

A description of the island of Anno-Bona : shewing its eligibility and importance as an occasional place of resort for our Guinea-men, East-Indiamen, Botany-Bay-men, and ships carrying passengers to the Cape of Good Hope : also, as a naval and military station, to foster and protect our increasing commerce to the western coast of Africa : with a map and fine views of the island, and an appendix, containing a letter addressed to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P. on the causes and prevention of sickness and mortality among seamen employed in the African trade / by Elliot Arthy.

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A DESCRIPTION
OF THE
Island of Anno-Bona;
SHEWING
ITS ELIGIBILITY AND IMPORTANCE AS AN OCCASIONAL
PLACE OF RESORT
FOR OUR
Guinea-men, East-Indiamen, Botany-Bay-men,
AND
SHIPS CARRYING PASSENGERS
TO THE
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE;
ALSO,
AS A NAVAL AND MILITARY STATION,
To foster and protect our increasing Commerce
TO THE
Western Coast of Africa.

WITH A MAP AND FINE VIEWS OF THE ISLAND;
AND

AN APPENDIX:

Containing a Letter addressed to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.

ON THE
Causes and Prevention of Sickness and Mortality among
Seamen employed in the African Trade.

BY ELLIOT ARTHY, SURGEON,
AUTHOR OF THE SEAMEN'S MEDICAL ADVOCATE;

And many Years a Surgeon, Supercargo, and Commander in the
Service of African Merchants.

ENTERED AT STATIONER'S HALL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY CARPENTER AND SON, ALDGATE
HIGH-STREET; AND SOLD BY J. RICHARDSON, ROYAL-
EXCHANGE, AND J. GORE, CASTLE
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1820.

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Containing a Letter addressed to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.

OF THE

Causes and Prevention of Slavery and Slave-trade

Ships employed in the African Trade.

BY

BY ELLIOT ARTHUR, Surgeon.

OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL SOCIETY.

And now first a second edition, and corrected in the
style of the second edition.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY GARRISON AND SON, ALBANY

ROAD, LONDON, AND SOLD BY A. HARRISON, 21, 22

MARK LANE, AND A. HARRISON, 21, 22

MARK LANE, LONDON.

1847.

DEDICATION.

To the Right Honorable Earl Bathurst,

Secretary of State, Colonial Department, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

AS the Guardian of our Colonial Establishments, and as a Member of the Commercial Council of the Nation, I entertain a hope that your Lordship will pardon my presumption in having inscribed to your Lordship an Essay, which has for its objects, the safe and comfortable conveyance of our numerous Colonists across the perilous seas, and the increase, accommodation and protection of our commerce ; by means of which, we have been enabled to create and to maintain a naval power, superior to that of all other nations : a power to which, under Almighty God, we are indebted for our national independence, and the now peaceable enjoyment of our lands, our laws, and our religion.

Conscious that it does not become an obscure individual to enter into any eulogium on your

Lordship's talents, zeal, and activity, in the high Offices of the State, which you are appointed to fill; not even if your Lordship's efforts were otherwise than conspicuous in the growing prosperity of our colonies and commerce; I have omitted the usual compliments of a dedicatory address, in the presumption, that your Lordship will be better pleased with my humble endeavours to make myself useful by the composition of the following pages, and that my labours will give me a better claim to the honor of subscribing myself

Your Lordship's,

Very respectful

And faithful humble Servant,

ELLIOT ARTHY.

36, FORE STREET, CRIPPLEGATE,

London, January, 1820.

DESCRIPTION
OF THE
ISLAND OF ANNO-BONA.

THE political repose of Europe having rendered it necessary for our government to prohibit all merchant ships from visiting the Island of St. Helena, and to hold it for the exclusive purpose of imprisoning the most daring and ambitious captain of the present day, an experienced African Navigator presumes to suppose that he may render himself in some degree useful to his country, by directing the attention of British Statesmen and Merchants to the little known and seldom visited Island of Anno-Bona, and pointing out its several advantages as a place of resort and protection to both our East-Indian and African Navigators.

The great length of the passages of our East-India and Botany-Bay Ships, out and home, requires that they should still have some convenient place to call at on their way to and fro, for a supply of water and refreshments, and for assistance in casual distress. Our homeward-bound Guinea-men, from all parts of the coast situated to the south-east of Cape Palmas, also require a like place of resort; and, in time of war, they often want a place of refuge from an enemy, and of rendezvous for convoy. And, what is of no less importance, as we have just commenced, and seem likely to proceed in, a very extensive field of agriculture and colonization at the Cape of Good Hope, so the ships which are now employed, and likely to be increasingly employed, in the conveyance of numerous passengers, as well as merchandise, to and from that settlement, should likewise have a midway place of resort for a supply of water and fresh provisions, otherwise, great will oftentimes be the sufferings of our adventurous emigrants and valuable seamen. All these benefits to our East-Indian, African, and other Merchant Ships may, it is presumed, be found combined in the Island of Anno-Bona; and, while the little Island of St. Helena is rising in political renown, but of forbidden approach, the obscure spot, which is here attempted to be brought into notice, may become

of superior importance to the British Nation, utility to her merchants, and accommodation to her emigrating subjects and way-worn mariners.

