

Additional Intelligence by the Niagara—Our Correspondence from Africa—The French Slave Trade—The Yacht Wanderer, &c.

THE NIAGARA AT THE NAVY YARD.

LANDING AT THE NAVY YARD—SUMMARY INSPECTION OF THE SHIP—HER EXCELLENT CONDITION—DISMISSING THE CREW—A PARTING GLASS OF GROG—HAULING DOWN THE FLAG—HOW THE CREW BEHAVED ON THE VOYAGE—TAKING CARE OF THE NEGROES—CONDUCT OF THE POOR ELACKS—SHOOKING INHUMANITY—SICKNESS AND DEATH—SLANDEROUS REPORTS CIRCULATED—SPECULATIONS OF SOMEBODY AT THE EXPENSE OF UNCLE SAM—NOVEL FREIGHT CHARGE, ETC., ETC.

The United States steam frigate Niagara landed at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, on Thursday afternoon, on her return from Monrovia, Africa, where she landed the recovered negroes of the slaver Echo. Though but just returned from so long a voyage, she had hardly touched the wharf before she was visited for examination by Board of Officers, under instructions from Commodore Breece, consisting of Commanders Footo and Rowan and Lieut. Le Roy, who, under the usual instructions, proceeded to inspect the ship in all her details. Every part of the ship was minutely examined, and the crew drilled as if in action. The crew executed the orders with skill and celerity.

The report of the inspectors states that the condition of the ship reflects great credit upon the captain and officers.

All day yesterday the vessel presented a busy scene in the preparations for removal and transhipment of surplus stores. The jacks were as jolly as usual, and were rendered additionally pleased with the consciousness that a most disagreeable duty was performed, and they were once more at home. By order of the Commodore, all the crew were yesterday transferred to the North Carolina. About dusk, being ready to go, they sent word to the captain that they would be pleased to take a parting glass of grog with him on the occasion of their leaving. To this Captain Chauncey readily assented, and briefly addressed them, expressing his satisfaction with the manner in which they had performed their duties, and hoping to meet them again in the service of their country. Several of the officers, who have for several years been in active service, expected to obtain leave of absence, but were somewhat surprised to find themselves detached to other vessels for immediate duty. The energetic and capable Chief Engineer of the ship—who has, we believe, been attached to her since she was launched, making both telegraphic trips, and the trip to Africa—is to be retained for the present, probably to fit out the Niagara for sea agreeably to the recent orders of the department. The flag was hauled down about dusk, and the ship went out of the commission to Africa.

The behavior of the crew during the voyage is said to have been excellent. They manifested the greatest desire to attend to the wants of the unfortunate cargo of negroes, covering them carefully at night, and uncovering them in the morning, like so many children. The crew bore with patience the inconvenience of the filthy habits of the negroes, who were by no means particular in discharging the necessities of nature. Both the male and female negroes were found, in spite of all precautions, to become so unhealthy and filthy that they had to be penned up and washed with hose, all in a sock, like so many sheep. It is said by those on board the Niagara that the behavior of these unfortunates was totally unlike what would be expected from human beings. Though supplied with regular rations of food, they were so voracious that they would watch eagerly by the side of a dying comrade for the sake of seizing his morsel of biscuit or his blanket. They did not even take interest enough in the funerals to regard them, and hardly deigned to look at them. They would lie in the embrace of a dead comrade and not turn over to look at the preparations for burial. Even the women exhibited but little sympathy for one another, but the men were entirely destitute of that quality. They did not appear to know that they were going home, and only evinced gratitude when they found themselves in Africa and among those with whom they could converse. Then, they flocked about the captain and cordially shook his hand. When they were taken on board at Charleston, the men were terribly emaciated, and much afflicted with the scurvy from long use of salt provisions. No suitable provisions had been provided for them in the ship's stores, and the beef and pork sent by some ignorant friends at the North was not very palatable to them. Capt. Chauncey was obliged to get extra stores with great expedition, and also provide himself with extra medicines. The diet was instantly changed from salt to fresh food, and from that time the mortality was less. Several post mortem examinations, made by order of the Captain, developed the existence of large quantities of worms in the bodies of the deceased. It was noted that several died while in the very act of eating. In general they remained in a stooping, sitting, or crouching position, and would not leave it without being obliged to. Sometimes the more healthy were induced to dance for an hour or so, but those in the least measure unwell were perfectly helpless and inactive. Their voracity extended so far that fights at first often occurred when it was thought that on receiving a larger allowance of food than another. On the outward voyage the Captain, being in about latitude 35, and the mortality increasing, determined to run further south, and accordingly steamed up for three days. The effect was wonderful upon the health of the cargo, and seemed to trace them up as soon as the tropical climate was reached. Great difficulty was found in communicating with them, and were it not for one of the crew of the slaver Echo, a Portuguese, named Frank Lee, who was on board the Niagara, this difficulty would have proved a serious one. This man was active both night and day in attending to the wants of the negroes, distributing their rations and conveying orders to them. He could not converse fluently with them, but managed to make himself understood, and obtained a command over them which was most invaluable throughout the voyage. It is said that Captain Chauncey was so pleased with the services of this man and his arduous efforts to do all the good in his power, that he promised to intercede for executive clemency should the Portuguese fare hard in his approaching trial at Charleston.

