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REMARKS

ON THE

SLAVE TRADE

AND

AFRICAN SQUADRON.

BY

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THE SLAVE TRADE.

THERE never was, I believe, a subject in which the people of this country have felt so deep an interest, which at the same time has been so little understood, as that now under the consideration of a Select Committee of the House of Commons—the Suppression of the Slave Trade. We have become wearied and disgusted with our repeated failures, and public opinion now runs high in favour of withdrawing our squadron, and permitting the Slave Trade to take its natural course.

The evidence given by the different witnesses before the Committee, (as published in their first and second Reports,) must certainly appear most conflicting to any person now giving his attention to it for the first time. It reminds one occasionally of the old story, “there is nothing like leather.”

Naval officers, generally, recommend the adoption of stringent coercive measures; Liverpool merchants tell us to withdraw our squadron, allow commerce to take its natural course, and carry out

the principle of free trade in its most unlimited sense. West India proprietors and ship-owners tell us to throw a floating bridge across the Atlantic, for the convenience of the quasi "free emigrants" from Africa to America. Judges, Missionaries, Physicians, Slave Traders, &c. each have their own specific remedy ; while a gentleman who has been 47 years in the Foreign Office, considers that we should persevere for another half century in a profuse expenditure—of pen and ink.

I will endeavour to examine, dispassionately, into the merits of these several recommendations, confining my remarks, as much as possible, to the particular parts where my own personal experience and local knowledge, entitle me, I think, to express an opinion. I will indulge as little as possible in argument, and confine myself to facts.

The speech of the Honourable Member who seconded the motion for the appointment of a Committee is firstly deserving of attention. *The Times* of the 23rd of February thus reports it :

" He and his partners, as a matter not of philanthropy, but of ' pounds, shillings, and pence,' which regulated almost every transaction in this great commercial country, thought fit, finding that the slavers interfered with their legitimate trade, to send out a clever, enterprising young man, with instructions to go from port to port, from river to river, from creek to creek, from bay to bay, and endeavour to ascertain by what means, and with what goods, the slavers purchased the slaves, and bring home samples. He did so ; and nine-tenths of the goods were found to be of British manufacture, and thereupon he (Mr. Jackson)

and his partners fitted out a ship freighted with similar articles ; and sent her into the very nest of slavery, to see whether they who sold slaves for such goods would not employ those slaves in preparing the produce of the country to exchange for the goods. The result was that the trade of every slaver was suspended, while this ship was filling as fast as possible with palm oil."

Now, if this speech is correctly reported, I think the Honourable Member must have been greatly deceived by his agents in Africa ; I do not think that such a proceeding ever did take place ; at least not between the years 1832 and 1847. The Slavers have never had their trade suspended by the mere presence of a palm-oil vessel, and no palm-oil vessel has, during the last ten years, taken on board her cargo from the nest of slavery.

It would be difficult to point out the exact spot which might be termed the " nest of slavery," but it is certainly somewhere between the Equator and the Cape of Good Hope, from which part of the coast three-fourths of the slaves that leave Africa are exported, but from which part not a cask of palm-oil has ever yet been exported. The palm-oil trade is confined to the coast north of the Equator ; and almost exclusively to the rivers, where the slave trade has entirely ceased since we were enabled to capture vessels, *equipped* for that traffic. The palm-oil trade at Whydah increased greatly about the year 1843, consequent on the almost total cessation of the slave trade at that place, during the two or three previous years.

Mr. Jackson is also reported to have stated that

“Free labour could be had to any amount; he never sent a ship to the west coast of Africa but 20 or 30 canoes put off directly she arrived, with 20 or 30 men in each canoe, ready to be engaged at a dollar a month, without reference to the time or to the service, and willing to live upon rice only. Persons who had recently been there, stated that they would undertake to plant in our West India islands at £4. 10s per man, as many free labourers as those islands could take—men willing to work for 12, 24, or 36 moons, and only asking that they might go back at the end of the term.”

If any West India proprietor should be tempted to try this experiment, in the expectation that the negroes would work for a dollar a month, and an allowance of rice, he would find himself most grievously mistaken. When at Jamaica, about two years ago, I met a number of those men (Kroomen), to whom Mr. Jackson alludes, some of whom I had formerly known on the coast of Africa, and I took some pains to ascertain what their feelings on the subject were. They stated that they were then in constant employment on the railroad, and earning as “navigators” 1s 6d a day, or 9s a week; with which they appeared well contented, but they were most anxious to get back to Africa. They stated that their board and lodging, with other necessary expenses, amounted to 5s or 6s a week, and they could not save more than 2s 6d or 3s a week, which they deposited from time to time in the Savings’ Bank. I remarked that 3s a week was more than they could save by any work in Africa; they replied, “We be ’fraid, massa, we no go back to our country

—suppose we pay passage, we go back poor man, then our people laugh and we be fool.”

I do not deny that a Liverpool merchant could carry negroes across the Atlantic at the rate of £4. 10s per man; he would do it as cheaply as a Spaniard or Brazilian; but it would be to all intents and purposes a Slave trade.

The Honorable Member was complimented by Sir Robert Inglis, Mr. Hume, Mr. Cardwell, and Lord Palmerston, on this his maiden speech; but I have never read a speech that I considered likely to do more injury to the cause, which the British nation has so much at heart—the extinction of the Slave trade—than this.

The encouragement, by every possible means, of legitimate commerce in Africa, is undoubtedly one of the most effectual means of suppressing the Slave trade, or rather of preventing the revival of that trade after it has once ceased: but allow commerce just to take its course—remove all checks to the natural avarice and cupidity of man,—and the Slave trade will soon flourish, to the exclusion of every other, and the continent of Africa will soon be in a worse state of social demoralisation than it is at present.

CHAPTER II.

AGREEING in almost every sentence expressed by Lord Palmerston in his evidence before the "Sugar and Coffee Planting and Slave Trade Committees," I believe him to be mistaken in attributing the temporary cessation of the Cuban Slave trade, in 1845-46, to the Acts of the Colonial Government. This is rather an important point, as bearing on the policy of our maintaining a preventive force.

The following list shews the number of vessels and slaves that have arrived at Rio de Janeiro and Havana, and their neighbouring ports, from 1836 to 1847 inclusive, taken from the Reports of Her Majesty's Commissioners. The Commissioners consider, that by adding one-third to those numbers, we approximate very nearly to the total number imported into Cuba and Brazil. I should consider that to afford a just estimate with respect to Brazil; but with regard to Cuba, I think that one-fourth, or one-fifth, would shew the proportion imported into other parts of the island; as almost all vessels, after landing the slaves, go to Havana and are included in the Commissioners Returns. However the difference is trifling, and I take the Commissioners' estimate. It contains also the number of captures made by Her Majesty's cruisers during the same period, taken from the Returns already before the Committee; and it shews the proportionate number of

slave vessels, and slaves, which have been captured by Her Majesty's Squadron. It also shews the average price of new slaves in Brazil during those years, as given in evidence before the Committee, by Senr. José E. Cliffe:—

A.D.	ARRIVALS OF SLAVES AND SLAVE VESSELS FROM AFRICA.										Per centage		Average price of new Slaves in Brazil.
	Into Rio and its neighbour- ing Ports.		Into Havana and its neigh- bouring Ports.		Total into Rio, Havana, and their neigh- bourhoods.		Assumed total amount of Slave Trade.		Number cap- tured by British Squadron.*		captured by British Squadron.		
	Vess.	Slaves.	Vess.	Slaves.	Vess.	Slaves.	Vess.	Slaves.	Vess.	Slaves.	Vessels. per cent.	Slaves.	
1836	—	—	41	14,082	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36
1837	—	—	29	12,240	—	—	—	—	29	7,237	—	—	33
1838	59	24,790	32	10,495	91	35,285	121	47,000	31	6,444	20	12	33
1839	64	30,290	31	10,995	95	41,285	127	55,000	69	5,566	35½	9	—
1840	28	14,910	28	10,104	56	25,014	75	33,300	69	3,616	48	10	—
1841	20	8,370	31	8,893	51	17,263	68	23,000	71	5,966	51	20	72
1842	21	8,894	9	2,500	30	11,394	40	15,200	52	3,950	56½	20½	72
1843	37	14,891	17	6,000	54	20,891	72	27,900	43	2,797	37½	9	83
1844	43	22,850	21	7,280	64	30,130	85	40,200	48	4,577	36	10	83
1845	36	16,502	6	950	42	17,452	56	23,300	52	3,519	48	13	69
1846	101	50,324	2	419	103	50,743	137	67,700	66	2,788	32½	4	64
1847	115	57,871	3	1,450	118	59,321	157	69,000	60	39,67	27½	5½	47
1848	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Assumed by Senr. Cliffe		33

Lord Palmerston was asked by the Committee on Slave Trade (Question 31), “Is it not the fact, that the Governor of Cuba has successfully prevented the Slave trade at the present time in that island?”— He replied, “I believe the Governor of Cuba has done so during the last two years; I am *obliged to*

* These numbers are taken from the Returns of the Mixed Commission and Vice Admiralty Courts; but vessels are not, of course, always adjudicated in the same year in which they are captured.

suppose so, because that is the only method of accounting for the great diminution in the importation of slaves into Cuba."

Now whatever may be the cause of such diminution, it cannot be justly attributed to the acts of the Spanish Colonial Government, as the then Captain General, O'Donnell, encouraged the Slave trade more openly than either of his predecessors. According to the concurrent testimony of Her Majesty's Commissioners, the Consul General, British Naval Officers, and the Slave traders themselves, Don Geronimo Valdes was the only Captain General who actually endeavoured to suppress the Slave trade. He assumed the command on the 7th March, 1841, and was superseded on the 15th September, 1843, without being permitted to await the arrival of his successor. Notwithstanding the honourable and upright conduct of General Valdes, which does not admit of the shadow of a doubt, the Slave trade flourished under his command; the traders obtained large remunerating profits.

General O'Donnell arrived on the 19th October, 1843, and has continued in command until within the last few months. His conduct, with respect to the Slave trade, has been as disgraceful as that of his predecessor was just and honourable. He commenced by liberating the vessels already detained by General Valdes, and has subsequently afforded every possible facility to the slave merchants, from whom he extorted bribes, in a more open and undisguised manner, than did either of his predecessors.

But notwithstanding all this, the Slave trade was never at so low an ebb as it was during one part of General O'Donnell's command.

The Slave trade, like any other speculation of the kind, would cease only when the returns failed to afford a remunerating profit. This was the state of things at Havana in 1842, in which year only *nine* vessels succeeded in landing slaves, and only *three* sailed on a slave trade voyage. The slave merchants, during that and the preceding year, had lost considerable sums of money, owing to the destruction of the slave factories, and the capture of their vessels in Africa; it was understood that the three vessels dispatched in 1842, were merely for the purpose of breaking up their establishments, and of bringing back whatever could be saved, either in goods or slaves.

The appearance however of Lord Aberdeen's letter to the Lords of the Admiralty, dated 20th May, 1842,* which questioned the legality of the orders issued by Lord Palmerston, changed the aspect of affairs at Havana: the hopes of the slave merchants were revived, rates of insurance on slave trade adventurers fell considerably, capital was forthcoming,—the Slave Trade was re-established. In 1843, *twenty-three* vessels left Havana on a slave voyage, and *sixteen* succeeded in landing their cargoes; the consequence of which was, that the price of a new slave fell from £88 to £66.

But although the Slave trade was re-established

* Appendix VII.

in Cuba in 1843, it did not prove to be a very profitable speculation; this was owing to the increase of our squadron in 1845, and to the many captures subsequently made by it: the trade gradually declined from 1843 to 1846, in which latter year it may be considered to have ceased. Her Majesty's Commissioners at Havana, in their Report to Lord Palmerston, dated 1st January, 1847, thus report the cessation of the Slave trade.

"The first observation we have to make is, respecting the extraordinary and unprecedented fact that we have not to record the departure of any single vessel hence, during the last year, suspected of being intended for the Slave trade. This is a fact as gratifying as it is extraordinary; and we must acknowledge that the success it proves to have attended the efforts of Her Majesty's Government to suppress the traffic is such as we had not anticipated. The great number of captures made during the year 1845, must no doubt have very considerably affected the slave dealers; and the continued activity of the cruisers on the coast of Africa must have deterred them considerably in the prosecution of their trade. Thus we can well believe that, as our list of arrivals of slave-vessels in 1846 shows only four to have been reported during the year, of which two were doubtful reports, and all those in the first half of the year, the further prosecution of the trade has been for the present at least given up."

It will thus appear that the alternations in the Slave trade of Cuba were exactly in proportion to the stringency or laxity of the measures adopted by Great Britain to suppress it, and not to the acts of the Colonial Government: very much, no doubt, depends on the good faith of the authorities in Cuba; but it is certainly not to them that we must now look for the realization of our hopes.

Her Majesty's Commissioners at Havana, who have resided there upwards of ten years, and her Majesty's Consul General report it to be their opinion that the profits or losses of the Slave traders depend—firstly, on the success or otherwise of the British Cruisers,—secondly, on the good faith of the Captain General,—and, thirdly, on the market price of sugar; but they invariably attach the greatest importance to the first of these influences. Her Majesty's Commissioners, in their Annual Report to Lord Palmerston, dated 1st January, 1841, (Class A. 1841, p. 167), shewing a continued decrease of the Slave trade, say—

“Nor is this decrease in the supply to be explained away by any supposition of a decrease in the demand. The price of slaves in the market continues the same, and one of the late cargoes has been sold, we are credibly informed, though the negroes were very young, at the price per head of 425 dollars (£85.), cash payment.”

They then go on to notice the extraordinary increase in the exportation of sugar, which had actually *doubled* within the preceding five years; and yet during these same five years the Slave trade had been constantly *decreasing*.

Again, on 1st January, 1842, the Commissioners make the following Report to Lord Palmerston, (Class A. 1842, p. 119).

“On the last occasion of our having to fulfil this duty, in our despatch of 1st January, 1841, we had the gratification to state that notwithstanding a remarkable impetus given of late to the cultivation of the chief productions of the island, tending consequently to an increased demand for slave labour, yet the trade

in slaves has manifestly declined, inasmuch as, in both the arrivals and departures of vessels engaged in that traffic, there appeared a decrease of about one-third on the average of former years. This subject of gratulation we have the further satisfaction now to repeat, as the lists enclosed shew a *continuance of the diminution*, there appearing to have been despatched hence, suspected of being engaged in the slave trade.

