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Review 4/10

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THE

BRITISH SQUADRON

ON THE

COAST OF AFRICA.

BY

AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY.

With a Map.



PRICE SIXPENCE

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CHART OF
AFRICA
SHOWING THE STATE OF THE SLAVE TRADE
(Reduced from that in the Lords Report - 1850)

References.

On the Coast shaded Black, the Slave Trade formerly existed and has been put down mainly by the measures of G^t Britain. *S^t Helena

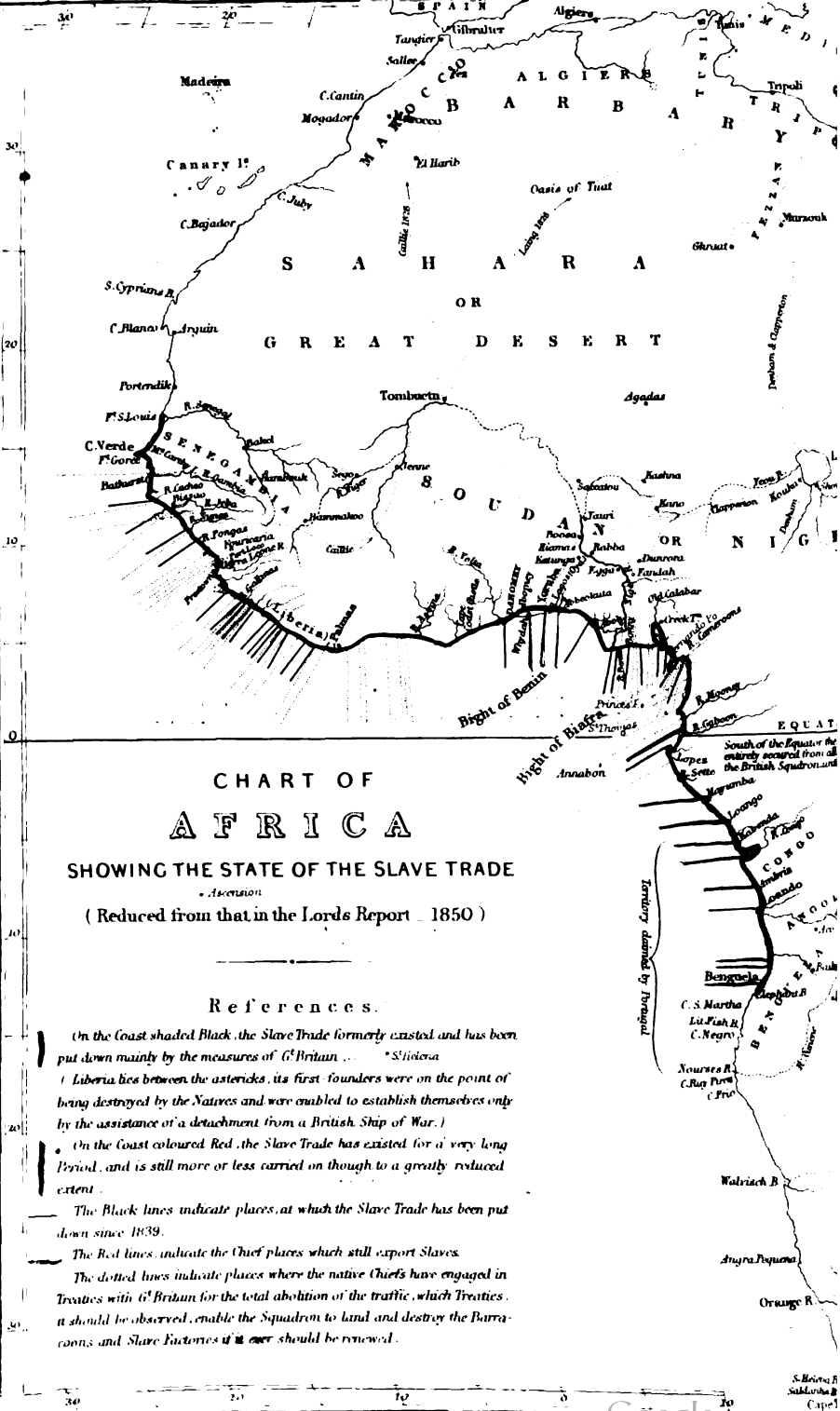
(Liberia lies between the asterisks, its first founders were on the point of being destroyed by the Natives and were enabled to establish themselves only by the assistance of a detachment from a British Ship of War.)

