JEAN BAPTISTE HENRY SAVIGNY

VOYAGE TO SENEGAL

A MEMOIR

Jean Baptiste Henri Savigny

Voyage to Senegal: A Memoir

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PREFACE.

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The annals of the marine, record no example of a shipwreck so terrible as that of the Medusa frigate. Two of the unfortunate crew, who have miraculously escaped from the catastrophe, impose upon themselves the painful and delicate task, of describing all the circumstances which attended it.

It was in the midst of the most cruel sufferings that we took the solemn resolution, to make known, to the civilized world, all the details of our unhappy adventure, if heaven permitted us again to see our dear country. We should believe that we failed in our duty to ourselves, and to our fellow citizens, if we left buried in oblivion facts which the public must be desirous to know. All the details of the events at which we were not present, have been communicated to us by respectable persons, who have warranted their authenticity. We shall, besides, advance nothing which cannot be proved.

Here, we hear some voices ask, what right we have to make known to the government, men who are, perhaps, guilty, but whom their places, and their rank, entitle to more respect. They are ready to make it a crime in us, that we have dared to say, that officers of the marine had abandoned us. But what interest, we ask, in our turn, should cause a fatal indulgence to be claimed for those, who have failed in their duties; while the destruction of a hundred and fifty wretches, left to the most cruel fate, scarcely excited a murmur of disapprobation? Are we still in those times, when men and things were sacrificed to the caprices of favour?

Are the resources and the dignities of the State, still the exclusive patrimony of a privileged class? and are there other titles to places and honours, besides merit and talents?

Let us venture to advance another truth, a truth useful to the Minister himself. There exists among the officers of the Marine, an intractable *esprit de corps*, a pretended point of honour, equally false and arrogant, which leads them to consider as an insult to the whole navy, the discovery of one guilty individual. This inadmissible principle, which is useful only to insignificance, to intrigue, to people the least worthy to call on the name of honour, has the most ruinous consequences for the State, and the public service. By this, incapacity and baseness are always covered with a guilty veil, which they dare to attempt to render sacred; by this, the favours of government are bestowed at random, upon persons, who impose upon it the strange obligation of being perpetually in the dark respecting them. Under the protection of this obligation of officious silence, hitherto seconded by the slavery of the press, men without talents survive every revolution, exhibit in every antichamber their privileged incapacity, and braving public opinion, even that of their comrades, who are the first victims of a foolish and arrogant prejudice, which deceives them, shew themselves more eager to monopolise favours and honours, in proportion as they are less able to render themselves worthy of them.

We shall believe that we have deserved well of our government, if our faithful narrative can make it sensible how much its confidence is abused. Just, besides, and not animated by passion, it is with real pleasure that we shall make those known, who, by their conduct in our shipwreck, have acquired a right to general esteem. Others will doubtless complain of the severity of our accusing

language; but honest men will grant us their approbation. If we hear it said, that our frankness may have been useful to our country, this success will be, at once, our justification and our recompence.

We have questioned, concerning the nautical details, several gentlemen of the navy who were on board; we confess, however, that on comparing their accounts, we have observed that they did not always entirely agree; but we have taken those facts which had the most witnesses in their favour. We shall be sometimes obliged to record cruel truths; they will, however, be directed only to those, whose unskilfulness, or pusillanimity have caused these dreadful events. We venture to affirm, that the numerous observations, which we have collected, will give to our work all the accuracy rigorously required in so interesting a narrative.

We must observe to our readers that it has been impossible for us to avoid the use of naval terms, which will, perhaps, give a great degree of roughness to our narrative, but we hope that the public who are always indulgent, will be so on this occasion, to two unfortunate men, who pretend only to make them acquainted with the truth, and not to give them a superior work. Besides, as we in a manner, submit these events, to the judgment of the gentlemen of the French Navy, it was necessary to make use of the technical terms, that they might be able to understand us.

This second edition is enriched with notes, which will give the reader interesting details on many points, which in the former we could only slightly touch upon. He will have nothing more to desire, particularly respecting the march in the desert after the stranding of the long-boat.

These notes begin with the moment that the frigate stranded, and terminate with the arrival at St. Louis.

They were communicated to us by Mr. Landry, an officer of the Royal University, Professor Emeritus of the Academy of Paris, and at present at the head of a school or Academy, in the Rue Cerisaye, No. 2, quarter of the Arsenal, at Paris. He has had the kindness to extract them for us from a narrative, written by his nephew, Mr. Bredif, Engineer of Mines, belonging to the expedition to Senegal.