There were shipped on board the Niagara a quantity of goods to be carried to Liberia, for the Colonization Society and others, a quantity of stores being comprised in the lot. It is said that on the way out it became necessary to borrow or buy some of these stores, and that the agent who had them in charge actually had the impudence to make out a bill, charging freight on the stores from New York.

It is also said that many of the goods sent to Liberia were sent merely on speculation, and not for the sole benefit of the poor negro, the generosity of Uncle Sam being abused for the benefit of somebody who owned and sold the stores, and paid no freight.

It is positively asserted by those on board the Niagara, that the reports of inhuman treatment of the negroes which have been made since the return of the Niagara are entirely untrue; that the lash was never used under any circumstances as a punishment, and that the negroes were uniformly treated with kindness; some of them receiving food from the captain's table. The story of the woman's being cruelly put in irons arose from the fact that one of the women became convinced that another female was trying to cause her child's death by means of sorcery. This is a common superstition among the Africans, and this woman revealed upon some of her companions to attempt to throw the offending one overboard through a port hole. They had actually succeeded in getting the poor victim to the side, when the officer of the deck sent for Captain Chauncey, who, to quiet the rest, ordered the indignant but misled mother to be secured. She was released on promise of peaceable behavior.

The Niagara was visited yesterday by a large number of persons. Among others, a number of naval officers, friends of the commander and officers, who expressed much satisfaction at the condition of the ship. Among other visitors were the President, Secretary, and Vice President of the Colonization Society, who warmly congratulated Capt. Chauncey on the humane manner in which he had discharged his disagreeable duty.

The crew of the Niagara will be paid off to-day, and the ship will be immediately got ready for sea.

OUR COAST OF AFRICA CORRESPONDENCE.

UNITED STATES SHIP COMBERLAND,  
OFF ST. PAUL DE LOANDE, Sept. 24, 1858.

Arrival at St. Paul de Loande—Laxy Times for American Cruisers—The Schooner Wanderer—Col. Corrie's Operations, &c.

We arrived here on the evening of the 16th, thirty days from Porto Praya. We might have made the passage in less time, but on the evening of the 14th, having arrived within seventy miles of the port, it was deemed prudent to put the ship's head off shore and "take up a position" until daylight; consequently we did not arrive until 10 o'clock last evening, when we performed the dangerous and almost incredible feat of anchoring the ship ten miles from Loande, in thirty fathoms water; which gallant achievement will doubtless create a great moral effect upon all who witnessed it, and a panic among those engaged in the "nefarious traffic."

We got under way on the morning of the 17th from our first anchorage; but the depth of water off the town being only ten fathoms, it was considered entirely too dangerous to approach nearer to it than four miles. We found Loande in its usual state: no news of any importance, and only one American vessel (the bark Hazard, of Salem) in harbor. We have now been fifteen months of the African station, of which—(here is a nut for the nigger-worshippers)—precisely twenty-two days have been passed on the usual cruising ground for slavers—thirteen of which twenty-two days we were at anchor—and with the exception of the boarding and overhauling of the Cortez, of which daring exploit you received some account last October, no slavers or any other vessels have been boarded by us, nor are likely to be, from present appearances.

In consequence of the injured health of the ship's company, consequent upon that affair and a boat expedition two miles up the Congo river, it was deemed necessary by the commander-in-chief that the ship should remain three months at Madeira, in order to recruit the health and spirits of the officers and crew after such unprecedented fatigues and hardships—two weeks being the period usually allotted to the other vessels of the squadron. The remainder of the time has been passed at Cape Verde,

and now—after an absence of eleven months from it—was again on the coast of Africa.

I merely give you this short account to convince your readers how much has been said, and how little actually done, towards contributing anything to the suppression of the slave trade. Our squadron on the West coast of Africa has never dreamed of such a thing.

The bark Sea View has arrived from the Congo river, and reports the schooner Wanderer as at anchor there. We are now preparing a boat expedition, doubtless to seek Col. Corrie to show us negroes comfortably. It would be too much responsibility for us to seize him.

THE YACHT WANDERER.

SOME INCIDENTS OF HER LATE VOYAGE—COLLECTED FROM THOSE ON BOARD.