On the Coast coloured Red, the Slave Trade has existed for a very long Period, and is still more or less carried on though to a greatly reduced extent.

The Black lines indicate places, at which the Slave Trade has been put down since 1839.

The Red lines indicate the Chief places which still export Slaves.

The dotted lines indicate places where the native Chiefs have engaged in Treaties with G^t Britain for the total abolition of the traffic, which Treaties, it should be observed, enable the Squadron to land and destroy the Barracoons and Slave Factories if they should be renewed.



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THE

BRITISH SQUADRON

ON THE

COAST OF AFRICA.

BY

THE REV. J. LEIGHTON WILSON,

*AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY IN THE GABOON RIVER,
WEST COAST OF AFRICA.*

WITH NOTES

BY CAPTAIN H. D. TROTTER, R.N.



LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY;
SEELEY'S, HANOVER STREET, AND FLEET STREET;
BAIN, 1, HAYMARKET.

"The experience and observations of one who has lived on the coast of Africa nearly twenty years, who has watched the operations of the British Squadron all that time with the liveliest interest, and who is in no way trammelled by any party views that exist in England, may not be unacceptable, or entirely unavailing, in the present crisis."

Vide page 5.

"In all these varied ways it does seem to us that the British Squadron has rendered important service to the cause of humanity. It has put down piracy on the African seas; has restored peace and tranquillity to a line of sea-coast of more than 2000 miles; has called into existence a large and flourishing commerce, and, at the same time, has thrown the shield of its protection over the cause of Christian missions, and all the varied agency that has been employed to promote the cause of humanity and civilization among the benighted inhabitants of this great continent. If these great objects are not worthy of British philanthropy, we know not where to find those that are."

Vide page 26.

INTRODUCTION.

MR. LEIGHTON WILSON, a citizen of the United States, the Author of the following observations on the African Squadron, has been for many years residing at the Gaboon River, near the Equator, as a member of the American mission established in those parts. This gentleman has passed twenty years of his life upon the African Coast, and on learning that a Committee of the House of Commons had given an opinion in favour of withdrawing the British Squadron from the Coast of Africa, he drew up this paper in order to show by the unbiassed experience of one apart from English prejudices, what has been the real effect of the policy of England.

Mr. Wilson hoped that the honest testimony of a foreigner, and especially of a citizen of the United States, to the success of the British Squadron, might not be without effect in assisting to disabuse the public mind of this country as to the alleged failure of our repressive efforts and the impossibility of extinguishing the Slave Trade.

Mr. Wilson wrote this paper in April, 1850, and refers only to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons. The Lords' Report was agreed to a few days before the MS. reached England, and the remarkable coincidence of the

results of this gentleman's experience with the conclusions of their Lordships, derived from the evidence before them, is worthy of the gravest consideration.

The British merchant, the British philanthropist, and above all, the British Christian ought to feel grateful to Mr. Wilson for drawing attention to this subject. Not only does the development of the vast resources of Africa, affecting the mercantile interests of the civilized world at large, and especially of England, depend upon the protection to legitimate commerce which is afforded by the African Squadron against the Slave-trader, who keeps the people at war, and the land consequently in a state of unproductiveness; but, as has been well said, the social and moral condition of a vast continent, and the diffusion of light and knowledge amongst the people of Africa are staked, to all human appearance, on the future conduct of this country in respect to the Slave Trade.

