and Manna Rock, from the deck of the "Alecto" whilst lying at Robertsport.

I dispatched Lieutenant Stryker to Sugaree with a message to King Sand Fish, and requested an interview with him, and at the same time to inform him and the other Chiefs, through him, that if any slaves or emigrants were kidnapped and sold on board of that vessel, that they would be held responsible, and that they would be severely punished by the Liberian Government, for so palpable a violation of its Laws.

At 12 o'clock we went alongside of the vessel. She had the French Flag flying, and was at anchor between Sugaree and Manna Rock, being about six miles from the settlement at Robertsport, and about 1½ miles from the shore. I proceeded on board the vessel in a boat belonging to the "Alecto." Lieutenant Walker of that vessel

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XIII. Colonization Pamphlets

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