The Island of ANNO-BONA was first discovered by Portuguese Navigators, and so named by them from being descried on a new-year's day. It is situated in south latitude $1^{\circ} 25'$, and in east longitude $5^{\circ} 52'$, at the distance of about 200 miles west from Cape Lopez, on the western coast of Africa. The central land of Anno-Bona is so very high, that it may be seen, in clear weather, at the distance of 10 or 12 leagues; and its shores may be approached with safety in any direction, so near as a mile. Its base, where it emerges from the sea, is about 30 miles in circumference; from which, the land rises in varied and picturesque forms to a considerable elevation, in the central parts of the island; nearly the whole of which, is covered with orange and lime trees, and on the summit of the sugar-loaf mountain there is a pond of fresh water. The anchoring place is on the north-east side of the island, where there is a town near to the shore, defended by a small intrenchment of stones; abreast of which, and about half or three quarters of a mile from the beach, there is from ten to fifteen fathoms water, good sandy holding ground, very smooth

riding, and a convenient landing place. Off the south-east point of the island, and at a good distance from the shore, is a small island or rock, in the form of a sugar-loaf; between which and the land there is a good passage for ships; and near the shore, approaching the anchoring-place, are seen seven rocks above water, which should be carefully avoided, as also, a sand bank to the northward of the town. On the south-east side of the island there is good fresh water, which runs down the mountain through a valley of orange trees; but the watering is rendered somewhat difficult by stones and breakers. For the purpose of illustrating this description, and further instructing the navigator, the author has annexed a map of the island, and three views of it, at different bearings and distances.

The wind, about the island, blows with a moderate force, and little variation, from the south and south-west quarter, throughout the year; so that as ships lie there, under shelter of the land, they ride at anchor exceedingly easy and safe, and the navigator has little or no danger to apprehend from wind and weather, excepting about the months of March and September, when tornadoes, or strong gusts of winds from the eastward, prevail at times over the general sea breeze, and blow direct into the anchorage, but

fortunately, the previous gloominess of the horizon to the eastward, and the heavy thunder and lightning by which they are preceded, always give timely notice to those who have not the ground tackling requisite for riding them out, to get under sail, and withstand their fury in the offing.

In point of salubrity to European visitants and settlers, that island could scarcely fail of proving greatly superior to any of our settlements on the western coast of Africa, and much better suited to the constitution of Europeans than the climate of even any other African Island, situated within the tropics, and at a shorter distance from the continent. It is situated far out of the reach of those pestilential vapours and excessive heavy dews and rains which are so prevalent, and so fatal to Europeans, on the coast of the continent; and it does not contain any marshy land, nor stagnant waters, within its shores. All these favourable circumstances considered, there is much reason to believe that it would be found the montpellier of the western coast of Africa.

The island produces plenty of wood, suitable for firing, and is well supplied with pure fresh water, which flows into the sea, at a short distance from the anchorage, to the south-east; and ships may soon procure a supply, either by

means of their own boats and people, or by employing the canoes of the natives. It also produces plenty of refreshments, and very cheap; there are cows, sheep, goats, fowls, and many hogs; together with sugar canes, plantains, bananas, pine apples, cocoa nuts, pomegranates, oranges, limes, tamarinds, yams, and cassada. But oranges are the fruit with which the island most abounds; the quantity of them is incredible, and they are produced all the year round; they are full of juice, of an exquisite flavour, and of the largest size, many of them weighing above three quarters of a pound. A little cotton, likewise grows on the island, which is sent to Portugal. By properly encourageing the natives, they would, doubtless, be very soon brought to supply any quantity of those and other refreshments that our ships might need; and should any thing else be required, such as bullocks, rice, indian corn, calavances, and yams, or even ship-timber and lumber, the island could be readily and abundantly stocked from the neighbouring continent.

There are about one thousand inhabitants on the island, who are a mixture of Portuguese and African Negroes; the latter people are said to be the descendants of a cargo of African Negro Slaves, that were shipwrecked there on their passage to Brazil. They are, on the whole, a stout, hardy, active, and half-civilized people;

and were they favored with a British Governor, by the introduction of a few useful arts and profitable employments, and with an able minister of the gospel, they would, doubtless, soon become very industrious, useful, and orderly subjects. Even in their present state of degradation and wretchedness, they will be found extremely useful to ships touching there; for, besides fetching them wood and water, should any ship be in distress, through sickness and mortality of her crew, assistance from these people may be obtained on very reasonable terms; and many of them are not only tolerably good seamen, but also capable of great improvement in that capacity: this has, indeed, been often experienced by our Guinea-men.

To those commanders who have visited Anno-Bona, or been in the practice of trading to the coast of Africa, no instructions are here required for their government at that island; but, it may be necessary to acquaint others, who are strangers there, that under the present circumstances of the inhabitants, they do not require money for any of the refreshments or necessaries they can supply, nor are there any established customs payable to them for anchorage or water. Seamen's cloathing, coarse woollen and cotton cloths, pocket handkerchiefs, hats and worsted caps, hardware and earthenware, gunpowder,

sprits, leaf tobacco, and pipes, also, salt, and even any sorts of old cloaths, are much more acceptable to them than either gold or silver; and an assortment of these articles, to the amount of five or ten pounds, will be sufficient, with good humour, ingenuity, and dexterous management, to purchase as much live stock, poultry, fruit, and vegetables, as any of our ships might need. Though there is no duty claimed there for anchorage or water, it is customary, however, to make a present to the governor, of a few of the above-mentioned articles, as also to the priest, and him that acts as linguist or trade-man.

It may be necessary to state, that the Island of Anno-Bona has been found rather difficult to gain, when sailing to it from the northward, owing, it is presumed, to the strong currents which often set to the westward, and at other times to the eastward, within the track from the Cape de Verd Islands: these obstacles, would, however, be easily surmounted by our East-India, Botany-Bay and Cape Navigators, who are so well versed in the art of ascertaining longitude by lunar observations. It may, also, be useful to acquaint the African Ship Masters, that in consequence of Dalzel's sailing directions for the Western Coast of Africa being out of print, a selection has been made of the most useful parts of the work, and inserted into

Purdy's Atlantic Memoir; which is published by Mr. Richard Holmes Laurie, Chartseller to the Admiralty, &c. &c. No. 58, Fleet Street, London, and who has favoured the author with much information relative to Anno-Bona.