There can be no doubt that, every one desirous of learning the truth on this momentous question, will regard Mr. Wilson's paper as an invaluable means of authentic information, and it has therefore been re-published from the 'Colonial Magazine' in which it first appeared, with a few explanatory notes; some passages also have been printed in italics, but no other change has been made in the author's manuscript.

H. D. T.

LONDON,
January 31st, 1851.

THE BRITISH SQUADRON

ON THE

COAST OF AFRICA.

THERE is scarcely any topic of greater interest before the British public at the present time than the question of the continuance or withdrawal of the Squadron from the coast of Africa. The Committee appointed by Parliament* have reported in favour of its discontinuance; but the spirit with which the subject has since been discussed, both in and out of Parliament, shows that there is anything but unanimity of sentiment in relation to the Report. The public mind is fortunately awake to the importance of the subject; and whatever may be the final disposal of it, one thing is certain, the welfare of Africa is deeply involved. In view of this state of things, *the experience and observations of one who has lived on the coast of Africa nearly twenty years, who has watched the operations of the British Squadron all that time with the liveliest interest, and who is in no way trammelled by any party views that exist in England, may not be unacceptable, or entirely unavailing, in the present crisis.*

If it be true that the efforts of the Squadron to suppress the Slave Trade has been a failure; that no good or important object has been effected after so protracted a struggle with this monstrous evil, then it is but the dictate of common sense that it should be recalled, and, of course, the sooner the better.

* The Author was only in possession of the Report of the Select Committee of the *House of Commons*, and had not heard of its having afterwards been rejected by a large majority of the whole House.—H. D. T.

But, on the contrary, if the experiment has not proved to be a failure ; if as much real good has been achieved as could reasonably have been expected under existing circumstances ; and if the continuance of the same measures for a while longer (with such alterations and improvements, of course, as experience may suggest) promises to accomplish all that was anticipated by the originators of the enterprise, or could now reasonably be demanded by the friends of Africa, then the responsibility of those who advise its withdrawal is no trifling matter.

In settling the question whether there has been a failure or not, we must inquire what was the object proposed by those who were instrumental, in the first instance, in getting a Squadron stationed on the coast, and the means by which they expected to effect that object.

Those who will take the pains to read what was written, as well as the speeches which were delivered in Parliament about the time referred to, will find that the question originally rested on a much narrower basis than it does at present. It did not then, as it has since, involved, the subject of emancipation in the West Indies, the question of free and slave-grown sugar, and various other minor topics which have grown out of these.

Whatever importance these collateral topics may possess in themselves, they had little or nothing to do with the plans of those who originated the undertaking under consideration. The main object of the enterprise was the relief of Africa. It was thought to be but an act of justice and humanity, on the part of Great Britain towards Africa, to put an end to a traffic which not only filled the latter country with

perpetual strife and bloodshed, but effectually closed every avenue to her improvement and civilisation. The share which the people of Great Britain had taken in promoting this nefarious trade made it obligatory upon her to do something to redress these wrongs; while her prominence among the great Christian nations of the earth made it entirely proper that she should be the pioneer in rescuing Africa from this terrible scourge.

It was not supposed that this traffic would be entirely and for ever broken up by the mere temporary restraints that could be imposed upon it by the presence of the Squadron; much less was it expected that the operations of the Squadron on the coast would exert any direct or efficient influence in promoting civilisation among the people whom they might shield from this evil. But it was hoped that, by keeping it in check for a time, Christianity and civilisation would have an opportunity to put forth their influence, and raise the aborigines to a position of improvement from which there could be no danger of relapsing into their former degradation. These were the views of the distinguished philanthropists who first enlisted the sympathies of the nation in the undertaking. And so long as public attention was confined to this simple original object, the expense of the enterprise was cheerfully borne, and there was no want of exultation at the success which from time to time crowned the efforts of the Squadron in this difficult and somewhat perilous service.

