

S U B S T A N C E

OF THE

REPORT

OF THE

COURT OF DIRECTORS

OF THE

SIERRA LEONE COMPANY,

DELIVERED TO THE

GENERAL COURT OF PROPRIETORS,

On Thursday the 26th February, 1795.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE DIRECTORS.

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SUBSTANCE

OF THE

REPORT

OF THE

COURT OF DIRECTORS.

THE DIRECTORS have thought it proper to call the present Court with the view of laying before the Proprietors the account which they have received of a calamity which has been sustained by the Colony at SIERRA LEONE, through the depredations made by a French Squadron, which has very lately and unexpectedly appeared in that quarter.—The Directors will lay before the Court a detailed account of the chief occurrences which passed from day to day during the period to which they allude; they will add some general observations made by their Governor and Council some weeks after the calamity; and they will then mention the steps which the Directors have already taken, or are pro-

ceeding to take, in order to relieve the sufferings of their servants, and in order to put their establishment on that footing which may still afford the means of accomplishing the great objects of this institution; and which may at the same time accord with the present circumstances of the Company.

“On the 27th September, 1794, late in the evening, some alarm was excited in the Colony by the firing of two heavy guns at sea. After an anxious night, on the 28th, as soon as it was light, the Company’s servants were able to count seven or eight sail, and could distinguish the English colours in them all. About nine o’clock they could discern that the fleet consisted of one two-decker, several large armed ships, and two armed brigs. It was agreed, that if they should prove enemies, resistance to such superior force would only be an idle waste of lives, and that it might also render the terms of capitulation less favourable. It was then considered whether an attempt should be made to save any part of the Company’s property: to this measure the objections were, *First*, that there was little probability of having the buildings preserved, unless the Company’s servants should remain on the spot; and it was obvious that they could not remain with safety if it should be known that any property was secreted. *Secondly*, that no vessels could be employed in the removal of goods, as all their motions could
now

now be seen, since the fleet was already coming in. *Thirdly*, that since the property must be delivered to a number of individuals, in order to its removal, there would be great difficulty in recovering it; and that the chances were very much in favour of its being an English fleet, in which case the removal would be productive of nothing but loss: the wind also was at this time fair; the tide flowing; and there was hardly time either for deliberation or execution. In about half an hour some men in one of the frigates were seen pointing a gun into the piazza of the Governor's house; and the shot began flying over the town in a few minutes after.—The colours were immediately struck, and a flag of truce was held out; but the firing still continued, several grape and musquet shot falling into the piazza. It appears that a black child was killed, and two black settlers were severely wounded.

The French, after they had been hailed and assured that the Colony had surrendered, desisted from firing. Soon after ten o'clock they began to land, and a servant of the Company was at the same time sent to invite the commanding officer to the Governor's house. A number of Frenchmen were found to have already entered into the great store, as well as two principal houses, where they were already pillaging and destroying whatsoever they met with. The officer was too much engaged to attend to the invitation immediately;

diately ; but one Newell, an American Slave Captain, (who had before had a dispute with the Governor, and who had piloted the French vessels into the river) being attended by half a dozen Frenchmen, came to the Governor's house, almost foaming with rage, presented a pistol to the Governor, and with many oaths demanded instant satisfaction.—The Governor answered, that since he was no longer master of his own actions, the Slave Captain must now *take* such satisfaction as he judged equivalent to his claims. This man afterwards became so outrageous, that the Governor thought it prudent to request from the French officer a safe conduct on board the Commodore's ship, which was granted ; and he also desired to have a guard for his own house, which the officer professed an intention to give.