In 1840	54 vessels.
„ 1841	31 vessels.”*

It will thus appear, that during the years 1840-41, the Slave trade was constantly *decreasing*, notwithstanding the demand for slave labour was continually *increasing*. This can only be ascribed to the measures adopted by the British Government, viz. the passing of the “Slave Trade Suppression Bill” of August 1839, and the destruction of the slave factories on the coast of Africa. It certainly cannot be attributed to any acts of the colonial authorities, as General Espelata and the Prince of Anglona, were noted encouragers of the Slave trade. General Valdes assumed the command in March, 1841; the measures adopted by him assisted, doubtless, in bringing the Slave trade to the very depressed state in which it was in 1842; but, even the upright and honourable conduct of this Governor did not prevent its sudden revival, on the appearance of Lord Aberdeen’s letter of the 20th of May, 1842, which created a belief that the policy of the British Government had changed relative to the Slave trade.

An examination of the table at page 7, will shew

* In 1841	31 vessels.
„ 1842	3 vessels.
„ 1843	23 vessels.

that the alternations in the Slave trade, both in Cuba and Brazil, have been in exact proportion to the success, or otherwise, of the efforts of Great Britain in her endeavours to suppress it. It also appears that the actual market price of a new slave in Brazil has been regulated, in a very great measure, by the same cause, viz. the proportion between the number of vessels and slaves captured, and of those that escape.

It must be borne in mind that, previously to the passing of the "Slave Trade Suppression Bill" of August 1839, the importation of slaves into Brazil from the coast of Africa, south of the line, was wholly unrestricted. That act did not come into full operation until the beginning of 1840, during which, and the two following years, Her Majesty's cruisers were particularly successful, capturing more than half of all Slavers fitted out, and one slave out of every five embarked from Africa. The consequence of which, together with the destruction of the slave-factories in 1841-42, was, that the price of slaves in Brazil reached the highest point in 1841-44.* The appearance in Brazil of Lord Aberdeen's letter, early in 1843, and the misapprehension of its meaning created in the minds of the people there, as well as in Africa, caused a number of slave-adventures to be im-

* The intention of Her Majesty's Government to increase the African squadron, as notified in both Houses of Parliament, in March 1844, caused the market price of slaves to be kept up during that year.

mediately undertaken ; and the slave-factories that had been destroyed, to the south of the line, in 1842, were all re-established in 1844 ; the price of slaves then fell, and has been falling ever since. It appears that the present squadron has captured only one vessel out of four,* and only one slave out of eighteen ; the result of which is, the price of slaves in Brazil, in 1847, was £47. and it is assumed by Señor Cliffe that the price is now down to £33. which is exactly what it was when the trade was unrestricted.

Much stress has been laid,—for the purpose of shewing that the alternations in the Slave trade do not in any manner depend on the efficiency of the preventive force,—on the fact, that the Slave trade had almost ceased in Cuba in 1846, while it still flourished in Brazil, notwithstanding that the same measures were applied to both countries alike, and while the demand for their staple productions continued the same. This apparent incongruity admits of a very easy solution.

It will be admitted that the Slave trade would cease when its returns failed to yield a remunerating profit. Well, an Havana slave merchant cannot afford to lose every other vessel that he fits out ; but a Brazilian can afford to lose four out of five. Her Majesty's Commissary Judge, in his report to Lord Palmerston, (Class A. 1838, p. 113) states : “ From the most accurate calculations I “ can learn, it appears, that the return of two

* $27\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

“vessels out of three would only afford a remunerating profit.” On the other hand, Her Majesty’s Commissioners at Rio Janeiro, as well as all who have given evidence on the subject, shew that the return of one vessel out of five secures a profit to the Brazilian slave merchant. If then, one merchant can only afford to lose one vessel out of three, and the other can afford to lose four out of five, which of the two will first be obliged to relinquish the traffic?

It is scarcely necessary for me to state, that the Brazilian slave merchant buys an old vessel for a mere trifle; a small crew can navigate her, as she is always in fine weather; on her return she is crammed full of slaves, but little water is required, the wind is fair, and the voyage occupies only three or four weeks. A slaver from Havana must be well found, and sea-worthy in every respect; she must have a numerous crew, and be prepared for stormy winds, and even hurricanes, in the West Indies; the return voyage occupies six or eight weeks, and she is enabled to carry a comparatively small number of slaves.

In my letter to Lord Aberdeen of 4th April, 1844,* which is printed in the first Report of the Committee on Slave trade, I expressed the opinion, that, owing to the difference in the profits, the Slave trade would cease in Cuba before it would in Brazil; the result has fully proved the correctness of that opinion.

* See Appendix III.

CHAPTER III.

THE evidence of Captain Denman is certainly most important; I coincide, almost entirely, in his general views respecting the Slave trade, and the principle on which we should act in our endeavours to suppress it. I cannot, however, agree as to the efficacy of the plan he proposes, as stated in his Memorandum. The mere adoption of his recommendation would certainly not suppress the Slave trade; it would not be applicable except on a small part of the African coast. Had Captain Denman served on the coast, south of the equator, from which part three-fourths of the slaves are taken, or had he visited the rivers in the Bights of Benin and Biafra, he certainly would have avoided many errors into which he has been led, owing to his limited practical knowledge of Africa.

The adoption of Captain Denman's recommendation, that "the capture of slave vessels should be entirely secondary to the great object of preventing the embarkation of slaves," cannot be too strongly urged. But his recommendation that vessels should be constantly nailed to the same spot, and not allowed to leave a slave port open for an hour, even to chase a suspicious vessel, cannot be too strongly reprobated; such a proceeding would be proper only at Gallinas, and one or two other spots in Africa, where, owing to the great number of small

independent tribes, not always on friendly terms with each other, slaves cannot be transported by land, without great risk and expense. This part of his plan could not be carried out to the southward of the Equator, where there is good communication by land, and where slaves can be marched 100 miles without let or hindrance. It would take four times twenty-four vessels to maintain such a blockade as he proposes. No part of his plan is applicable to that part of the west coast of Africa, claimed by the Crown of Portugal, situated between the 8th and 18th degrees of south latitude.

Captain Denman estimates the Slave trading coast of Africa to extend over 400 or 500 miles of coast; but it is certainly double that extent. No general rule can be laid down for adoption along the whole coast: different places require different modes of proceeding.

Very great praise is justly due to Captain Denman for his masterly proceedings at Gallinas; the skill and energy he there displayed were most creditable to him and to the service: no man ever yet inflicted so heavy and effective a blow to the Slave trade, as he did on that occasion. His opinions on the different bearings of the Slave trade, wherever his personal experience applies, are worthy of the best attention: but, I think, he has come to some hasty conclusions, which have done an injury to the cause in which he takes so deep and enthusiastic an interest. I believe that his evidence would have

been more valuable, had his remarks been confined to that part of Africa of which he has a good local knowledge.

The evidence of Captain Butterfield is, I think, correct so far as it goes : he confines himself to a simple statement of facts, coming within his own personal knowledge. There is, however, a mistake in his list of captures ; he omits nine captures made by the " Waterwitch," and four or five by the " Brisk ;" they were made during his temporary absence from the coast. With reference to the number of captures made at that time, I wish to draw attention to Captain Butterfield's answer to question 567, where he states, that the cruisers there captured three-fifths of the slave vessels. The information I received was precisely similar, as stated in my answer to question 1300* ; and it agrees with the returns already presented to Parliament, which shew that the squadron then captured 56 per cent. of all the slavers fitted out ; *vide* the Table at page 7.

The remarks of Captain Allen are valuable, only so far as they relate to the river Niger and its neighbourhood ; there only has he had any practical experience. He states that he knows little, or nothing, about the coast of Africa,—was never in Brazil,—never came in contact with a slaver,—and knows nothing whatever of the Slave trade : but yet, he ventures to recommend the removal of our squadron from Africa to Cuba and Brazil, which no

other Naval officer has done : and this opinion has been quoted by one of the members of the Committee, when examining another witness.

In my answer to questions from 1444 to 1455,* I endeavoured to point out the impracticability of blockading the coasts of Cuba and Brazil ; and this opinion is confirmed by Captain Stopford, who has some knowledge of the Brazilian coast. Captain Allen is doubtless able to afford much interesting, useful, and valuable information, respecting the Niger and the interior of Africa ; but I demur to his being considered a very competent witness on subjects purely naval, seeing that he has not served afloat, except in the Niger expedition, for a great many years.

On a careful perusal of my own evidence, I can see but little that I would wish to alter or correct : in one or two instances, however, I have committed the same error that I have noticed in others, *viz.* speaking too confidently on a subject of which I had not a sufficient personal knowledge. In the latter part of my answer to question 1362, in making a comparison between the number of slaves landed in Brazil, during the years 1838 and 1840, I stated “ during the year 1840, I do not think there could “ have been *one tenth* of the number sent from Africa “ to the Brazils that there were in 1838.” I ought to have said *one half*, instead of *one tenth* : I was certainly under the impression that the dispro-

* Appendix VI.

portion was greater than *one half*; but that is sufficient to shew the effect of the restrictive policy of Great Britain. It would have been more correct for me to have taken the year 1841, instead of 1840, because the "Slave Trade Suppression Bill" of 1839 did not come into operation until 1840, previous to which year we had no power to interfere with Portuguese slave vessels south of the equator; and consequently, the Brazilian slave trade was, until then, wholly unrestricted.

Part of my answer to question 1364, may perhaps be misunderstood. I there stated that a very old Brazilian slave merchant, examined before the "Sugar and Coffee Planting" Committee, did not for one moment doubt the ability of Great Britain to suppress the slave trade. I ought to have added, "*until he had witnessed the failure of her efforts.*" Senor Cliffe, the person to whom I alluded, and who has since been examined before the Committee on Slave Trade, was asked by Lord George Bentinck (question 1462) whether, "when this country first adopted the policy of increasing the blockade service, the Brazilian Slave traders were very much alarmed." He replied, "We were at that time; because, it was supposed that whatever England attempted to do, she was able to carry out; but we had not the impudence to suppose that she would *not carry it out most efficiently*; and therefore the Slave trade died away for some time."

Seeing the failure of our efforts, he now states that we never shall succeed. On the other hand,

Mr. Wise, the United States Minister at Rio de Janiero (see his Letters; Class A. 1846, p. 197 of the Slave Trade Correspondence), and foreigners in general, do not doubt our ability, but they question our sincerity.

The correctness of my opinion, as expressed in the answers to questions 1461-1467, to the effect that the majority of the slaves exported, were not captured in wars, expressly undertaken for that purpose,—that those wars very seldom, or ever, took place south of the equator; and that nearly one-half the slaves were children or young persons sold by their parents, has, I believe, been questioned by those who have had less personal knowledge of Africa than myself. I may be wrong: but, after having, during a period of six years, visited the greater part of the western coast of Africa,—having been a considerable distance up every known river, from Sierra Leone as far south as a slaver ever shewed herself; having passed several days and nights on some of the rivers, seventy or eighty miles in the interior; having visited many dozen African towns and villages, where I lost no opportunity of endeavouring to gain some information respecting the social and political condition of the people,—I have deliberately formed the opinion expressed before the Committee.

If any person, desirous of forming an opinion as to the manner in which the Slave trade was supplied, were to derive his information from the slaves

arriving at Sierra Leone, or on board slave vessels, he would undoubtedly come to the conclusion that they were nearly all taken in war. A negro considers it a disgrace to have been born a slave, to be a debtor, or criminal, or to have been sold by his father ; he will therefore always tell you that he has been taken in war. I have asked the same question, over and over again, both on board slave vessels, and in the barracoons on shore, and have received the same reply ; and I have been amused at the derisive shouts that these replies called forth from the other slaves.

The Rev. Mr. Schön, who has been many years in Africa, considers that the great majority of slaves have been captured in war ; he has, however, principally resided in the colony of Sierra Leone, and has, probably, derived his information from the liberated Africans ; he has seen very little of the Slave trade,—none except at Shebar, which is situated between Sierra and Gallinas, and where the people are more warlike than any other in Africa ; excepting, perhaps, the people inhabiting the countries bordering on the Bight of Benin. Mr. Schön, on being asked (2746) the proportion between those taken in war, and those condemned as criminals, replies, “ I could not state any precise number. “ There is one thing to be observed, a person sold “ for a crime is apt to deny it, and to say that he “ was taken in war.” Mr. Schön states, that he actually saw a boy sold by his father ; but he does

not say that he ever heard a negro acknowledge to have been so sold ; he would say, doubtless, that he had been taken in war.

When stating that the proportion of slaves that were sold by their parents amounted to nearly one-half, I was speaking of the coast south of the equator, where these slave hunts never do take place. In those countries north of the equator, bordering on the windward coast, where these slave hunts do take place, the proportion of those sold by their parents is trifling ; comparatively few children are exported from the Bight of Benin. Out of 1683 slaves, captured by me to the south of the equator, 1033 were children, a very great majority of whom had doubtless been sold by their parents.

Commander Birch is the only naval officer whose evidence appears to differ from mine, in any matter of fact ; but the difference is more apparent than real. The subject, however, is too important for me to pass it unnoticed.

In stating that some factories are established to the north of Cabenda, nearer Cape Lopez, Commander Birch says, in reply to question 2245, "In Captain Matson's evidence he said it was impossible, from the state of the country, that they could have gone there ; but I know it of my own knowledge, because I have seen them, and been into them."

Now, Captain Birch did not hear my evidence and I do not think he could have ever read it ; it certainly was not published until several weeks after

he gave his own. I made no such statement, and I cannot see any single sentence in my evidence that can, by any possibility, be taken to imply such a statement. I certainly never could have said there were no slave factories between Cabenda and Cape Lopez; for I have seen many, and have captured six or eight slave vessels on that part of the coast.

In my report to the Admiralty, in 1843,* on the coast of Africa, which was printed in the first report of the Slave Trade Committee, I thus describe that part of the coast:—"Between Cape Lopez (lat. $0^{\circ} 36'$) and Mayumba (lat. $3^{\circ} 22'$) there is "no Slave trade, nor any trade whatever; the "country is impassable, it is very thinly populated, "and the natives are less civilized than on any "other part of the coast. This effectually prevents "any communication between the Bights and the "south-west coast of Africa. Between Mayumba "and the River Congo, the slave trade has been "very briskly and successfully carried on for many "years, principally by Spaniards from Havana." Such was the state of things in 1843, and I am informed by officers, lately returned from the coast, that it is the same to this day. In saying that there was no slave trade between Cape Lopez and Mayumba, I did not say that it was impossible to build a barracoon on the beach; I am informed that barracoons are now built there, for the temporary reception of slaves, which are transported along

* Appendix I.

shore in launches, from the slave factories at Cabenda and Loango, and shipped from thence, out of the way of Her Majesty's cruisers. This proceeding was indeed attempted when I was on that coast. Captain Birch's evidence goes entirely to prove the correctness of my description of the coast in 1843, viz. that there is plenty of Slave trade between Congo and Mayumba, but that it cannot be established between Mayumba and Cape Lopez ; for almost in the same breath that he volunteers a contradiction to some supposed statement of mine, he says, (2244—2247) that, "there are numerous factories at Cabenda, but no barracoons." Where, then, are the barracoons? Captain Birch himself answers the question: "they have gone down farther to the northward, nearer Cape Lopez. There are no slaves shipped at Cabenda, they are shipped by the men who actually live in Cabenda, but they transport their slaves coastwise," That is, they run along shore to the northward, for which the wind is always fair, and ship their slaves out of sight of one of her Majesty's cruisers. But this proceeding can, I think, be always frustrated by the exercise of ordinary vigilance, supposing the cruiser not to be nailed to the same spot.