Having made these preliminary explanations, we are now prepared to show why this enterprise cannot be regarded as a failure. And the emotion which predominates in our minds, since taking up our pen

to write, is that of surprise that the results of this enterprise should be so little understood in England, and, above all, that so many of the officers of the Squadron, who have themselves been engaged in this service, should have no higher appreciation of their own success. The views of the latter, however, (those of them, at least, who have but little faith in the success of the enterprise), may be accounted for in part by the fact that they have seldom been stationed on the coast for a longer period than two years, and, of course, have not had the advantage, from personal observation, of comparing the present state of things on the coast with what it was fifteen or twenty years ago. Many, too, have been induced to renounce all confidence in the scheme, from the fact that they were placed in command of vessels that were utterly unfit for this kind of service, and were doomed, without any fault of their own, to find their most vigorous and praiseworthy efforts terminate only in disappointment.

Notwithstanding the objections from this source, we propose to show that the Squadron has been operating against the Slave Trade, directly and indirectly, in a most effectual way, and we rely upon facts to sustain us in this position, which can neither be gainsayed or denied.

Previous to the period when this traffic was declared to be illegal by the British Parliament and the Government of the United States, it was carried on very much in the same way as lawful trade is at the present time. Vessels which came out for slaves "ran the coast down" (to use the parlance of the country), touching at all the principal native settlements, and purchasing such slaves as were offered

for sale, until their cargoes were completed. In some cases whole cargoes were collected by kidnapping the natives who came off in their canoes to trade, and sometimes by capturing other slave-vessels that had completed their cargoes, and were ready to sail, but had not the means of self-defence. Besides, there were a few points along the coast occupied by the British, as well as other European Governments, intended to facilitate the same trade. In this way the whole coast, from Senegal to Benguela, was, less or more voluntarily or involuntarily, implicated in this trade. When the trade became illegal, however, it was banished from most of the European settlements; and the Spaniards, Portuguese, and others, who determined to persist in it, notwithstanding its illegality, had to adopt a new mode of operations. They could no longer perform their usual voyages along the coast without multiplying the chances of being seized as prizes, and having their property confiscated. It became necessary, therefore, to erect barracoons on those parts of the coast where slaves could be collected with the greatest ease and in the largest numbers; and at the appointed time the vessels returned and took away these slaves without being detained on the coast more than twenty-four hours, and in some cases only a single night. The points thus occupied at one time could not have been less than forty or fifty. The English have never had any treaties with the Spanish, Portuguese, or Brazilian Governments, that would authorize them to destroy these barracoons*. Hence they have been

* The destruction of barracoons and slave factories is a question with the native governments, and not with those of which

compelled to do what they could by guarding the coast and seizing slave-vessels in the vicinity of these barracoons. But as the number of the places occupied by the Slave-trade greatly exceeded the number of cruizers* employed to watch them, and were seldom less than fifty or a hundred miles apart, it will readily be seen that the cruizers had a difficult task to perform, and the frequent escape of slavers was inevitable. At the same time the profits of the trade were so great, that the escape of a single slaver would cover the loss of three captures.

Notwithstanding all these disadvantages, such have been the diligence and activity of the officers of the Squadron, that they have forced this trade out of more than three-fourths of the strongholds which it once occupied. Let any one open the map of Africa and ascertain the places where slaves are now collected and shipped, and compare the number with what it was twenty or twenty-five years ago, and it cannot result in anything short of profound surprise.

From Senegal, near the borders of the Great Desert, to Cape Lopez, a few miles south of the Equator, a distance coastwise of something like 2,500 miles,

these miscreant slave traders are the subjects, who, in every case, are violating their own laws, so far as they extend. In the several instances that have occurred of destroying factories, no complaint has been made by the government of the country to which the slave traders belonged. And as regards English courts, the foreign law prohibiting the Slave Trade would be an effectual bar to any legal proceedings. In Captain Denman's case, the Spanish law was known to exist prohibiting the Slave Trade as a crime, but the plaintiffs took measures to prevent evidence of the fact from being given.—H. D. T.