The Governor, when he was on board the French ship, expressed to the Captain his surprise at the proceedings which had taken place, and observed, in civil terms, that he had hoped to find in Frenchmen a generous enemy ; but that on the contrary the Colony had been dealt with in a manner which he believed was unusual, except in places taken by storm. The first words spoken by the Captain were, " Have you removed any property ? " The Governor assured him he had not. " Be careful," returned he, " of what you say to me ; for if I shall find after this that you have removed any thing, I shall
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make you suffer, and there shall not be a hut left in the place." The Governor repeated his assurance: on which he was told to make himself easy, since all farther pillage should be prevented. The Captain however would make no written engagement; and he said in the same breath, that if the seamen and soldiers were disposed to plunder, he could not prevent them. He also added, that it was his intention to burn every house in the place belonging to *Englishmen*. The Governor made use of many arguments in order to dissuade him, and also represented the nature of the Establishment in such a manner as seemed likely to interest his feelings; but it was all to no purpose: Newell, the American Slave Captain, who was joined by another American, a Slave Trader, of the name of Mariner, appearing to have prejudiced the minds of the French, the Governor endeavoured to expose the unworthy motives which both these men might be supposed to have for vilifying the Company, and his observations seemed to gain some credit; but all applications urged on behalf of the Colony continued to be ineffectual, the constant reply being, * "Citoyen cela peut bien être, mais encore vous êtes Anglois." The case of the black settlers was then represented, who, though not Englishmen, were sharing the same fate with the Company's servants; the houses of the former being also broken into and pillaged. Strong protestations were made

* "Citizen, that may be true, but still you are Englishmen."

by the French officer of his friendly intentions with respect to the blacks; but it was hinted as before, that there was no possibility of restraining the soldiery. A solemn assurance was however given, that the settlers houses should be saved from fire. A demand for several articles was urged by the Governor, on the ground of their being necessary to keep the people alive; such as wearing apparel, provisions, medicines, &c. all which he was induced to hope at the time that the officer would allow. A proposal to ransom the place was also made, but in vain.

The scene which Freetown now exhibited was in every respect distressing. Of the crew of the French ship, some were carrying away great loads of goods on their backs; others were gathering themselves round a cask of wine, which they were drinking without any restraint. Leman, a black settler, who had been some time before imprisoned for selling a man as a slave, was seen dressed out in a laced suit of clothes, intended for one of the African Chiefs, and was exulting that he had now got his liberty. Mariner, the American, had also adorned himself with some spoils from the house of the Company's Surveyor, and was heard vowing destruction to the place, and every individual in it, if some runaway slaves of a person with whom he had lived, were not restored. He also related how the settlers had formerly followed him into his boat with stones: "But now, said he,

he, I shall glut myself with revenge." All the houses were by this time filled with Frenchmen, who destroyed whatever they found in them which they could not convert to their own use, while several other parties were scouring the town in quest of stock: of which the destruction on this and the following day was extremely great. In the Governor's yard alone, 14 dozen of fowls were killed; and the number of hogs destroyed, in all parts of the town, was not less than twelve hundred. The books of the Company's library were scattered about, and defaced; and if they bore any resemblance to bibles, they were torn in pieces and trampled upon. In the house of Mr. Afzelius, the Botanist, the plants, seeds, dried birds and insects, drawings, books, and papers, were scattered in heaps on the floor; and a beautiful musk cat was killed. In the Accountant's office all the desks and drawers were demolished in the search for money; the copying and printing-presses also were destroyed. All the Company's telescopes, barometers, thermometers, and an electrical machine, were broken to pieces. The wearing apparel of the Company's servants was taken out of their rooms. The Governor's own apartment was guarded by a sentinel for a time; but this only served to retard the pillage of it.

On the next day a few clothes, books, and papers, which had been saved from the general wreck, were, by the assistance of the Commodore,

modore, sent into the country, but the greater part of them was again taken away by the different gangs of pillagers, who beset every avenue into the town. All the Company's servants had some time before this period fled into the woods, or taken refuge in the neighbouring towns; except ten or twelve of them, who were collected in the Governor's house, where also several French sailors had quartered themselves, who were tolerably civil, occasionally offering to the gentlemen a share of the pork and fowls which they were dressing. It became now however every hour more and more unpleasant to remain in Freetown, as the soldiery were giving themselves up to every species of excess. They were also shooting all the day long at the stock which was running about, so that it was highly dangerous for any one to walk out; the greater part of the gentlemen therefore dispersed themselves in the course of this and the succeeding day, either in the native towns, or the farm houses of the settlers; three of them taking refuge in the Danish or Deferter's Town, upon the mountains, where they were very kindly treated. All the native children placed at Freetown for education, were received, together with their school-mistress, into a native town about two miles distant, the headman of which very resolutely refused to permit a party of Frenchmen who had straggled thither to enter into it.

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The Governor being unwilling to absent himself while there was a prospect of effecting any thing in behalf of the people, applied for permission to remain on board the Commodore's vessel, and obtained it. He lay in the cabin, where however he was not able to obtain so much as a sheet to throw over him. In his walk this day he met with a number of settlers, who appeared much affected at seeing him.

