Diplomacy in Barbary*

The shores of Barbary have provided historic grounds of conflict between Christian and Moslem, between Western Civilization and strange and sometimes hostile neighbors. Similarly, the waters of the Mediterranean have frequently been cut by the prows of hostile flotillas, and its winds have borne the sound of thundering batteries and the acrid smell of burning gunpowder.

Early in its career as an independent republic, the United States was drawn into conflict on these shores and waters. The flag of the new republic was fouled with insult, and American citizens were held in slavery by bandits putting out from African ports. Various expeditions and agents had been sent there unsuccessfully to right these wrongs, but it was not until after the War of 1812 that ministers of punishment and peace were to succeed in the difficult task.

On the southern shores of the Mediterranean sprawled the four Barbary kingdoms—Algiers, Morocco, Tripoli and Tunis—ruled by Turkish military chieftains whose main interest and principal support was piracy. For years these Moslem marauders had preyed upon the Mediterranean commerce of Christian nations, and when the United States came into being, the new republic found its infant commerce likewise beset. Algerine corsairs immediately began to harry American merchantmen, and the Tripolitans finally drove the United States into war, 1801-1805. War with Algeria had been avoided because the United States, before the navy was created, had begun the practice common even among powerful European nations of paying tribute to secure immunity.1

* Among the treasures of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania is an extensive collection of the manuscripts of William Shaler of Connecticut and Massachusetts, sometime member of the American Philosophical Society held in Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge, and a diplomat of wide experience. These papers, the gift of Mrs. Willoughby Webb of Martha's Vineyard, have made possible the writing of this sketch. Manuscripts, unless otherwise cited, are from the Shaler Papers.

1 For the general background of relations with the Barbary powers and American experience there, see Gardner W. Allen, Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs (Boston, 1905); Ray W. Irwin, Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776-1816 (Chapel Hill, 1931); Charles O. Paullin, Diplomatic Negotiations of American Naval Officers (Baltimore, 1912); R. L. Playfair, Scourge of Christendom (London, 1884), 252–303; William Shaler, Sketches of Algiers (Boston, 1826).
The humiliation of tribute was resented in the United States, but for some years there seemed to be no alternative. The dangers and perplexities which beset Jefferson and Madison during the confusions of the Napoleonic wars prevented any change, and the little effort they could spare was engrossed in the Tripolitan War. By 1812, however, Algerine conditions had become intolerable. The Dey of that country had started a quarrel over the tribute and had begun piratical attacks upon the merchantmen of the United States within his reach. Only the fact that the War of 1812 drove its flag out of the Mediterranean saved United States shipping from great damage. The Algerine navy succeeded in capturing only one American prize, the Edwin, George C. Smith, master, with a crew of ten and a single passenger. These unfortunates were thrown into slavery; even their government was unable to ransom them. While the war lasted, Madison and Monroe could do nothing, but they determined to settle the score at the first opportunity.

The Algerine question was first on the agenda when the ink had dried on the Treaty of Ghent. President Madison promptly asked Congress to declare war on February 23, 1815, and by March 2, the declaration was proclaimed. A naval expedition was speedily organized and plans made to send with it a commission of three—two naval officers and a civilian, with power to negotiate for a peace.

The American navy was rich in competent officers, but to find a civilian of sufficient capacity and training for the diplomatic responsibility was more of a problem. President Madison, however, chose a man admirably fitted for this task—William Shaler of Connecticut, a man with unique qualifications for so taxing a post.²

William Shaler was born just prior to the Revolution, and the premature death of his father had caused him to take to the sea at an early age. He became an agent for an American house which traded extensively with France during the French Revolution. Shaler learned French and French business methods, but more important, he waxed enthusiastic over French ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity. He had also sailed to South America and the Orient, and when the Spanish-American revolutions broke out, he was appointed an American agent to Cuba and Mexico. Shaler now was

anxious for another assignment to Spanish America, where he might further aid the cause of liberty, but his superiors saw in him potentialities for the African post. Madison invited him to undertake this peace mission and then to settle in Algiers as Consul General for all the Barbary states. To this Shaler acceded, and prepared to demand respect for American power from behind the guns of a fleet. He entered upon his new assignment with great enthusiasm. To him it was “an employment very distinguished in itself, surrounded with all ‘the pomp and glorious circumstance of war’; and in many respects more agreeable than anything at this time in the gift of the government.” It was his hope that the United States would “have a controlling aim in the general affairs of the civilized world” before he died.3

Squadrons were organized under two great captains, Stephen Decatur and William Bainbridge. It was with the former that Shaler sailed on the Guerrière on May 20, 1815. The commissioners were instructed to make an honorable peace and a treaty which would free the prisoners and relieve the United States from further tribute. However, the United States was to give voluntarily as much money as either Britain or France agreed to continue. While there was to be no stipulated ransom paid for the prisoners, a private gratuity might be presented afterwards. The commission was provided with $30,000 for the expense of the negotiation, and among the presents they were to take was a beautiful sabre for the Dey, which had been secured in London at a cost of $5,000.

On the long voyage of nearly a month Shaler was busy making plans. Desiring to secure publicity in Europe for the fleet’s display of American strength, he wrote a series of letters to diplomats and agents of his acquaintance. He asked them to see that the European press printed accounts of the expedition and its full naval strength, so that the powers might be impressed by the rapidity of American recovery from the War of 1812. Not until after the fleet had sailed from Gibraltar in mid-June did it see action.

Shortly after leaving this haven the squadron encountered an Algerine frigate of forty-six guns which the Guerrière immediately engaged. The battle lasted a brief twenty minutes, during which not an Algerine shot struck the American ship. To Shaler it “resembled a

3 Shaler to Jonathan Russell, Jan. 7 and June 14, 1815.
sham fight more than anything else." A few days later a brig of twenty-two guns was captured under circumstances that were later to cause much trouble. These prizes were taken into the Spanish port of Carthagena where it was learned that the grand admiral of Algiers had been killed in the battle. Since they also learned that the Algerine fleet was away from the city, they realized that the opportune time to present their demands was at hand. The fleet sailed immediately, reaching its destination on June 28, while the Algerines were still uncertain as to the fate of their ships. Under these auspicious circumstances Decatur and Shaler prepared to negotiate.

Since Tobias Lear, Shaler's predecessor, had found the Swedish Consul, Johann Norderling, most helpful, Monroe had instructed the commission to work through him. When the Swedish ensign and a white flag were hoisted on the Guerrière, Norderling and the Algerine captain of the port came on board. The latter was dumfounded to learn of the capture of the war vessels and immediately asked for a truce while negotiations were pending, for he feared that the remainder of the Algerine fleet might return at any time and be captured by the American expedition. Decatur and Shaler not only refused the truce, but also a request that the negotiations be conducted on shore—the treaty was to be made aboard the Guerrière.

