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SHERBAR (AFRICA).

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 1 July 1853;—for,

A "COPY of DESPATCHES from Commander *Phillips*, of the 'Polyphemus,'
reporting the Destruction of the BARRACOONS of Don *Crispo*, on the African
Coast, last Christmas Day, and the Burning of the Town of *Sherbar*, on or about
the 18th day of January last."

Admiralty, }
11 July 1853. }

J. H. HAY,
Chief Clerk.

COPY of DESPATCHES from Commander *Phillips*, of the "Polyphemus,"
reporting the Destruction of the BARRACOONS of Don *Crispo*, on the African
Coast, last Christmas Day, and the Burning of the Town of *Sherbar*, on or about
the 18th day of January last.

(No. 333.)

"Penelope," Sierra Leone,
27 December 1852.

Sir,

I TRANSMIT herewith, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a copy of a Despatch from Commander Charles G. Phillips, of Her Majesty's steam sloop "Polyphemus," reporting his having destroyed a slave barracoon in the Kittam country.

For several months past a notorious Spanish slave-dealer, named Crispo, has been collecting slaves in the Sherbro and places adjacent. The last information I had of him was, that he was residing at Gallinas, but on my arrival there with the intention of sending a force against him, I discovered that he had removed. From the enclosed despatch, their Lordships will observe that Commander Phillips received intelligence of a number of Crispo's slaves being ready for shipment at a place called Babbak, about 17 miles from Sherbar, where the "Polyphemus" was stationed; with great zeal and judgment, he moved his ship along the coast at night, and at daylight, on the 25th instant, he landed, marched through the jungle, burned the barracoon, the houses of Crispo and the chief, and brought off ten of the slaves.

The effect of this energetic proceeding will, I apprehend, in the present disturbed state of the Sherbro, where the chiefs, instigated by Crispo, evince so strong a desire to recommence the slave trade, be most salutary. I cannot speak too highly of the ability displayed by Commander Phillips in carrying out this important service, in which I am happy to find he was ably supported by Lieutenant Sullivan, and Mr. Stephen Moriarty, Master; the latter officer, and Mr. Riccalton, Paymaster and Purser (who was a volunteer on the occasion), were very severely bruised by being thrown under the paddle-box boat while landing on the beach in a heavy surf.

It being desirable to encourage the natives to give information, I have authorised Commander Phillips to reward the Kroomen referred to in his letter with a present of ten dollars.

I have, &c.

(signed) *H. W. Bruce*,
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty.

2 DESPATCHES REPORTING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE

Enclosure.

"Polyphemus," off Babbah, lat. 7. 19. N.; long. 12. 16. W.
25 December 1852.

Sir,

I HAVE the honor to report that this morning I destroyed the slave barracoon of Crispo, the slave-dealer at this place, which is situate in the Kittam country, 17 miles east of the Shebar, distant about a quarter of a mile from the Boom Kittam, and little more than the same distance from the sea-shore.

Ten male negroes, chained by the neck, and awaiting embarkation, were rescued, and are now on board this vessel.

The circumstances which led to this operation are as follows:

Yesterday (the 24th December) three Kroomen deserted the service of Crispo, and came off to the ship with information of a number of slaves intended for shipment, having been collected at this place.

The "Polyphemus" was accordingly anchored during the night on the sea-coast of the place, and at daylight I landed with 45 men and officers; the country people flying at our approach, and driving the slaves before them, with the exception of the ten individuals already reported who escaped to us.

Three distressed Europeans (Spaniards) also threw themselves upon the protection of the British flag; and I have taken them on board for conveyance to Sierra Leone.

The slave barracoon, the residence of Crispo, and the house of the chief, having been set fire to and consumed, I returned with the party to the ship.

I have, &c.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty,
&c. &c. &c.

(signed) C. Gerrans Phillips,
Commander.

(No. 18.)

"Penelope," at Sea, lat. 8° 2' N., long. 14° 23' W.,
24 January 1853.

Sir,

ADVERTING to my Despatch of the 27th December last, No. 333, I request you will lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the enclosed Report from Commander Charles G. Phillips, detailing his further proceedings in the Kittam country.