Commander Birch is asked (2402), whether he agrees with me as to the proportion of slaves that are criminals, debtors, or who have been sold by their parents. He replies, "No I do not ;" but he does not state any fact to support his opinion, and

he certainly does not appear to have made many inquiries on the subject.

There is one more point on which Captain Birch appears to differ from me. He is asked (2294), "Have you understood that it is the practice of the Slave traders to put on board their vessels a larger number of slaves than they expect to be able to land alive on the coast of Brazil." He replies, "I never heard so, except from Captain Matson." But refer to his description of the two full slavers captured by him, beginning at question 2281. He captures a vessel about 290* tons, with 560 slaves on board, 600 miles off shore, and he thought about ten or twelve days out; she was supposed to have taken on board a full cargo, but had since lost a good many; he does not know how many; she had then only 560 slaves on board, and although "in a dreadful state, was not actually crowded to the extent to which he had read and heard that they generally crammed slave vessels." Why was this vessel, after having been ten or twelve days at sea, found not to be in the usually crowded state? I think it is reasonable to suppose, that it was because she had undergone a certain process of weeding. Again (question 2314), he captures a second vessel, very nearly on the same spot; she

* Captain Birch is mistaken respecting the size of this vessel; she was, when measured by the officers of the Vice Admiralty Court, found to be only *ninety-four* tons.

has then 510 slaves on board ; is about 260* tons ; she had lost a great many slaves. He is asked (2318), "You understood that there had been a great mortality on board?" "I did, *but they were much better when we fell in with them.*" Does not this shew that the process of weeding had been in operation. They must have taken some pains to conceal the number of deaths, which is a point on which the Court at Sierra Leone, when examining witnesses, requires the fullest information.

Captain Birch is asked (2468), "There are 450
" slaves, for instance, embarked in a certain ship ;
" how many of those slaves are landed in Brazil on
" an average?" He replies, "I should think two-
" thirds, or more ; sometimes the vessels, I believe,
" go across without one landing ; I can mention
" the case of the 'Senator.' " He considers the
average loss, on the middle passage, to be one-third ;
and yet he has not heard that it is the practice of
the Slave traders to put on board their vessels a
larger number of slaves than they expect to be able
to land alive on the coast of Brazil, except from
Captain Matson.

I could certainly have no desire to exaggerate this mortality, for it goes to prove that which I am most reluctant to admit, namely, that our repressive measures greatly aggravate the horrors to be endured by all that are embarked : although the aggregate amount of misery endured by the natives

* This vessel measured only 189 tons.

of Africa, is less now than it would be, were the trade to be thrown open.

I heartily concur in Captain Birch's recommendation to hang every Captain of a slaver at the yard arm. This, and Mr. Bandinel's recommendation to take possession of an island in Brazil, are the most practical remedies I have heard offered. Such measures would do more to suppress the Slave trade than the burning of barracoons or cruising in Africa.

Captain Wyvill, who served for several years as senior officer in the Mozambique Channel, and who is therefore to be considered capable of forming a correct opinion on the subject, states, that four vessels (I presume independent of reliefs) are sufficient to suppress the slave trade on the eastern coast of Africa; I have heard the same opinion expressed by other officers who have served there. Lord John Hay estimates the number required to be five, and he has, doubtless, had much communication with officers who have served there. But this spot has been almost entirely neglected; while attempting to close all the outlets to the slave trade on the western coast of Africa, a very convenient one has been left open on the eastern. Who then can say that we have done our utmost to suppress the Slave trade?

According to the concurrent testimony of a number of officers who have served on that coast, a force consisting of six or seven vessels, inclusive of

reliefs, would actually stop the Slave trade on the eastern coast of Africa.

I think Lord John Hay is rather mistaken in supposing that thirty-six vessels are actually employed in suppressing the Slave trade. There are twenty-four stationed on the western coast of Africa, but not every one of them are so employed ; not more than two or three on the eastern coast ; the same number, perhaps, on the coast of Brazil. There are certainly not *four* in the West Indies : during the years 1846-7, when I was serving on that station, only one vessel, the “Daring,” was so employed ; and she only for a very short time, not more than five or six months in the aggregate, during the two years. But there was then no slave trade to stop.

Lord John Hay states (3756), that the coast of Cuba is 2000 miles in circuit, but that there is only one part of the coast where slaves are landed. Nearly all slaves are certainly now landed in the neighbourhood of Havana, as being nearest to the general market ; but they can be landed at almost any part of the island ; and those parts which are the most dangerous,—surrounded by rocks and shoals,—offer the greater facilities for escaping a cruiser, and the greater facilities for landing the slaves.

Captain R. H. Stopford thinks that the squadron on the coast of Africa will not suppress the Slave trade ; but he admits that he has had very little experience in slave business, was only two months on the coast of Brazil, and never on the coast of

Africa. He thinks however that the squadron would be more effective on the coast of Africa than on the coast of Brazil ; there surely cannot be two opinions among Naval officers on that subject.

Captain George Mansel is the only other Naval officer who has been examined before the Committee ; and he goes the length to say that no amount of naval force will suppress the Slave trade. His evidence is most important, as it is the result of personal experience. I do not disagree with his statements as to any matters of fact, but I differ very much from him in opinion. I perfectly coincide in his opinion that the present squadron has not succeeded in suppressing the Slave trade. I agree with him that it never could do so,—it was never quite sufficient for the purpose, and it is still less so since the impetus given to the Slave trade by the Sugar Act of 1846. But I regret to feel obliged to go still farther than this, and to say that the present squadron has not done what it ought to have done.

I will not blink the question. Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I have not the slightest intention of casting an unworthy reflection on a service to which I am so devotedly attached ; I believe the squadron on the coast of Africa, taken as a whole, would, if properly directed, do whatever man may be considered capable of doing ; but I believe their efforts have been cramped by proceedings over which they could have no control whatever.

I never had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Sir Charles Hotham, but I believe him to be one of the very best officers in our service. I consider, however, that he has committed very grave errors in his attempts to suppress the Slave trade,—errors naturally to be expected from one, who first undertakes a peculiar and particular service, without any personal experience in it; errors sure to be committed by one, who, without any local knowledge whatever, undertakes the management of a large squadron, on a very extensive coast, parts of which are so widely different from each other, and each requiring the adoption of totally different measures.

Sir Charles Hotham took command of the station in October 1846, and finds it in a very relaxed state; this was stated to have been the case by Sir Charles Hotham himself, it was admitted by many other Naval officers, and it was confirmed by the Secretary of the Admiralty in his place in Parliament. It must then be admitted, that things were not in a very satisfactory state previously to Sir Charles Hotham's taking the command. I cannot state what were the particular measures adopted by the new Commodore, as I know them only from hearsay: he succeeds, however, in re-establishing discipline, without which no squadron can be effective in any part of the world. I believe he has removed the vessels to a greater distance from the coast, and has forbidden the employment of boats

on detached service : this latter restriction must certainly have crippled the exertions of the squadron.

The commander of a cruiser may, by a judicious employment of his boats, on detached service, almost double the efficiency of his vessel ; and it does not necessarily follow, that their crews should be either sickly or disorganized. During the four years I commanded the "Waterwitch," my boats were almost constantly absent on detached service ; they never had a case of sickness ; they captured, while absent, *eleven* slave vessels and 1,140 slaves,* the whole of which would otherwise have escaped. I do not advocate a reckless employment of men in boat service ; but I think a great deal may be done with proper management. I cannot agree with Capt. Mansel, that boat service must necessarily be subversive of discipline, injurious to health, or that it demoralizes the whole ship's company. A daily routine of duty was as strictly observed in my boats as on board the vessel herself ; on one occasion a boat's crew were absent five weeks without once leaving the boat, except to wash themselves.

But whatever may have been the measures, the result has been most unfortunate. In 1845 the squadron took 48 per cent. of all slave vessels fitted out ; in 1846 it took only 32 per cent., and in 1847 only 28 per cent., (see table at page 7.) There certainly were never two more unsatisfactory years than those of 1846-47.

* Exclusive of those captured when their own vessel was in sight.

I am not surprised that Captain Mansel, in common with many other officers, are disgusted at their want of success, in what has been a truly national undertaking. Their failure, however, cannot be attributed to any acts of their own. Captain Mansel commanded a particularly dull sailing vessel, and, I believe, succeeded in capturing only three or four vessels during his period of service. He states that he has been four days in trying to get from Cabenda to Red Point, a distance of twelve miles, and after all obliged to relinquish it: but I have been five months almost constantly in sight of those two points, in a fast sailing vessel, and never experienced any difficulty in getting from one to the other. That is, however, the very last part of the coast of Africa where a dull sailing vessel should be stationed. In my report to the Admiralty in 1843,* which is published in the first Report of the Committee on the Slave Trade, I recommended that steamers, and none but steamers, should be stationed there.

* Appendix II.

CHAPTER IV.

THE evidence of Mr. Bandinel is that which requires to be the most closely examined; it deserves the utmost attention, as being the fruits of a thirty years' experience in the Slave trade department of the Foreign Office. The information afforded by him, respecting our treaties with foreign powers is, doubtless, correct and valuable. But, I think, some facts assumed by him are incorrect, and the conclusions derived from them not very logical.

I will confine myself, as much as possible, to those parts of Mr. Bandinel's evidence, where he speaks of the influence of the British squadron on the Slave trade. I am anxious not to travel out of my sphere, and am also anxious to bring these remarks to a conclusion.

Mr. Bandinel states repeatedly that the African squadron has not even restricted the Slave trade, although the squadrons in Cuba and Brazil have had some influence on it: his figures, I believe, agree with mine, for they are both derived from the same source—official documents. He goes on to shew (3321) that the Brazilian slave trade greatly diminished in 1841, and still more so in 1842, notwithstanding that the Brazilian authorities connived at it more openly during that particular year. He states (3321), “The number of captures effected in

“the preceding year, had however, produced a
 “depressing effect on commercial speculations, from
 “which they did not immediately arise. That would
 “look as if it were upon the Slave trade.” I do not
 exactly understand that remark, but I will continue
 his evidence “in extenso.”

“3322. Would it not appear from that to have been the increased vigilance of our cruisers on the coast of Africa which made that probable?—No, not on the coast of Africa, but on the coast of Brazil particularly; it is specifically so stated in the correspondence; no doubt the captures on the coast of Africa had also an effect; they must have had an effect; but I mean that the depression of the trade is stated more particularly to have been consequent upon the measures on the land and on that immediate coast; it is so stated by our minister at that period. No doubt the coincident captures on the coast of Africa must have had an effect, but I think that a paramount importance has been wrongly laid upon the captures on the coast of Africa, so far as I can see.

“3323. *Chairman.*] This is an important point, and if you have any authorities to which you can refer, I should wish you to do so?—On the 20th March, 1840, Mr. Ouseley writes: ‘*There is no doubt that the increasing difficulties and risks incurred by the slave dealers are caused almost wholly by strong measures adopted by Her Majesty’s Government, and the activity of the British cruisers on this coast.*’

“3324. What coast was that?—The coast of Brazil. I will read on. ‘The conduct, however, of the late governor of Angola, Admiral Noronha, and the absence of Senhor Moreira from this capital, also contributed to check the traffic in Africans during several months of last year. The prizes made of the Portuguese vessels under the late Bill during the present year have produced a most salutary effect in discouraging the trade with the coast of Africa; and had not the necessity of sending several of Her

Majesty's vessels to the Rio de la Plata called away the cruisers from this coast; it is probable that the slave trade in this province would have been completely interrupted.' ”

That appears to be a very unfortunate extract for Mr. Bandinel: Mr. Ouseley attributes the decrease in the Slave trade to the activity of the British cruisers; he knows, from his own observations, that the cruisers are active on the coast of Brazil, but he is not likely to know what they are doing in Africa. But it so happens, that during these said two years, 1841-42, Her Majesty's brig, “*Waterwitch*,” then under my command, on the coast of Africa, captured a considerably greater number of slave-vessels than did the whole of the two squadrons of Brazil and the West Indies combined. What then becomes of Mr. Bandinel's assertion, that the cruisers are useless in Africa, although of some use in Brazil?

Mr. Bandinel thinks that we should, as soon as possible, withdraw our squadron, which has hitherto done nothing whatever, and trust to “gentler means.” With respect to Brazil he thinks we should go on continually making treaties (see his answers to questions 3336—3340.) And in speaking of Africa he says, (3282):—

“With regard to the Slave trade in Africa it must be extinguished by civilization; by commerce; by constant amicable communication; by Christianity; and by the introduction of all those mild virtues and those enlightened views, and those arts of peace which the spirit of Christianity and the present state of civilization in the world will create and foster.”

Now that sounds very pretty ; I admire the sentiment, and only wish the Slave trade could be extinguished by the introduction of Christianity and moral virtues ; but when we look at the state in which Africa now is, can we expect those principles to be at once received there. Those gentle means were tried in the Niger expedition, and signally failed. Is it not more rational to suppose that the introduction of those principles will follow, rather than precede, the extinction of the Slave trade ?

Mr. Bandinel endeavours to shew, that the destruction of the slave factories on the coast of Africa, and particularly those destroyed by Captain Denman at Gallinas, was of very little service in suppressing the Slave trade. He gives a number of extracts from the Reports of the Commissioners at Sierra Leone, and rests his opinion, chiefly, on the fact, that the Commissioners' anticipations of the good effects of Captain Denman's proceedings did not prove to be correct ; but that the Slave trade revived there a few years afterwards. Mr. Bandinel does not appear to have considered well the relation between cause and effect ; he cannot surely have forgotten Lord Aberdeen's letter ; he ought at least to have some recollection of that document.

Let us now examine these same extracts from the Commissioners' Reports, which are given by Mr. Bandinel, and let us be a little particular as to dates. Captain Denman destroyed the slave factories at Gallinas in the latter part of 1840 ; and on the 31st

December of the same year the Commissioners thus notice his proceedings in their report to Lord Palmerston:—

“Great however as the good effects of this blockading system may appear, we have yet to communicate to your Lordship what we consider a much more important feature in the history of the Gallinas Slave trade ; which is, the total destruction of the eight slave factories established there, and the emancipation of 840 slaves, who were on that occasion given up by the native king Siacca to Captain Denman. These measures of hostility towards the Slave dealers were, as we are informed, conducted by the native chiefs, between whom and the Slave dealers, we think, there is now so serious a feud established, as to render impossible, at least for a considerable time to come, the re-establishment there of slave factories. The panic which the destruction of this stronghold of slavery has created is very great ; and the foreigners have quitted the Gallinas in the greatest alarm, in the belief that their lives were no longer safe there, from the ill disposition manifested by the natives.”