These demands were transmitted to the Dey, who, having no option in the matter, consented, and the next day his representative appeared on board the flagship. Captain Decatur and Shaler presented a draft treaty which they demanded should be signed immediately. This treaty, as Monroe had instructed, contained no references to tribute nor to presents; such payments the American commissioners declared would never again be formally agreed to by the United States. But, they added, the United States was a magnanimous and generous nation and would give presents on occasion. The Algerine representative made various attempts to bargain, but received only one concession. As the war vessels just captured by Decatur were in poor condition and would require a large expenditure to fit them for a voyage to America, the commissioners agreed to return them, although such a stipulation was not included in the treaty. Finally, the emissary of the Dey was ordered to take the treaty ashore and to bring it back signed. Until this was done there would be no truce, and the Algerine fleet might sail into the trap at
any moment. Despite the fact that the distance to shore was five miles, the treaty was signed and returned in three hours—none too soon, as it happened, for immediately thereafter one of the Algerine vessels hove in sight.

By July 4 the formalities had been completed, and Shaler went ashore, where he was introduced to the Dey, to whom he presented the ceremonial sword. He also dispersed some $17,000 among myriad officials, including the Dey’s barber and two cooks. Thus Shaler entered upon the duties of his new position as Consul General to the Barbary states, with general oversight of the activities and expenditures of the American consuls at Tripoli, Tunis and Morocco. 4

Shaler found his new post a strange, unreal sort of place. Algiers was impressive, unlike anything most Americans knew. The city itself was located on a semicircular bay twelve to fifteen miles wide, rising from the sea and stretching out on the sides of a steep amphitheatre. It was a walled city, shaped like a topsail, compactly filled with 50,000 people living in square, whitewashed houses. Its narrow streets were steep, seldom wide enough to permit carts to pass, all seeming to lead to the fortress or Casauba which dominated the city. The houses were flat with roofs protected by parapets. There were no windows on the street, and the long and narrow rooms were built around interior courts. The metropolis was heavily guarded, fortified with a thousand pieces of heavy cannon, and the gates of the city were closed each night.

Shaler in time rented one of these square houses from the heirs of a murdered Dey for $250 a year. Two sides of his house looked out over the sea and had a terrace from which he might enjoy the chance sight of an American ship entering the harbor. He could not, however, fly

4 The complicated and somewhat puzzling story of Shaler’s early negotiations is found in Shaler, Sketches of Algiers, 125–128, Appendix C; American State Papers, Foreign Relations, IV, 4–7; Allen, 281–284; Irwin, 176–182; Paullen, 111–116; Monroe to Shaler, Apr. 10 and May 12, 1815, Instructions, U. S. Ministers, VII, 393, 406; Shaler to Monroe, Apr. 29, July 5 and 28, Sept. 25 and 27, 1815, Algiers, Dispatches, IX, State Dept. Archives; Decatur and Shaler to Monroe, July 4, 1815, Mediterranean Negotiations, State Dept. Archives; Decatur to Monroe, July 7 and Aug. 31, 1815, ibid.; Bainbridge to Monroe, Sept. 5 and Nov. 15, 1815, ibid.; Decatur to Monroe, Feb. 9, 1816, ibid.; Decatur, June 19, July 5, 24, 25, and Nov. 12, 1815, Captains’ Letters (1815), IV, VI, Navy Dept. Archives; Commission, April 25, 1815; S. Pleasonton to Shaler, May 5, 1815; Decatur to Shaler, July 2, 1815; undated memorandum, Norderling to Shaler, July 3, 1815; Gamble to Shaler, July 22, 1815; McCall to Shaler, Aug. 7, 1815; Shaler to Russell, Sept. 26, 1815; Decatur to Shaler, Oct. 7, 1815; Norderling to Shaler, Oct. 3, 1816.
his flag from his house; it was a violation of Moslem religious custom
to permit a foreign banner in the city. As it was necessary to display
a flag as a sign of peace to assure incoming vessels that the harbor
was safe to enter, Shaler, like the other consuls, hired a garden out-
side the city where he could fly the Stars and Stripes, protected by a
soldier whom he had engaged.

His household was small, for he was a confirmed bachelor—though
one with a roving eye. He had brought with him his nephew and
namesake, William Shaler, and during the early years of his stay,
William Buell, a young man in ill health, served as his secretary.
As was customary, he employed a native factotum or dragoman,
Baptiste Jollié, and various other servants. It was necessary that he
constantly distribute largesse. Whenever he landed or boarded a
boat, he was saluted with five guns, for which he had to pay \$40. Whenever American vessels arrived in the harbor and remained more
than three days, a present of bullocks, poultry, bread, fruits and
vegetables was sent on board, for which the Consul had to pay \$14.
Life was made up of paying for presents. However, his salary of
\$4,000 was ample to support a style of luxury which he described as
“splendid and elegant, but entirely unencumbered with fastidious
and fatiguing forms.” In fact, his social opportunities were limited,
because his relationships with the Turkish rulers were confined to
official business. He and his fellow consuls were consequently thrown
much into each other’s company, and they formed a society which
Shaler found “most friendly and pleasing.” His closest ties were with
the Swedish consul and, in later times, with the Danish and the
Dutch representatives. Although his relations with the British were
to be friendly and fateful, he unfortunately found little reason to like
the French.

The government with which he had to deal was a peculiar one. The
kingdom of Algiers was a fief of the Turkish Empire and was ruled
by a military force of some four thousand Janissaries from Turkey.
All administrative posts were held by the officers of this alien force.
The Dey or Bashaw was elected from among them by the Divan or
Council composed of present and former corps commanders. These
elections were ratified by the Turkish Emperor. The Dey appointed
his ministers from the Divan, including the Hasnagle (minister of
finance and interior), the Aga (war minister), the Vikel Argee (min-
ister of marine and foreign affairs) and two others. The Dey and these ministers were the government and ruled unchecked, except by the fear of revolt among the Janissaries. These revolts were apt to occur at any moment—once, in fact, there were seven during a single day. When Shaler began his consulship, Omar was the Dey, but Shaler was to see several successors within his years of service.

This Turkish government ruled a mixed people. The largest group were the Moors, who were predominant in the cities. There were also Arabs, Biscaries, Mozabis, Kabyles and the Touariks; in Algiers alone there were 5,000 Jews. The Moors themselves were a mixed race of the ancient inhabitants, Mohammedan conquerors, Turks and emigrants from Spain. The Arabs were plainsmen, descendants of the Mohammedan invaders who had swept in from Asia in the seventh century. The Biscaries were related to the Arabs, and all spoke Arabic in some form. The other three groups were probably descended from the original African inhabitants, and spoke a language which was distinct. These people were eventually to be of great interest to Shaler.

While becoming acquainted with the North African people and their customs, Shaler found his diplomatic duties difficult and dangerous. He found himself early “on his own,” for Decatur did not remain long, taking his fleet to Tunis and Tripoli. To be sure, Bainbridge arrived not long afterwards, but after displaying his forces to the Dey, he also went on to impress the Tripolitans and Tunisians. These visits concluded the tour of African duty of the fleet, and, according to orders, most of the war vessels returned to America leaving only a frigate and two sloops in the Mediterranean under Captain Shaw. Even before Bainbridge left, however, Shaler discovered that his position was none too secure.