Ships calling at that island, on their way to the East-Indies, Botany-Bay, or the Cape of Good Hope, would get into the south-east trade wind, in the course of two or three days after taking their departure from it; and, as in that track, they would pass about one thousand miles to the eastward of the longitude, in which those ships now generally cross the latitude of Anno-Bona, outward-bound, they would save nearly double that distance, as well as considerable time, in crossing the Southern Ocean towards the Cape of Good Hope. In short, Anno-Bona may be considered as both a necessary midway place of resort for a supply of water and refreshments, and as a much shorter track to and from the Cape of Good Hope, than that which is now generally pursued by those navigators. And, further, ships homeward-bound from the Cape, or elsewhere, that might be in distress, or in want of water and other necessaries, after getting into the south-east trade wind, might reach Anno-Bona in the course of ten or twelve days, with a fair wind.

Having shown the eligibility and importance of the Island of Anno-Bona, as an occasional place of resort for our Guinea-Men, East-India-Men, Botany-Bay-Men, and Ships carrying passengers to the Cape of Good Hope, it comes next in order to shew its eligibility and still greater importance, as a naval and military station to foster and protect our increasing commerce to the western coast of Africa.

Since the abolition of our African negro slave trade, our commerce, in all the mercantile productions of the western coast of Africa, has very much extended. In gold, ivory and palm oil only, it has increased nearly four-fold; and in some instances more; and, under certain circumstances and encouragements, which will be stated in a subsequent essay, it would continue to increase, to an extent infinitely beyond the expectations of those, who are unacquainted with the great mercantile resources of that country.

This increasing and important branch of our commerce may, at some future period, again require the protection of our navy, and also become liable to suffer very material injury from the cruisers of enemies, as it did during the late war. In such case, our trading ships would occasionally require some place of refuge from an enemy, and of rendezvous for the benefit of

convoy. At present, however, we have not, along the whole coast, from Sierra Leone down to Ambris, which is 2500 miles in extent, coast-wise, any one fort or settlement capable of affording such protection, or convenient for such accommodation to our African traders.

No reflection is here meant on the military appointments of our forts, which are situated on the gold coast, and at present under the management of the African Committee. The inadequacy of those fortifications to protect our merchant ships arises, it is presumed, from natural causes, which are altogether insurmountable, and of which the principal ones are the great swell of the sea, and the unsafe anchorage at the short distance necessary to receive the benefit of their protection. The blame, therefore, if there is any, is imputable to the founders of them, and not to their present managers and governors.

Our homeward-bound ships from all parts of the Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, and the Coast of Angola, are at present under the necessity of resorting to the Portuguese Islands of Prince's and St. Thomas', in the Gulf of Guinea, whenever they are in want of water and refreshments, or have any remains of their outward cargoes to dispose of,

They have no other places of refuge when in distress, or in dread of an enemy ; and during the late war, they had no other places of rendezvous for the benefit of convoy. These islands are, at times, very difficult to gain, through squally weather and strong adverse currents ; and the climate of those Islands has occasionally proved as injurious to the health of our seamen as that of the African Coast. At these islands our ships are required to pay eighty-four ackies, or the sum of twenty-one pounds sterling, for custom-house and harbour dues, and a farther duty of ten per cent, on all the goods that are landed ; and, occasionally, British-merchantmen have been condemned there, and as it is rumoured, very unsatisfactory accounts given of the sale of them. Surely, the sale of condemned ships would be more fairly conducted, and it would not be required to levy such enormous customs and duties, in a convenient settlement of our own.

The island of Anno-Bona is placed at the south-west extremity of the Gulf of Guinea, in which is situated, at the distance of 360 miles north north-east from Anno-Bona, the River of Bonny ; and at the distance of 300 miles east south-east from Anno-Bona, lies Majumba, on the coast of Angola. From Bonny to Majumba, the extent of coast does not exceed 600 miles ;

but in the several rivers and places of trade within this limit, we have a more extensive trade, and which produces more revenue to Great Britain than the trade of all the other parts of the Coast of Africa, from the Gambia to the Congo; and it is there only, that the vast increase of our commerce in the productions of Africa, alluded to in a preceding page, is to be looked for.

The winds and currents which prevail throughout the year about this great center of our African Trade, unavoidably causes our ships that trade within its circle to pass very near to, and at times even in sight of the Island of Anno-Bona, on their return home: the like causes also bring to nearly the same focus our homeward-bound ships from all parts of the Bight of Benin, and of the Gold Coast, as far distant as even Cape Palmas; and Anno-Bona lies in the direct way home of all our trading ships from the Coast of Angola, as far to the southward as Ambris. The rainy season of the year likewise renders it necessary for them all to take their departure from those coasts at nearly the same period.

On the whole of this statement, it is clearly apparent, that our trading ships from all parts of the coast situated between Cape Palmas and Ambris, which comprizes an extent of coast of nearly 2000 miles, might, with great facility

and conveniency, occasionally assemble at Anno-Bona, for the benefit of convoy home, and take refuge there when either in distress, or in danger of capture by the cruizers of enemies, as well as resort there to dispose of the remains of their outward cargoes and procure a supply of water and live stock. And the author further conceives, that were a minute survey of Anno-Bona to be taken, no natural obstacles to the erection of suitable fortifications, and wharfs for repairing ships and landing cargoes, would be found, but what British industry, energy, and skill, might soon surmount.