* Down to the year 1830, there never were more than six cruizers employed on the African coast.—H. D. T.

there is now, with the exception of three factories on what is called the Slave Coast, no trade in slaves whatever. In fact, the trade, with the exceptions just made, is now confined to what is called the Congo country, in which there are not more than eight or ten points where slaves are collected, and from which they are shipped†.* If we add to these the three above mentioned, we have, on the whole coast, not more than twelve or fourteen; whereas there were, even within the knowledge of the writer, nearly four times this number. We scarcely know how such results have been overlooked, and yet these are facts that cannot be denied. More than 2,000 miles of sea coast, and that forming the frontier of the best and fairest portions of the African continent, has been relieved from this unparalleled scourge; and perhaps more than 20,000,000 of human beings, interiorwards, have been restored to comparative peace and happiness by the operations of the squadron along the coast. And how has all

* See MAP. The Author refers to the Bight of Benin, along 200 miles of which some slave trade still exists; but this must also entirely cease from the moment the Commodore is able to have six or seven efficient cruisers constantly stationed there, each on a clearly defined district, and ordered to prevent the embarkation of slaves by inshore cruising.—H. D. T.

† It is possible that there is a little of this trade near the Rio Pongas and Bissao, to the north of Sierra Leone; but, if any at all, it is very insignificant.—AUTHOR.

Mr. Wilson, doubtless, had not seen the last report of the Mixed Commission Court at Sierra Leone, which states:—"Not a single cargo of slaves has been taken away from *any* part of the coast between Sierra Leone and Senegal in 1849." Appendix to "Lords' Report, 1850," p. 195. This tract of coast includes the places above specified.—H. D. T.

this been achieved? We reply, by a process in itself perfectly natural, and in exact accordance with the expectations of those who originated this enterprise. Take, as an illustration, the history of the Slave-trade in the Bight of Biafra. All who have investigated the subject know that the rivers Benin, Bonny, Brass, Calabar, and Cameroons were once the chief seats of this trade. It is through these rivers that the Niger discharges itself into the ocean; and as the factories near the mouths of these different branches had great facility of access to the heart of Africa, it is probable that the Slave-trade was carried on more vigorously here than anywhere else on the coast. But at present there is none of it. This part of the coast having been subjected for several successive years to a virtual blockade, not only did the Spaniards and Portuguese find themselves under the necessity of relinquishing it, but, at the same time, the natives saw that they could derive a larger and more certain profit from lawful commerce, and consequently turned their attention to the manufacture of palm-oil. The number of vessels now engaged in carrying on a lawful trade in these rivers is between forty and fifty; and so decided are the advantages reaped by the natives from this change in their commercial affairs, it is not believed that they would ever revert to it again, even if all outward restraints were taken away.

Now, while we do not expect the truth of these statements to be called into question, we anticipate that some exceptions will be taken as to the amount of real good that has been effected, as well as to the share of credit which we have assigned to the British Squadron in connection with the above-mentioned

results. It will be said, perhaps, that in forcing the Slave-trade out of so many of its strongholds, important aid has been derived from the English Colonies and the Liberian settlements; and that in relation to other parts of the coast, where no such aid has been available, although the Slave-trade has been shut up to fewer points, the only consequence is, that it is carried on more vigorously at these points, and that the number of slaves still exported is as great as it ever was.

In relation to the first of these objections we would remark, that while it is unquestionably true that important aid has been derived from these settlements in breaking up slave-factories in their immediate vicinity, it is equally true that they could have had no such aid, had it not been for the countenance and support which they received from the English and other men-of-war on the coast, and for the simple reason that none of these settlements, nor all of them together, have sufficient naval force to contend with a single armed slaver.* If they have in their power to destroy any barracoons that may be established in their immediate neighbourhood, by marching a land force against them, their enemies, if not intimidated by the presence of so many men-of-war, could at any time take ample revenge by destroying what little commerce they have, if they did not put in imminent peril the most promising settlements on the coast.