The first trouble arose from the agreement to return the two warships which the squadron had captured on its way to Algiers. This concession had been made at Decatur's insistence and against Shaler's better judgment. Indeed, there had been friction between the two men at every step. Decatur was overbearing, and was inclined to run things without too much deference to his civilian associate, thus earning from Norderling the title “Bashaw Decatur,”

6 Shaler, Sketches of Algiers, 49-51, 53, 71-72, 82; Shaler to Monroe, Nov. 5, 1815, Jan. 10, 1816, Algiers Dispatches, IX.
as he strutted about sporting the Order of the Cincinnati. The captain, although he insisted upon the return of the ships, did not wait to see that transaction consummated. Shaler thought that he should have brought the boats to Algiers before sailing for home. Actually, Decatur did no more than take an Algerine captain to Spain and secure the transfer to him. No sooner had Decatur departed than Spain refused to let the Algerine brig sail.

The difficulty lay in the fact that Decatur's capture of the brig had been irregular. He had pursued it into Spanish waters where it had run on a shoal; it had then been seized in violation of international law. Decatur's excuse was that the brig lay among shoals which he could not blockade, and that she would undoubtedly slip away at high water in the night. Since she was provisioned for a long voyage of depredation, he had decided to stop her. Spain, however, refused to recognize Decatur's claim, as Shaler and the Algerine authorities learned when the frigate returned on July 23 without the brig. The Dey lost little time in making sharp demands upon the American consul, even insisting that if Spain did not surrender the brig, the United States must supply one in its place.

The Consul was in a difficult position. He was far from home and without instructions. In writing to Secretary Monroe of his difficulties, Shaler requested authority to secure aid from Captain Shaw in bringing about a settlement. But there was no way of telling when he might receive a reply; the Consul was almost completely cut off from his home government. There was no mail or dispatch service of any kind, and he had to depend upon the accidental opportunities presented by the visit of a war vessel or the sailing of a captain whom he could trust. Such procedure was irregular and uncertain, for even American naval officers were careless about forwarding his dispatches and his letters often lay for long periods at various ports, while waiting for ships bound to America.

Shaler was further hampered by financial difficulties. Word of this dilemma reached the Dey's ears, making him disdainful of American resources. Shaw was short of money with which to supply his fleet, and this curtailed his cruising range. On the other hand Shaler, Decatur, and Bainbridge had been entrusted with $30,000 deposited with Baring brothers which could be drawn on order of two of the commissioners. Before Decatur left, he and Shaler had drawn half of
this for Shaler's use. He now advanced some of these funds for Shaw's needs, but when this expedient became known, the Algerines became contemptuous of American poverty. The Dey came to enjoy the idea that the American demonstration of the previous year was a feverish and unusual burst of strength which could not be maintained by a weak, poverty-stricken, and very distant power.

Under these circumstances, the Consul General found it extremely difficult to establish the respect and maintain the prestige which he felt was due his government. As the United States did not pay tribute and as he was not in business and had no favors to dispense, it was not easy for Shaler to create influence. He was determined, however, and overlooked no opportunity to assert his rights. When he found that Turkish soldiers were taking fruits, flowers, and vegetables from his garden outside the city walls, he made the strongest efforts to redress this wrong. After several fruitless protests, he declared to the Dey that he would consider such pilfering a national insult; this threat brought results.

Furthermore, Shaler was determined to forestall any retaliatory raids upon American commerce while the Algerine rage over the loss of the brig was hot. The Consul boldly threatened the Dey with naval might if any harm came to American shipping. He declared that Algerine vessels must bear an American passport or else be in danger of seizure by the American navy. These passports were issued to the native shipmasters for each voyage, a measure by which Shaler sought to impress upon the Algerines that any interference with American vessels would cancel his protection and leave them to the mercies of the American navy. He was particularly insistent upon enforcing respect, because he had discovered that the Algerines often brought in vessels and then let them go, just to show their power. Even the British, Shaler believed, tolerated this practice. But not he. He told the Minister of Marine that any such treatment of American merchantmen would mean reprisals upon the Algerine navy. His attitude in those early days of his mission was belligerent. As he wrote Shaw, "We must fix upon something as near to what is just as we can and browbeat them into its acceptance. Indeed the only way to deal with these people is to treat them as you would plantation Negroes." 6

6 Shaler to Shaw, Jan. 23, 1816.
The controversy over the brig held by the Spanish came to a partial settlement before Shaler could hear from Monroe and without a call upon Shaw's little fleet. On March 17, 1816, a Spanish flotilla came into port bringing the disputed brig which was to be returned conditionally. In December, a Spanish war vessel had foundered on the Barbary shore; Spain was willing to exchange the Algerine prize for this ship. To this proposal the Dey had to agree, although he felt cheated and suspected that the United States had connived with Spain to rob him.  

Within a fortnight after this settlement, another diversion occurred which was to have unfortunate consequences upon American interests. The Algerines had been in the habit, during the confusion of the Napoleonic wars, of preying upon the coasts of the Italian states, kidnapping the inhabitants for slaves. Great Britain, on the warpath against the slave trade, had decided to put a stop to this practice. On March 31, 1816, Lord Exmouth arrived with a large British fleet, and soon flattered and persuaded the Dey into making treaties of peace by which the captives were restored to Sardinia and Naples.

During these negotiations, the American squadron put into Algiers on April 3. Shaw had received the Decatur-Shaler treaty of the previous year, duly ratified by the United States Senate, and he and Shaler forthwith proceeded to present it to the Dey for an exchange of ratifications. Unfortunately, however, Omar was feeling particularly elated because of Exmouth's visit. He had interpreted it as a compliment to his power and it had given him a new sense of strength. Consequently, when the two Americans appeared before him, he immediately demanded the President's views regarding the Spanish prize. Shaler explained that the ship bearing the treaty had left the United States before the Consul's request for instruction had been received. The Dey was then brought to discuss the treaty, and produced his copy which was not the same as that just ratified. Evidently, the Algerine minister had inserted some provision relating to indemnity for sailors captured in the war vessels. "This interview terminated by mutual professions of friendly disposition but without the confidence necessary to give any value to such professions." Next day the treaty was returned to Shaler unratified.

7 Shaler to Monroe, Apr. 25, 1816, Algiers Dispatches, IX.
“The reasons which they gave for it were probably true,” Shaler reported, for in all likelihood no such formality had ever been practiced before. “The treaties existing between foreign powers and Algiers,” as far as Shaler knew, were nothing more than capitulations. The return of the treaty caused the naval commanders to talk of war; Captain Oliver Hazard Perry read Roman history to learn how Rome had fought against Carthage. Shaler, however, was opposed to force despite renewed insults from the Algerines which, he declared, forced him to retire to shipboard. He was therefore relieved when this move proved effective. After some delay, the Swedish Consul Norderling reported that the Dey was much surprised that Shaler had left. He wanted only peace. Negotiations began again, and it was finally agreed that the Dey would write to President Madison directly, in the meantime observing the treaty until a reply was received. This letter was duly prepared in Turkish and addressed to his Majesty, the Emperor of America. In it the Dey declared that as the ships had not been returned, the treaty was broken and of no effect. He now proposed that they go back to the original treaty, under which the United States paid tribute. He also requested that Shaler be removed as soon as possible. The Consul suspected that these proposals were made because the Dey did not believe the United States could muster sufficient force to support its demands. At any rate, there was to be further delay. Shaw and his fleet sailed off, the Commander having sent Shaler a cask of old whiskey as a farewell gift.