These wholesome and energetic measures of Captain Denman were not however followed up during the year 1841. It was generally believed that the Government had disavowed his proceedings, and the slave merchants consequently began to feel their way. On the 31st December of that year Her Majesty's Commissioners thus express themselves :

“In their last annual Report, Her Majesty's Commissioners, alluding to the destruction of slave factories at the Gallinas, expressed an opinion that those measures of hostility having been conducted by the native chiefs, so considerable a feud must have arisen between them and the slave dealers, that the re-formation of similar establishments, for a considerable period at least, was rendered highly improbable. We regret, however, to

be obliged to say that this opinion has not been borne out by the result. We have received information that during last rains no less than three slave factories were settled in the Gallinas, whither the factors and goods had been conveyed in an American vessel."

A year afterwards, on 31st December, 1842, they say,

"At the Gallinas, the Slave trade, which had been paralysed for a time, by the sweeping destruction of the factories and barracoons, is stated to have again partially revived."

It was thus only partially revived at the end of two years.

The letter of Lord Aberdeen to the Lords of the Admiralty of the 20th May, 1842, was made public towards the end of that year, the effect of which, on the minds of the Slave traders and the Chiefs of Africa, I have already shewn in my evidence before the Committee, 1261.* In the year 1843, then, the Slave trade at Gallinas was fully re-established. On the 31st December of that year, (1843) the Commissioners say :

"Your Lordship will perceive that unhappily for the cause of humanity the Slave trade has greatly increased during the year 1843. The Slave trade in this neighbourhood has been most successfully and extensively carried on. At the Gallinas the Slave trading establishments have been all restored, and are in active operation."

Now these are the very same extracts given by Mr. Bandinel in his evidence, from which he attempts to prove the inutility of Capt. Denman's proceedings.

* Appendix VI.

Mr. Bandinel goes on to state that "the destruction of the barracoons on any particular part of the coast is of no use whatever, it is hurtful to the (legal) trade; it frightened away the legal trade, as well as the other. . . . It frightened all people away; all Europeans instantly. It did not frighten away the Slave traders from getting barracoons immediately again, because the very next year they were there."

I have endeavoured to shew the cause of the barracoons being there again, and I will now come to the question of legal trade being frightened away by the destruction of the slave factories.

The principal places in Africa where the slave factories were destroyed by Her Majesty's officers, were Gallinas, Cabenda, and Ambriz. It has been sufficiently shewn that there was not any legal trade to frighten away at Gallinas. Neither was there any at Cabenda, at which place I was present at the destruction of the slave factories, and where I had been stationed for several months previously. At Ambriz there was a considerable legal trade; there were two English, two American, and one Hanseatic factories; but so far from these people being frightened away, they were much pleased at the whole proceeding. I was in the company of a number of these people, (English, Americans, and Germans,) looking at the burning of the barracoons, and I was not a little amused to hear them chuckling at the destruction of their rival's property.

The only instance, I believe, where such proceedings were injurious to legal trade, was that of some unwise acts of one of Her Majesty's vessels in the river Pongas, where the operations were supposed not to have been exclusively directed against those engaged in Slave trade.

Mr. Bandinel advises, that in any future Slave trade Treaty with Brazil, we should formally acknowledge her right to import negroes from Africa under the denomination of "free emigrants." I cannot but think that any formal acknowledgment of such right, in any treaty with a country where slavery so extensively exists, would afford direct facilities to the prosecution of the Slave trade.

In the year 1840, when the Portuguese flag could be no longer used, and the slave merchants were very sorely pushed, the "*Society for Colonization*"! in Brazil fitted out a vessel called the "Claudina," and despatched her, with an imperial passport, to proceed to Africa and to bring over a cargo of "free emigrants." She proceeded direct to Cabenda, where there was no trade whatever but that in slaves; she was fully equipped, her slave deck laid, ready to receive a cargo of slaves, there waiting for her. She was captured immediately on her arrival by a boat belonging to Her Majesty's brig "Fantomê," and was condemned at Sierra Leone, by the mixed British and Brazilian court.

Mr. Bandinel's hint about taking possession of

an island of Brazil,* which I have before noticed, is well thrown in. It remains for the Statesmen of this country to decide whether, or not, the determined perseverance on the part of the Brazilian Government in violating their engagements, justifies that step. If this be one of Mr. Bandinel's "gentler means" I heartily agree with him.

A literal and practical fulfilment of the first article of our treaty with Brazil, of 1826, which stipulates that the Slave trade, when carried on by Brazilian subjects, shall be treated as piracy, is all we want to clear the sea of those miscreants,—at least it would render the task of the British Government comparatively an easy one.

* I should fancy that a better might be found than St. Catherine, which is not quite so much in the way of the Slave trade as Mr. Bandinel imagines.

CHAPTER V.

AFRICAN emigration appears to be considered, by some persons, at once, the great panacea for the evils of the Slave trade and for the sufferings of the West India proprietors : I am firmly of opinion, that it will never lessen either the one or the other. An intimate knowledge of the greater part of the western coast of Africa, enables me to state confidently, that *bona fide* free emigrants are no where to be procured ; except, indeed, in an extremely limited proportion from the Kroo Coast, and a few from Sierra Leone ; and I have never heard a person, who has had any extensive personal knowledge of Africa in general, express a contrary opinion.

The Committee on Slave Trade did not, I believe, enter largely into the question of emigration. Mr. Macgregor Laird, however, thinks that the experiment is worth trying ; but I will give his recommendation in his own words. He says (2988)—

“ The experiment of free emigration I think is worth trying. I should like to draw a parallel case with that of the Southern States of America. There are societies formed all through the Northern States for assisting runaway slaves into Canada. The average number has been stated at sometimes like 4000 or 5000 that annually escapes from the Southern States ; they run the gauntlet through the Northern and Eastern states, and get to Canada at last. Now they are the same race as those people that I consider this country is bound to endeavour to improve,

the African race. If you were to put two vessels (we will take the Cameroons river, or any other river), a slaver and an English ship, the one offering perfect freedom, with men on board who had been to the West Indies, their own countrymen, and the other purchasing slaves ; judging of Africans like other men, you would say that the free vessel would get more, because the proportion of slaves to free men is very great. If they can escape and run the gauntlet through all those Yankees who are hunting them in the United States (they are the same race of men), why will they not escape from their own country ?”

He is then asked, “They might not have the “ same inducement to escape from their own “ country ?” He replies, “ They have the inducement of *either being forced on board the slaver, or “ making their escape, and getting on board the free “ ship.*” And thus by outbidding and outmanœuvring the Slave trader, we are to induce the natives of Africa *freely* to emigrate from their country.

The evidence given before the “ Sugar and Coffee Planting” Committee, went, I believe, entirely to shew the impracticability of obtaining any considerable amount of free labour, from the continent of Africa. At any rate, the Committee, in one of its resolutions, left on record a significant warning against the establishment of a British Slave Trade under the new title of “ Free Emigration.”

I am of opinion that free emigration must, and will be, extremely limited ;—limited in numbers, because few will go voluntarily, and also limited to the period between the extinction of the Slave trade,

and the time when the natives of Africa shall know the value of their own soil. When this lesson shall have been learnt, emigration will cease, and the tide will flow the other way : and then will be felt the blessings derived from any system of emigration that you may have succeeded in establishing.

In the present state of things, it would be extremely difficult, if at all practicable, to separate emigration from the Slave trade. What inducement has the negro now to emigrate? He is naturally of an idle and contented disposition ; his wants are few, and easily supplied ; he would rather live on a little at home, than work for you abroad ; his soil is infinitely richer, and more productive than yours. Why then should he expatriate himself?

The richness of the soil of tropical Africa, and the natural resources of that country are, I believe, completely undervalued. I allude particularly to that comparatively salubrious part of the coast, situated between the 3rd and 7th parallels of south latitude ; and which is, I think, as salubrious as the coast of America, in the same latitude. This may properly be termed the nest of slavery, and where legal trade is scarcely known.

I once passed two days in the house of a slave merchant, thirty-five miles up the river Congo, and visited his establishment thirty miles still higher up : I received from him a good deal of information respecting the country, and the social condition of

its people. He was a most singular man: there was a mixture of benevolence and ferocity in his disposition which one could scarcely comprehend,—benevolent by nature, which his education and mode of life could not entirely change. His name was Alphonse Meynier; a Frenchman by birth, and educated for the medical profession; he commenced life as the surgeon of a slave vessel, and on the deaths of nearly all the medical officers in Captain Owen's surveying expedition in 1827, he received from that officer an acting appointment as Assistant-surgeon in her Majesty's navy; but this he soon relinquished for the more lucrative employment as agent to a Slave trading house at Havana, and which he had then held for the previous ten or twelve years; he left Africa in 1842, when the slave factories were destroyed, returned in two or three years afterwards, and is, I believe, there still. He was not only a shrewd, but a very intelligent man; he was a practical philosopher; he did not express any wish to see the Slave trade abolished, as he thought, with his brother Cliffe, that it was the most profitable trade under the sun. He considered it, however, to be the curse of Africa, which the British nation would one day succeed in eradicating; he spoke in admiration of the people, who he said were the mildest and most inoffensive that he had ever known; in mildness of disposition they would bear a comparison with any European nation;

crime, or what they considered crime, was scarcely known among them. These qualities of the Congos are well known on the other side of the Atlantic ; they are delicate, and therefore not suited to field labour, or any hard work ; but they are chosen for domestic servants both in Cuba and Brazil.

Don Alphonse, to shew what the soil was capable of producing, had a garden in which he cultivated many of the vegetables of Europe, and fruits of the tropics ; he had potatoes and green peas, although I do not think the latter came to perfection ; the cotton plant was cultivated with very little trouble, and yielded at the end of three months ; he shewed that Indian corn could be cultivated to any extent, as well as the yam and cassada root ; plantains, bananas, and pine-apples grow without any care whatever. He pointed out a forest of palm-trees, with the berries rotting on the ground ; the natives collecting sufficient only for domestic purposes. In pointing out to me how far Providence had blessed them, he would exclaim, “ These people *ought to be* the richest and happiest in the world.” How can you expect such a people to emigrate from such a country ?

It has often been to me a matter of surprise that English missionaries have never visited that part of the coast, where I am sure they would be well received, and where I believe their labours would be attended with greater success than in several other parts of the world. The French missionaries made

their appearance in the Congo about half a century ago; they could not succeed in converting the natives to Christianity, owing, in a great measure, to their own excessive intolerance, and to their insisting, as a *sine qua non*, on the observance of monogamy on the part of the natives. They built a chapel, part of which still remains, and for which I am told the natives entertain a certain kind of respect.

An African chief is not, as is generally supposed in this country, a kind of "King of the Cannibal Islands," delighting in human sacrifices, and all that sort of thing; he is, generally speaking, a humane, shrewd, and intelligent man. I have visited King Boy in the Nun, King Peppel in the Bonny, Duke Ephraim in the Old Calabar, and the Chief of Benin, whose name I forget; and I could but admire, in most cases, the propriety of their conduct. I lived for a week in the house of King Bell in the Cameroons, and saw nothing that would shock the most fastidious taste; except perhaps the first day, when the soup was served in an utensil, the proper use of which his Majesty did not know, but which was by far the most splendid thing of the kind I ever saw. I was, for three days, a prisoner of war of King Pass-all's, at Cape Lopez, who treated me much better than Washington or Buonaparte would have done under the same circumstances. I was for five months constantly off the Congo and Cabenda, in almost daily communication with the

shore, where I paid repeated visits to the different chiefs, who always received me with kindness, honour, and the excess of hospitality, although I was successfully preventing the slave trade, on which alone they depended to supply their wants and replenish their exchequers.

The description of a dinner given to me by one of these African chiefs, may not be here out of place. I had had some little misunderstanding with Principe Jack, the chief of Cabenda, owing to his having threatened to cut off the heads of two of his people whom he had detected giving me information about slave vessels. When the affair was satisfactorily arranged, he asked me to dinner, that we might eat together and be friends. I went at the appointed time, 2 o'clock, accompanied by three or four of the officers. I need not give the bill of fare, but the dinner was in the Spanish style; there was a good show of plate, with knives, forks, plates, &c.; we sat down like men, and not like monkeys. The party consisted of about twenty, and included all the head men of the neighbouring villages, none of whom had any dress except a piece of printed Manchester cotton round the middle. The table was not quite large enough for the party, and we were therefore crowded rather closely together. The room was not large enough for the host of attendants, who kept tumbling over each other in all directions; the thermometer must have been upwards of 90°, and the atmosphere therefore was not the most

agreeable ; none but an African could have stood it. Principe Jack was dressed out for the occasion, and, as he sat at the head of his table, cut a most ridiculous figure ; he had on a serjeant-major's coat and epaulettes, an embroidered waistcoat (probably from Drury Lane theatre), a white shirt, red neckerchief, and a jockey's cap ; no shoes, and no trowsers. Seeing us sit down uncovered, he threw away his jockey's cap ; after soup, he threw off his coat and epaulettes ; something else went off with every course, and by the time he had drank the Queen of England's health, with three times three, he was *in puris naturalibus*, except the usual piece of cloth, and a very fine piece of net-work over the shoulders, which is the distinctive mark of a chief.

CHAPTER VI.

I WAS induced to digress in the last chapter ; but the question is, "How are we to suppress the Slave Trade?" Let us first understand what we have hitherto done. I need not go back farther than the year 1840 ; previously to that, we had positively done nothing. We had certainly fought a good battle : we made a great many treaties,—expended vast sums of money,—set a splendid example to other nations,—but we had not effected any practical change in the Brazilian or Cuban Slave trade.

True it is, that the Brazilians were very much frightened by the insertion of the word "*piracy*," in our treaty of 1826 ; but they quickly found that it was only pen and ink : as soon, therefore, as their markets recovered from a glut, occasioned by the rush they made for slaves while the trade remained legal, they continued to carry it on, wholly unrestricted under the flag of Portugal. True also is it, that we checked the Cuban Slave trade, for a moment, by the sudden appearance of the Spanish treaty of 1835 ; but the slave traders discovered that they could evade that treaty by hoisting the Portuguese flag, with a forged set of Portuguese papers. It was not until the year 1838, that the

Mixed Commission Court at Sierra Leone, affirmed the principle that the nationality of a vessel was to be taken from the place of residence of her owner, and of his mercantile establishment; until this principle was acted upon the Spanish treaty of 1835 was wholly inoperative.

But even then we could not touch a *bona fide* Portuguese vessel when "equipped" for the Slave trade; nor could we take her, if south of the line, with slaves actually on board. The "Slave Trade Suppression Bill" of 1839, which came into operation in the beginning of 1840, gave us that power; previously to which the Portuguese-Brazilian Slave trade was wholly unrestricted.