The Narrator sent this account to his family above a year ago, addressing it to his sister. The reader will, therefore, not be surprised at the tone of simplicity which prevails in this recital. Mr. Landry would not take away any part for fear of injuring the truth of the circumstances, by meddling with it. If Mr. Bredif, is always placed in the fore-ground, that is not surprising; in a sister, a brother is the principal object which she cannot lose sight of for a moment.

He who loves to observe men, in all the circumstances, in which they may be placed, will easily judge, after what Mr. Bredif did or felt, what may have been done or felt by the sharers in the same misfortunes, who are, besides, never forgotten.

Mr. Bredif is now in the interior of Africa, employed upon the Mission which the government has entrusted to him; the last accounts from him are of the 14th of October, 1817. The manner in which he knows how to give an account of the facts which he has observed, and still more the courage, the prudence, and humanity, which he displayed in the disaster of the Medusa, and in all that followed it, give reason to hope, and this hope cannot be deceived, that be will duly execute his Mission, and render himself worthy of his Majesty's favours.

[Illustration: PLAN of the RAFT of the MEDUSA, at the moment of its being abandoned. 150 Frenchmen were placed on this Machine. 15 only were saved 13 days after.]

NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO SENEGAL.

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INTRODUCTION

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The French settlements, situated on the western coast of Africa, from Cape
Blanco to the mouth of the river Gambia, have been alternately possessed by
France and England, and have remained definitively in the hands of the
French, whose ancestors laid the foundations of them previously to the
fourteenth century, when they discovered this country.

The English made themselves masters in 1758 of the Isle of St. Louis, the seat of the general government of all the settlements which the French have on that part of the coast; we recovered it twenty years after, in 1779 and our possessions were again confirmed to us by the treaty of

peace between France and England, concluded on the 3d of September, 1783. In 1808, our possessions fell again into the power of the English, less by the superiority of their arms, than by the treachery of some individuals unworthy of bearing the name of Frenchmen. They were finally restored to us by the treaties of peace of 1814, and 1815, which confirmed that of 1783 in its whole extent.

The stipulations of this treaty regulate the respective rights of the two nations on the Western coast of Africa; they fix the possessions of France as follows:—from Cape Blanco situated in longitude 19° 30', and latitude 20° 55' 30", to the mouth of the river Gambia in longitude 19° 9', and latitude 13°; they guarantee this property exclusively to our country, and only permit the English to trade together with the French, for gum, from the river St. John to Fort Portendick inclusive, on condition, that they shall not form establishments of any kind whatsoever in this river, or upon any point of this coast. Only it is said, that the possession of the factory of Albreda, situated at the month of the river Gambia, and that of fort James, are confirmed to England.

The rights of the two nations being thus regulated, France thought of resuming her possessions and the enjoyment of her rights. The minister of the marine after having long meditated, and taken two years to prepare an expedition of four vessels, at last gave orders that it should sail for Senegal. The following is a list of the persons who composed the expedition.

A Colonel, to command in chief for the king on the whole coast from Cape Blanco to the mouth of the river Gambia, and charged with the superior direction of the administration… 1

A Lieutenant-Colonel, (chef de bataillon) commandant of Goree… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 1

A Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the African battalion, composed of three companies of 84 men each… … … … … … 253

A Lieutenant of Artillery, inspector of the powder magazines and batteries, and commanding ten workmen of his arm…… 11

A Commissary, inspector of the marine, chief of the administration… … … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 1

Four Store-keepers… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … 4

Six Clerks… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 6

Four Scouts (guetteurs)… … … … … … … … … … … …… 4

Two Curés… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … 2

Two Schoolmasters (instituteurs)… … … … … … … … …… 2

Two Writers (greffiers, they supply the place of the notaries and even of the mayors)… … … … … … … … …… 2

Two Hospital Directors… … … … … … … … … … … …… 2

Two Apothecaries… … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 2

Five Surgeons… … … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 5

Two Port Captains… … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 2

Three Pilots… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … 3

A Gardener… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …… 1

Eighteen Women… … … … … … … … … … … … … … …..
18

Eight Children… … … … … … … … … … … … … … …... 8

Four Bakers… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …... 4

Farther for an intended expedition into the country of Galam.

