

OFFICERS OF THE NEAPOLITAN NAVY—AMERICAN
BARQUE PARANA.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

The despatch of the United States Minister resident at the Court of Naples, relative to the saving of the crew of the American barque Parana from shipwreck by the officers of the Neapolitan Navy and Marine.

APRIL 10, 1856.—Referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

To the House of Representatives:

I transmit, herewith, a report from the Secretary of State, with accompanying document, in compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 4th instant.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, *April 9, 1856.*

To the President of the United States:

The Secretary of State, to whom has been referred the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 4th instant, requesting the President, if not incompatible with the public interest, to communicate "a copy of a despatch dated October 29, 1855, from our minister resident at Naples, relating to the saving from shipwreck of certain American vessels and their crews," has the honor to lay before the President a copy of the communication called for by the resolution.

Respectfully submitted.

W. L. MARCY.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, April 9, 1856.

Mr. Owen to Mr. Marcy.

[No. 51.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Naples, October 29, 1855.

SIR: I have had occasion to observe the zeal and courage with which, on several occasions, sometimes at the risk of life, the officers of the Neapolitan navy and marine service have come to the succor of our vessels in distress.

The two chief examples that have come to my knowledge, during my residence here, are the following:

In the month of March, 1853, the American barque "Parana," caught in a violent storm in the Gulf of Santa Eufemia, near Il Pizzo, in Calabria Ultra, was drifting towards certain sunken rocks, on a lee shore, when Signor Vincenzo d'Abundo, of the Neapolitan marine service, seeing her danger, put off to her relief in a launch, at the imminent risk of his life. He reached her by strenuous exertion and with much difficulty, at the moment when his launch, filled with water, was on the point of sinking; and, by his intimate knowledge of the roadstead, succeeded in piloting the vessel (with the loss, however, of two masts) safely into port. There is little doubt that the rescue of this barque, and of the lives of all on board, is due to Signor d'Abundo's humanity and courage; and when the captain of the said barque, anxious to testify his gratitude, tendered a handsome remuneration for the timely succor, Signor d'Abundo (as our consul at Messina has certified to me) refused to receive any.

The other case occurred on the 30th December, 1854. The Cavaliere Don Raffaele Gonzales, captain of the Neapolitan steam-frigate the "Archimedes," came to the aid of the American barque "Golden Rule," Captain Nickerson, then drifting, during a furious gale, towards the rocks on which stands the Palermitan light-house, and under the greatest risk of suffering total shipwreck. By the efforts of Capt. Gonzales, his officers and crew, the "Golden Rule" was saved, without suffering any damage whatever, from what seemed total destruction.

It has been intimated to me that these officers would receive with peculiar satisfaction, from the American Congress, some slight testimonial of these important services. A small gold medal, with suitable device and inscription, would, I feel assured, from what I have heard, be valued by them beyond the decorations here so commonly bestowed by royalty; and such an evidence that these acts of international comity are noted and valued by us, would not only tend, as far as it went, to strengthen the relations of good understanding between the two nations, but (what is of even more importance) might, by encouraging similar acts hereafter, prove the means of saving the lives of many American citizens.

In all cases coming within my knowledge, where a vessel of any European nation has been saved by Neapolitan aid, the sovereign of the country has granted to the person saving the same a decoration or similar testimonial of gratitude.

I know not what has been the practice of our government, in this

connexion, in the past; but, if the President saw fit to make a recommendation in accordance with the above suggestions, I think the precedent would be one that might be advantageously imitated in the future.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
ROBERT DALE OWEN.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,
Secretary of State.