Should any person then be disposed to doubt the eligibility of the place, and the practicability of our accomplishing the necessary works, let him peruse the under account of the many and great obstacles which the Russians surmounted in the founding and building of the now great and flourishing maritime city of Petersburg;* and,

* "The Swedes beheld, without apprehension, a settlement in the midst of a morass, and inaccessible to vessels of burthen; but, in a very short time, they saw the fortifications advanced, a town raised, and the little island of Cronstadt, situated over against it, changed, in 1704, into an impregnable fortress, under the cannon of which even the largest fleets may ride in safety. These works, which seemed to require a time of profound peace, were carried on in the very bosom of war; workmen of every sort were called together, from Moscow, Astracan, Casan, and the Ukraine, to assist in building the new city. Neither the difficulties of the ground, that was to be rendered firm, and raised, the distance of the necessary materials, the unforeseen obstacles, which are for ever starting up in all great undertakings; nor, lastly, the epidemical disorder, which carried off a prodigious number of the workmen, could discourage the royal founder, and, in the space of five months, a new city rose from the ground."—See SMOLLETT'S translation of VOLTAIRE'S History of Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia.

then, I would ask him, whether the accommodation and protection of our commerce, does not require, at the least, equal pains, industry, and perseverance on our part.

For the purposes which have been stated, Anno-Bona might eventually prove a valuable acquisition to the British Nation, and even to our East-India Company, or to a British African Company, should such a desirable an association of merchants ever be formed. The island is claimed by the Portuguese Nation, but is of little or no use to them, as they are in possession of the Islands of Prince's and St. Thomas, in the Gulf of Guinea, which seem to answer all their purposes of trading to the neighbouring continent; so that the surrender of the island in question, to our government, might probably be accomplished with little trouble and cost, at this joyful period of universal peace.

Should it happen to accord with the views and wisdom of our Government to found a settlement at Anno-Bona, the nation would, eventually, have great reason to rejoice in the increase of her commerce, revenue and naval power, which would result from the good protection thus given to her African ships;—our merchants, ship-owners and underwriters, would also be greatly benefited, and pleased by the protection

so afforded to their adventures ;—our emigrating fellow-subjects, and our seamen, would be cheered in the refuge, assistance and refreshments it would impart to them ;—and it would yield the means of subsistence in divers occupations, to many British Subjects, who, through dearth of employment might be languishing in obscurity and want, and probably contemplating their flight to some rival nation ;—nor, would the forlorn-inhabitants of the island have less reason than any others to rejoice in the settlement of civilized and Christian Britons on their shores.

By the “ Report from the Select Committee on Papers relating to the African Forts, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, the 26th of June, 1816,” and lately perused by the Author, he is led to suppose that our Legislators are instituting enquiries and collecting information relative to Africa, with a view to some great national undertaking in that quarter of the world ; and as a sincere well-wisher to both his country and Africa, he is hopeful and desirous that the little settlement, which his experience, observation and pen, have enabled him here to point out, may be their first step towards benefiting our African friends and commerce.

APPENDIX;

Containing a Letter addressed to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.

ON THE
CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF SICKNESS AND MORTALITY
AMONG
Seamen employed in the African Trade.



TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq. M.P.

RESPECTED SIR,

AS a small step towards meriting the favors which I have lately solicited from you,* and convincing you of my zeal in the cause of humanity, and justice, towards our brave and invaluable seamen, in particular, I have now taken up my pen to direct your attention to some defects and abuses in the Medical Department of our African Trade, which I do humbly conceive to require legislative correction.

Our trade to the western coast of Africa, now employs, annually, about twenty sail of vessels, of from 100 to 400 tons burthen, and navigated

* See the private letter which I addressed to you on the 4th of December, 1819.

with from fifteen to thirty men each. This trade, may be considered, at present, as merely in its infancy, and as likely to become, at some future period, of considerable magnitude and importance to the nation ; so that, as we experience the happy results of training up children in the way they should go, in like manner, we shall find the beneficial effects of an early correction of those defects and abuses, which a mistaken policy and inordinate pursuit of gain, have been the means of introducing into the medical department of this branch of our commerce.

From what I have observed, and what has been communicated to me on the subject, I am strongly disposed to believe, that were our African Ships Muster Rolls to be inspected, say for the last year only, the mortality amongst our seamen employed in that trade would be found to be, proportionably, as great as it was before the passing of the Slave Trade Carrying Act in the Year 1799. This mortality, if not timely prevented, will become, as the trade increases, a great national evil, as well as the source of much unhappiness to individuals ; and, will be found to be occasioned, in a great measure, by the like causes as in former times, namely, by the seamen not having proper medical assistance, and by their being unnecessarily employed on duties prejudicial to health.

Our African Ships may be divided into two classes, of nearly equal number ; namely, those which trade mostly in rivers, and are of the larger burthen, and, those which trade chiefly on the open coast, and are of the smaller burthen. The first class of vessels being, for the most part, required to lay five or six months, and often a much longer time, in the unwholesome rivers of Africa, wherein fevers and dysenterys are more prevalent and violent, than on the open coast, do mostly carry surgeons ; but, unfortunately, as the appointments are now made, they have more of a tendency to please the fancy and quiet the consciences of the merchants and captains, than to materially benefit the seamen. Not being compelled by law, to take well educated, examined and approved surgeons, who would be thought to require extravagant wages, and too tenacious of doing any more than their particular duty : they generally give the preference to inexperienced youths, and mere pretenders, whom they can hire on more reasonable terms, and more easily train to employ themselves in occupations unconnected with their duty to the sick. Since the druggists have become apothecaries, and medical advisers, many young men have had the boldness to engage themselves as surgeons on board of African Ships, after only two or three years servitude behind a druggist's counter ; of this, I can bring proof if required, and do consider

that I have much reason to complain, as they have repeatedly stood in my way, and prevented me from being employed, although my experience and successful practice as a surgeon in that service has long been generally known and acknowledged.

