

that under ordinary circumstances the list would be very much increased, as the men under the present exigencies, actuated by a laudable desire to do their duty to the last, refrain from presenting themselves as applicants for the list.

Under these circumstances, we feel ourselves obliged to report that, in our opinion, a few days more of such exposure as they have already undergone, would reduce the number of the crew by sickness to such an extent as to hazard the safety of the ship and the lives of all on board.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

(Signed) J. L. FOX,
J. S. WHITTLE,
Assistant-Surgeons.

To CHARLES WILKES, Esq.,
Commanding Exploring Expedition.

Although my own opinion, as I have stated, differed from that expressed in the report, I deemed it my duty to ask the opinion of the ward-room officers, and also, in order to procure additional medical advice, restored to duty Acting-Surgeon Gilchrist, who was under suspension. The opinion of the ward-room officers was asked in a written circular, of which the following is a copy.

U. S. Ship Vincennes,
At Sea, January 31st, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,—

The receipt of the enclosed report of Drs. Fox and Whittle, relative to the health and condition of the crew of this ship, at this time, renders it necessary for me to decide whether it is expedient to push farther south in exploration under the present circumstances.

As you are acquainted with all the circumstances, it is unnecessary to repeat them, except to remark, that your opinion is requested before I decide upon the course to be pursued, in consequence of the strong bias self-interest might give me in the prosecution of our arduous duties. I wish the report returned to me, and for you to communicate your opinion in writing.

I am, respectfully, &c.,

CHARLES WILKES,
Commanding Exploring Expedition.

To the Ward-Room Officers,
U. S. Ship Vincennes.

The answers to this letter will be seen in Appendix XXVII.; and it is sufficient here to say, that a majority concurred in opinion with the