SIR: I inclose herewith the copy of a letter I received a few days ago at Vichy, from the minister of foreign affairs in answer to the one I addressed to him on the 8th instant, in relation to the Sandwich islands. You will observe that after expressing the painful surprise my communication had caused him, he states that the information which had been received in the United States respecting the pending measures and intentions of the French Government towards those islands, and on which your despatch No. 28 was founded, is erroneous; which he has instructed Monsieur de Sartiges to rectify in his communications with you at Washington, while he awaits my return to Paris to give me viva voce the same eclairecismens here.

I waited upon the minister of foreign affairs as soon as I returned, and after some moments of conversation on general topics he entered upon the subject of our recent correspondence. He said that he had been surprised and even pained at the apparent facility with which the Government of the United States had given credence to the rumors which had reached it respecting the supposed designs of France toward the Sandwich Islands; that there was in truth no real foundation for those rumors; that the French Government had ordered no hostile demonstrations whatever to sustain M. Perrin's mission to coerce the submission of the islands to its demands; that not having the advantage which both England and the United States possessed in the presence and controlling influence of natives of each of those countries in the Hawaiian councils, it might sometimes find it necessary to employ a more energetic tone of negotiation than either of those powers to obtain an equal treatment with them, but that the Government of the United States might be assured that France would always respect the independence of these islands, which she had a common interest with other commercial nations in maintaining; and that nothing was more remote from her wishes or intentions in any event than to subject them to her dominion or to acquire territorial sovereignty over them.

I told Monsieur Baroche that I should have great pleasure in communicating to you these explicit and honorable declarations on the part of the French Government; and having already presented to him in writing the views of the Government of the United States, as expressed in your dispatch of the 19th ultimo, I did not think it necessary to add anything further than to say that the rumors which he seemed to think had met with too easy a credence at Washington, had come through a semiofficial channel which it would have been difficult wholly to disregard.

I will take this occasion to remark that there seems to have been an entire misconception on the part of Mr. Judd as to the nature of the instructions received from the Department of State, in June, 1850, respecting the controversy between France and the Hawaiian Government. In both of his letters, which accompanied your dispatch No. 28, he speaks of my being authorized to propose to the French Government the good offices of the United States for the adjustment of the controversy. It will be seen, however, on reference to the instructions addressed to me, that, without any proposal of the good offices of the United States for settling the matters in dispute, I was to take a "proper opportunity" in my intercourse with the minister of foreign affairs, "if circumstances, in my judgment, should warrant it," to