There now ensued another long period of waiting during the slow transport of dispatches. The British, however, varied its monotony by providing an exciting summer. In May, Exmouth returned with new demands that excited the wrath of Omar, and insults were exchanged. The British Consul was arrested, and his wife and children unceremoniously hustled about. The Dey also captured British subjects engaged in coral fishing under his license, and in the melee some of them were killed. For the time being, this quarrel was smoothed over by presents and meaningless exchanges.

Shaler was naturally a close observer of the episode and, in particular, of the plight of the British Consul, Hugh McDonnell. There were two reasons for deep interest on his part. First, he liked McDonnell and his family. The Consul he recognized as a “strong John Bull
but an honorable man,” with whom he lived “upon most friendly terms.” More particularly, however, Shaler was interested in protecting the dignity of the consular position. He was disappointed in the outcome, which only increased his contempt for British policy. It was his belief that the British had an interest in maintaining the Barbary pirates who conveniently kept down the profits of commercial rivals in the Mediterranean.

Great Britain, however, did not intend to overlook the Dey’s insults. Making common cause with the Dutch, whom Shaler had expected to strike before this, the British ministry sent a joint fleet under Exmouth to inflict punishment. Word of the approach of this armament came from France in July, and when a British war vessel appeared, to take away the British Consul on August 3, the Algerines knew what was coming. They sought to prevent the departure of McDonnell, whose wife and daughter were smuggled on board disguised as midshipmen. When this was discovered, the Consul and some British officers and sailors on shore were arrested. Such was the state of affairs when Lord Exmouth’s fleet arrived on August 27, 1816. Exmouth demanded the release of the hostages, and when it was refused opened up a bombardment. The fleet threw in 30,000 shots and 300 shells. Hardly a house went undamaged, and the Algerine navy and merchant marine were severely crippled. By the next afternoon the Algerines surrendered.

Shaler had been a witness to all this. During the battle many Turks, probably skulkers, constantly passed in and out of his house, breathing vengeance particularly upon the British Consul upon whom they blamed their woes. From his roof he could see hundreds running along the seashore under his very walls, many of them slaughtered by the guns of the fleet. By night the upper part of his house was in ruins, for five shells had exploded within its walls. As night fell, he learned that the British Consul had been thrown in a dungeon, loaded with chains. By eleven, the general firing had all but ceased—only an occasional gun was to be heard. At midnight he viewed from his terrace a “peculiarly grand and sublime spectacle.” Everything in the port seemed aflame, and two burning vessels were drifting out to sea. At this moment a terrific thunderstorm came up, and in the vivid flashes of lightning he could see the fleet retiring offshore before a land breeze. Occasionally the scream of a shell or the
flash of a rocket vied with the thunder and lightning. But the battle was spent. When the British landed in the morning, they found Shaler at breakfast on his terrace, served by frightened servants whom he compelled to wait upon him. The British Consul was rescued from his dungeon and a peace was dictated by Exmouth. The Dey was forced to agree to the abolition of Christian slavery, to restore captives, and to pay back the ransom money received under the recent treaties with Naples and Sardinia.

While Algiers was recovering from this humiliation, Shaler awaited the arrival of his instructions and the answer to the Dey’s letter. At length in October, Commodore Isaac Chauncey appeared with a fleet of six vessels. His appearance spread consternation among the Algerines, for so wrecked were their defenses that they could expect nothing but a second chastisement. As Chauncey had no dispatches, Shaler decided to sail with him to Gibraltar to await their arrival. After reassuring the Dey that peace alone was desired and that no punishment would be attempted without due warning, he boarded the flagship and sailed off. On finding no word awaiting him at Gibraltar, Shaler visited Morocco, which was under his general supervision. After concluding a satisfactory inspection there he returned to Gibraltar, still seeking his instructions.

The long period of uncertainty finally came to an end when the Spark reached Gibraltar with the long-awaited dispatches. Shaler and Chauncey learned that they had been appointed commissioners to settle all difficulties. The Dey was to be told that the United States had been working to persuade the Spanish to surrender the ships. The United States now demanded that the Algerine government sign a new treaty, only slightly modified. In the preceding document it had been provided that United States prizes might be sold in Algiers, a privilege accorded to no other power. Monroe suspected that this might have aroused British opposition and in order to avoid further hindrance, he was willing to drop the point.

The fleet set sail shortly, and on December 7 arrived off Algiers with all plans made and a formal note ready to be delivered to the Dey. Chauncey and Shaler had originally planned to demand that the negotiations be conducted on the quarter-deck of the Washington, but the weather was bad and the fleet could not safely run in and
anchor under the guns of the fortifications. In addition, the fleet was short of provisions. It was therefore decided that Shaler should go ashore with the acting chaplain of the Java, Charles O. Handy, who was to serve as secretary of the mission. Chauncey in the meantime was to go to Port Mahon, the American fleet rendezvous on the island of Minorca, for provisions. So tempestuous was the weather, however, that Shaler and Handy were prevented from landing for a week; on one wild night the Spark, on which they were quartered, nearly foundered in the bay. Had the ship been anchored, it and all on board probably would have been lost.

When Shaler finally got ashore on December 15, he was met by further delays. The Dey, first of all, made much of Chauncey's absence. He then brought up the old question of the ships and the Spaniards, which he claimed the President had not satisfactorily dealt with in his reply. He even called all the foreign consuls to be present while he raised this issue with Shaler. Shaler, however, refused to discuss the matter further, as the President had spoken officially and finally. Then the Dey made another play for delay. He said it had taken eight months and a day, which he counted off on his fingers, for the President to answer him; he would ask the same privilege of time. Because he had just been through a war, he was not ready to make a treaty. If the United States compelled him to sign, he would break it at the first opportunity. He had entered into one treaty with the United States in good faith, but the complexion of things had changed and difficulties had arisen between the two nations. Shaler then said he would have to consult Chauncey who would return in a few days, a demand which the Dey thought unnecessary since Shaler had just certified that he was competent to conduct the negotiation. Shaler demanded ten days and, in effect, threatened war, which finally brought the Dey to agreement.

The following day, however, it became apparent that the monarch believed that Shaler had agreed to the eight-months-and-a-day delay. This Shaler stoutly denied, and concluded not to wait for Chauncey but to inform the Dey that no such delay could be tolerated. There must be an immediate treaty. Finally, the Dey came to terms, but as the next day, Friday, was his Sabbath, Saturday the Sabbath of his interpreter, the Jew Bensamon, and Sunday Shaler's Sabbath, the treaty could not be signed until Monday. During these
negotiations the Dey comported himself with dignity and determination, but with no "hasty ebullitions of temper."

Over the week end Chauncey returned, and Shaler urged him to stay until these protracted negotiations were finished. He did remain a few days, but the return of the fierce storms made it necessary for him once again to take the fleet back to Mahon, leaving only the long-suffering *Spark* in the tempestuous bay. These same tempests delayed the signing which had been set for the 23rd, for a terrible storm on the evening of the 22nd kept the Dey busy supervising the work of saving water-front property. Once again the *Spark* nearly foundered. This strenuous experience gave the Dey an excuse to go to the country for a rest, and it was not until Christmas that the formalities were concluded. That same day Handy boarded the *Spark* to carry the document to Chauncey at Port Mahon, much to the relief of the captain and the crew of that sore-buffeted vessel.