The French had now made their way in various directions to the farms of the settlers, which they were plundering; one of them being seen in the act of taking away from a settler the bed on which he was used to lie, the Governor tried to dissuade him from it, on which the Frenchman threatened to cut the Governor down; but four officers having come up, the man was led away, and at night he was put in irons.

30th Sept. Mariner, the American, was again very gross in his abuse; he gloried in what had been done, and expressed it to be his heart's desire to wring his hands in the blood of Englishmen; adding that if his influence should prevail, not a hut should be left in the place. The Commodore however was this day prevailed on to allow about five tons of rice, from the Company's store, to be divided among the settlers.

On the 1st October, a man was dispatched to a neighbouring river, in order to collect rice for the Company. On the second, several

of the chief buildings in Freetown, and one or two settlers houses were burnt by the French, and one of the Company's small vessels also. The church was observed this day to have been pillaged, the books torn, and the pulpit and clock broken to pieces. The Commodore had mentioned to the Governor that the church should be saved. The Apothecary's shop, with every medicine in it, was also destroyed. Information was received that the slave factory of Bance Island had been taken, the life of one boy only having been lost.

On the third of October, Mr. Afzelius, the botanist, made application to the Commodore for the recovery of his drawings, and, after bearing much rudeness, he was at last able to obtain part of them. A complaint to the Commodore was this day renewed respecting the conduct of the Americans, who were holding out frequent threats. The inconsistency of Frenchmen leaguings with men whose trade it was to enslave their fellow-creatures, and whose dislike to the Sierra Leone Company arose merely from the hatred of the latter against the same traffic, while France was professing to make war against slavery, and even to liberate all slaves, was strongly urged; upon which the Commodore addressed himself on the subject to Mariner, who endeavoured to evade the charge: the conversation ended in the Commodore's directing the slave captain to take no measures whatever, either against the place or against any individual.

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On the fourth, the Governor made a recapitulation of the several promises which had been held out, and earnestly pressed the fulfilment of them. The Commodore evaded them all, saying in plain terms that he should be in danger of losing his life if he were to comply with them. Such a representation of the distressful state of the colony was made, that at last one barrel of flour, one cask of pork, and one puncheon of brandy, were obtained.

October 6. On this day the conflagration of all the buildings, exempted from the former fire, commenced. The church, a range of shops, and three of the settlers houses near the water side, were destroyed, and also three small vessels, together with all the boats belonging to the Company which could be met with. The Company's schooner, the Thornton, was given to Mariner as a reward for his services, and a quantity of rum, gunpowder, and other goods, were divided between him and Newell.

The Governor, in company with one or two other servants of the Company, this day visited several of the farm houses; they were much gratified both by the warm congratulations of the settlers on their health and safety, and also by observing that there was no appearance of want in these parts; the distant farms in general abounded with provisions, and the rice, which, together with 50 or 60 puncheons of molasses the French had permitted to be
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taken away, afforded to the free blacks a very sufficient present subsistence. The French vessels this day being on their return from Bance Island, passed by Granville town, and fired one shot into it; in consequence of which all the settlers living there fled into the woods, but there was no attempt to land.

7th and 8th Oct. The Governor now fixed himself at Granville Town, from whence he occasionally visited Freetown, and renewed his applications to the Commodore for necessities, obtaining on one of these days a bag of biscuit and about twenty pounds of sugar. He attempted to procure the restitution of a schooner belonging to a native trader, which had come down to Sierra Leone, but in vain, some letters found on board, addressed to the Governor, being thought a sufficient ground for her condemnation. He succeeded however in a nearly similar application for the recovery of a small vessel, belonging to the mulatto trader, spoken of in a former Report as a person eminently friendly to the Company. Some uneasiness was at this time excited in the minds of several Nova Scotians respecting the natives, of whom they appeared now to feel a greater dread than they had felt even of the French themselves. A son of the late king of Sierra Leone, brother of the late J. H. Naimbanna, a young man possessing no weight in the country, took this opportunity of declaiming violently against the Company; remarking among other things

things that the Governor and Council had been guilty of killing his brother, and that this was the time for demanding satisfaction. The detention of two vessels of the Company by the natives, which had happened before the arrival of the French, created suspicion, and a few other smaller circumstances were much spoken of and exaggerated. The Governor succeeded in some measure in allaying the general fears, which appear in the main to have been totally unfounded.