An Engineer of mines… … … … … … … … … … … … …... 1

A Geographical Engineer… … … … … … … … … … … …... 1

A Naturalist (cultivateur naturaliste)… … … … … … …... 1

Farther for an expedition which was to seek upon Cape Verd, or in its neighbourhood for a spot proper for the foundation of a colony.

A Physician… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …... 1

An Agriculturist for European productions… … … … …... 1

An Agriculturist for colonial productions… … … … …... 1

Two Geographical Engineers… … … … … … … … … … …... 2

A Naturalist… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … 1

An officer of the marine… … … … … … … … … … … … … 1

Twenty workmen… … … … … … … … … … … … … … …..
20

Three Women… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …... 3

Total 365

This expedition consisted therefore of 365 persons, of whom about 240 were embarked on board the *Medusa* frigate.

NARRATIVE, &c. &c.

On the 17th of June, 1816, at seven in the morning, the expedition for Senegal sailed from the roads of the Island of Aix, under the command of Captain Chaumareys; the vessels composing it were the *Medusa*[1] frigate of 44 guns, Captain Chaumareys; the *Echo*[2] corvette, Captain Cornet de Venancourt; the flute *La Loire*, commanded by Lieutenant Giquel Destouches; and the *Argus*[3] brig, commanded by Lieutenant Parnajon. The wind was northerly, blowing a fresh breeze; we carried all our sails; but had hardly cleared the port when the wind scanted a little, and we tacked to double the Tower of Chassiron, which is placed at the extremity of the Isle of Oleron.[4] After having plied to windward the whole day, in the evening about five o'clock, the *Loire* being unable to stem the currents which were at that time contrary, and hindered her from entering the *passes*, desired leave to cast anchor; M. de Chaumareys granted it, and ordered the whole squadron to anchor. We were then half a league from the Isle of Rhé, within what is called the *"Pertuis d'Antioche."* We cast anchor the first, and all the other vessels came and placed themselves near us. The _Loire _being a dull sailer, was the last which came to an anchor. The weather was fine: the wind N.W. and consequently too near to allow us to double Chassiron, with a contrary current. At seven in the evening, at the beginning of the ebb, we weighed anchor, and hoisted our sails; all the other vessels did the same: the signal to get under way had been given them a few minutes before. At night we found ourselves between the lights of Chassiron and La Baleine.[5]

A few moments sufficed to double them; we were scarcely clear, when the wind became almost calm; the vessels no longer obeyed the helm, the sky grew dark, the sea was very hollow, in short every thing announced a storm; the wind threatened to blow from the west, and consequently to become contrary; it was variable and squally; towards ten o'clock it was perceived that we were running directly upon a danger, called *Les Roches Bonnes*.[6] We tacked to escape certain destruction; between eleven and twelve at night, a storm arose in the north, and brought on wind from that quarter; we were then able to advance; the clouds dispersed, and the next day the weather was very fine, with a breeze from the N.E. but very faint; for some days we made but very little progress.

On the 21st or 22d we doubled Cape Finisterre; beyond this point which bounds the Gulph of Gascony, the *Loire* and the *Argus* parted company; these vessels sailing very ill, it was impossible for them to keep up with the frigate, which to enable them to do so, would have been obliged to take in her top-gallant sails and studding sails.

The *Echo* alone was in sight, but at a great distance, and carrying a press of sail not to lose sight of us. The frigate was so much a better sailer than the corvette, that with a small quantity of sail, she not only kept up with her, but even got a-head of her in a surprising manner; the wind had freshened and we were going at the rate of nine knots.[7]

An unfortunate accident disturbed the pleasure we felt at being so favoured by the wind; a sailor lad 15 years of age, fell into the sea, through one of the fore port-holes, on the larboard side; a great many persons were at the time, on the poop and the breast work, looking at the gambols of the porpoises.[8] The exclamations of pleasure at beholding the sports of these animals, were succeeded by cries of pity; for

some moments the unfortunate youth held by the end of a rope, which he caught hold of in his fall; but the rapidity with which the frigate sailed, soon forced him to let go; a signal was made to acquaint the *Echo* with this accident; that vessel was at a considerable distance, and we were going to fire a gun to second the signal, but there was not one loaded, however we threw out the life buoy.[9] The sails were clewed up, and the ship hove to. This manoeuvre was long; we should have come to the wind, as soon as they cried, "a man overboard," it is true that somebody cried aloud from the poop, that he was saved; and a sailor had indeed caught him by the arm, but he had been obliged to let him go, because he would have been pulled overboard himself: a boat was however let down; it was a six-oared barge in which there were only three men: it was all in vain; and after having looked for some time, the boat came on board again without having found even the buoy. If the unfortunate youth, who seemed to swim pretty well, had strength to reach it, he doubtless perished on it, after having experienced the most cruel sufferings. The ship was trimmed, and we resumed our course.