This time the task was finished. The second treaty was to be the law between the two powers for years to come. It had been achieved by two naval expeditions and the havoc wrought by the British bombardment. Despite this successful outcome, however, Shaler was depressed. He was tired of the mission and anxious to return home. Just before Exmouth's bombardment he had written, "In the course of years, this dreary place would hardly furnish a single event worth retailing, unless the roasting of Jews and the strangling of Turks be regarded as such." Also there seemed no future in the post, and so far he had been unable to save anything from his salary. He was a poor man, and, since his brother Nathaniel had perished in the War of 1812, his family was dependent upon him. Worst of all, he had lost his feeling of superiority: "I am not qualified for any employment of a higher grade than this is, therefore, this must be the extreme limit of my diplomatic honors." In order to persuade Monroe to release him, he may have been oversanguine about the durability of peace. Wishful thinking may have convinced him that he might advise the State Department, despite Captain Oliver Hazard Perry's dissent, that the fleet might safely be withdrawn. This was counsel for which he was later to repent.8

With the task at Algiers accomplished, Shaler next turned his attention to his other consular charges, Tunis and Tripoli. Since it would be some time before he could receive an answer to his request for a recall, he planned to visit Thomas D. Anderson and Richard B. Jones, the consuls stationed in these kingdoms. In Tunis, particularly, his presence was needed because of trouble that had arisen over injuries to an American citizen. He set forth determined on a show of authority, "well satisfied that any relaxation of a just and severe discipline in support of our new system [no tribute] towards the Barbary powers will inevitably tend to the injury of our credit and of our interests." He left Algiers on May 8, 1817, leaving his secretary, William Buell, in charge of his office.

At Gibraltar Shaler was delayed by fever, and by a recuperative trip to Italy. His visits to Naples, Messina, and Syracuse caused him to ponder the message "of the crumbling monuments of the greatness of nations whose existence has passed away but the rays of whose glory still shine upon us." It was not until September that he finally reached Tunis and Tripoli in the company of Chauncey who had returned to the Mediterranean. As a result of his tour, Shaler was able to adjust several problems of varying seriousness, including the difficult question of whether the American consul should kiss the foot of the Bey of Tunis. A treaty with that monarch was also concluded. Since Shaler's investigation showed him that there was no natural dependence of the other Barbary consulates upon that of Algiers, he recommended that each be made independent of the Consul General, a recommendation later accepted by Monroe.

Bad news prevented Shaler's return to Algiers. The plague had broken out, and Death stalked the streets. This terrifying Figure was accompanied by revolution and the overthrow of the Dey. The misfortunes of the Algerine monarch had been too much for him: he had been beaten by the British, he had been forced to sign a second

17, May 12 and 30, June 29, July 25 (2 letters), Oct. 20, Nov. 13, Dec. 30, 1816, Algiers Dispatches, IX; Shaler to Shaw, Apr. 8, 1816; Norderling to Shaler, Apr. 9 (2 letters), 10, 1816; Perry to Shaler, Apr. 10, 1816; Shaler to the Dey, Apr. 11, 1816; Perry to Shaler, Apr. 15, 1816; John Graham to Shaler, Aug. 24, 1816; Bernard Henry to Shaler, Sept. 20, 1816; Chauncey to Sec. of the Navy, Dec. 27, 1816; Shaler to D. Ankarloo, Dec. 7, 1816; Charles O. Handy's Journal of the Mission, Nov. 8–Jan. 14, 1817; Chauncey to Monroe, Jan. 1, 1817; Perry to Shaler, Jan. 22, 1817; Chauncey to Sec. of the Navy, Oct. 15 and 29, Dec. 27, 1816, Captains' Letters (1816), IV.
treaty with the United States, and now the plague was scourging his subjects. It was evident that his fanatical people saw him as the object of divine displeasure, so they destroyed him—"the only man," Shaler believed, "amongst them who appeared capable of sustaining their rickety fortunes." A religious fanatic, Ali Khodgia, described by Shaler as an "old imbecile shopkeeper," organized the Turkish Janissaries against Omar, and having killed him with their aid, shut himself up in the fortress and began a high-handed rule.

The first task of the new Dey was to rid himself of the Turkish soldiers and to make his government hereditary. With the assistance of native tribesmen he succeeded in slaughtering a number of the Janissaries. He also sought to make his rule a social success, and gathered about him a harem of beautiful girls. The fact that most of these girls were Jewesses, some of whom enjoyed British citizenship, suggested the desirability of religious zeal for proselyting, and the new Dey began with his Jewish interpreter, whom he insisted should turn Mohammedan. The linguist refused, despite offers of promotion, claiming the protection of British citizenship. Such defiance infuriated the Dey. Immediately he had a fire kindled—he would burn Bensamon at the stake. The sight of the flames caused the interpreter to swoon; when he revived, he found that his head had been shaved and that he was dressed as a Musselman. When the British Consul protested this action, the Dey opened a door and showed the interpreter a number of recently severed heads; he threatened to add his to the collection if he did not acquiesce.9

These reports confirmed Shaler in his determination not to return to Algiers until the plague subsided, and he settled himself at Marseilles to direct at long distance the performance of consular duties by Buell. A problem loomed most formidably. The usual semi-piratical fleets which put out from Algiers might well carry the plague infection with them, and woe betide any ship which fell in with them. Buell reported that the Dey claimed to be friendly, but

9 Shaler to Monroe, Mar. 2 and 5, May 17, 1817; Shaler to Adams, Sept. 25 (2 letters), Oct. 10 and 17, Nov. 25, Dec. 10, 1817; Chauncey to Shaler, Aug. 16, 1817; Shaler to Graham, Oct. 16, 1817; Shaler to Chauncey, Nov. 20, 1817; Gallatin to Shaler, Dec. 4, 1817; Shaler to Russell, Dec. 12, 1817; Thomas Appleton to Shaler, Jan. 7-9, 1818; Shaler to Russell, June 25, 1818; Shaler to Norderling, Dec. 8, 1818; Shaler to ________, July 20, 1819; Shaler to Hughes, Mar. 25, 1820; Stewart to Shaler, Sept. 27, 1819; Shaler, Sketches of Algiers, 153.
Shaler was suspicious, partly because Anderson wrote from Tunis that the Bey had repudiated the September treaty with the United States and had made an alliance with Algiers. That cruisers were being armed foretold piratical forays.

Dr. George Eustis, American Minister to the Hague, was wintering in Marseilles for his health, and both diplomats worked on the problem. After full discussion Shaler sent Buell his instructions. He was to tell the Dey that the President of the United States had been informed that Algerines would not molest American ships. Buell was also to tell him that, because of the plague, it was necessary that the Dey “make an explicit declaration that in future all commanders of Algiers cruisers shall receive his positive instructions not to board any American merchant vessel during the existence of pestilence in his dominions on any pretext whatsoever.” He was further to impress upon the Dey that such aggression would be considered “an act of hostility of the most aggravated nature.”

Buell reported in due time that he had given the Dey Shaler’s demands, to which the Dey had replied that the flag of the United States was often flown by others and that he must board some ships in order to prevent this deception. Could not bona fide American ships display a signal? Shaler instructed Buell to tell him the United States would stoop to no signals and would hold the Dey accountable for any violations.