On the 9th of Oct. the Company's largest ship, the Harpy, arrived off Cape Sierra Leone, from England, having several passengers on board, and goods to the amount of about 10,000*l*. The demolition of the Company's houses having been discovered, she put out again to sea, and she appeared for a time to gain on the vessel which was sent in chase of her, but the wind dying away, she was overtaken, and immediately struck. No part of the cargo of this ship was landed in the Colony, nor would the Commodore suffer the dispatches and papers brought by her to be delivered, a few newspapers excepted. The English passengers were completely plundered of their property; the Company's chaplain, who went out in her, was deprived of all his private papers; and three natives, who had been making a voyage to England, lost all the presents which they were carrying back with them, not excepting a part of their clothes, which they were obliged to exchange
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for others of an inferior sort : a plant hatch, sent out by the Harpy, containing many valuable articles of tropical cultivation from his Majesty's collection at Kew, which were thought likely to thrive in Africa, and particularly the bread fruit tree, was destroyed, together with all its contents, though earnest application for the delivery of it was made. An under-gardener of the king, as well as his assistant, to whom the charge of the plant hatch was committed, died soon afterwards of an illness contracted at this period.

It has been already noticed that several of the Company's servants retired on the first arrival of the French squadron, either into the woods or neighbouring towns. Mr. Pepys, the Company's Surveyor, who with his wife and child went out to Sierra Leone by the earliest ship, to whom also the Company stood indebted for some extraordinary exertions in laying out the lots of land during the first unhealthy season, was of the number of those who fled. A rumour was circulated among the blacks, (supposed to be a very unfounded one) which reached his ears, that a price was set on his head : his wife and child, together with a female servant, joined him in the woods, where they obtained necessary food through the kindness of some Nova Scotians ; many of whom had families, which fled thither also. The Governor, in the course of a walk which he took on the fourth day after the arrival of the French, met with Mr. Pepys, and

and urged him to take shelter in some of the towns near the water-side (for he had slept hitherto in the open air), and this advice would have been followed if fresh rumours of some design against the person of Mr. Pepys had not been propagated by the Nova Scotians, which appear to have been too readily believed. He had now multiplied precautions for his safety, and he continued, together with all his family, to pass the night as before, notwithstanding some heavy rains. On the 6th or 7th day after the arrival of the French, Mr. Watt, the Company's manager, found this unhappy party in the woods, oppressed with fever, and some of them nearly exhausted. With great difficulty they were led to the water-side, from whence a boat, which the natives were so good as to supply, transported them to the Bulam shore. Every attention of which the distressed and sickly state of the colony would at this time admit, was there paid to them. Mrs. Pepys, as well as the child and her maid, recovered; Mr. Pepys died.

On the 10th, the Governor returning home to Granville Town, after an unsuccessful application to the Commodore for the delivery of a few letters by the Harpy, found the corpse of Mr. Pepys lying in the town. He learnt that the headman of the Bulam shore had demanded the present of rum which is customary on the occasion of a burial; and as the Company were not in a

condition to grant it, the body was sent back to be interred on the Sierra Leone side.

On the 11th, the Governor heard that it was the intention of the Commodore (who was now supposed to be on the eve of sailing) to leave on shore at Freetown, all the European sailors who had been found on board the various ships which had been captured, amounting in all to near a hundred and twenty. As the Governor was without means of providing for them, he made a very strong remonstrance to the Commodore on the subject, urging him to grant some provisions and medicines and other articles, the want of which was likely to be very generally and severely felt in the Colony. No answer was returned either on this or the succeeding day.

On the 12th, some shew of resistance to the French was made by the settlers in the country. A party who had gone out in quest of booty, were met by the Governor, returning with great precipitation, having been driven back by the Nova Scotians.—This being Sunday, public service was performed at Granville Town by the Company's chaplain, who had recently arrived.