For many months past the legal trade in the Sherbro and rivers connected has been impeded by the determined endeavours of certain chiefs, of whom John Fortune and Harry Tucker are the principal, to renew the traffic in slaves. The Governor of Sierra Leone informed me that they had peremptorily ordered all British subjects to quit their territory, that our merchants had been robbed and ill-treated by them, and that no indemnification or redress could be obtained; and further, I ascertained that they had even gone so far as to insult the Government messenger who had been sent to them with friendly remonstrances. This unsatisfactory state of things, so different to what might have been expected after the measures adopted in the year 1849, has arisen consequent on the return of a Spanish slave-dealer, Pablo A. Crispo, to re-establish the nefarious traffic, for engaging in which he was, on a former occasion, expelled the country.—(See "Correspondence relating to the Slave Trade," 1849-50, Class (A.), pp. 290. 305.) This persevering character is most likely an agent for some wealthier parties in Cuba or Rio de Janeiro, and probably connected with the Company denounced in Mr. Stafford's despatch to me, dated 5th June 1852; there can be little doubt that the schooner lately captured by Her Majesty's steam vessel "Bloodhound" was consigned to him.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, together with the importance of proving to the surrounding chiefs that they will be obliged to conform to the treaties which they have entered into with the British Government, and confiding in the local knowledge acquired by Commander Phillips on his former expedition, I directed that officer to proceed up the Kittam River with a small armed force, to demand of John Fortune that he should deliver up Crispo, with the slaves intended for exportation.

The expeditionary force reached as far as Damma, where Fortune resided, and that chief having refused compliance with the demand made upon him, although he admitted that Crispo and his slaves were within his territory and under his protection, Commander Phillips attacked the town, and succeeded in destroying it and the stockade by which it was defended. He then proceeded to punish other refractory chiefs, the particulars of which will be found in his report. I cannot speak too highly of the energy and judgment exhibited by this officer and those associated

BARRACOONS OF DON CRISPO, &c.

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associated with him on the occasion. His measures will enable the trading community of Sierra Leone to pursue their calling in peace and safety, and dispel the apprehension of the slaves being exported from the neighbourhood of Sherbro.

I have, &c.

(signed) *H. W. Bruce*,
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

Enclosure.

H. M. Steam Sloop "Polyphemus," off Shebar,
23 January 1853.

Sir,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that, on the 18th instant, I entered the Boom Kittam River, with the force named in the margin; and, by the evening of the 20th, being then about 50 miles up the river, and within a short distance of Damma, where Crispo and his slaves have been sheltered since the 25th ult., was rejoined by Lieutenant Strickland, whom I had sent before me, to repeat the demand for their surrender; he reported having seen the chief, John Fortune, who was there in considerable force, and had distinctly admitted that Crispo and his slaves were then within his territory, and under his protection, but refused to give them up, unless I obtained the consent of Henry Tucker, a notorious slave-hunter.

Damma seems to have been the principal stronghold of the Kittam chief, John Fortune, a large village protected by a strong double stockade, a marsh and a narrow approach; but Lieutenant Strickland's reconnaissance of it was so complete, that I determined to attack it at dawn; accordingly, at daybreak of the 21st a fire was opened from the six-pounder across the marsh, under cover of which the storming parties were landed, led by the senior Lieutenant; a rocket was discharged with effect to the right of the principal gate, and the chief and his followers abandoned the place with the utmost precipitation; the gates were then forced, and within a very few minutes the whole of the buildings, stockade and all, were reduced to ashes.

The boats now fell down the river, and were joined by an armed gig, under Mr. Nathan, a British merchant resident at the mouth of the Sherbro, to whom I am indebted for important information, and having learned that the bearer of a letter from the Governor of Sierra Leone had been put in irons, and the British flag insulted, at Metron, and part of an adjoining village, and where a former partner of Crispo's was actually resident, I burned those places, and sent the chief as a prisoner to Bendo.

Carranco, another nest of slave traders within the Kittam territory, was also burned.

Soobroo, a small village where certain British traders had been plundered, was also destroyed, and on the evening of the 22d, a house belonging to Don Crispo, with two of his barracoons, and the property of the chiefs at a place called Yella, a short distance from Babbah, was set fire to and destroyed.

I feel it my duty to state that the activity and intelligence of Lieutenant Walter Strickland, first of this vessel, contributed mainly to the success of these operations; Lieutenant Rich, commanding the "Teazer," accompanied me in his boat, and deserves my acknowledgments, as do the exertions and good conduct of all the officers and men employed in these services.

The only casualty I have to report is, one petty officer wounded by musketry fired from the bush in the lower part of the river.

I am, &c.

(signed) *C. Gerrans Phillips*,
Commander.

Rear-Admiral Sir H. W. Bruce,
Commander-in-Chief.

"Polyphemus."

2 Paddle-box boats.
2 Cutters.
1 Gig.
Lieut. W. Strickland.
Mr. J. B. Anderson, Mate.
Mr. Geo. R. Harvey, Mid.
Mr. J. T. Gabriel, Act. Asst.
Surgeon.
34 Seamen.
9 Marines.
20 Kroomen.

"Teazer."

1 Gig.
Lieut. F. D. Rich, and
4 Seamen.

SHERBAR (AFRICA).

COPY of DESPATCHES from Commander *Phillips*, of the "Polyphemus," reporting the Destruction of the BARRACOOKS of Don *Crippo*, on the African Coast, last Christmas Day, and the Burning of the Town of *Sherbar*, on or about the 18th day of January last.

(*Mr. Grace.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
13 July 1853.

752.

Under 1 oz.