While these policies were being worked out, Shaler left Marseilles for Sicily in March, 1818, aboard the U.S.S. Franklin, the flagship of the newly arrived Commodore Stewart. From there he proceeded to Tunis and then to Algiers, where he found the plague still raging. He did not go ashore at Algiers, but learned that the bloodthirsty Dey had died of the plague, and that a new Dey had been legally elected by the Divan. Power was once again in the hands of the Turks. The new regime seemed more inclined to respect American rights, and the Algerine fleet was kept at home that spring. From Algiers Shaler proceeded to Leghorn, the new rendezvous of the fleet, where he planned to settle down with the satisfied feeling that “it has been my lot in Barbary, at least in Algiers, to substitute a system of political relations upon a footing of independence and economy, in the place of one that was tributary and of unbounded extravagance.” For all
his satisfaction, however, he was still hoping to be relieved and allowed to go home.\textsuperscript{10}

When the cessation of the plague finally permitted Shaler to return to Algiers in the fall of 1819, his responsibilities were relaxed. He had accomplished his mission, insofar as he had made the name of the United States respected on the shores of Barbary. He sought from time to time to be transferred to other duties, but the State Department kept him at his post—none knew better than he how to handle this peculiar people. Save for a leave during the winter of 1821–1822, which he spent in the United States,\textsuperscript{11} Shaler was to remain on the shores of the Mediterranean for nine more years. He did not complain too much. Not only was great consideration shown him, both public and private, but some of his driving ambition was flagging with the advance of years. Furthermore, he could now save $1,000 or more a year, and was prospering. He even admitted he was beginning to set a higher value upon the luxuries of fine climate, abundance, and leisure. It was up to the State Department, he felt, to dispose of him. "I am growing fat, I am becoming a water drinker. I have become a moderate reasonable politician but what will surprise you the most I am a poet, and as far as I have gone, no very mean one."\textsuperscript{12}

Shaler had really grown quite contented in Algiers, which had become known to Americans in the Mediterranean as the "Old Consul's Bay." Here he kept watch, and grew in his understanding of its strange people. As he wrote Bainbridge: "The Algerines, though a sensible people, pay no attention to abstract arguments; they reason only upon experience and palpable facts. . . . These Barbarians are generally cunning and cowardly but capable of an activity that is really admirable, it is my opinion that they can equip a fleet for sea with more dispatch than any other people. . . . Morocco is null as a marauding power, and in Tunis and Tripoli we have a certain guaranty for good conduct in the hereditary form of these govern-

\textsuperscript{10} Shaler to Adams, Mar. 18, 1818; Buell to Shaler, Feb. 16, Apr. 12, 1818; Shaler to Adams, Apr. 15, May 10, Sept. 12, Dec. 12, 1818, July 5, 1819; Shaler to President Monroe, Mar. 10, 1819, Algiers Dispatches, X; Monroe to Shaler, July 18, 1820, Instructions to Consuls, State Dept. Archives.

\textsuperscript{11} Shaler to Adams, Oct. 29, 1820; Jan. 25, July 15, Aug. 27, 1821, Algiers Dispatches, X; Shaler to Johnston, Mar. 1, 7, and 26, May 2, 1822, Johnston MSS., HSP.

\textsuperscript{12} Shaler to Hughes, Mar. 25 and Oct. 3, 1820; Ankarloo to Shaler, Mar. 19, 1820; Hughes to Shaler, July 11 and 23, 1820; Shaler to Adams, Mar. 25, 1820, Algiers Dispatches, X.
ments. But the Government of Algiers is always that of a predominant faction liable every day to be overturned, the present only is important to them, as they openly prefer to rely alone upon pyracy for existence being without agriculture, commerce or arts . . . the standing that we have acquired here is irksome and vexatious to all the governments of Europe, to some because they wish not, and to others because they cannot follow our example. . . . I have endeavored to make them comprehend that we have nothing in view beyond the maintenance of the positive security of our flag and the respect which is due our character in Barbary.”

These years, however, were not without incident. Twice Shaler was called upon to participate in delicate negotiations. In 1822, when he returned from his American sojourn, he found his position in danger. He had left his nephew and namesake, William Shaler, in charge of the consulate when he departed for home, but the youth was irresponsible and prone to escapades. From Commodore Jones his uncle received an unpleasant report. William, it seems, had gone into the country one day on a hunting expedition without “that attendance proper to denote his quality and procure for him the desired security when he quitted the highway,” which he had so often been warned to take. He followed an accustomed path and was surprised to be halted by an armed guard. The construction of a canal had recently been undertaken by the Algerine Ministry of War, and a guard had been stationed to keep strangers away from the new work. When young Shaler defied the guard and threatened him with his gun, the young man was tumbled from his horse in the very presence of the war minister himself.

Enraged and humiliated, the young man had tried unsuccessfully to make a diplomatic incident of it; the Dey would not take him seriously. He had already had difficulty with Buell because of the “lightness and irregularity of his conduct,” and young Shaler seemed just as irresponsible. The Algerine sovereign sought a meeting of the other consuls to discuss the question. They refused to become involved, and the Dey dropped the matter until the elder Shaler returned. This attitude so aroused William, Jr., that he left the country to await his uncle at Port Mahon. When the Consul first heard the story, he thought the attack might be premeditated. He

13 Shaler to [Bainbridge], Sept. 5, 1820; Shaler to Stith, Sept. 30, 1819.
soon changed his mind, and sent his nephew home to the United States. Reaching Algiers on November 16, 1822, three months after the incident, he learned that the Dey was inclined to forget the matter. But not Shaler. White men, and particularly citizens of the United States, could not afford to lose face with these natives. Taking a firm stand, Shaler told the Dey "that the outrage which had been offered to the Government of the United States" in the presence of one of his principal ministers "was of a character too serious for me to decide upon inasmuch as it involved peace or war," and he had therefore referred the matter to Washington. He knew that his position was tenuous, but he had to uphold his nephew. Withdrawing to his consulate, Shaler held no further communication with the Dey. This was all he could do, for when he finally heard from John Quincy Adams, he learned that the Secretary considered it only a petty insult for which the youth was in large part responsible, and that it must be noticed no further.\(^{14}\)

Shaler was, perforce, brought out of his retirement the next year by a new rampage of the Algerine Dey. These were the times of the Greek rebellion against Turkish misrule, and so strong had been the Greek spirit that the Porte had called upon its Barbary vassals for aid. The Dey of Algiers had entered the conflict with some degree of success and had been stimulated thereby to return to piracy. In October, 1823, he decided to begin depredations on European and American commerce and to resume Christian slavery. He believed he could now defy the powers with safety and sought an opportunity to test his strength.