On the 13th of October several French officers brought to the Governor a small stock of provisions, amounting to about two or three weeks supply for the whites in the Colony. This grant was said to be made in consequence of

of the remonstrance sent in two days before ; and it consisted of twelve barrels of flour, two barrels of biscuit, two chests of rice, three barrels of oatmeal, two tierces and a barrel of beef, and a puncheon of brandy. The Governor repaired immediately to the Commodore's ship, in order to thank him for the gift, as well as to urge his compliance with several other demands. The Commodore paid no attention to his solicitation, and he set sail on the same day to the southward, with all his fleet, to which the Harpy was now added.*

On the departure of the French squadron, about a week's allowance of flour and beef was distributed among the sailors who had been left on shore, and almost all the beef was disposed of at the first serving. Several tons of rice, which previous means had been taken to collect, were brought into the settlement ; a few very essential articles were also unexpectedly obtained from the neighbouring slave-factory at Bance Island, which had been able to remove some of its property ; and a small supply of live stock was procured from other quarters. The Governor and Council finding that many Nova Scotians

* The Directors have some reason to suppose that the Commander of this Squadron may not have received any regular commission from the present French Convention ; and that the equipment of it may have been made on the speculation of private individuals (some of them Slave Traders) acting as owners of privateers, and not declaring the particular object of its destination,

had, by the permission of the French, carried off considerable quantities of wood and other articles belonging to the Company, during the general pillage, demanded that a restitution of every thing should now be made, provisions excepted, an allowance of twenty per cent. being at the same time proposed by way of salvage. The Directors are sorry to observe that only a small proportion of the property in question had been brought in, at the time when the last dispatches left the Colony.

A few weeks after the departure of the French squadron, intelligence arrived of their having captured two of the Company's small trading vessels, on their passage down the coast. The crews were immediately put on shore, as were a number of other Europeans, who had navigated several English slave-ships which were also captured. After having been plundered by the natives of that part (who also reduced into fresh captivity six hundred slaves whom the French had liberated), as many of the European captains and sailors as were able to crowd into a few boats of which they got possession, made their way towards Sierra Leone: they were hospitably entertained and assisted, first by a factor connected with the mulatto trader already mentioned, though living at a considerable distance from him, then by an aged and respectable native, the chief person in the river Sherbro, who has been also spoken of in the former Report as
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very friendly to the Company; after which they reached the place of residence of the mulatto trader himself: here again they experienced the utmost civility and attention, and the schooner of the mulatto trader brought them all in good health to Sierra Leone. It may not be improper to remark that this pacific and friendly chief (the same person who was complained of by a slave-factor as being "*too easy*") prevented one of the French ships of war from pursuing and capturing a large loaded vessel from England, belonging to a neighbouring slave-factory, which took refuge in his river.

The Directors think that, while they are mentioning the advantages derived from the mild and friendly dispositions which the Company has cultivated in respect to the chiefs of their own neighbourhood (advantages in which the party of slave-captains of whom they have been speaking, have so happily participated), it may be proper to notice some circumstances in the conduct of other slave traders, tending to shew the unequal measure which is dealt out to the Sierra Leone Company, and the disadvantages under which it is obliged both to carry on its peaceful trade, and to support its beneficial establishment.

One of the two captured ships of the Sierra Leone Company, which were last mentioned, was much distressed, just before her capture, through some little deficiencies in her equipment, and in particular by the want of top-

sails. Application was made to a slave-captain on the coast, who could have conveniently supplied her wants, but he demanded the sum of 100l. as the price of a small anchor, and a no less exorbitant payment for every other necessary; expressly saying that he should make this enormous charge on account of her being a vessel belonging to the Sierra Leone Company.

Another circumstance tending to mark the hostility of the slave-traders, which reached the ears of the Company's servants through the report of prisoners, but which, if not reported by them, would have appeared more than probable, is the following:—It is said that the British slave-factor of the Isles de Los, whose factory was destroyed by the French squadron some-time previous to their arrival at Sierra Leone, might easily have given about two days notice of their approach to the Sierra Leone Government; but that he purposely declined it, having been even heard to mention that he wished the French to destroy the settlement, and that he hoped they would not leave a hut standing in the place. The same slave-factor is stated to have been guilty of the following injustice and inhumanity. Eighteen British sailors, forming part of the crew of a vessel of his, in which he was sailing, were left by him unperceived on the wharf at Freetown, some weeks subsequent to the departure of the French squadron, all of them being sick and in the most miserable condition.

condition. The Governor was not made acquainted with the circumstance until the morning after, when he learnt that one of these unhappy men had died during the night; the others were so weak that they could with difficulty ascend the hill in order to get to a place of shelter.