It was not, then, until the year 1840, that the maritime police of Great Britain had any real powers to suppress the Slave Trade.

The slavers were driven from the rivers flowing into the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and also from the river to the north of Sierra Leone, as soon as the "equipment" treaty of 1835 came into operation. In 1840-41 the Slave trade had almost entirely ceased at Gallinas, Whydah, Lagos, &c.; in fact, every where to the north of the equator. It was then confined almost exclusively to those parts of the eastern and western coasts of Africa, belonging to the Crown of Portugal, in the ports of which Slave vessels were permitted to remain fully equipped for the Slave trade, and protected from search by Her Majesty's cruisers. This was the only difficulty

experienced by Her Majesty's officers in their endeavours to suppress the Slave trade.

But in the face of this difficulty, in the years 1840-41-42, a very limited number of Her Majesty's Cruisers captured upwards of 200 Slave vessels, 192 of which were condemned: during the same period, only 170 were supposed to have landed their cargoes in Brazil and Cuba. This caused the price of a new slave to be, on the average, £80. and £90. in those countries; and the cost price of a prime slave to be upwards of £100.

It was then supposed that the Slave trade could not exist much longer; it had, indeed, almost ceased in Cuba, only *three* vessels having left Havana on a Slave-trading voyage in 1842: the insurance companies had ceased to accept policies on Slave trade adventurers.

In consequence of the Slave trade having almost entirely ceased on the whole coast of Africa, except in the Portuguese possessions, the *greater number* of the native chiefs,—relinquishing the hope of ever being again able to carry on the traffic—had, in 1842, entered into treaties with this country, engaging, for a trifling consideration, not to permit the Slave trade to be revived: and there was then every prospect of our obtaining such treaties along the whole coast. Our difficulty would have then been only with the Portuguese Government; and, judging from the good faith with which they have latterly acted (although their subordinate officers are as bad as

ever), we should have obtained those powers which would have enabled us to eradicate the Slave trade from the continent of Africa.

Had we persevered for one or two more years in the policy of 1841, and with a small increase of our squadron, I am firmly of opinion that our efforts would have been crowned with success.

Having endeavoured to explain the causes which led to such a satisfactory state of things in 1842, I will now endeavour to shew the reasons, why, in the year 1848, we appear to be in a much worse position than we were in 1839 : I say "appear," because I still think we have the remedy in our own hands ; and that our powers are greater than they were then.

The gradual and constant increase of the Slave Trade since 1842, has been caused, I think, by a succession of untoward events,—by the unfortunate publication of Lord Aberdeen's Letter to the Lords of the Admiralty, in the latter part of 1842, which appeared to imply a total change of policy on the part of the British Government with respect to the Slave trade,—by the discussions created by the jealousy of the French people respecting the right of search, which gave encouragement to the Slave traders,—by the abrogation of the Brazilian Slave trade treaty, which that government would not have insisted on, had they not believed that they would have found sympathy in France ; and the delay of the British legislature in passing an

act to supply the place of that treaty, which threw the Brazilian Slave trade, for a time, completely open,—by an unfortunate decision of the twelve judges of Great Britain, which shewed to the Brazilians that they might kill Her Majesty's officers and men, when in the execution of their duty, with perfect impunity,—by the passing of the sugar bill of 1846, which made it appear to the world that we would rather allow slavery and the Slave trade to flourish, than pay a penny a pound more for our sugar,—by the ratification of the Ashburton treaty with the United States, by which we relieved the Americans from the engagement by which they were bound by the treaty of Ghent, and from whom we are not likely to obtain any further assistance,—and lastly, by the adoption of inefficient and inconsiderate measures on the coast of Africa, just at the very time when we should have put forth all our energies, to neutralize the ill effects of so many concurrent mischievous influences, and to repair the faults that we had already committed.

I have repeatedly called attention to Lord Aberdeen's letter to the Lords of the Admiralty of May 1842, and endeavoured in my evidence (1261)* to shew its influence on the minds of people in Africa. I do not, however, wish to make it appear that his Lordship is alone responsible for its mischievous effects ; it was doubtless the act of the Government, and was backed by the opinion of the Queen's

* Appendix VI.

Advocate. The ministry had only been a few months in office, and were, perhaps, desirous of trying to suppress the Slave trade by "gentle means;" but I am quite certain that Lord Aberdeen would never have put his name to that document, had he fancied that it would, in the remotest degree, have appeared to imply an encouragement of the Slave trade. I have been honoured with several personal interviews with Lord Aberdeen, and I can declare that I never met one who appeared to have the subject more thoroughly at heart, or who appeared more anxiously alive to any suggestions that might tend to assist in forming a correct judgment in the matter, than he was.

When the British Government first decided on increasing the squadron on the coast of Africa, the fact was formally notified in both Houses of Parliament, in March 1844; the note of preparation, thus sounded, was soon heard on the other side of the Atlantic, before indeed a single vessel was commissioned for the purpose. This created much alarm in the minds of the Slave traders, who, as Senor Cliffe tells us, did not doubt the ability of Great Britain to do what she had threatened. The effect of this threat was, to keep up the price of a new slave in Brazil in 1844, to £83., notwithstanding that the importations, during that and the previous year, had very greatly increased, while the proportionate number of captures had greatly diminished. The Slave trade, in fact, suddenly *doubled* itself in 1843.

But the Slave traders soon perceived that we were not in earnest; the Admiralty would not commission more vessels early in 1844, because they already had more seamen afloat than had been voted: consequently, the squadron was not increased to any extent until 1845.

But even then it was not sufficient for the purpose; and it never has been. Instead of putting it under the command of an officer who had a sufficient amount of local knowledge, (one might surely have been found in the Captain's list), the Admiralty selected one, who, although a very good officer, knew nothing about Africa, to which place, I believe, he was sent, merely because he happened to command a steam frigate which was found to be unfit for any other part of the world. It was to be expected that he would do more mischief during the first year of his command, than he could repair during the two last. I stated to the Committee (1289):*

"I may here take occasion to remark, that every Commodore whom we have had on the coast of Africa since this plan was given or adopted, has been a stranger to the coast, which has been very unfortunate, although a very good officer no doubt in every other respects; but I think it would be just as ridiculous to send an officer to the North Pole, who had passed his time in China, or to send an officer to treat with the Chinese who had passed his time in exploring the North Pole, as it is to send a perfect stranger to the coast of Africa, to treat with the native chiefs, when he knows nothing of their manners and customs, and possesses no local knowledge of the coast."

* Appendix VI.

Her Majesty's Commissioners at Sierra Leone, judging from a long personal experience on the coast, appear to have been pretty much of the same opinion. In their report to Lord Palmerston, dated 31st Dec. 1838, in accounting for the comparatively small number of captures at one particular period, they say,

“During this period also, — succeeded — in the command of the squadron, and the time which precedes, and immediately follows, a change of this nature, is always a season of comparative inactivity.”

A stranger goes there with some pre-conceived notions of his own, and fancies that all done by his predecessor has been wrong.

It was stated by Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons, and by Lord Aberdeen in the House of Lords, that the plan then about to be put into execution had been recommended by Capt. Denman and myself; but we appear neither of us very willing to accept the responsibility of its failure.

I must disclaim against its being considered any plan of mine : the one I gave in required a force of 12 steam and 20 sailing vessels, including the commodore, and the depôt at Ascension : my communications with the Admiralty and Lord Aberdeen, which are printed in the first report of the Committee, will be found in the Appendix. It will be seen that I recommended a particular class of vessel at each particular part of the coast, according to its local peculiarities ; and I was informed at the

Admiralty that my suggestions were approved of, and would be attended to.

Now let me ask, have these suggestions ever been attended to? In the first place, the squadron was never sufficient in numbers, and consequently the cruisers could never maintain a blockade: when in want of provisions or water they were obliged to leave their port open, and the slavers knew full well how to bide their time.

I recommended that "two steamers well found in boats," should be stationed between Mayumba and Congo, which would require at least one more to ensure proper reliefs. But it appears that that part of the coast was left to the care of the old "Actæon," who must have been anything but a hunter, as she could not get twelve miles to windward in any given number of days.

I recommended that four large brigs* well found in boats, and a steamer, should be constantly cruising between Ambriz and Little Fish Bay; but it appears that Commodore Jones left the greater part of that coast to the care of the Portuguese authorities, and consequently the slavers had a very pretty time of it. They don't care how many doors you shut, so that you leave one open.

The squadron was not only deficient in numbers, but several of those composing it were next to useless. What could the "Actæon," "Rolla," or "Espoir," do against a fast-sailing slaver? The

* I kept as much as possible to sailing vessels, owing to the expense, but steamers are undoubtedly better.

orders, too, issued to the cruisers tended greatly to diminish their efficiency ; they could not be strictly obeyed, and they therefore, in some cases, became a dead letter.

It may not be out of place to refer to the regulations respecting the payment of bounty-money on Slaves and Slave vessels. The absurd disproportion between the amount payable for a full and empty slaver exposes the British officer to most unjust imputations. I well remember the unpleasant feeling created among officers, by a speech of Lord Brougham's in the House of Lords, wherein he accused us of permitting empty vessels to approach the coast unmolested, for the chance of catching them full of slaves. The accusation found an echo in the House of Commons, and foreigners have repeated it over and over again.

Captors are paid £4. per ton for an empty vessel, and £5. per slave for a full one ; now, as a vessel of fifty tons will often have on board 400* slaves, the cases will stand thus :

Empty vessel $50 \times 4 = \text{£}200.$

Full vessel $400 \times 5 = \text{£}2,000.$

This is exclusive of £1. 10s. per ton for all vessels broken up.

This exposes us to unjust and illiberal remarks. But I say that a British officer should be placed above suspicion.

* The mean of all full slave-vessels captured by me gives an average of 6.2 slaves to the ton.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Report of the present Select Committee, will decide, now and for ever, whether the Slave trade is to be extinguished or not. The opinion which may be expressed by the British House of Commons, founded on the Report of its Committee, and on the evidence before it, will determine whether we are to take up the matter in earnest, and, by exerting the mighty strength, as well as the moral influence, of this great country, exterminate a traffic which she once thought it her interest to encourage, and then felt it her duty to abandon; or whether, without making any further effort whatever, she is at once to “retire from the contest she has so long “waged, baffled, beaten, and insulted by a set of “lawless smugglers.”

But fortunate indeed will she be, if she can retire from the contest with no worse reproach than that;—fortunate, indeed, will she be, if she can do so without deserving the reproach which is now being constantly directed towards her, namely, that she is no longer desirous of suppressing the Slave trade, because she has discovered that it is not her interest to do so,—because she has discovered the theory of black free labour being cheaper than black slave labour to be a positive delusion, and is therefore

desirous of reviving the Slave Trade under another name.

Such are the reproaches that are being constantly directed towards the Government and people of this country, not merely by a set of lawless miscreants, or by the hireling press of a slave holding country, but coming from the lips of some of the first statesmen in foreign countries.

The speech of Mr. Calhoun, at a large public meeting in America, is perhaps fresh in the recollection of many of the readers of this pamphlet. I regret that I cannot now lay my hand on it to give an extract : but it was to the effect, that public opinion in Great Britain had latterly undergone a marked change respecting slavery and the Slave trade ; and that we were now desirous of supplying our West India colonies with forced labour, under the specious plea of affording free emigration to the natives of Africa.

Few persons, except those who wade through the correspondence annually presented to Parliament, on matters connected with the Slave trade, will have read a letter addressed by Mr. Wise, the United States Minister at the Court of Brazil to his British colleague there, for the expressed purpose of its being communicated to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, and doubtless, with the approbation of his own.

Mr. Wise, in this letter, which occupies thirty-five folios in print, accuses the British nation of being the direct instigators of the Slave trade, actuated

by the most sordid and selfish motives. He tells Her Majesty's Government, "that British manufactures are shipped by British subjects on board of "Slave vessels at Rio de Janeiro; when these "vessels arrive thus loaded on the coast of Africa, "the English cruisers allow them to pass unmolested, "to the end that they may land those goods, buy a "cargo of slaves, which are afterwards captured, "and sent as apprentices to the possessions of Great "Britain, and for which the Government pay a "bounty of so many pounds sterling 'per capita.'"

He states that we refrain from destroying the factories, because we have discovered that we "*burnt our own goods.*" Such were his conclusions from having read Lord Aberdeen's letter of 20th May, 1842, which directed that in the event of the barracoons being burnt the goods were to be spared. Mr. Wise says,

"Cabenda is called the 'Burnt District'—burnt district once, but burnt district no more. I tell you, yes, to tell the Earl of Aberdeen, that the reason alleged here boldly, unequivocally, and with an air of confidence and insolence even, which, whether it be true or false, defies contradiction, is that when the burnt district was burnt, the British 'burnt their own goods'—the loss fell on British merchants and manufactures; and as the saying is, 'a burnt child dreads the fire!' Such is the boasted answer to the question why the storehouse of slavery and its goods are not destroyed? I can only ask again why is the factory not again burnt?"

Mr. Wise asks, emphatically, why the factory is not again destroyed, and I take this opportunity to echo the question.

Shall we, I say, stand before the world, free from the above imputation, if we now retire from the contest "baffled, beaten," &c., without any effort to shew that we are in earnest.

The majority of persons in this country fancy that we are now doing our best to suppress the Slave trade; in my humble opinion, we are not. Mr. Macgregor Laird, an intelligent British merchant, tells the Committee, that the "finest class of "small men-of-war in the world are now upon the "coast of Africa." But it appears that Sir Charles Hotham is of a different opinion. He states in his report to the Admiralty, dated 14th March, 1848,

"There is not a sloop on the African station that can compete in sailing with a well-found slaver. At certain periods of the year, when the fresh breezes set into the Bight of Benin, a well-equipped slave vessel will escape even from a steamer; this has already happened to the 'Grappler,' and may any day occur to the 'Blazer.'"

Why, then, send such vessels, with others whose names I have already mentioned, to Africa? they might as well be at Spithead. It is a mere paper blockade.

Sir Charles Hotham is an active, intelligent, and energetic officer, and is doubtless, by this time, well up to his work. Why not then give him what he asks for—steamers, and efficient ones too.

It has been said by a British legislator, "Remove "your foolish squadron, trust to free trade in Africa, "and the slave trade will die a natural death." That is mere opinion unsupported by argument. If the trade were thrown open, there would be a

certain limit to the demand in Cuba ; but with respect to Brazil the demand would be almost unlimited ; and there is scarcely a limit to the supply from Africa.

Remove your squadron, and the natives of Africa would be brought to the coast in droves, and wars would be created that do not now exist. The price of a slave in Brazil would be little more than the cost of transport ; and a British ship-owner tells you, he can take them double the distance in fine roomy vessels, at £4. 10s per man.

When the price of a slave might be reduced to the lowest price, what would be the limit to the demand in Brazil ? The life of a slave would then not be worth one year's purchase, when worked in the mines. It would be economy on the part of the owners of mines to get as many prime men every year as possible ; they would get the greatest possible amount of work out of a man in the shortest possible time ; put him underground and work him to death in a year—use him up, and then buy another.

