HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

[From the annual message of President Johnson to the Fortieth Congress, December 9, 1868.]

I am aware that upon the question of further extending our possessions it is apprehended by some that our political system can not successfully be applied to an area more extended than our continent; but the conviction is rapidly gaining ground in the American mind that, with the increased facilities for intercommunication between all portions of the earth, the principles of free government, as embraced in our Constitution, if faithfully maintained and carried out, would prove of sufficient strength and breadth to comprehend within their sphere and influence the civilized nations of the world.

The attention of the Senate and of Congress is again respectfully invited to the treaty for the establishment of commercial reciprocity with the Hawaiian Kingdom, entered into last year, and already ratified by that Government. The attitude of the United States towards these islands is not very different from that in which they stand towards the West Indies. It is known and felt by the Hawaiian Government and people that their Government and institutions are feeble and precarious; that the United States, being so near a neighbor, would be unwilling to see the islands pass under foreign control. Their prosperity is continually disturbed by expectations and alarms of unfriendly political proceedings, as well from the United States as from other foreign powers. A reciprocity treaty, while it could not materially diminish the revenues of the United States, would be a guaranty of the good will and forbearance of all nations until the people of the islands shall of themselves, at no distant day, voluntarily apply for admission into the Union.

HONOLULU, April 14, 1869.

DEAR FATHER: The bark Comet sails to-day for San Francisco, and even though I have little to make a letter interesting, I will venture a few lines.

Our latest advices, by the Idaho, seemed to convey the idea that the reciprocity treaty was beyond hope, and the effect is beginning to be generally felt and seen. Men who have kept silent for months, guarding their words and actions, have openly expressed themselves of late as being in favor of annexation, and begun to talk of forming an organization or party with that end in view.

What they want is to know that they will be backed up by the United States and its representatives here in all proper measures taken by them to secure a change in the political sentiment of the islands and their annexation at the earliest possible period.

This means not necessarily a war on the part of the United States, but a feeling that they are supported by our Government and its officials, even to the continued presence of a man-of-war, if necessary, and intervention should this Government attempt to stop free speech and a free press or put down an American simply because he is an American and expresses himself favorably towards the United States.

Americans whose opinions are entitled to respect claim that they have never had from the Government of the United States that countenance and support that England and France have always extended to their subjects here. They say (and I am disposed to think with some justice) that while an Englishman or Frenchman, even though holding an office under this Government, never forgets his country, Americans have been brought up and become more thoroughly Hawaiian than the