

whalers, not only to support the authority of the consuls and masters of whalers, but at the same time to protect the interests of the crews. I am well assured that the presence of our national vessels would in a great measure prevent many of the disturbances that are constantly occurring between the masters and crews, among the crews of different vessels, and between both these and the authorities on shore. It is due to the large interest embarked in this extended fishery, that the government should protect its defenceless ships against savage attacks, and have a force at hand to preserve the property in case of accident or wreck. Two of our vessels of war, actively engaged, would suffice to afford ample protection to this business, by being kept cruising so as to reach the various ports at the proper seasons. In this way they might be the means of relieving many of our countrymen from distressing situations, and of restoring them to their homes in safety. A knowledge among the whaling-fleet that their interests were watched over, even if they made no calls for aid, would give security, and protect them from impositions, as well as prevent them from practising fraud, or committing aggressions on the natives of the islands they visit. Such aggressions invariably lead to retaliations on the part of the chiefs, which they inflict upon the first unsuspecting vessel that anchors in their ports. The capture of vessels, and the massacre of their whole crews, have frequently been owing to this cause.

It would also be the means of securing the owners against losses; for it scarcely need be stated, that in the event of accidents, that would be deemed elsewhere of a trivial nature, condemnation frequently ensues, and a total sacrifice of the property. This is not to be ascribed to any want of vigilance, or to connivance on the part of our consuls or the public authorities; but it arises from the desire on the part of whole communities to derive profit out of accident. A visit of a man-of-war, or the feeling that one was or would be at hand to afford succour, and relieve distress, would have a tendency to remove these evils.

The difficulties to which the whaling fleet is exposed are often aggravated by the position of our consuls; for if engaged in trade, as they almost always are, they lose that influence and standing with the authorities, which they otherwise would have, whether civilized or savage, as well as with their own countrymen.

The whole system is wrong: those appointed to such situations should not be suffered to engage in trade, but should receive a salary adequate to their support. This would place them in a situation to assert our rights; prevent the difficulties now of daily occurrence; and enable the consuls to maintain the high standing they ought to hold in foreign ports.