Most of the larger class of ships trade to Old Calebar for palm oil, where the surgeons are required to attend daily on shore to select the palm oil and assist in the purchase of it. This extra service, prevents them, in a great measure, from attending to their duty to the sick ; and, withal, exposes them so much to the pestilential influence of the climate, and other causes of sickness, that few of them escape attacks of the endemical fever, or dysentery, of which many of them die ; whereby the seamen are deprived of the benefits of their professional assistance, and many of them, also, die in consequence. On examination of the Calebar Ships Muster Rolls, for the last five or six years, it will be found, that a certain Liverpool captain, has buried his surgeon on four successive voyages, which could scarcely have happened, if they had not been employed in services prejudicial to their health on shore ; besides, which, instances will be found, of one-half, and even the whole of a ship's crew having died on a Calebar voyage.

None of the second, or smaller class of vessels, carry a surgeon, although their crews are frequently subjected to a great deal of sickness, and of consequent mortality, through being unnecessarily employed on services prejudicial to their health, particularly during the rainy or sickly season of the year, on the coast of Africa. These services are landing and shipping goods in open boats, fetching wood and water, and waiting at late hours after sunset to take the captains from the shore on board their ships; and, they are required of the seamen, more or less, on board of every ship, whether large or small, employed in the trade, to the great prejudice of our brave and invaluable seamen's health, and the maintaining of a constant succession of sickness and mortality on board the ships, while on the coast.

While on the subject of the sufferings of our seamen in this trade, it is necessary to observe further, that in the way the trade has hitherto been carried on, it has proved generally unprofitable to the merchants engaged in it; which has necessarily disposed them to the observance of a rigid economy in the out-fit of their ships. In the victualling department, particularly, their economy has been carried, in many instances, to an extreme; bordering on injustice

towards the seamen, who toil through the day and night in their service, and which is more particularly and severely felt when the voyages happen to turn out unexpectedly long.

There is, also, such a driving at profit in the trade, that the ships are generally so much overstowed with goods, both outward and homeward-bound, as not to leave sufficient space under the decks, for the accommodation of their crews. And, there is such strict attention required of the seamen to the duties of the ship, as does not leave them sufficient leisure for washing their berths and cloaths, and other acts of cleanliness necessary to their health and recovery from sickness. They are not allowed proper attendance and indulgence when labouring under diseases, or in a state of convalescence; neither are they allowed such diet as is necessary for sick and convalescent people. All these circumstances tend to aggravate their diseases, to protract their recovery, and subject them to frequent and fatal relapses.

So long as the trade continues to be carried on in the Bight of Biafra, and many other parts of the coast, without the intervention of forts and factories, and the ships are under the consequent necessity of continuing five or six months, and often a much longer time, on that pestilential

coast, going from place to place, and from river to river, collecting their cargoes, the seamen will be inevitably liable to a great deal of sickness, independently of their being unnecessarily employed on duties prejudicial to their health.

On these considerations alone, it is surely just, humane, and national policy to provide good medical assistance and attendance on the sick, which may be effectually done by prohibiting ships carrying twenty men and upwards, from going into the trade without taking a surgeon who has been examined and approved of by the royal colleges of physicians and surgeons of London, Edinburgh, or Dublin, or else by the physicians and surgeons of the public hospitals in the out ports to which the ships belong; and, further, by prohibiting the employment of the surgeons on duties prejudicial to their health, or on services interruptive of their duty to the sick, either on ship board or on shore.

There is oftentimes a great lack of physic, as well as of food, on these voyages; which may be provided against, by requiring the surgeons to declare upon oath, before the collector, or the comptroller, of the customs, at the ship's clearance outwards, that they are furnished with the requisite quantity of medicines, instruments, and

all other necessities in their department, for such voyage. And, in order to stimulate them to be diligent in their profession, and as a means of improving medical science, they should, also, be required to keep a regular journal of all transactions and remarkable occurrences relative to the health, sickness and death of any of the crew, throughout the voyage; and to deliver the same on oath, to the collector, or the comptroller, of the customs, on the ship's return home; or, in case of default therein, neither themselves nor the ship to be allowed a clearance for any future voyage in the trade.

It might, perhaps, be thought too arbitrary, or too discourageing to the trade, to compel ships carrying less than twenty men, to take a surgeon; but, it would be neither unjust nor detrimental to the merchants, to prohibit the unnecessary employment of seamen on duties prejudicial to their health: on the contrary, as an old African trader, I aver, that on all parts of the coast, from Cape Verde to Cape Negro, there are multitudes of able and willing natives to be hired and victualled at the rate of not more than twenty shillings per month, who would perform all the boating service of our ships, more orderly and promptly than our seamen, particularly under the direction of a patron.

By thus employing the natives in the boating service of every ship in the trade, the health and lives of a great many of our seamen would be preserved ; and, if every ship was further required to employ a proportion of one or two of the natives for each hundred tons of their burthen, as a part of their crews throughout the voyage, they would be found extremely serviceable in stowing the ship's holds, and other laborious duties ; they would also soon become very useful as seamen, and in the course of a few years there would be a multitude of them trained up to assist ships that might be in distress through sickness and mortality of their white men, and for carrying on the extensive coasting trade, which is likely in no very distant period, to spring up in western Africa ; and, moreover, such an extensive association with Europeans, would be a great means of civilizing the natives along the whole of that coast.