In relation to the other objection, that there has been no material diminution of the number of slaves

* Governor Roberts, of Liberia, was enabled to destroy the last remaining slave factory there by the assistance of the French Squadron, the English cruizers sent for the purpose having arrived too late.—H. D. T.

exported from the coast, we have more than our doubts. The time has been when tolerably accurate statistics might be collected on this subject, but we do not see how this can be done at present.* There is no one on the coast of Africa who can furnish anything like accurate information; and as most of the slaves which reach Brazil are smuggled into places where there is the least likelihood of their being detected, we doubt whether there is any one there that can furnish information upon which more reliance can be placed. *It is the policy of those engaged in this traffic to make an exaggerated impression, for they hope to put an end to the efforts of the squadron by convincing the English nation of the hopelessness of the undertaking.* Our own impression is, that the number of slaves exported has vastly diminished, perhaps in a ratio very nearly proportioned to the extent of sea-coast which it has lost. It is utterly incredible that the number of slaves now concentrated at a dozen

* The tables of Mr. Hutt's Committee are, however, worthy of notice; for, having been brought forward to prove the total inefficacy of our efforts, they may be fairly taken as not exaggerating the degree of success that has been accomplished. Those tables show that, for the five years ending with 1839, 65,000 slaves were landed annually in Brazil, and that since 1839, embracing a period of eight years, the average has been but 31,000. They show that, for fifteen years prior to 1835, the importation into Cuba was 40,000 a-year; that, with the first Equipment Treaty in that year, it fell to 29,000 for the next five years. That since 1839, when equipped vessels became subject to seizure everywhere, it has for eight years averaged only 6,000 per annum. Thus the power to seize equipped vessels, in spite of the notoriously defective class of cruisers employed, has been followed by a reduction in the number carried across the Atlantic, shown by the difference between 105,000 and 37,000, or, in other words, by *no less a diminution than nearly 68,000 in every year.*—H. D. T.

or fourteen points can be compared with what it was when the whole coast was taxed for this purpose; and it is equally improbable that the number of slave-vessels which escape now can be compared with what they were ten or twelve years ago, when there were fewer cruisers on the coast.* But even if this were not the case, still it must be obvious to every man of reflection that very great progress must have been made towards its entire extirpation, by reducing it to such narrow limits; *and any special symptoms of life and energy which it may put forth just now cannot, to the experienced eye, be regarded in any other light than the desperate struggles of a ruined cause.* A very large proportion of the country has already been delivered from its clutches, and, as will be shown in a subsequent part of this article, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for that trade to re-instate itself in places where it has once lost its power and influence.

The task of managing it, too, along a line of sea-coast of not more than three *hundred* miles must be easy compared with what it was when as many *thousand* miles of coast had to be guarded. Let a few improvements be adopted in the operations of the Squadron on the coast, and we see no good reason why this traffic may not be brought to a speedy and effectual end.

Thus far we have confined our remarks to the direct influence of the squadron in breaking up the Slave Trade.

We propose now to show that it has been operat-

* From 1819 to 1839 (twenty years) the British Squadron captured only 333 slave vessels: from 1839 to 1849 inclusive (eleven years), it captured SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR slave-vessels. This vast increase in the number of captures, coupled with the great reduction in the amount of Slave Trade during the same period (as shown in the note to p. 14), demonstrates the powerful efficacy of the measures of this country.—H D. T.

ing still more efficiently in an indirect way; and under this head we would specify the influence it has exerted in promoting lawful commerce, the countenance and protection it has extended to the European settlements and the American Colonies* on the coast, and especially the indirect aid it has afforded to the cause of Christian missions. In these different ways the British Squadron has done more, perhaps, to emancipate Africa from the thralldom of the foreign Slave Trade, than by all other methods put together. Without this, all the prize-ships that have been taken, and all the treaties that have been formed, whether with the chiefs of Africa, or with the different Governments of Europe, would have been comparatively worthless. It should be borne in mind too, that all the indirect good secured in these various ways was distinctly anticipated, and did in fact constitute an essential part of the enterprise, as it existed in the minds of those who projected it.