The *Echo* rejoined us, and for some time she kept within hail; but we soon lost her. On the 26th, we plied to windward during the night, fearing lest we should strike on the eight rocks, which are situated the most *Northerly*, in 34° 45', Latitude, and the most *Southerly* in latitude, 34° 30', so that the extent of this danger is about five leagues from *North* to *South* and about four leagues from *East* to *West*: the most southerly rock is distant about forty leagues to the *North*, 5° East, from the East point of Madeira.

On the 27th, in the morning we expected to see the island of Madeira, we however proceeded to no purpose till noon, at which hour we made an observation to ascertain our situation. The solar observation made us East, and West of

Porto Santo; we continued on the same tack, and in the evening at sunset, the man at the mast head discovered, land.[10] This error in the arrival, was at least thirty leagues in the East. It was attributed to the currents of the straits of Gibraltar; if this error really arises from the currents of the strait, it merits the attention of vessels which frequent these seas. The whole night we proceeded with few sails up; at midnight we tacked, in order not to approach too near to the land.[A1]

The next morning at day break we saw very distinctly the islands of Madeira Porto Santo; on the larboard, were those called Desert; Madeira was at least twelve leagues off: sailing before the wind we made nine knots, and in a few hours we were very near it. For a considerable time we ran along the coast of the island at a small distance from shore: we passed before the principal towns, Funchal and Do Sob. [A2]

Madeira appears like an amphitheatre; the country houses which cover it seem to be in a very good taste, and give it a charming appearance. All these delightful habitations are surrounded by fine gardens, and fields covered with orange and lemon trees, which when the wind blows from the shore, diffuse for full half a league in the open sea, the most agreeable perfume. The hills are covered with vineyards, bordered with banian trees: in short every thing is combined to render Madeira one of the most beautiful islands of Africa. Its soil is only a vegetable sand, mixed with an ash, which gives it astonishing fertility; it shews every where nothing but the remains of a volcanised earth, the colour of which is that of the element, by which it was long consumed. Funchal, the capital town of the islands is situated in long. 19°. 20'. 30." in lat. 32° 37'. 40". This town is far from handsome, the streets are narrow and the houses in general ill built: the highest part of the island is the Pic de Ruvio,

which rises about two hundred metres above the level of the sea. The population of Madeira is from 85,000 to 90,000, inhabitants as we are assured by a person worthy of credit, who has resided for some time in that fine colony.

We sailed in this manner along the coast of Madeira, because the intention of the commander was to send a boat on shore for refreshments; but being surprised by a calm under the land, we were afraid of approaching too near, lest we should not be able to stem the strong currents which set towards it. A gentle breeze arising, enabled us to get out to sea, where the wind became favorable, and pretty brisk; it was resolved that the boat should not go on shore: and we resumed our course going at eight knots. We had remained three hours opposite Funchal bay. At nightfall Madeira was in full sight: the next morning at sun-rise we saw the islands called Salvages, and in the evening we descried the Pico of Teneriffe, on the island of that name. This lofty mountain, behind which the sun had just set, presented a sight truly magnificent; its summit seemed to be crowned with fire: its elevation above the level of the sea, is 3711 metres; it is situated in lat. 28° 17' and in long. 19°. Several persons on board affirmed that they saw the Pico at eight o'clock in the morning; and yet we were at least thirty leagues distant from it; the sky it is true, was extremely clear.

The commander resolved to send a boat to St. Croix, one of the principal towns in the island, to fetch fruits, and some filtering stones, which are made in that town; they are only a kind of mortar, made of the volcanic stone of the country. In consequence, during the whole night we made short tacks; the next morning we coasted the island, at the distance of two musket shot, and passed under the guns of a little fort, called *Fort Français*. One of our companions leaped for joy, at the sight of this little fort, which was raised in haste by a few Frenchmen, when the English, under

Admiral Nelson, attempted to take possession of the Colony. It was there, said he, that a numerous fleet, commanded by one of the bravest Admirals of the English navy, failed before a handful of French, who covered themselves with glory and saved Teneriffe; the Admiral was obliged to take flight, after having lost an arm in the contest, which was long and obstinate.