[From the Albany Statesman, Dec. 15.]

No little excitement prevails at the South, as well as in the Northern States, at the present time, on the subject of the report of the practical reopening of the slave trade, by the supposed successful landing of a cargo of Africans, fresh from their native coast, by the yacht Wanderer. The rumors respecting the affair are as numerous as they are varied. According to some accounts, as many as four hundred of the captured negroes were set safely ashore somewhere in Florida or Georgia. Others place the number at three hundred and fifty—others again at three hundred, or two hundred and fifty, but all agree in the assertion that a profitable cargo was brought into port of strong, youthful, vigorous chattels, for the benefit of the rice, cotton and tobacco growers of the South. On a return trip from Charleston last Saturday, we were in company with some who had been voyagers on the Wanderer during her late excursion.

Without either denying the correctness of the ground work of these reports, or vouching for its accuracy, we may be permitted to venture the suggestion that they are in the main greatly exaggerated. The Wanderer, as every one knows, is a handsome and very fast sailing yacht. She sailed in July last for the Congo river, and passed some time very pleasantly on the coast, if we may rely upon the history of the expedition given to us by a gallant officer who accompanied Captain Currie on the voyage, and whose name is identified with many deeds of daring and adventure. We allude to Captain Farnham, the renowned "overland" rider, whose brilliant career in Texas, California and Nicaragua is familiar to so many of his fellow countrymen. Certainly, if a contraband trade was intended, in the original instance, by the company on the Wanderer, they played their cards well, and managed to draw one species of "wool" over the eyes of the valiant Britishers on the coast, before consummating their speculation in another species.

The British frigate Medusa was on the coast at the time of the visit of the Wanderer, and numerous were the friendly visits, and gratifying were the civilities that passed between the officers of the two nations. The Wanderer's people were entertained and fêted by the Britishers, and the Britishers in their turn were entertained and fêted by those on board the American yacht. So entire was the confidence felt in the latter, and so assured were the gallant John Bull's that their Yankee friends were bent only on a pleasure and information seeking trip, that the idea of examining the Wanderer, to see if she could possibly be fitted for a slaver, was laughed at when proposed by Capt. Farnham, as "a very good joke." Probably it was only a joke. Certainly we are not going to designate it as anything else.

The Wanderer remained some time on the coast. Her people landed at various points of interest, and viewed African nature in all its originality and beauty. They visited native princes in their palaces, and the description given of the habits and appearance of the people by Capt. Farnham will one day doubtless excite interest in thousands of readers. While there they ran a race with a British yacht which boasted of unusual speed, and beat her as easily as a race horse would beat a common roadster. After remaining on the coast a sufficient time, the Americans one night stood out to sea, and turned their eyes homeward. Those who were on board declare that she returned as she went; but if she did stow away a trifle of wool between her decks, certainly none but those who were on board appear to have any definite and conclusive knowledge on the subject. And it is not likely that such knowledge would be readily communicated to outsiders.

We should rather incline to the opinion, however, that if any Africans really tried the "middle passage" on board the fast sailing yacht, they were not so numerous as common report would indicate. Some eighty negroes landed on the shore of Florida or Georgia, and sold at seven hundred dollars a head, would have realized to the speculators fifty-six thousand dollars—a tolerably handsome hit, when the lightning's speed, and excellent, untarnished character of the Wanderer made suspicion and capture so improbable. One thing is certain—the American yacht was sailed by as bold, as fearless and as adventurous a company as ever trod the decks of a ship; and if she did make a successful trade in African wool, she must have the credit of coming the Yankee over certain naval officers in the service of her British Majesty, with a shrewdness and tact unsurpassed in the history of New England ingenuity.

THE SUSPECTED SLAVERS.

[From the Salem Register, Dec. 16.]

Dr. Rainey, the surgeon of the United States frigate Niagara, gives a list of American vessels on the coast of Africa "suspected of being engaged in the slave trade," and among them enumerates the brigantine Robert Wing and the brigantine Paulina, verily adding: "The Robert Wing is of Sierra Leone. Has on board boxes of money and one of doubloons. The Paulina is supposed to be her consort."

The Robert Wing is a regular trader, belonging in Boston and commanded by a Salem captain. The boxes of money were undoubtedly the proceeds of her outward cargo. The Paulina is owned by Captain Charles Hoffman, of Salem, known for many years as one of our most extensive and successful merchants in the legitimate African trade. There are undoubtedly slavers on the coast, but there is no good reason for placing these merchantmen under the ban of suspicion.

The notorious yacht Wanderer, which is said to have landed some Africans on the coast of Georgia quite recently, was in the Congo river not many months ago, but she is not mentioned among the "suspected."