Lawful commerce (and by this term we mean trade in the natural products of the country, in opposition to the Slave Trade,) owes its existence almost entirely to the presence and influence of the British Squadron. Previous to the period when a check was given to the Slave Trade, the lawful commerce of Western Africa consisted of small quantities of gold dust, ivory, and bees' wax, chiefly from the Gold Coast and Senegambia, and did not amount annually, it is pre-

* It is a remarkable fact that the Colonists of Liberia, soon after their first establishment in 1822, would have been driven into the sea by the hostile native tribes in the neighbourhood, had it not been for the support and protection of a British naval officer of the African squadron. See "Life of Ashmun," page 147, and "The New Republic," page 86. This last little work ought to be read by all who are interested in Liberia. It is about to be republished by Nisbet, of Berners-street, under the title of "Africa Redeemed: or the Means of her Relief Illustrated by the Growth and Prospects of Liberia."—H. D. T.

sumed, to more than 20,000%. The insignificance of this trade, however, did not arise from any poverty in the natural resources of the country at that time, for they were as considerable then as they are now; but to the influence of the Slave Trade. During the prevalence of this trade, the African seas were almost wholly given up to piracy. No vessels could carry on lawful trade without the constant liability of being plundered. If these vessels were armed for self-defence, as was attempted in some few cases, the expense was so great, that it consumed all the profits of the voyage.

Another thing that operated equally to the disadvantage of lawful trade was, the fact that the natives of the country were so much engrossed in furnishing victims for the Slave Trade, that they had neither the time nor the taste for the tamer pursuits of cutting dye-wood or manufacturing palm-oil. Indeed, the excitement connected with capturing and selling slaves was always more congenial to savage natures; and had it not been for the obstacles interposed by the presence of the British Squadron, we scarcely see how their attention could ever have been diverted from this to pursuits so different and so much less congenial to their natural tastes.

The presence of so many vessels of war has put an effectual stop to all piracy on the coast; and the impediments thrown in the way of the Slave Trade have left the great majority of the natives of the country no other alternative than to betake themselves to the peaceful pursuits of lawful commerce, or give up all intercourse with the civilised world. They chose the former, and we have the fruits of this choice in the unprecedented prosperity of their commerce.

We do not pretend to give precise statistics, but suppose it entirely safe to say that the annual exports from Western Africa to the present time, cannot be less than 2,000,000L.* whilst there is every reason to believe that it will double, if it does not treble, or even quadruple itself in the next twenty years, if it is only protected until it has struck its roots a little deeper in the soil of Africa.

We might bring together a large number of interesting facts to illustrate the very rapid growth of this trade, but must confine ourselves to a limited number of the simplest statements. The Island of Fernando Po, which is supposed to contain about 20,000 aboriginal inhabitants, had no lawful commerce whatever twenty or twenty-five years ago. A small quantity of palm-oil was made for domestic use, but not a gallon was exported. At present, however, as we have learned from good authority, more than 200 tons are annually exported; and judging from the rate of its increase for the two or three last years, it will double itself in the next five. We might mention other places along the coast, as Grand Cestos, Cape Lahou, Jack-a-Jacks, and all the rivers of the Bight of Biafra, where the growth of this trade has been much more rapid, but the particulars of which are not so well known as the case just mentioned. We might arrive at similar results by comparing the number of vessels now engaged in lawful commerce with what it was twenty-five or thirty years ago. Then there were not more than

* The imports from Africa into Great Britain alone, in 1849, amounted to £975,000; and I am told, from good authority, that the legal trade carried on by other nations (Dutch, French, American, and Portuguese), is at least to equal this.—H. D. T.

ten or twelve on the whole coast; at present, however, there are more than 200,* the aggregate tonnage of which greatly exceeds that of the Slave Trade in the days of its most uninterrupted prosperity.