Having doubled a point which extends into the sea, we entered the bay, at the bottom of which is the town of St. Croix. The appearance of Teneriffe is majestic: the whole island is composed of mountains, which are extremely high, and crowned with rocks terrifying from their size, which on the north side, seem to rise perpendicularly above the surface of the ocean, and to threaten every moment to crush by their fall, the vessels which pass near their base. Above them all rises the Pico, the summit of which is lost in the clouds. We did not perceive that the Pic was constantly covered with snow as some voyagers affirm, nor that it vomits forth lava of melted metal; for when we observed it, its summit seemed intirely destitute of snow and of volcanic eruptions. At the foot of the mountain, and up to a certain elevation excavations filled with sulphur are observed; and in its neighbourhood several of the sepulchral caverns of the Guanches, the ancient inhabitants of the island.

Towards noon the *Echo* corvette, which had parted company, rejoined us, and passed under the stern of the frigate: she was ordered to imitate our manoeuvres, which she instantly did; she did not send any boat on shore. Thus united, we lay to together in the bay of St. Croix. About four o'clock in the afternoon, the boat having returned on board we directed our course for Senegal. They had bought in the town some earthen jars of a large size, precious wines, oranges, lemons, banian figs, and vegetables of all kinds.

Several unfortunate Frenchmen were on the island who had been long prisoners of war; they lived upon what the Spaniards chose to give them. They had been restored to liberty on the conclusion of peace, and waited only for a favorable opportunity to return to France. Their entreaties to the officer who commanded the boat were useless; he had the cruelty to refuse to restore them to their country and their families. In this boat there was another officer M. Laperère, who strongly insisted on bringing away these unfortunate persons; his entreaties could not move him who commanded the boat.

The depravity of morals at St. Croix is extreme; so much so that when the women heard that some Frenchmen were arrived in the town, they placed themselves at their doors, and when they passed, urged them to enter. All this is usually done in the presence of the husbands, who have no right to oppose it, because the Holy Inquisition will have it so, and because the monks who are very numerous in the island take care that this custom is observed. They possess the art of blinding the husbands, by means of the *prestiges* of religion, which they abuse in the highest degree; they cure them of their jealousy, to which they are much inclined, by assuring them that their passion, which they call ridiculous, or conjugal mania, is nothing but the persecution of Satan which torments them, and from which they alone are able to deliver them, by inspiring their dear consorts with some religious sentiments. These abuses are almost inevitable in a burning climate, where the passion of love is often stronger than reason, and sometimes breaks through the barriers which religion attempts to oppose to it: this depravity of morals must therefore be attributed to inflamed passions, and not to abuses facilitated by a religion so sublime as ours.

The Island of Teneriffe is not equal to that of Madeira: one cannot even compare their agricultural productions, on account of the great difference of their soils: but in a commercial view, Teneriffe has the advantage of Madeira. Its geographical position in the middle of the Canaries, enables it to carry on an extensive trade, while Madeira is confined to the sale and exchange of its wines for articles of European manufacture.

The soil of Teneriffe is much drier; a great part of it is too volcanic to be used for agriculture: every part of it however, which is capable of producing anything is very well cultivated, which should seem to prove, that the Spaniards of this country are naturally much less indolent than they have been represented.[A3]

When we were in the open sea we had favorable winds from the N.N.E.

In the night of the 29th of June the frigate caught fire between decks, by the negligence of the master baker; but being discovered in time, the fire was extinguished. In the following night the same accident was repeated; but this time it was necessary, in order to stop the progress of the fire, to pull down the oven which was rebuilt the next day.

On the 1st of July we descried Cape Bayados, situated in latitude 26° 12' 30", and in longitude 16° 47'. We then saw the skirts of the immense desert of Zaara, and we thought we perceived the mouth of the river St. John [A4], which is very little known. We passed the tropic at ten o'clock in the morning; the usual ceremony was there performed with a certain pomp; the jokes of the sailors amused us for some moments; we were far from thinking of the cruel event which was soon to deprive of their lives a third of the persons who were on board the frigate. This custom of

tropical baptism is strange enough; the chief object of it, is, to procure the sailors some money.

