

*Extract from the instructions of the Navy Department to the commanders of all U. States' vessels, cruising in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, &c.*

"You have also enclosed, such parts of several acts of Congress, prohibiting the importation of slaves into any ports or places within the jurisdiction of the United States, as are necessary to point out to you your duty and authority under these laws; and it is expected and required of you by the President, that a strict and vigilant attention be paid to the direction therein contained, that, if possible, this inhuman and disgraceful traffic may be suppressed.

By the act of the 20th of April, 1818, you will perceive, that it is made unlawful to import or bring in any manner whatsoever, into the United States or territories thereof, from any foreign kingdom, place, or country, any negro, mulatto, or person of color, with intent to hold, sell, or dispose of such person as a slave, or to be held to service.

By this act it is also made unlawful for any citizen of the United States, or other person, to build, equip, load, fit, or otherwise prepare, any ship or vessel, in any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States, or to cause any such ship or vessel to sail from any port or place whatsoever, within the jurisdiction of the United States, for the purpose of procuring and transporting any such slaves to any port or place whatever. And any ship or vessel employed in such importation of slaves, or so built, fitted out, or prepared, is liable to be seized and forfeited.— And by the act of the 3d of March, 1819, the President is authorized to employ any of the armed vessels of the United States, to cruise in such places as he may think proper, where he may judge attempts may be made to carry on the slave trade by citizens or residents of the United States, in contravention of the acts of Congress prohibiting the same; and to instruct such armed vessels to seize, take, and bring into any port of the United States, to be proceeded against according to law, all ships or vessels of the United States, wheresoever found, which may have taken on board, or which may be intended for the purpose of taking on board, or of transporting, or may have transported, any negro, mulatto, or person of color, in violation of any of the provisions of the act of the 20th April, 1818, above referred to, or in violation of any other act or acts prohibiting the traffic in slaves."

"You will perceive, from the generality of the provisions in these laws, you are authorized to take and bring in all ships or vessels of the United States, which may have been in any manner employed or intended to be employed in the slave trade; or any other vessel offending against the provisions of any of the laws you have enclosed. You will particularly notice the two provisions to the first section of the act of 1819; the first of which directs in what manner you are to keep and dispose of the slaves which may be found on board of any ship or vessel seized by you. If brought within the United States, they are to be delivered to the marshal of the district where brought in, and transmit the evidence of such delivery to this Department. Upon the capture, therefore, of any vessel having slaves on board, you will immediately proceed to the Island of Sherbro, on the coast of Africa, and deliver such slaves to the agent appointed by the President to receive them, pursuant to the provisions of the act, or to any other agent so appointed, at any other place on the coast of Africa. The second proviso relates to the disposition of the officers and crews of such vessels so captured by you— Great vigilance will be expected from you, in the safe keeping of all such officers and crews, until they shall be handed over to the civil authority, to be proceeded against according to law."

"P. S. No provision having as yet been made for the reception of slaves upon the coast of Africa, you will for the present, and until ordered otherwise, consider the foregoing orders relative to the disposition of such slaves as you may capture, so far modified, that you will deliver them on Smith's Island, at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, to such agent as may be appointed by the President to receive them there."