I am not one of those who think that we can expect to suppress the Slave trade, by the mere adoption of any blockade system—although that is pre-essentially requisite to our success. Let our measures, however, be consistent ; do not allow one to neutralize the other.

I believe that we have the remedy in our own hands. If we were to enforce the fulfilment of our treaty with Brazil, which stipulates that Brazilian

slave traders shall be treated as pirates, we should have the support and sympathy of the nations of Europe, who I do not think have changed their opinions on that subject since 1815. Once shew that we are in earnest, and the seas will be swept clean of these miscreants who disgrace humanity.

While the people on the continents of North and South America doubt the sincerity of our wish to suppress the slave trade, those on the continent of Africa doubt our ability to do so: the *prestige* belonging to the name of England, is, I regret to say, there already on the wane.

Principe Jack, the native chief of Cabenda, after having first seen the slave traders ignominiously expelled from his dominions, and their property destroyed by the British naval forces, and then about two years afterwards, seeing the very same men return again more elated and more impudent than ever, and giving extraordinary accounts of the fallen power of Great Britain, thus expressed himself to a British officer: "One time we think Englishman be almost same as God Almighty; now we think he be same as other white man,—all same as we."

Prince Manna, the chief of Gallinas, during a discussion with the Commander of one of Her Majesty's vessels, asked the following pertinent question: "You tell me to send away Spanish man, and not buy slaves; what for you no stop Spanishman coming?" Not receiving a ready answer, he said, "I tell you why you no stop Spanishman; you be 'fraid. Yes, you be 'fraid; and I too be 'fraid to

“ send him away. Me no want Spanishman. ’Spose
 “ Spanishman no come, I no buy and no sell slave ;
 “ but he come, he bring cloth, and I sell him
 “ slave ; Spanishman be my friend, and I be ’fraid
 “ to send him away.”

The security of an Englishman, in his travels and mercantile transactions in Africa, consists in the *prestige* attached to his name. It enables the British merchant to send a cargo of goods into the interior of the country, “ under the charge of a “ white man, with no other security but the good “ faith of the black man.”* It enables the Englishman to go where no other man dare go ; it enables the missionary to propagate the doctrines of Christianity, and the trader to extend the arts of civilization over the whole continent.

If this feeling be once destroyed, by our retiring before the slave traders, these people will take our place. They are already received with more respect than formerly ; the natives once looked upon them as a set of criminals, skulking out of your way, but they now see them look you boldly in the face.

Our dominion in India was at first firmly established by the brilliant successes of the British arms, but it is not maintained by the power of those arms alone ; it is not an empire of bayonets, but an empire of opinion. May our power in Africa be based on the same solid foundation, and may future generations in that country have reason to bless, and not to curse the name of Britain.

* Mr. Jackson’s Speech in the House of Commons.

APPENDIX.

I.

Remarks sent to Admiralty, 15th Dec. 1843.

(Extract.)

I CONSIDER that the manner in which the Cape of Good Hope and Coast of Africa stations are divided, is particularly favourable to the escape of slave vessels, which are now enabled to take advantage of Her Majesty's cruisers not being able to act so much in concert as they could do were they under the orders of the same local senior officer.

The 10th degree of south latitude is the very centre of the Portuguese possessions, where the slave trade is carried on, and where there is constant communication, both by land and water, between the slave depôts on one station and the slave depôts on the other; the traders are thus enabled to transport their slaves, and all necessary equipment, to that station which is not so strictly guarded as the other; and so great do they consider this advantage, that they can almost ensure the escape of any vessel. Even the permission for the cruisers to go beyond the limits of the stations, and communicate with each other, can make but little difference. It is requisite that they should all be under the orders of the same local senior officer, whose plans could be formed according to information received. It is on correct information that principally depends our success; if reduced to mere 'hide and seek,' we have no chance with the slavers; they have several hundred boats employed, and the transport by land is particularly easy.

Taking alone into consideration the suppression of the

slave trade, the stations should be divided either by the 3rd, 7th, or 16th degree of south latitude. Between Cape Lopez (lat. $0^{\circ} 36'$) and Mayumba (lat. $3^{\circ} 22'$), there is no slave trade, nor any trade whatever; the country is impassable, it is very thinly populated, and the natives are less civilized than on any other part of the coast. This effectually prevents any communication between the Bights and the south-west coast of Africa. Between Mayumba and the river Congo the slave trade has been very briskly and successfully carried on for many years, principally by Spaniards from Havannah. This part of the coast might certainly belong to either station, but it were better that all cruisers to the southward of 3° south should be under the immediate command of the same officer, who, by having a number of vessels at his disposal, could ensure the coast being equally guarded; and in case of a cruiser being in want of provisions, she might be supplied or relieved by one whose services could be better spared, instead of leaving an important post unguarded. It is moreover absolutely impossible for the senior officer in the Bights personally to attend to this part of the station; he must entrust it to one of his subordinates—in fact make it a distinct station. Should it, however, be necessary for other reasons to attach this part of the coast (from Mayumba to Congo) to the northern station, another good division might be made by the river Congo, or the seventh degree of south latitude.

The coast between the river Congo and Ambriz is another waste and sterile tract, almost destitute of fresh water, and where there is no trade whatever. At Ambriz (lat. $7^{\circ} 52'$) begins the Portuguese slave trade, and near this spot will always be the principal market for slaves, roads converging to that place from all parts of the interior, and even from the opposite shore of Mozambique.

The coast between Ambriz and Little Fish Bay (lat. $15^{\circ} 13'$) is that which requires to be the most strictly watched; it embraces the whole of the Portuguese posses-

sions south of the Line, and where there is scarcely any other trade but that in slaves; there is one continued line of communication along the whole coast, which abounds in small coves and creeks, in any one of which vessels can not only embark their slaves, but can supply themselves with water, provisions, and other necessaries, which are easily transported by land. To capture vessels under these circumstances, or even to frustrate their schemes, requires the utmost care and vigilance, but our exertions are in a great measure thrown away if they are allowed quietly to arrange their plans, while none can be made to counteract them, The stations should not be divided between the 3rd and 16th degree of south latitude."

H. J. MATSON,
Commander.

II.

Commander Matson to Sir George Cockburn, 8th Jan. 1844.

(Extract.)

Except at those places where boats can be used on detached service, small brigs or brigantines* are of greater service than frigates; the masts of a frigate, even with her sails furled, are seen by a small vessel before it is possible for her to be seen by the former; the slaver then escapes by merely altering her course. The upper sails of a vessel that would carry 300 slaves, are not so high as the cross-jack yard of a frigate.

I presume that owing to the extra expense, steamers are not to be employed where sailing vessels will do nearly as well; and for the same reason, that a large vessel is not to be employed when a small one is sufficient.

Beginning then with the north extreme of the slave-

* Not any brigantines have been employed until within the last year.

trading coast, I consider that a steamer occasionally visiting the rivers to the northward of Sierra Leone would prevent the slave trade being revived* at those places; this vessel would not be required to carry a large quantity of fuel or provisions.

To prevent any slave trade between Sierra Leone and Cape Palmas, would require three sailing vessels stationed at particular points, and a steamer, which should be senior officer, to communicate with the whole; small vessels would be better here than large ones.

Between Cape St. Paul's and Lagos would require two or three sailing vessels and a steamer, the former small.

A steamer occasionally visiting the coast between Benin and Cape Lopez would prevent the slave trade being revived in the rivers.

Two steamers, well found in boats, would prevent any slave trade between Mayumba and Congo; from Ambriz to Little Fish Bay would require four sailing vessels (large brigs well found in boats) and a steamer, the latter senior officer.†

With such a force employed the coast would be actually blockaded, no slave trade could exist, and the cruisers might be withdrawn from the coasts of Cuba and Brazil. A few extra vessels would be required to relieve those absent for provisions or refitting.

I do not think that this force would be required for more than two years; the slave trade having once actually ceased, other steps might be taken to prevent its being revived. I am not well acquainted with the Mozambique, but I believe that three sailing vessels would be sufficient; no small slavers go there.

* It has, I believe, since revived.

† See paragraph † at page 74.

III.

Commander Matson to the Earl of Aberdeen.

25, Westbourne Place, 4th April, 1844.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to enclose to your Lordship extracts from my remarks on the suppression of the Slave trade, which were given to the Admiralty and Sir George Cockburn in December and January last.

I then stated it to be my opinion that a force consisting of seven steam and ten sailing vessels, constantly stationed on particular parts of the western coast of Africa, would prevent any slave trade whatever; but that an additional number would be required to relieve those absent for provisions and refitting; requiring a force of 12 steam and 20 sailing vessels. I pointed out the particular positions where it would be advisable to station the different cruisers, and marked on the charts those places to which the slave traders usually resorted; duplicates of those charts I beg also to enclose.

The Northern limit of the slave-trading coast I consider to be at or near the river Gallinas. I am not well acquainted with the coast to the northward of Sierra Leone, but I do not believe that any slave trade has been carried on there for several years; if that be the case a steamer occasionally visiting the Pongas, Nunez, &c. would prevent the revival of the slave trade there; and it could not be revived without the fact becoming known to the authorities at Sierra Leone.

Between the river Shebar and Cape Palmas the slave trade has been very briskly and successfully carried on for many years by the Havana merchants; the traffic will, I think, cease on this part of the coast before it does so on the coast of Guinea, or on the coast south of the Equator. The landed proprietors in Cuba care very little for the continuance of the slave trade, and are, in fact, averse to the importation of fresh negroes.

From Cape St. Paul's to Cape Formosa the slave trade is carried on both by the Spaniards and Brazilians; the

Portuguese in all cases are only agents and carriers. Owing to the uncertainty of communicating with the shore, the quarrelsome character of the native tribes, and the prevalent calms and light airs of this coast;—owing to the detention consequent on all these, the slave trade has not flourished here since we were enabled to capture vessels ‘equipped’ for the slave trade. I am confidently of opinion that as soon as it becomes known that we have increased our squadron on the African coast, not a slaver will be found to the northward of the Equator.*

It is generally supposed that the slave trade is carried on in the rivers of Africa, but I do not believe that a slave vessel has entered a river during the last three years; certainly not for three years previously to my leaving the coast in 1843. It is on the coast south of the Equator that the slave trade has been and is likely to be carried on with the greatest success. Where one slave has been embarked north of the Equator, at least five have been embarked to the southward of it. From April 1840 to April 1843, 120 slave vessels were captured by Her Majesty’s cruisers south of the Equator, and this by a squadron scarcely ever consisting of more than three or four brigs. During the same period not more than 65 slave vessels were captured north of the Equator by the whole African squadron, consisting of from 10 to 15 vessels.†

The Brazilian slave market, which receives five-sixths of the negroes exported from Africa, is almost wholly supplied from the coast south of the Equator; the island of Cuba is chiefly supplied from the coast north of the Equator. These are the only two places in the world that receive slaves from Africa.

I believe that it is the opinion of those who are acquainted with Brazil, that the comparative mercantile prosperity of that country depends on a constant supply of negroes, to

* The evidence of Senr. Cliffe, who describes the feeling created in Brazil, by the proposed increase of our squadron, fully shows the justness of that prediction, which subsequent events have prevented being fulfilled.

† The Squadron to the northward of the equator was quite as active and successful, as that to the southward; the *proportionate* number of its captures was greater; very few escaped it.

work the mines and sugar plantations. Be that as it may the demand for them is very great indeed ; 100,000 annually would scarcely supply the market. Owing to the slave trade having been checked, and only checked by us, the price of a new slave in Brazil in 1842 was treble what it was in 1839 ; and for the same reason, viz. a check given to the slave trade, the cost price of a slave in Africa in 1841 was only one quarter of what it was in 1838. During the last two years the Brazilian slave trade has gradually increased, but the value of the slave also still increases. The profits of the trade are so enormous, that if one vessel in six escapes, it repays the loss of the other five ; the Brazilian slave merchants are therefore not so likely to relinquish their traffic as their brethren of Cuba,* and they will resort to those places that offer the greatest facilities for escape.

† In my former remarks I stated it to be my opinion that three steamers and four large brigs, all well found in boats, and exclusive of reliefs, would prevent the slave trade south of the Equator ; but these vessels will have a more difficult duty to perform than those stationed north of the Equator. The officer in charge of this particular part should possess a thorough knowledge of the coast. There is one continued line of communication along the whole coast (300 miles on one part, and 200 in another), which abounds in small coves and creeks, in any one of which vessels can not only embark their slaves, but can supply themselves with water, provisions, and other necessaries, which are easily transported by land. He will have a delicate duty to perform in his communication with the Portuguese authorities, with whom it is of the utmost importance that he should preserve a proper understanding ; he may in some cases secure their co-operation, unwilling though it be, and by exercising his 'surveillance' perseveringly and judiciously, he may force them against their will to do their duty. He should understand the manifold manœuvres of the slave dealers, anticipate every possible scheme, and take steps to coun-

* See my remark at p. 15.

† See p. 71.

teract them. It will entirely depend on the ability and exertions of this officer, whether the above named force is or is not sufficient to stop the slave trade south of the Equator. More than double that force would not do so, unless it be properly managed.

I believe, my Lord, that some misapprehension exists as to the benefit hitherto derived from the slave treaties with the native chiefs of Africa. It is a fact, that the only chiefs that have entered into these treaties are those in whose dominions the slave trade had actually ceased several years before the treaties were proposed to them. I may except the chiefs of Cabenda and Ambriz, but they only agreed to the treaties for the sake of preserving the goods of the slave traders when the barracoons were destroyed; they immediately afterwards annulled the treaties, and formally refused to comply with them.

The chiefs of Cape Mount and New Sestos agreed to the treaties in the expectation that it would lead to a very large increase of their trade with British vessels, in which expectation they have been disappointed. It is not stipulated that they should receive any subsidy from Great Britain. The authority of these chiefs is very limited; it does not extend beyond their own small town near the sea coast.

The treaties with the chiefs of Eboe and Egarrah are useless; no slave vessel has ever yet been seen in their waters, and they have no authority over the tribes near the sea coast. They signed the treaty as proposed to them, and received the presents; but they will engage in slave trade whenever they can do so; and it would be extremely difficult to enforce a treaty in the interior of Africa.

The chiefs of Calabar and Cameroons have entered into treaties, and they receive annual presents from this country; but the slave trade had ceased in their rivers for more than five years previously to the signing of the treaties.

If the treaties with the chiefs of Cabenda and Ambriz could be enforced by us, it would be of vast benefit, and more particularly that with Ambriz. It is only eight miles outside the Portuguese possessions, and the slave merchants

consequently resort to that place, to evade the laws of Portugal, to do which they receive every assistance from the colonial authorities; Ambriz is a kind of free port for slave trading.