For the further preservation of the seamen's health, and for their proper accommodation in health as well as in sickness, it is absolutely necessary to enforce the reservation of a sufficient space between decks, or under the half-deck, or the forecastle, according as the ship is constructed, for at least one-half of the crew to sleep in ; and which ever of these places may be allotted to them, it should be frequently washed clean, well dried

with a fire, and fumigated, and, likewise occasionally lime-whited, after the manner required on board our ships carrying large compliments of emigrants. Their hammocks should be scrubbed clean, and well dried, at least once a month; and their chests, clothes, and bedding, should be got above deck, to be ventilated and sweetened by the action of the sun and wind, every week, in favorable weather. There should be a good canvas awning provided for the main-deck, for the purpose of sheltering them from the intense heat of the sun, and the excessive heavy periodical rains which fall in that country; and to screen them from the pestilential dews and vapours which prevail during the night on the sea coast, and in the more insalubrious rivers of western Africa. Under such an awning, the ship's spars might be so disposed, as to suspend the greater part of the seamen's hammocks; where both the sick and well would sleep more conveniently and comfortably, and with less detriment to their health, while on the coast, than in the heated and noxious air between decks.

When any of the seamen are taken sick, and more particularly when many of them are indisposed at the same time, one of their shipmates should be appointed to do all that may be needful for them in their helpless state; such as, preparing their meat and drink, and washing their

cloaths. Instead of the ordinary provisions of the ship's company, which are both unpalatable and improper for sick people, they should be dieted morning, noon, and evening from the cabin table, and allowed a requisite quantity of wine daily. This indulgence, if it can be called so, considering how little a sick man can eat, would be no more cost, than their usual provisions when in a state of health, and, fortunately, there are few parts of the coast, at which our ships trade, that do not afford a sufficiency of live stock, poultry, fruit, and vegetables, to support the lives and restore the strength of sick and convalescent seamen. At the Island of Anno-Bona, in the Bight of Biafra; at Popoe and Quittah, in the Bight of Benin; at the Isles de Loss, on the windward coast; and at the Island of Goree, near Cape Verde; in particular, fresh provisions and refreshments of all kinds, are very plentiful and cheap; and, in cases of emergency, or when a ship is leaving the coast with a great many sick and convalescent people on board, the commanders should be instructed by their owners, to call at, or send their boats to, the most convenient places, for such refreshments and supplies as may be wanted.

Seamen that have recently recovered from a violent illness, and those who are in a state of convalescence, should not be required to do any

laborious duties, more especially in the ship's hold, or exposed to the sun's mid-day heat, nor to keep watch during the night; as the too early requisition of such services, will retard their restoration to a confirmed state of health and strength, and occasion relapses, which frequently terminate fatally, or in a state of irrecoverable weakness during the remainder of the voyage. There are many light and easy jobs necessary to be done on board of a ship, such as mending sails, knotting yarns, and making sinnet, in which weakly men may be employed, under an awning, without any hindrance to the re-establishment of their health and strength; on the contrary, those employments would serve to amuse them, and gradually train them up for the performance of the more laborious duties of the ship.

Lastly, I proceed to notice what may be considered as a proper and sufficient allowance of provisions for seamen when in health, and here, I am led to observe, in the first place, that the difference in the cost of a scanty and an ample allowance of ships provisions is so trifling,—the injustice of half-starving people who undergo so many perils and hardships, and who are required to toil incessantly through the night, as well as through the day, is so great,—and, the disadvantages of not satisfying their appetites,

with good and wholesome food, are so many, that I am not a little surprised at there ever having existed a complaint on this score.

If the trade will not afford reasonable wages, and a sufficiency of provisions, for those who are required to perform the labours of it, surely it is not worth carrying on, and ought in justice, humanity, and sound policy, to be either given up or revised. If the seamen are not allowed a sufficiency of victuals, they will not be in strength to do their duty, and if the provisions given to them are not of a good and wholesome quality, they will be affected with disorders, particularly that destructive disease the scurvy. If their appetites are not satisfied, they will ever be murmuring, mutinous, and negligent of their duty, and few good men will go into the service. And, lastly, if our seamen are not well victualled, they will enter into the service of other nations, particularly that of our flourishing rival in commerce on the other side of the Atlantic, who enjoys a super-abundance of provisions, and will joyfully open her store to our disaffected seamen, to the great injury and decay of our naval power.

The provisions which were allowed to seamen in the African Trade, as specified in Schedule A, of the Slave Trade Carrying Act, which was

passed in year 1799, but not now considered to be in force, may be taken, with a few exceptions and additions, which I shall point out, as a precedent, and a guide for regulations on this occasion. According to that antiquated bill of fare, there were two, of what are called, on ship board, bannian days, in each week, on which, the seamen were not allowed any beef nor pork ; but, instead thereof, a portion of oatmeal, butter, and cheese ; or, of stock-fish, oil, and vinegar. This food, is of too light a kind, to satisfy the appetites, and support the strength of people, who are required to both labour all the day, and to work and keep watch all the night ; and, withal, of too perishable a nature to be preserved good longer than a month or two in the hot and humid climate of Africa.