From St. Croix, we had constantly steered to the S.S.W. During the ceremony at the tropic we doubled Cape Barbas, situated in lat. 22° 6', and long. 19° 8': two officers suddenly had the course changed, without informing the captain; this led to a pretty warm dispute, which however had no serious consequences. These two officers affirmed that we were running upon a group of rocks, and that we were already very near to the breakers. We had sailed the whole morning in the Gulph of St. Cyprian, the bottom of which is strewed with rocks, so that at low water, brigantines cannot frequent these seas, as we were told at Senegal by M. Valentin, senior, who is perfectly acquainted with this whole coast, and could not conceive how the frigate could have passed amidst all these reefs without striking. The shore was within half a cannon shot, and we clearly saw enormous rocks over which the sea broke violently.[11] If it had fallen calm, there is no doubt but the strong currents which set, in-shore, would have infallibly carried us into danger.

In the evening we thought we descried Cape Blanco[A5], and according to the instructions given by the Navy Office, we steered W.S.W. During a part of the night the *Echo*, with which we had constantly kept company since we left Madeira, burnt several charges of powder and hung a lanthorn at the mizen-mast; her signals were not answered in the same manner; only a lanthorn was hung for a few moments to the fore-mast; it went out soon after, and was not replaced by another light. M. Savigny was on deck where he remained a part of the night: he had full opportunity to perceive the negligence of the officer of the watch, who did not even deign to answer the signals made by the *Echo*[A6]. Why, in the neighbourhood of so formidable a danger, not compare the points of the two

ships, as is usual when vessels sail in company? The captain of the frigate was not even informed of the signals of the corvette. At eleven o'clock, she bore off the larboard bow; and soon after he perceived that the direction of her course made a pretty large angle with ours, and that it tended to cross us passing a-head; he soon perceived her on the starboard: it is affirmed that her journal states that she sailed the whole night W.S.W. ours does the same. We must necessarily have hauled to the larboard, or she to the starboard, since at day-break the corvette was no longer in sight.

At sea a vessel may easily be perceived at the distance of six leagues. From midnight till six in the morning, she must have gained above six leagues of us, which is not to be imagined, for she sailed much slower than we and stopped every two hours to take soundings. To explain this separation we must necessarily admit either that the frigate steered more south, or the corvette more west, if the two vessels had run on the same tack it would be impossible to explain it.

Every two hours the frigate brought-to, to sound; every half hour the lead was cast without lowering the sails; we were always upon shallows, and stood out to sea, to find a greater quantity of water: at length about six o'clock in the morning we had above a hundred fathoms; we then stood-to the S.S.E.; this course made almost a right angle with that which we had followed in the night: it bore directly in-shore, the approach to which, in this place, is rendered terrible by a very long reef, called Arguin, which according to instructions we had on board extends above thirty leagues in breadth.[12] According to the instructions given by the Minister of the Marine, this danger is avoided by running only twenty-two leagues in the open sea; it is true they recommend not to approach the shore but with the greatest

precaution, and with the sounding line in the hand: the other ships of the expedition which sailed according to those instructions all arrived at St. Louis without any accident, which is a certain proof of their exactness.[13] Besides it is said, that one must make W.S.W., when one has discerned Cape Blanco; and it is probable we had not got sight of it in the evening, as was supposed. We therefore had an uncertain point of departure; hence the error which was so fatal to us.

According to my Comrade Corréard, we cannot pass over in silence, a scene which took place in the morning. The Captain was deceived in the most singular manner; about five or six o'clock he was called up; some persons who were on deck persuaded him that a great cloud which was in the direction of Cape Blanco and in truth very near it, was that Cape itself. My companion in misfortune, who sees clearly, and who knows how to distinguish between a rock and a cloud, because he has seen enough of them in the Alps, where he was born, told those gentlemen that it was only a cape of vapour; he was answered that the instructions which the minister had given to the captain prescribed to him to make this cape; but that we had passed it above ten leagues; that at this moment the question was, to make the captain believe that the instructions of the minister had been punctually followed, and that they desired to persuade him, which was not difficult, that this cloud was the Cape. Many have deposed, as we have been told, that Cape Blanco, had been seen in the evening of the 1st of July: we venture to affirm that that rock was not seen at all.

After this pretended reconnaissance of the 2d July, if we were persuaded that we had seen that Cape, we should have steered west, to double the bank of Arguin; the danger once passed, the course should have been again directed to the south which is the route to Senegal; but he who for