

as its second officer. Not only is it of great importance that the commander should have as his second in command, an officer in whose zeal and efficient co-operation he can rely, but the government desires the choice should fall on one possessing the necessary qualifications in case of an accident to that officer, to carry out the objects of the Expedition, and to conduct it in safety to our own shores. With these views and wishes, I have seen, with regret, that a mere matter of etiquette prevents you from engaging in a service for which you are so well fitted.

Regarding as I do the practice of giving officers temporary appointments as illegal, and prejudicial to the service, I could not recommend to the President to sanction its continuance for three years longer, by granting such appointment to the officers of the Expedition.

It does not, however, appear to me, that this decision ought to present an obstacle to your accepting a command under Lieutenant Wilkes, whom you rank by what must be considered an imaginary line.

If the Expedition were of a *military character*, I would not attempt to combat your scruples; *but it is purely civil*, and even should a war break out between the United States and any naval power, your path upon the ocean would be peaceful.

It is the opinion of the President, as well as my own, that an Expedition, undertaken to promote science, and extend the bounds of human knowledge, ought to command the services of all who can contribute to its success, in whatever station it may be thought most advantageous to place them; and I venture to hope, that waiving all claim to superior rank, you will accept the command now tendered you.

I am, sir, respectfully yours,

(Signed) J. R. POINSETT.

III.

AFTER Captain Hudson was assured that a General Order would be published, divesting the Expedition of its military character, and consulting Commodore Ridgely,—well known in the service for his high sense of honour, and thorough knowledge on all points of etiquette and duty, and for whose judgment he had great respect, whose decided opinion and advice was, that it was his duty, as an officer of the government, under the circumstances of the case, to accept the command and go out in the Expedition,—Captain Hudson sent the following acceptance.