But to resume the narrative of the events which followed the departure of the French from Sierra Leone:—It appears that in about three weeks afterwards, an almost universal sickness prevailed among the whites; being evidently the consequence, in a great measure, of the exertions made by some, and the miseries endured by others, at that crisis. The difficulty of getting medical attendance, (the physician and both the surgeons being ill, one of the latter of whom died) together with the want of proper food and accommodations, materially aggravated the disorder, which, as in the instance of the first sickly season, was fatal chiefly, and almost exclusively, to the lower Europeans. The destruction of the medicines of the Colony was now most severely felt, as will easily be conceived, when it is observed that the Governor himself, after no very slight fit of fever, appears to have refrained from taking bark, lest he should consume an undue proportion of the small quantity of this article which was left in the Colony. The Directors are much concerned to mention, that out of the 120 sailors first mentioned to have been put on

shore at Sierra Leone by the French, no less than 80 are already reported to have died. It is stated by the Governor that they were never, in any stage of the public distress, in want of at least a regular meal of rice; and the Directors are persuaded that no measures which either prudence or humanity could dictate under the existing circumstances of the Colony, have been neglected, either in respect to these or any other refugees from the slave ships, who have been cast from time to time on the clemency of the Sierra Leone government.

The Directors have the satisfaction of being able to close the distressful history of the period which they have described, by observing that before the date of the last dispatches, the general sickness is said to have in some measure abated; that the most healthy season of the year was approaching; and that a very seasonable supply of articles much wanted in the Colony, though in some respects probably an inadequate one, had just been purchased from the captain of a chartered vessel sent out by the Directors.

The whole pecuniary loss sustained by the Company on this occasion, may be computed at about 40,000*l.* exclusive of the buildings destroyed, of which the cost has been about 15000*l.*; their value however having been much less, the sum likely to be spent in replacing such part of them as will now be thought necessary, will be probably not more than

than 2 or 3000l. About 8000l. or 9000l. have been laid out in permanent improvements, such as the construction of works of defence, making roads, a landing place, a wharf, and the allotment and cultivation of lands. The whole property of the Company now remaining, exclusive of the 8000l. or 9000l. dead stock last mentioned, is computed by the Directors, on a rough calculation, at about 85,000l.

The Governor and Council state, in abatement of the calamity of which they give the account, that some good effects may be considered as resulting from it: they observe that the late events have opened the eyes of the Nova Scotians to their own folly, in having contended for the ground nearest to the water side, and in having so much neglected the cultivation of the more distant and mountainous parts; they even remark that the improvement about to take place in the mountains during the ensuing dry season, seems likely to be as great and important as the detriment which has been recently done to the town. A very favourable opportunity is said to be thus afforded of dismissing from the Company's service a number of Nova Scotians, whom the Governor and Council had been long endeavouring in vain to fix on their farms. The experience which has now been had of the internal resources of the Colony, is also mentioned as a circumstance extremely consolatory and important:

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the settlement has been left, for the space of many weeks, destitute of almost every article from Europe; a great proportion of the live stock which had begun to abound in it has been also killed, and the Company's boats and shipping destroyed; and yet no want of necessary food has been felt, nor has the calamity been followed by any other evils than those which have been described. The plan of building on which the Governor and Council mention that they shall proceed, is merely that of erecting one considerable store, a large dwelling-house and a church, all of country materials; the last of which was already so far advanced that public service was to be performed in it on the Sunday after the date of the dispatches: some measures were also taken for the erection of a building on the Bulam side of the river, for the sake of additional security.

On the arrival of the body of intelligence which has just been stated to the Court, the Directors lost no time in dispatching two small vessels to the settlement; each carrying an assortment of necessaries for its consumption. They were also able to embark a few material articles on board the Amy (the only large ship now remaining to the Company), which happened to be detained at Plymouth, and which had already in her a small quantity of goods for trade: a few persons engaged in the Company's service (the number of

of whom on receipt of the above intelligence was reduced) are gone out as passengers by this vessel ; and among those who have set sail is Mr. Dawes, who had returned to England, having been two years Governor of the Colony. He had been induced by the state of his health, and the circumstances of his family, to think of retiring from the Company's service ; but when some information alluded to in a former Report, of a tumult having happened in the Colony, arrived in England, his zeal in the cause of the Sierra Leone Company led him again to offer his services. The more recent and serious calamity which has since happened, and the indisposition of the acting Governor, Mr. Macaulay, seemed to render Mr. Dawes's presence so desirable, that the Directors thought they should not do justice to the undertaking, if they were not to avail themselves of the offer made by this gentleman at so extraordinary a crisis.