The occasion for this defiance was an outbreak on the Algerian frontier among the Kabyles, an independent group of tribes which had never been controlled by the Turkish rulers of Algeria. In the course of the hostilities a Turkish official had been carried into the mountains as a hostage. The Dey, seeking reprisal, turned upon the consuls of the Powers, because a number of Kabyles were servants in Algiers, particularly in the consular households. Condemning these tribesmen to death, the Dey attempted to arrest them. He made demands upon the various consuls for the surrender of their servants,

\(^{14}\) Shaler to Adams, Oct. 2, Nov. 2, 15, and 23, 1822, Algiers Dispatches, X; Shaler to Adams, Apr. 15, 1823, \textit{ibid.}, XI; Adams to Shaler, Dec. 9, 1822, Dispatches to Consuls, State Dept. Archives; Jones to Shaler, Sept. 4, 1822; McDonnell to Jones, August 18, 1822; Appleton to Shaler, Sept. 25, 1822; Ankarloo to Shaler, Oct. 26, 1822; Shaler to Russell, Oct. 30, 1822; Shaler to Rush, Dec. 10, 1822.
and most of the consulates complied. McDonnell and Shaler refused. Shaler had two of these young men in his household and had no intention of turning them over to probable death. His house was respected, but that of the British Consul, who was unpopular, was violated and the servants dragged out. McDonnell was anxious that all the consuls join in signing a remonstrance against this action of the Dey. At first Shaler was not willing to comply, because he felt that the other consuls had not co-operated but had weakly surrendered their rights. At length, however, he consented, when he was permitted to draft the remonstrance based upon the general principles of international usage.

During this dispute, the Algerines were preparing for war with Spain. Early in January, 1824, prizes began to be brought into Algiers, their crews quite apparently being enslaved. When the British Consul protested, the Dey declared that the treaty made by Exmouth had expired and that Christian slavery had begun anew. Hardly had this defiance been uttered when a British frigate appeared with orders for the Dey to sign new articles to be added to former treaties. The Algerines were to agree never again to violate a consulate, and to permit the British flag to fly from the consulate in the town. The Dey refused to sign, and on January 29 McDonnell and his family withdrew to the frigate. Although some concessions were made by the Dey, he would not agree to permit the flag to fly in the city of Algiers. The frigate sailed off with the McDonnells, leaving British interests in the charge of Shaler. That day, January 31, the British fired on an Algerine war vessel off Algiers, and the Algerines declared a state of war. Shaler then turned his efforts toward persuading the Dey of the folly of war with England, and even undertook to send a letter from the Dey to the English government through the American minister in London.

On February 22 a British fleet appeared in Algiers under command of Vice-Admiral Sir Harry B. Neale, accompanied by McDonnell. Shaler went aboard the flagship to tender his good offices and to report that the British consulate was undisturbed and that McDonnell’s agent was carrying on his affairs. The admiral, in turn, informed Shaler that he was to blockade the port until the Dey signed the additional articles and made amends to the Consul.

After a day of sickness, for Shaler was beginning to suffer from attacks of sick headache which were to occur with increasing fre-
quency, he tried to persuade the Dey to see reason in the affair. This was not easy, for the Dey himself was in a difficult position. It would violate a deep-seated religious prejudice to allow the British flag to fly inside the walls of Algiers. The populace was fanatical about it, and he would raise a storm of protest if he yielded on this point, particularly to McDonnell. The citizens still held the British Consul responsible for Exmouth’s bombardment, and the Dey knew that he was dangerous to him as long as he remained. He therefore welcomed this opportunity to refuse to allow McDonnell to return.

Shaler kept up his efforts for a month, encouraged by the desires of most of the Algerine officials to avoid war, but he found the Dey “impractical” and fatalistic. All he gained was the ill will of the potentate. After a month of blockading, the Vice-Admiral pressed for an answer, and at length went ashore on March 28 for an interview in which the Dey again refused to yield. The admiral threatened to leave if McDonnell were not received, but the Dey refused to make any decision until he had heard directly from the British government in answer to his letter. The blockade continued.

After three more months of blockading British patience was exhausted, and by July 11 a large fleet had assembled and made preparation for bombardment. Some skirmishes occurred and occasional shots were fired until the 25th, when an agreement was finally reached. The British retreated from their stand by not pressing the flag privilege and by agreeing, on motives of humanity, not to insist on McDonnell’s return for fear of his being killed. The Algerines in their turn signed the articles, again agreed to renounce Christian slavery and to receive a British Proconsul, Danford.

Shaler was disgusted at this outcome because he was attached to McDonnell and his family and thought that the British should have insisted on their return. However, he received Danford into his home and set about advising him on his consular duties. Shaler noted with pride that his own standing with the Algerines had not suffered; he was well satisfied with himself, a fact he did not hide in his dispatches to Washington.15

15 Shaler, Sketches of Algiers, 177-244; Shaler to Adams, Oct. 30 and Dec. 12, 1823, Mar. 21 and Oct. 17, 1824, Algiers Dispatches, XI; Shaler to Richard Rush, Jan. 15, Feb. 16 and 28, July 27, 1824; Shaler to McDonnell, Feb. 27, 1824; Shaler to Spencer, May 18, 1824; A. Fitch, Jr., to Shaler, Feb. 27, 1824; Shaler to Wm. Sweetland, Aug. 20, 1824; Shaler to Johnston, Sept. 29, 1824, Johnston MSS.
These later years were not wholly concerned with diplomacy, for Shaler was returning to an old interest. Scholarly pursuits had always attracted him, and he was tempted in the leisure of his consulate to return to this enticing pastime. Just before he had terminated his furlough in 1822, an eminent scholar had sought him out. Peter S. Duponceau, noted Philadelphia lawyer and officer of the American Philosophical Society, had begun a correspondence with Shaler regarding the languages of northern Africa. He was particularly interested in the speech of those tribes descended from the pre-Mohammedan peoples who had flourished before the conquest. No one knew much of the Berber dialects, and Duponceau asked Shaler to gather information regarding them and to supply vocabulary lists. This task appealed to Shaler's scholarly bent and he now went to work on it. In due time, he sent several reports to Duponceau which were discussed in the American Philosophical Society and published by them.

These reports to Duponceau aroused his interest in philology in general. Feeling that he needed more knowledge as background for his Berber studies, he studied Greek and Latin. To his old friend Senator Johnston of Louisiana he wrote: "You doubtless recollect that I stupidly refused to join you in the study of the Latin when I was last in Washington on the pretext of its being too late? Well, I have since become a most devoted classical student, and I have really overcome all the great obstacles in the way of my being rather a good scholar. As I provided myself with elementary books in France I had occasion to remark the excellency of their methods for studying the classical languages. They appear to me superior to ours in simplicity of arrangement and perspicuity of demonstration. My Greek grammar was composed in 1813 by an illustrious professor for the use of the celebrated normal school in France . . . ; it has gone through the 13th edition and is the best synopsis of any language that I have ever seen. It entered into my plan of study to make a complete translation of this grammar and finding as I proceeded that I could do it justice, I have determined to make a fair and correct copy of it in order for publication, if it should be judged sufficiently useful by my literary friends at home." Unfortunately, he was to learn that someone else had published such a translation in Baltimore.
In this work he was aided by the arrival of a competent secretary, William B. Hodgson, who joined him in the spring of 1826. Shaler had urged for some time that he be sent a scholarly assistant, part of whose duties would be the investigation of North African dialects. At one time he had even thought of bringing over a child who would be brought up to speak them, and had written to Duponceau about it. But none could be found. He had then considered having one of his younger nephews try it. Now, however, a young man of scholarly tastes had been selected, and undertook these philosophical studies upon his arrival. Shaler found him apt, and when the Consul left Barbary in 1828, Hodgson continued reporting to the American Philosophical Society on North African languages. These two diplomats had thus extended the bounds of knowledge as well as the interests of the young republic.\(^{16}\)

Shaler's scholarly interests were not circumscribed by the bounds of philology. He aspired to write for a wider audience. From the very beginning of his sojourn in Barbary, he had been curious about these people and their customs. He had collected a mass of information regarding Algiers, its people, their environment and their behavior. These data he worked into a narrative which had a double purpose—to give information and to promote an idea.

