Towards noon on December 16th, I left Monrovia in a Woermann sailing boat that was to collect native produce in Marshall, at the Junk River. The crew consisted of seven powerful Kru men. I had brought along two of my servants from Robertsport, and the boat was heavily laden with chests and
barrels. As we set out, I was able to buy a large Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia viridis*) [*Ch. mydas*] from fishermen who had just caught it. The price was three dollars, and I took it along in order to improve the crew’s fare. Only slowly were we able to round Cape Mesurado. As I had never before been at sea to the east of Monrovia, it was a special delight to leisurely observe the promontory; its slopes descending gently towards the southwest, and its protruding rocky outcrops illuminated by the evening sun. Towards dark we stayed further away from the shoreline, but never so far that we could no longer hear the roar of the surf. During the night a tornado assaulted us with torrential rain, so that we had to drop the anchor in order not to be either thrown ashore, or blown out into the high sea. Later, the wind from land, which usually blows from eleven in the evening until 10 in the morning, rose again, helping us to advance towards our goal at a fairly quick pace. A refreshing sleep was obviously out of the question, for the chests on which I tried to stretch out, stowed next to and over each other, were quite wet, as were the blankets we had brought along.

These coastal boats are always under the command of a Kru who, through his nautical knowledge, in as much as this is required on such trips, and because of his great familiarity with the coastline, its promontories, river mouths, shallows and cliffs hidden under water, has acquired sufficient skills to be entrusted with this position. Such a commander bears the title “headman,” but on board one does him the courtesy of addressing him as captain. During critical moments, especially when passing through the sometimes very dangerous surf, the headman is always at the rudder, and only hands it to his subordinates when there is absolutely no danger. Such a headman bears a considerable responsibility, not only for the boat he’s in charge of, which, if in a good condition, represents a value of 400–500 dollars, but also for the cargo and for the lives of his crew. The greatest danger on such boat journeys are the tornadoes, which are the most frequent early and late in the year. When one of them catches a ship under sail by surprise, it will often capsize. The surf presents another severe hazard. At some coastal towns it has become truly notorious, and is often so vicious that even the most daring headman will refrain, if need be for days on end, from trying to cross it. A true headman is proud of the successful journeys he has made, and it has indeed occurred that one among them, who had lost a boat in the surf after many years of journeys without mishap, immediately resigned from his position out of sheer frustration, and preferred to once again become an ordinary Kru sailor. Almost each steamer and sailing ship brings new boats from Europe. Nevertheless, the demand is hardly ever satisfied, because no matter how