I do not consider that these treaties are mischievous; on the contrary, they can do no harm, and some of them may be of service on a future day; but not any practical good has hitherto resulted from them.

It is not to be supposed that any chief in Africa will keep faith with us any longer than it suits his interest to do so; a treaty is therefore useless unless it contains a stipulation by which we are authorized to suppress the slave trade by force, in case of its being at any time hereafter revived.

The chiefs over whom it is of importance that we should have some power, are those of Mayumba, Loango, Malemba, Cabenda, Congo, and Ambriz; these are the maritime tribes on the south-west coast of Africa that are interested in the slave trade. The people of the first four named countries are the mildest and most inoffensive of all the natives of Africa.

I beg to refer your Lordship to the accompanying charts, containing my remarks on the slave-trading coast.

I have the honor, &c.,

H. J. MATSON, *Commander*.

IV.

Commander Matson to the Earl of Aberdeen.

25, Westbourne Place, 21st July, 1844.

MY LORD,

I beg leave to offer to your Lordship some further remarks relative to the suppression of the slave trade, which I am induced to do by the very flattering manner in which Sir Robert Peel was lately pleased to mention my name in the House of Commons.

I have already stated it to be my opinion that the proposed force on the coast of Africa would not be required for more than two years; the slave trade having once

actually ceased, other steps might be taken to prevent its being revived.

That our present exertions may ultimately be crowned with success, it, I consider, will be necessary to attend to the following :—

1. Treaties with native chiefs, in virtue of which we might destroy slave factories on shore.

2. Permission to destroy slave factories on parts of the coast nominally possessed by the Crown of Portugal, but at a great distance from any constituted authorities.

3. Encouragement, by every means, of legitimate commerce with Africa.

We have not hitherto succeeded in obtaining a treaty with any native chief until he had already relinquished every hope of carrying on the slave trade; this fact then may be a guide to our future proceedings. When the coast belonging to any chief shall have been strictly guarded for one or two years; when the slave trade shall have ceased, and the slave traders withdrawn from his dominions; then, and then only, will he for a trifling subsidy stipulate for a final abolition of the slave trade. There will not be the slightest physical difficulty in enforcing a treaty with any of the tribes on the sea coast. Moreover, no slave merchant would trust a cargo of goods on shore in Africa where he knew that the English could land and destroy it.

I am able, my Lord, to speak very confidently on this subject, for there is not a single harbour or river on any part of the western coast of Africa, from Sierra Leone to Little Fish Bay, that I have not repeatedly visited, and there is scarcely a chief on the whole of that coast with whom I have not had repeated conversations respecting it.

I may here mention that an erroneous opinion generally prevails as to the amount of domestic slavery in tropical Africa; it has been greatly overrated. I do not believe that slavery existed among the tribes on the west coast until they were visited by Europeans, three centuries ago. I believe that domestic slavery in Africa was caused by European slave trade. Many observations that I have made lead

me to this conclusion. I will mention only one. Among the numerous African languages, differing from each other as widely as the English, Russian, and Italian, I have never found a word expressive of 'slave' or 'bondsmen.' Those words are generally rendered by 'escravo,' or 'cativo' (captive); the latter is common to all the African languages, from the Equator to the south extreme of the slave-trading coast.*

Our chief difficulty in suppressing the slave trade on the west coast will be on that part which belongs to the Crown of Portugal, situated between the eight and eighteenth degree of south latitude. Along this 600 miles of coast there are only four places at which there are any constituted authorities, viz., St. Paul de Loando, Nova Redonda, Benguela, and Mayumba, or Little Fish Bay; and their influence extends but little further than the range of the guns of the forts. The slave traders are absolute masters of all the creeks and corners of the coast; and here, my Lord, is the principal difference between the north and south coasts.

Between Sierra Leone and the Equator there is not a single harbour of refuge. Slave vessels, to avoid our cruisers, must keep the sea, where they are constantly liable to capture; but the coast south of the Equator affords excellent anchorage at all times, and instead of being obliged to keep the sea, slavers can seek shelter in their hiding places.

Our success here will chiefly depend on the co-operation of the Portuguese authorities with Her Majesty's cruisers. If the Portuguese Government could be induced to give directions to their colonial governors to accept the co-operation of Her Majesty's cruisers in destroying the haunts of foreign slave traders, and to allow a certain number of the commanders of Her Majesty's vessels to be armed with the same authority as Portuguese naval officers, much good

* I am informed by those well acquainted with the interior of Africa, north of the equator, that the tribes there have all a word expressive of "slave." My remark only applies to the south coast; I cannot, however, assert it as a positive fact, but only give it, as the result of my repeated inquiries. On inquiring their term for slave, the natives invariably told me that they had none; it is possible that they might have understood me to mean a slave for exportation. I am, of course, open to correction from any one who has visited the interior of Africa, south of the equator.

would result from such a co-operation. But unless we can obtain the active and earnest co-operation of the Portuguese government, I am of opinion that we shall have to maintain a squadron in their colonies the neighbourhood of long after the slave trade shall have ceased in all other parts of Africa.

I should be travelling out of my sphere were I to propose to your Lordship any scheme for increasing our trade with Africa. It is not likely that I should understand the subject in all its different bearings; but it is a fact that our trade is now almost exclusively confined to the most unhealthy, the most deadly parts of Africa, and the late unfortunate Niger expedition was directed to the same part.

If it be the intention of Her Majesty's Government to make any other settlements on the coast of Africa, or to organize any system of immigration of free labourers from parts of Africa not belonging to Her Majesty, to our West India colonies, I beg to call your Lordship's attention to that part situated between the third and eighth degree of south latitude, and more particularly to the countries near Ambriz and Cabenda. The climate there is the most salubrious, the soil the most fertile and the inhabitants are the most peaceable and industrious of all in Africa. Should your Lordship require any information respecting these places, I shall have great pleasure in affording it.

With respect to the withdrawal of our cruisers from the coasts of Cuba and Brazil, I am of opinion that unless the force employed on the coast of Africa be sufficient to stop the slave trade, and thereby render it unnecessary to employ cruisers for the same purpose on the other side of the Atlantic, no ultimate good will result from an increase of force; but I am confidently of opinion that the proposed force, if properly managed, will be found sufficient. I will not trouble your Lordship with my opinion on that part of the subject, which is purely naval.

I have the honour, &c.

H. J. MATSON, *Commander.*

V.

Commander Matson to the Earl of Haddington.

25, Westbourne Place, Eaton Square, 3 August, 1844.

MY LORD,

I beg most respectfully to call your Lordship's attention to the instructions that have lately been issued to Her Majesty's cruisers, employed in the suppression of the slave trade; some parts of which, I consider, are calculated to perplex and mislead officers in the execution of their duty, and, if obeyed to the letter, will render abortive all attempts of Her Majesty's Government to suppress the slave trade.

As the duties of officers are in these instructions so very minutely defined, every possible case being apparently provided for, there is little left for an officer but to obey them to the very letter; but to do so, in many cases, would be highly mischievous, and in some cases, physically impossible.

I will confine my remarks chiefly to the instructions relating to the capture and detention of Portuguese, Spanish, and Brazilian vessels; for whatever flag a slaver may hoist, she will, in most cases, be found to belong to one of those nations; most certainly so if she have slaves on board.

Portugal.—The instructions that apply to this treaty direct that "no part of the crew or passengers, or of the cargo, or of the slaves found on board the vessel seized, shall be withdrawn from it until the said vessel shall be delivered over to one of the Mixed Commissions, unless the transfer of the whole or part of the crew or passengers, or of the whole or part of the slaves found on board, should be considered necessary either to preserve their lives, or for any other humane consideration, or for the safety of the persons charged with the conduct of the vessel after its seizure. In this case, you or the officer charged with the said seized vessel, as the case may be, must draw out a certificate according to form No. 3, in which the reasons of the said

transfer are to be specified ; and the master, officers, sailors or passengers, so transferred, must be conducted immediately to the same port as the vessel and its cargo." The insertion here of the word " immediately," which does not appear in the treaty, would oblige a cruiser to leave her station immediately on taking a prize, instead of remaining until she had taken several ; she must immediately follow her prize into port, at whatever distance it may be, instead of waiting to send the detained crew by any early opportunity that might offer, or of keeping them on board until she had taken one or two more vessels, and have communicated with the senior officer of another cruiser, by which means one vessel might be sent with the detained crews of several, instead of all leaving the station at the same time.

If the cruisers are to be thus driven from their stations, the slave traders, by arrangements among themselves, would easily clear the coast of them ; and they would very soon become masters of this manœuvre. All officers would not, perhaps, act alike under these circumstances, but all would be more or less perplexed, and the belief would be generally entertained, that if they delayed obeying this order for a week they would be liable to censure ; and if they delayed for a month, they might be dismissed the service by the sentence of a court-martial.

I am aware that in some cases inconvenience might arise at the place of adjudication, if there were any considerable delay in forwarding the crew. But this applies only to a vessel that is to be judged by the tribunals of the country to which she belongs, and not to a vessel that is to be judged by a Court of Mixed Commission. The crew of a French vessel must be tried at the same place and by the same tribunal which tries their vessel, but the crew of a Portuguese vessel cannot be tried in a Mixed Commission Court, they must be tried by the laws of Portugal ; and if their vessel be adjudicated at the Cape of Good Hope, or at Jamaica, they must be forwarded from thence to a Por-

tuguese port. There should certainly be no unnecessary delay in bringing the crew of a slave vessel to justice, but the stipulations of the treaty can be most faithfully fulfilled without so stringently curtailing the powers of a British cruiser.

Brazil.—The instructions that apply to this treaty, direct that “the negroes must not be disembarked until the arrival of the vessel at the port of adjudication, unless urgent reasons, arising from the length of the voyage, their state of health, or other causes, require that they should be disembarked, entirely or in part, before her arrival there. In this case, you or the officer charged with the said seized vessel, as the case may be, must draw up a certificate according to form No. 3, in which the reasons of the said transfer are to be declared;” and negroes so transferred must be conducted immediately to the same port as the vessel and its cargo.

If then a Brazilian slave vessel be captured in the West Indies, the slaves, instead of being landed in a British colony, and remaining there until the judgment of the Mixed Court pronounce them to be free, must be sent back again across the Atlantic to Sierra Leone. Or, in the more probable event of a Brazilian slave vessel being captured in the Mozambique Channel, or in sight of the Cape of Good Hope, the slaves, instead of being landed at Mauritius or the Cape, must be sent with (or immediately after) the vessel to Rio Janeiro, where they eventually become slaves, or are again removed to a British colony.

Such surely cannot be the intention or wish of her Majesty’s Government; and there is not anything whatever in our convention with Brazil that calls for such a proceeding, which is now apparently to be adopted for the first time since that convention was signed.

By the convention of 23rd November, 1826, Great Britain and Brazil agreed to adopt and renew, “*mutatis mutandis*,” the treaties between Great Britain and Portugal of 22nd January, 1815, and 28th July, 1817, and

their several explanatory and additional articles ; we are still bound by the stipulations of those treaties. The instructions to cruisers, contained in the last-named treaty, state that, " if urgent motives, deduced from the length of the voyage, the state of health of the negroes, or other causes, required that they should be disembarked, entirely or in part, before the vessel could arrive at the place of residence of one of the said Commissions, the commander of the capturing ship may take on himself the responsibility of such disembarkation, provided that the necessity be stated in a certificate in proper form. But there is no stipulation concerning the ultimate disposal of the negroes.

This treaty was in force for upwards of twenty years, during which time a great many Portuguese slavers were captured in the West Indies. In every single instance the slaves were landed in a British colony, and remained there ; the vessel proceeding, according to treaty stipulations, to Sierra Leone for adjudication. Some officers now capturing a Brazilian slave vessel in the West Indies or Mozambique, would unhesitatingly disobey these orders ; others would undoubtedly attempt, cost what it might, to carry the slaves to the port of adjudication, wherever that might be.

The instructions for Brazil direct, " that no vessel can on any account whatever, be visited or detained whilst in a port or roadstead belonging to Brazil, or within cannon-shot of the batteries on shore : but in case suspicious vessels should be found so circumstanced, proper representations must be addressed to the authorities, requesting them to take effectual measures for preventing such abuses." I do not think that it is quite clear whether this includes a roadstead at a distance from any constituted Brazilian authorities ; I presume it does. A vessel, in that case, may land a cargo of slaves in many parts of the Brazilian coast, wholly unmolested ; and she may, in her outward voyage, successfully dodge her Majesty's cruisers. I would respectfully submit whether a certain authority be not given

or implied, by the 3rd Article of the Instructions to Cruisers, which forms part of the treaty between Great Britain and Portugal, of 28th July, 1817, which says, "The high contracting powers, having in view the immense extent of the shores of Africa to the north of the equator, along which this commerce continues prohibited, and the facility thereby afforded for illicit traffic on points where either the total absence, or at least the distance of lawful authorities, bar ready access to those authorities, in order to prevent it, have agreed, for the more readily attaining the salutary end which they propose, to grant, and they do actually grant to each other the power, without prejudice to the rights of sovereignty, to visit and detain, as if on the high seas, any vessel having slaves on board, even within cannon shot of the shore of their respective territories on the continent of Africa to the north of the equator, in case of there being no local authorities to whom recourse might be had, as has been stated in the preceding article." Whether this part of the treaty can be applied to Brazil is a question for a statesman or a lawyer, and not for a sailor to decide. But I think that it would appear to many, unacquainted with nice points of international law, that part of this 3rd Article might be applied to Brazil, as well as the Article immediately preceding it, and which forbids us to meddle with slave vessels in Brazilian waters.

Spain.—The instructions that apply to this treaty direct that, "If you suspect that a Spanish vessel under convoy of a Spanish ship-of-war, is engaged in the slave trade, you are to communicate such suspicions to the commander of the convoy, and offer to accompany him on the search to be made. The commander of the convoy, accompanied by you, is to proceed to search the suspected vessel. If the suspicion appear well founded, the vessel is to be taken by the commander of the convoy before one of the Mixed Courts of justice established under the treaty. Should the commander of the convoy omit to fulfil the conditions of the treaty, you have no authority to take any further steps."

But the treaty itself does not so stringently forbid the interference, or rather the active co-operation of the British officer. The 5th Article of the treaty states, "Thirdly, that if at any time the commander of a cruiser of either of the two nations shall suspect that any merchant vessel, under the escort or convoy of any ship or ships of war of the other nation, carries slaves on board, or has been engaged in the traffic in slaves, or is fitted out for the purpose thereof, the said commander of the cruiser shall communicate his suspicions to the commander of the convoy, who, accompanied by the commander of the cruiser, shall proceed to the search of the suspected vessel; and in case that the suspicions appear well founded, according to the tenor of this treaty, then the said vessel shall be conducted or sent to one of the points where the Mixed Courts of justice are stationed, in order that the just sentence may there be pronounced."