Instead of this antiquated, corruptable, and insufficient fare, it would be of no more cost to the merchant, and much more satisfying to the seamen, to allow, each man, one pound of beef or pork, per day ; together with, one pint of flour three days in each week, and half a pint of peas, or one pint of rice and two ounces of molasses, on each of the other four days in the week ; besides one pound of bread, and a quarter or half a pint of spirits, to each man, per day. In addition to which, if each man were allowed a pint of coffee, or cocoa, for his

breakfast, particularly whilst on the unwholesome coast of Africa, it would be much more conducive to the seamen's health and comfort, than the pernicious custom now in vogue, of giving them drams the moment they rise in the morning.

This may be considered, as very reasonable and sufficient diet for them whilst as sea, or in ports where other kinds of provisions cannot be procured; as, consisting of a better proportion of animal and vegetable food, and as containing articles less liable to spoil in a wet and warm climate, than those which I have noticed. In order to prevent scorbutic diseases, which the long continued use of salted meats and perishable vegetable food, is sure to produce, and to guard against their wanting victuals whenever the voyages happen to prove unexpectedly long, or any article of their diet becomes unfit for eating through long keeping, it will be further necessary to provide substitutes for the ordinary ship's provisions. For these reasons, whilst the ships are lying in British Ports, the seamen should be allowed liberally of fresh beef, potatoes, and vegetables; and, when on the coast of Africa, there are few places that do not produce an abundance of either rice, yams, cassada, plantains, or pompions, and at many parts there is also plenty of bullocks, hogs,

goats, and fish, to be obtained on very reasonable terms, and which may be occasionally, as well as advantageously, substituted for such articles of the ordinary provisions of the ship as may become deficient in quantity or quality.

At the island of Goree, near Cape Verde, there is, at all times, plenty of fresh beef to be had for five-pence per pound, and abundance of fish for less than one-penny a pound. In the river Gambia, as many bullocks, of from four to five hundred weight each, may be purchased, at any time, for the value of twenty or thirty shillings, in African trade goods, as would serve all the royal navy of Great Britain, and plenty of rice may be got there at the rate of ten pounds per ton. Bullocks and rice are also equally reasonable and very plentiful all along the coast, from the river Gambia down to Sierra Leone, and there again, fresh beef, fish, rice, and many kinds of vegetables, are plentiful and cheap. Rice may be purchased, in large quantities, at the rate of only five pounds per ton, from the natives of most parts of the coast situated between Cape Mount and the river Cavally, and at the Krou's a few small bullocks may also be obtained very cheap. Rice is so exceedingly plentiful along this coast, particularly at Trade Town, the river Sesters, Garraway, and the river Cavally, that as much may be got

in one day, especially during the dry or rice season of the year, that is from the month of October until March, as would amply serve the largest of our African ship's company for twelve months. Now, as rice can be preserved good longer than any other kind of grain or vegetable aliment, and as it is a very wholesome and palatable food, either by itself or seasoned with sugar, molasses, or fresh palm oil, I conceive that it would be advisable and advantageous for every ship destined to trade at places situated to the south-east of Cape Palmas, where the detention in trade is usually very long, and from whence the passage home is seldom less than ten or twelve weeks, to stop at either side of Cape Palmas on their way down, and purchase a requisite quantity of rice for the voyage, particularly as it is to be obtained so reasonably and expeditiously. In the rivers of Bonny, Calebar, Cameroons, and Gaboon, which are situated in the Bight of Biafra, wherein we have more trade than at all other parts of the coast together, many hundreds of tons of yams, an under-ground fruit like unto potatoes, may be bought for the value, in African trade goods, of four or five shillings per hundred weight; besides which, there is plenty of fish, plantains, and many other kinds of provisions to be procured in these rivers. And, lastly, at the Island of Anno-Bona, which lies in the passage home

of all our ships trading to the south-east of Cape Palmas, there is abundance of hogs, and many other eatables, to be bought at a very cheap rate, with only the remnants of African trade goods. Thus, seeing, that there is such an abundance of provision for the support of human life, readily and reasonably obtainable, at most parts of the coast where our ships trade, surely it is unnecessary, unjust, and even bad policy, at any time, to hunger our seamen, and but right, when they are proved to have been scantily fed, to award them short allowance money.

Before I close my list of regulations, it is necessary to say something relative to spirits, as seamen will not be altogether satisfied with any kind or quantity of provisions that may be allowed to them, unless they are also given a portion of grog; like as, a native chief of the windward coast of Africa will not be satisfied with the best European Dinner, if it does not also contain a dish of rice of his own culture, and dressed by his favorite woman. I also mention an allowance of spirits for this further cogent reason, that if it is not given to them, they will most eagerly and cunningly seek every opportunity of obtaining it by stealth, which they have many opportunities for committing whilst the ships are trading on the coast, when there is necessarily very frequent resort into the

ship's hold and spirit room, to mix and measure liquor for the trade. Besides an allowance of spirits being necessary to seamen's health, contentment and honesty, the occasional stoppage of their grog, as they term it, on the commission of any crime or misdemeanor, is generally more severely felt, and a more effectual means of bringing them to repentance and amendment, than a flogging or any other punishment; in short, the commander's power to stop their grog occasionally, serves more than any other terror, to keep them from committing offences.

Considering how much the seamen employed in this trade are exposed to great and sudden vicissitudes of weather and climate: sometimes drenched in rain, or soaking in noxious dews and fogs; at other times, burning under a vertical sun, or chilled by northern cold; and, considering likewise, how much their strength, spirits, and the fluids of their bodies are exhausted by labour in the torrid climate of Africa, they require at the least half a pint of spirits, each man, per day; which, should be mixed with three parts of water and served to them at their meals, as is done on board His Majesty's Ships of War; and this rule should be strictly adhered to, because, if the whole allowance should be given to them at a time and undiluted with water, many of them would be too much dis-

posed to drink it all at once, and so become intoxicated, and others would be too apt to drink it raw, which is a very injurious practice, particularly after long fasting.

