HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

Hawaiian Government was a fair and substantially equal treatment of their commerce, navigation, and the religion of their citizens, relatively to that which the same interests of England and the United States enjoyed; that the French Government had never had the slightest intention of pursuing any measures toward the Sandwich Islands inconsistent with a just respect of their independence; that after the receipt of the letter I had addressed to the minister of foreign affairs in July last, Monsieur de Sartiges had been instructed to give you the fullest and most formal assurances to that effect; but if they had known at the time, or could have anticipated, the course which was pursued by the Government of the United States in the matter, the dignity of the French Government would not have permitted them, in such circumstances, to give the frank and unreserved explanations which had been authorized.

He spoke of the manner in which the interposition of the United States had taken place as being unusual and wounding (blessante) to the dignity of the French Government, referring, as I understood him, to the circumstance of a communication on the subject being first addressed to the commissioner of the United States, and immediately afterwards made known by a circular to all the members of the diplomatic corps at Washington. He said it so happened that the first information of the proceeding reached them through the English legation here, which was very prompt to communicate it. He alluded, also, to the circumstance that the United States had been invited to become a party to the convention concluded between France and England in 1843 for mutually respecting the independence of the Sandwich Islands, but the invitation had been declined, a circumstance which, he thought, should protect France from the suspicion of having improper designs upon the independence of the islands.

Mr. Viol-Castel concluded by saying that in the position in which they were now placed by the proceedings of the Government of the United States it was not possible they could ask of us our good offices in bringing about an arrangement of their difficulties with the Sandwich Islands, but he trusted the United States itself would be prompted by its own sense of justice and a feeling of common friendship for both parties to use its influence with the Hawaiian Government to extend an equal treatment in the spirit of its treaty obligations to French interests with those of other nations.

I report to you without comment these observations of M. Viol-Castel, with as near a conforming to his own language as I have been able to attain. You will best appreciate their bearing and importance on the points which seemed most to touch the susceptibility of the French Government. I made such observations to him in reply as, without departing from the position taken by the Government of the United States, seemed best calculated to exhibit it in a friendly and conciliatory aspect. In this spirit (considering the preservation of the ancient friendly relations between the two countries as a matter of the highest importance to both, and, indeed, to all mankind) I have hitherto endeavored to conduct my official intercourse with this Government, and I am happy to say that I have always found it reciprocated in the fullest measure by the public authorities here.

I have the honor, etc.,

W. C. Rives.