His experiences had demonstrated the necessity of destroying these pirates. The Powers, or one of them at least, should wipe out this nest which threatened Christian interests. Shaler was anxious to do what he could to spread the idea of the conquest of Barbary. He had viewed the terrain of Algiers on various excursions into the country, and he had studied the military plans used by former conquerors. He reviewed his findings at length in his book. He explained that previous expeditions had made their attacks the hard way, by landing in the bay east of Algiers. Instead, the attacking

force should approach from the west. Ten miles to the west of the city was the bay of Sidi Ferrajh. The road from this bay to Algiers could be covered on horseback in three hours, and there were copious springs of water along the way. The only fortification in that direction was a "castle" about a mile from the Casabua in Algiers, so situated that it might be commanded from heights. Shaler believed this could be "scaled and breached by a mine in a short time." There batteries might be planted on heights commanding the citadel itself. While this was being accomplished, the fleet which had brought the land force would sail to Algiers and enter the bay stripped for action.

Shaler supplied with these general strategical directions minute information regarding the fortifications and the strength of the garrisons. From these details he turned to general policy. He was still thinking in terms of a plan he had written in 1812, in which he would divide much of the world between the United States and England. He now argued at length that "it would be for the general interests of the world that Great Britain should determine to occupy and colonize this portion of Africa."  

Jared Sparks had recently become editor of the *North American Review* and had asked Shaler for some articles on Algiers. Shaler now looked to him to arrange for the publication of his book. He was anxious that it should appear in print, for he had received no commendation from the State Department for his work as peacemaker during the recent British expedition. He therefore hastily added an account of his part in the difficulties which were brought to a climax in November, 1824. Despite his interest in British advance in North Africa, or perhaps because of it, he belabored the conduct of that armada. He emphasized his own resourcefulness and the "tameness" of the "preposterous expedition" which had ended in realizing the fable of the mountain in labor, "despite the fact that it numbered twenty-three sail" sufficient to "raze Algiers to its foundations." This manuscript he sent off in March, 1825.

18 Ibid., 167-176.  
19 Sparks to Shaler, Feb. 9, 1824; Shaler to Sparks, June 1, 1824; Shaler to Jones, Dec. 10, 1824; John Gray to Shaler, Dec. 10, 1825; G. Folsom to Shaler, Mar. 24, 1826; James Madison to Shaler, Apr. 20, 1826; Shaler to Sparks, July 10 and Aug. 22, 1826; Shaler to Thos. Appleton, Sept. 4, 1826.
Shaler’s *Sketches of Algiers* appeared during the next year and attracted a certain amount of attention. The commander of the British expedition, Sir Harry Neale, took quick umbrage, and immediately set about to answer it. In a pamphlet with the formidable title “A Reply to Erroneous Statements and Unwarranted Reflections in a Publication entitled ‘Sketches of Algiers’ by William Shaler,” the British Admiral stated flatly that all Shaler had done was to come aboard his ship upon the arrival of the fleet and communicate the Dey’s pacific intentions. He contradicted a number of Shaler’s claims, and charged that he could have gotten most of his information only from Bensamon, whose understanding of English was imperfect. On the whole, the criticisms were not serious, and we are led to believe that Neale was more exasperated at Shaler’s general contempt for the British, or as Neale put it “the illiberality of sentiment pervading the censure which I have been called upon to repel.” Shaler’s reply to this has not survived—Sparks would not accept it for publication. It is to be noted that the British made no effort to follow Shaler’s suggestions by invading North Africa in the region of Algiers.

Shaler and his book were to have more influence with the French. He spent the summer of 1825, before his work appeared, renewing old acquaintances in France. There he suggested to such influential men as Hyde de Neuville that French enterprise should encompass Algiers. No action was taken immediately, but his words were not forgotten, and when his book appeared it had some French circulation and was printed in a French translation. Events were shaping the policy of France along the lines Shaler had suggested.

Trouble between Algiers and the French was brewing. Shaler had become ill of gallstones and dropsy in the fall of 1826, and by spring...
was so sick that his life was despaired of. He was taken to Spanish mineral baths where he spent most of 1827 in slow recuperation. During his absence the Dey of Algiers had become incensed at the French. The latter had a concession for coral fishing on the coast of Algeria and had erected a bastion there to protect the industry. The French now undertook to enlarge this fortification without the consent of the Dey. He complained to the French ministry, and felt insulted when the Consul told him that his protests must be made only through the Consul and not directly to the French government. The potentate in his rage struck the Consul and so precipitated a crisis. In June, 1827, the French began a blockade of the port of Algiers which they were maintaining in some halfhearted fashion when Shaler returned in October.23

It was plain to Shaler that the French policy was not effective. He himself was winding up his affairs preparatory to returning home. His prolonged illness had warned him that he could stay in Algeria no longer, so he had once more applied for his recall. In February, 1828, the good news arrived. He was further gratified to learn that his scholarly efforts had been crowned by election to the American Philosophical Society. He now hoped to go back to Latin America, having been promised the Havana consulate whenever Spain might allow the establishment of an agent of the United States in that port. The diplomatic grapevine bore rumors that such an opportunity was about due. William Shaler left Algiers on April 3, 1828, nearly thirteen years after he first sighted it, directing his route homeward through France.24

Once more he took the opportunity to urge France to take over Algeria. He reported to those in authority on the unsatisfactory state of the blockade and pressed for more decisive action. The French government was not yet ready, but a decision was not far off. Finally, in 1830, the die was cast. In January the council of state adopted a

23 Shaler to Henry Clay, May 14, 1827; Hodgson to Henry Clay, June 27, 1827; Shaler to Henry Clay, Oct. 19, 1827, Algiers Dispatches, XI; Shaler to Commodore Crane, July 21, 1827; Shaler to A. H. Everett, July 27, 1827; Shaler to [James Brown], Aug. 4, 1827; Shaler to Hughes, Aug. 15, 1827; Shaler to Henp, Feb. 10, 1828; Shaler to Commodore Rodgers, [April 20, 1828].

plan presented by a young naval officer, Abel Aubert Dupetit-Thouars, for the invasion of Algeria. He was interestingly enough a relative of the famous botanist, Louis Marie-Aubert Dupetit-Thouars, whom Shaler probably had met nearly thirty years before on the Isle of France. Dupetit-Thouars’ plan was very similar to that of Shaler, and the French expedition which captured Algeria in July, 1830, followed the general strategy laid down by the American consul.25

When the story can be fully told, it will be known whether in mapping out the invasion of Algeria in 1942, the Anglo-American board of strategy studied Shaler’s plans. In any event, the American shock troops landed at Sidi Ferrajh and proceeded against Algiers just as Shaler had advised in 1826. American diplomacy on these strange coasts of Barbary had not been without its far-flung and long-range consequences.

University of Pennsylvania

ROY F. NICHOLS