I am aware, that many of the regulations which I have suggested, more especially those relative to the diet and accommodations of the sick, and the treatment of such as are in a state of convalescence, are more the merchants and ship-masters' province to adopt, than of the legislature to enact; but, having often witnessed the injurious, and, I may say, fatal consequences which uniformly result from the neglect of those just and humane attentions to sick and convalescent seamen, I considered it as my duty to state my sentiments fully on a subject of so much importance as the preservation of the health and lives of our brave and invaluable seamen, more especially in a letter intended to be presented to you through the medium of the printing press; and, if those gentlemen will condescend to pay due attention to my humble suggestions, I am confident that they will be amply benefited and gratified by the increased health, strength, and activity of the seamen to perform the duties of their ships,—by the great number of seamen which will be thereby preserved for national service and protecting their ships during war time,—and by the good name

which their liberality and humanity will attach to their service.

If, however, notwithstanding the many benefits which I have brought into the African Merchants and Captains view, they should consider themselves as aggrieved, or too strongly reflected upon, by my representations in the preceding pages, let them reflect that I have repeatedly, both personally and by letter, and publicly as well as privately, solicited them, one and all, to give me employment, even in a very subordinate station to that I had formerly filled; whereby they would have given a very different, and to myself a much more gainful, direction to my humble talents and industry, to what they have now through necessity taken; and, let them reflect further, that instead of complying with my earnest entreaties for employment, they have, to my great mortification and distress, and as it were by general consent, turned their backs upon me, after nearly thirty years of faithful servitude in their arduous and perilous service, and laid me on the shelf, now more than three years, like a useful book which they could not understand, and as if I had proved the most worthless of servants; and, this they have done, for little other reason, than because I did not make a prosperous voyage, under such discouraging and adverse circumstances, as the

ablest and greatest of their tyrannical favorites could not possibly have surmounted in a much, if any, better way than myself. In a few words, let them look into the memorial and petition, which I was reduced to the necessity of publishing in the year 1818, and say, whether I have not experienced as much unmerited neglect, ill treatment, and even persecution from some of them, as, without divine support, would have driven many a man, of a less firm and religious disposition, to the commission of suicide, or of some heinous offence to society. After this statement of the truth, I appeal to their feelings as christian men and as the natural providers for their families. whether they have any just reason to complain of my having taken up my pen to perform, what every honest and humane Englishman will surely consider as my duty to my country and our suffering seamen; and, whether, I have not had, sufficient reason for endeavouring, with the help of my pen, to bring myself into notice and employment in some other community, who may be better disposed to give my humble talents and industry a fair trial, and more disposed to prefer a little learning, sobriety, and moderation, to comparative ignorance, drunkenness, and tyranny.

If my humble suggestions in these pages, should prove the means of prolonging the life of

a single seaman, I shall be in some degree consoled for the extreme mortification and distress which I have suffered through their long and unmerited neglect of me, and for the excessive ill treatment which I have experienced from some of them in particular; and, now, to conclude this long digression and just appeal to those gentlemen, I have only to observe, that as some good generally springs out of evil, from my being driven to the necessity of instructing them in the happy art of preserving the health and lives of their seamen, I shall in the next place, if favored with health and sufficient length of days, endeavour to benefit them and myself by an essay on the now very little known art of making money in the African Trade.

You, respected Sir, have signalized yourself, during these many years past, in the cause of humanity and justice towards oppressed Africans; and, now, that I have brought into your view, a faithful picture of suffering, distress, and national loss, in the persons of our kindred, brave, and invaluable seamen, in whose welfare you are deeply interested as an Englishman and a Legislator; I am sanguine in my hopes, that you will not fail to exert your wonted and well-known benevolence, and your influence as a Legislator, towards preserving from sickness and premature death, those subjects of the state, who

are required in conducting and protecting our commerce with western Africa, and in whose preservation and increase, we are vitally concerned as a great maritime, commercial, and independent nation. There are several clauses in the Slave Trade Carrying Act that was passed in the year 1799, particularly the 21st, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, and 34th, and likewise schedules A. and B. which bear expressly and forcibly on the subject, and to which I beg leave to direct your attention. These clauses, together with the few hints which I have presumed to give you, will fully enable you to compose an Act for correcting all the defects and abuses, which now exist in the Medical, Victualling, and other Departments of our shipping employed in the African Trade. The African Merchants have late obtained, through your exertions, as I am informed, a considerable reduction of the duties on imported African productions; they can, therefore, now very well afford, and have great reason to submit cheerfully to whatever regulations you may, in your judgment, think proper to move in legislative assembly, for the better preservation of the health and lives, and the victualling and accommodation, of the seamen in their service.

May you long continue to enjoy healthful and happy years, to promote by your humane,

benevolent, and zealous exertions as a legislator, the growing welfare and liberties of the negro race, and to guard the laws, liberties, and religion of this highly favored empire; and, lastly, may you be pleased to accept of my humbly endeavours in this letter to merit the favors which I have lately solicited from you, and convince you of my zeal in the cause of humanity and justice towards our brave and invaluable seamen.

I am,

Respected Sir,

Your most obedient,

And faithful humble Servant,

ELLIOT ARTHY.

36, FORE STREET, CRIPPLEGATE,
London, January, 1820.

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favor which I have lately solicited from you
and convince you of my zeal in the cause of
humanity and justice towards our colored and
inhabitable brethren.

I am,
Dear Sir,
Your most obedient,
And faithful servant,
WILLIAM LUTHER.

20, Essex Street, Cambridge,
London, January, 1820.