The Directors propose to reduce within very narrow limits, the whole amount of the risk which the Company is in the time to come likely to incur in Africa ; and they also hope to see a considerable reduction effected in the general expenses of their establishment. The saving to be expected from the removal of many settlers to their farms has been already stated ; the contraction of the Company's trade will of course be accompanied by a corresponding abatement of the commercial

mercial charges. The diminution which has taken place in the shipping of the Company will also materially lessen one chief source of expense. In consequence of the recent losses, only one small vessel has been purchased, the intended plan of trade not appearing to require any further additions, and the Colony being no longer under the necessity of having those frequent supplies carried to it, which were at first essential to its existence.

The Directors think it proper in this place to repeat an opinion which was strongly stated in their former Report, that however prosperous the situation of the Nova Scotia colonists may become, the great ends of the institution of the Sierra Leone Company are not likely to be accomplished, unless the settlers shall continue to be furnished with instructors from hence, and with a government consisting of Europeans. The untoward disposition which too many of them have shewn, though it may be thought to make them less worthy of assistance, proves however, but too plainly, the importance of bestowing on them an intelligent and protecting government, and the means of instruction also; and it should be remembered that not less than 300 of their children, besides those of the natives, are at this time under the care of the Company. When the influence which the Sierra Leone Government has obtained over many powerful and respectable

respectable chiefs, of whose attachment several fresh proofs have been given on the late trying occasion, and when the important uses to which that influence may soon perhaps be turned are contemplated ; and when the Company's progress in respect to the interior of Africa, and all the other opening prospects of Civilization which have been stated in the former Report, are brought to recollection, the Directors are persuaded that the Proprietors will feel the same general impression which they have manifested before, and that the great body of them both in the metropolis and in the different parts of the country, will receive satisfaction in hearing that no events which have yet happened at Sierra Leone, have in any degree shaken the resolution of the Directors to prosecute the great cause which has been committed into their hands, with the same zeal with which they first entered upon it.

The Slave Trade, which notwithstanding the war had in some measure revived, is said to have received a considerable blow from the French Squadron ; the whole of the property already known to be captured and destroyed by it being supposed to amount to about 400,000*l.* of which much the greater part was engaged in that pernicious traffic : some commercial advantages, as well as opportunities of increasing the Company's influence, may possibly be the consequence of this

this destruction of European property on the neighbouring coast.

The Directors cannot forbear repeating in this Report, that they trust both for the honor of Great Britain and the cause of humanity, as well as the interests of the Sierra Leone Company, that the æra of the termination of the Trade in Slaves is approaching; and they reflect with satisfaction that the maintenance of an establishment already formed in the most convenient spot in Africa, with the direct view of promoting Real Commerce, and aiding the natural progress of Civilization, may prove hereafter material, not only as it respects the Proprietors of the Sierra Leone Company, but as a matter of national policy.

The Directors have thus stated the grounds on which they are encouraged to persevere; they shall endeavour to contract both the risk of the Company and its expenses, on the principles which have been spoken of, at the same time pursuing their main object, in such a manner as neither to relinquish the commercial advantages of which they have got possession, nor so as to suspend in any degree the measures which are necessary to promote the regular and uninterrupted progress of civilization.

The Report, of which the above is the substance, having been read, the General Court unanimously resolved :

“ That the Thanks of this Court be given
“ to the Court of Directors for the assiduity
“ with which they have continued to manage
“ the affairs of the Company ; and that this
“ Court do concur with the opinion of the
“ Court of Directors, that the laudable pur-
“ poses of this Institution should be pursued.”

It was then resolved,

“ That the substance of the Report just
“ read to the Court, with such alterations as
“ the Court of Directors may think proper
“ to make therein, be printed for the use of
“ the Proprietors.”

The Report of which the above is the
substance, having been read, the General
Court unanimously resolved:

"That the Thanks of this Court be given
to the Court of Directors for the assiduity
with which they have continued to manage
the affairs of the Company; and that this
Court do consent with the opinion of the
Court of Directors, that the said Report
of this Institution should be printed."

It was then resolved

"That the substance of the Report be
read to the Court, with such alterations as
the Court of Directors may think proper
to make therein, be printed for the use of
the Proprietors."