The treaty does not say by whom the slaver is to be conducted into port; and supposing that it be not convenient for the commander of the convoy to take or send the suspected vessel for trial, or that he has doubts as to her equipment, or is afraid of offending the colonial authorities of Cuba, on whom he is entirely dependent for his situation, his pay, and bread; supposing that for either of these or any other reasons, best known to himself, he does not choose to take possession of the vessel (and the treaty does not, like the Portuguese, oblige him to do so), would not the commander of the British cruiser be authorized, with the sanction of the commander of the convoy, to take or send the suspected vessel for trial? Supposing that after the search the two commanders should differ in opinion, would not the British officer be authorized to state his opinion in writing, and offer himself to take or send the suspected vessel for trial; and if the commander of the convoy should accede to this request, would he not be authorized to take possession of her accordingly, always remembering that he can do nothing without the consent of the commander of the convoy?

Such a proceeding is in nowise contrary to the letter or the spirit of the treaty ; but it is positively forbidden by their Lordships' instructions.

The commander of the convoy might say to the British officer, ' the vessel is undoubtedly a slaver, but it is ~~more~~ convenient for you than it is for me to fulfil the conditions of the treaty. I cannot do so.' The hands of the British officer are tied, for he cannot ' take any further steps' if ' the commander of the convoy omit to fulfil the conditions of the treaty.' The slave vessel might then escape, and the treaty be infringed by the British officer.

There would be a greater probability of a slave vessel being condemned at Havannah, were she prosecuted by a British instead of a Spanish officer. I recollect a case in point, which occurred while I was serving in the West Indies in 1837-38. One of her Majesty's cruisers (I think the " Ringdove") met a number of merchant vessels convoyed by a Spanish vessel of war, one of which was suspected to be a slaver. The British commander made known his suspicions to the commander of the convoy, and the vessel being searched agreeably to treaty stipulations, these suspicions appeared to be well founded. The commander of the convoy thereon took possession of the vessel, and promised to send her for trial to the Mixed Court at Havannah ; he failed however to do so, and sent her to St. Jago de Cuba, where she was tried by the local authorities and liberated. Her Majesty's Government afterwards called upon the government at Madrid to punish the commander of the convoy for having failed to fulfil the conditions of the treaty, and stated that the British commander had not interfered with the vessel, owing to the promise made by the commander of the convoy. The Spanish government replied that they had directed their officer to be severely reprimanded, and informed that his punishment was so lenient solely on account of the extenuating circumstance of the vessel being in a leaky condition, and unable to reach Havannah.

Some of the objections I have here stated are, I believe, common to a number of the other instructions. I will only mention one more: several slave vessels have been captured belonging to the different Mediterranean States. I will now suppose the possible case of one of Her Majesty's cruisers capturing a vessel belonging to the Two Sicilies: if it were a vessel of 60 tons, she would have a crew of 25 or 30 men; if 150 tons, a crew of 45 or 50. It would not be possible to allow these men to remain on board, and the instructions direct that, "if the master, officers, sailors, or passengers have been removed, they must be conducted immediately to the port of Naples." All officers would not act alike under these circumstances, but all would be more or less at a loss, if at a distance from the senior officer; and it is not impossible that some, looking strictly to the letter of their instructions, and feeling no personal disinclination for a few weeks' cruise in the Mediterranean, would proceed immediately with their prize to Naples.

I trust, my Lord, that I have said enough to shew that this simple word "immediately" may prove a heavy clog to our exertions in Africa. I will not trouble your Lordship with any remarks on what I consider the minor imperfections of these instructions, and only trust that I may be excused for having expressed my opinions so plainly.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

H. J. MATSON.

VI.

Extract from Commander Matson's Evidence before the Committee on Slave Trade.

1258. *Chairman.*] Will you have the goodness to proceed with your observations on the coast of Africa?—My first acquaintance with the coast of Africa was in 1832, but I consider that previously to the year 1835 very little had been done to suppress the slave trade. In the year 1835 we obtained a treaty that enabled us to capture Spanish

vessels equipped for the slave trade; previously to that we could only capture them with slaves actually on board, and therefore their risks were very few. They were then driven to adopt the flag of Portugal, with which country we had no treaty giving us the right to capture vessels south of the Line at all, either with or without slaves, and we could not capture them north of the Line unless they had slaves actually on board. In 1839, owing to the Portuguese Government not fulfilling their old treaty, an Act of the British Legislature was passed authorizing us to capture Portuguese vessels wherever we might find them with slaves, or equipped for the slave trade. That I consider was the first great blow in the suppression of the slave trade. In the year 1841, I think, Captain Denman destroyed the barracoons at the Gallinas. The British Government then gave orders that wherever we found slave barracoons erected we should endeavour to obtain the sanction of the native chiefs to destroy them; failing to obtain that consent we were in certain cases to do it without. However it was never difficult to obtain that consent, for it was always readily obtained for a very trifling subsidy, and most of the barracoons on the coast were destroyed. That had such an effect on the slave traders located on the coast of Africa that they gave notice to the native chiefs that they would not be any longer enabled to carry on the slave trade, and they prompted the chiefs to enter into treaties with us to allow us to destroy their barracoons, or at any rate to suppress the slave trade; and in every one of those treaties there was a stipulation whereby we were authorized to employ force, failing the execution of the treaty by the chief. Most of the chiefs in Africa, in fact, all the principal ones, entered into the treaties with us.

1259. Lord *H. Vane*.] When was that?—That was in year 1842; the last treaty was entered into in 1842, the last of any consequence.

1260. Were not most of the treaties in 1841?—Yes.

1261. In 1842 arrived Lord Aberdeen's letter?—Yes; on the appearance of Lord Aberdeen's letter the slave

traders altered their tone very much towards the chiefs; instead of assuring them that they would never be able to bring more goods (in fact they were winding up their affairs), they represented a false report. In the first place they said that there was a revolution in England, that the people had risen, and obliged the Queen to turn out Lord Palmerston, because he wished to suppress the slave trade; that there was now a revolution going on in England to oblige the Queen to carry on the slave trade, as they expressed themselves, "all the same as they had done one time before." This was believed along the whole line of coast, not only by the chiefs but by the slave traders themselves,—the people who were in the interior collecting slaves. So fixed was this belief, that on one occasion my boats captured a vessel full of slaves, just at the time there was a change of Admirals on the station, and consequently a change of flags, and the first question asked by an old Portuguese supercargo, who was on board the vessel, who had been previously stationed in the interior collecting slaves, was, whether that flag belonged to the Queen or the Parliament; he fancied that there were two parties, and he was surprised at being taken by what he considered, when he saw it, a friendly flag. This was believed not only by the chiefs, but by the slave traders.

1262. Sir *R. H. Inglis*.] Was it believed by such men as Pedro Blanco?—No; he was just one of the very men who propagated* the falsehood. Two of the principal chiefs with whom we obtained those treaties were those of Congo and Ambriz; they export, I suppose, half the slaves that go to Brazil; there are an immense number annually exported; Cabenda, Congo, and Ambriz; it includes a very large extent of coast. One of the stipulations in those treaties was, that we should subsidize those chiefs; (it amounted to a very small sum); and that failing their faithful execution of the treaty, we should put down the slave trade by force ourselves. Before the first annual subsidy arrived Lord Aberdeen's letter made its appearance,

* Promulgated.

and when Captain Foote, the commodore on the station, presented the first year's subsidy, they refused to receive it, and declared that they would not in fact ratify the treaty, although it had been ratified, because it had been signed by the kings and the chiefs. It then became a question with the British Government whether they should enforce this treaty in virtue of one of the stipulations ; and it being referred to some of the law officers of the Crown, I believe Dr. Lushington among others, it was at last decided that it should not be enforced. Since that of course they have carried on the slave trade, and have refused not only to enter into any treaty, but they prevent the English landing wherever they can.

1263. Mr. *Gladstone*.]—Upon what ground did they decline to execute the treaty?—Because they prefer the slave trade to any other trade. It is not to be supposed that a chief of Africa will enter into a treaty with the Government until he has relinquished every hope of carrying on the slave trade ; and it is that feeling which caused them to agree to the treaty with us.

1264. Then the Committee is to understand that when the barracoons were to be destroyed, they abandoned all hope of being able to carry on the slave trade, and were ready to enter into the treaty ; but that when the barracoons were not to be destroyed, they turned round?—Yes.

1265. Earl of *Lincoln*.] Then of what value is the treaty itself?—Because you can enforce it. These treaties were of no value, because they were repudiated within the first twelvemonth ; they were not enforced by us ; and they now no longer exist ; so that they are of no use whatever.

1444. The Committee received evidence tending to recommend the transfer of the English blockading squadron from the west coast of Africa to the coast of the Brazils or Cuba ; from your experience in the suppression of the slave trade, would you concur in such recommendation?—No.

1445. Will you state the reasons which induce you to give a different opinion?—I consider the blockade of the island of Cuba to be a physical impossibility. The extent

of the coasts of Cuba, I think, is pretty nearly 2,000 miles ; a greater extent of coast than the whole African slave trading coast put together.

1446. Have you been on the coast of Cuba?—Yes; I have been cruising about the island for two years; I have just come from there.

1447. With regard to the coast of Brazil, does it present an almost equal degree of physical impossibility in respect of the presence of a blockade?—Almost, for many reasons.

1448. Will you state the reasons, in reference to the extent of the coast, or any other circumstance to which you wish to direct the attention of the Committee?—We will suppose, for the sake of illustration, that there is a squadron stationed now off the coast of Brazil for the purpose of blockading it, that is, of stopping the slave trade; all that would be required for the slaver to do would be to abstain from approaching the land until it was dark, and then, as the sea breeze generally, or in fact almost always, blows towards the coast after dark, she could always pass through the line of the cruisers, however thick they might be; at daylight in the morning she would be in shore of the line; she would not care if she ran on shore during the night; she would land her slaves, and the parties would sacrifice the vessel, which they would care very little about; and even supposing they did not succeed in getting through the line of cruisers, we will suppose that at daylight there are some 20 vessels in sight of the cruiser; there is a very large trade; it is impossible for you to discriminate between a slaver and a legal trader, particularly lately when they are almost alike; they buy regular merchant vessels; it is impossible for you to know which to chase; whereas the slaver herself could always tell a man-of-war when she saw her, and could dodge and slip out of the way; and it is impossible for any cruiser, even a steamer, to examine many of those vessels, for the examination is not a matter which is done in a few minutes, there are a great many forms to go through, according to our treaties with the nations whose flags they carry, and it would give rise to a

very great number of complaints, no doubt, on the part of the Government whose merchant vessels were searched; almost every vessel that approached the coast of Brazil would have to be searched; in fact it is an impracticability, I think.

1449. At all events the number of vessels approaching the coast of Brazil, and the island of Cuba, is to your knowledge much greater than the number of vessels approaching the coast of Africa, where the Slave trade is carried on?—No doubt; there is no proportion.

1450. Are you enabled to state anything like the proportion of vessels engaged in traffic, lawful or unlawful, on the coast of Cuba or of Brazil, as compared with the number of vessels engaged in traffic, lawful and unlawful, on the coast of Africa?—Where the legal commerce may be said to exist now, slave trade no longer exists; that is, where there are palm-oil vessels (and there are hundreds of them, I believe, every year), there the slave trade no longer exists. On the coast south of the Line, where the slave trade now exists, I should say that for every legal trader there are five slavers.

1451. And on the opposite coast of the Atlantic, what is the proportion between the legal traders and the slavers?—I should fancy that where there was one slaver there were 10 legal vessels; perhaps 20.

1452. In addition to the consideration which you have now opened to the Committee, would you or would you not consider that, even if there were contemporaneously two blockading squadrons, one on the coast of Cuba and Brazil, and the other on the coast of Africa, the horrors of the middle passage could at all but be left in the state in which they are now?—Yes.

1453. Would the horrors connected with the practice of the barracoons be continued the same; must you have barracoons also?—Yes.

1454. Must you have the transport of slaves from the interior to the barracoons?—Yes, all that must take place.

1455. Whether you had or had not a blockading

squadron on the coast of Brazil?—Whether you had or not.

1456. The Committee understand that you have had very large experience in the suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa; is it correct to state that you yourself were engaged in the capture of one-tenth of all the vessels which have been captured?—I really do not know; I captured 40 during the last four years that I was on the coast.

1457. During the period that you were on the coast you captured 40?—Yes, while I commanded a vessel; I was present during the capture of a number of others, as a subordinate officer.

VII.

The Earl of Aberdeen to the Lords of the Admiralty.

20th May, 1842.

MY LORDS,

I beg to call your Lordships' attention to the subject of the instructions given to Her Majesty's naval officers employed in suppressing slave trade on the coast of Africa, and to the proceedings which have taken place with reference thereto, as detailed in the papers named in the margin of this letter. Her Majesty's Advocate-general, to whom these papers have been submitted, has reported that he cannot take upon himself to advise that all the proceedings described as having taken place at Gallinas, New Cestos, and Sea Bar, are strictly justifiable, or that the instructions to Her Majesty's naval officers, as referred to in these papers, are such as can with perfect legality be carried into execution. The Queen's Advocate is of opinion that the blockading rivers, landing and destroying buildings, and carrying off persons held in slavery in countries with which Great Britain is not at war, cannot be considered as sanctioned by the law of nations, or by the provisions of any existing treaties; and that however desirable it may be to put an end to the slave trade, a good, however eminent, should not be obtained otherwise than by lawful means.

Accordingly, and with reference to the proceedings of Captain Nurse at Rio Pongas, on the 28th April, 1841, as well as to the letters addressed from this department to the Admiralty on the 6th of April, the 1st and 17th of June, and the 28th of July of last year, I would submit to the consideration of your Lordships that it is desirable that Her Majesty's naval officers employed in suppressing the slave trade should be instructed to abstain from destroying slave factories and carrying off persons held in slavery, unless the power upon whose territory or within whose jurisdiction the factories or the slaves are found should by treaty with Great Britain, or by formal written agreement with British officers, have empowered Her Majesty's naval forces to take these steps for the suppression of the slave trade; and that if, in proceeding to destroy any factory, it should be found to contain merchandize or other property which there may be reason to suppose to belong to foreign traders, care should be taken not to include such property in the destruction of the factory. With respect to the blockading rivers, it appears from the papers referred to that the terms blockade and blockading have been used by British naval officers, when adverting to the laudable practice of stationing cruisers off the slave-trading stations, with a view the better to intercept vessels carrying on slave trade, contrary to treaties between Great Britain and the powers to which such vessels belong; but as the term blockade, properly used, extends to an interdiction of all trade, and indeed all communication with the place blockaded, I beg leave to submit for your Lordships' consideration, whether it will not be proper to caution Her Majesty's naval officers upon this head, lest by the inadvertent and repeated use of the term blockade, the exercise of the duty confided to British officers in suppressing slave trade might, by any one, be confounded with the very different one of actual blockade.

I am, &c. &c.

ABERDEEN.

THE END.