Still, however, we do not attach so much importance to this trade, on account of its present value, as we do to what it is capable of becoming, and is likely to become, if the agency which called it into existence is not prematurely snatched away. There is no reason to doubt that palm-oil will, in a few years, become one of the largest branches of commerce in the whole world. It can be produced to an almost unlimited extent, and the demand for it hitherto has always been equal to the amount produced. Palm-oil, however, is only one of a great variety of other products of the country, equally as valuable and capable of quite as much augmentation.

In connexion with such commercial results, present, past, and prospective, we do not see how the importance of the Squadron on the coast of Africa can well be exaggerated. Regarded merely in a selfish point of view, England will be repaid (and that, perhaps, at no distant day) for every dollar she has expended upon this enterprise, not only in the market she will have created in Africa for her manufactures, but likewise in the immense amount of valuable products that will be brought to her own shores from that country. But if these results acquire importance in connexion with commercial enterprise, how must they appear when contemplated in the light of humanity! We cannot contemplate this sudden and wonderful development of commerce in any other light than as

* Sixty-one British palm-oil ships arrived in one single English port (Liverpool) in 1849.—H. D. T.

one of those efficient agencies employed by Providence, not only to raise up Africa from the lowest depths of savagism, but to place her on a footing of respectability with the most favoured nations of the earth. And if this be a sober inference from the improvement already taken place, who will grudge the price of her deliverance?

Another object of importance effected by the Squadron is the protection it has afforded to the various European and American settlements that have been formed along the coast. Of these, eight are English, seven are French, four belong to the Liberian Republic, two are Dutch, and one belongs to Denmark. Portugal has possession of most of the islands, but has only one settlement on the mainland. Of these settlements Sierra Leone and Liberia are the largest in point of population. The former receives its accessions from the slaves that are recaptured by the British squadron, and contains a population of 60,000 to 65,000. The latter receives its accessions by emigrations of free coloured people and emancipated slaves from the United States, and has a population of 5,000 or 6,000. Liberia has recently assumed the character of an independent Republic; whilst Sierra Leone, with a population nearly ten times as great, continues the relationship of a colony to Great Britain.

Most of the other settlements on the coast are little more than fortified stations, around which a number of traders have rallied for the purpose of carrying on trade with the aborigines. These settlements, though none of them have as yet acquired any very great commercial importance, are nevertheless so many nucleuses of civilization,

the influence of which is being every day more and more extended. There are some things connected with the management of these settlements, as well as the manner in which trade is conducted, that are very prejudicial to the improvement of the natives, and they ought to be corrected. Their influence, upon the whole, however, is good, and they are doubtless destined to perform an important part in promoting the civilization of the country generally.

Natives are drawn from a great distance in the interior to these settlements, for the purpose of exchanging the products of the country for the manufactures of Europe; whilst the traders themselves are employing a considerable number of coasting craft* for the purpose of extending their commerce along the coast as well as in the interior. At many of the settlements, too, the forms of law, as practised by civilized nations, are beginning to be introduced, so that the natives who frequent them will not only have all the stimulus to industry which commerce furnishes, but will become familiar with models of Government, upon which they may construct their own as the progress of society may require.

But these settlements, which promise so much for the future welfare of Africa, have always had, and

* Coasting vessels trade regularly between Sierra Leone and Badagry, a distance of 1200 miles, owned and navigated entirely by liberated Africans. This trade took its rise in 1842, when the liberated Africans of the Yoruba tribe, wishing to get back to their country, clubbed together, and bought up condemned slave-vessels for the purpose, the Government affording them no facilities for leaving the colony. One native owner, the sole proprietor of one of the vessels, granted to Mr. Townsend, the missionary, a passage, free of expense, to Badagry.—H. D. T.

still need, the protection of foreign Governments. There are few, if any of them, that could withstand the combinations of hostile natives that would be formed against them, especially when they were instigated and supported by Spanish and Portuguese slave traders. Foreign residents, all along the coast, are perfectly aware of this; and there is nothing that would be more heartily deprecated by them than the premature withdrawal of the Squadron. It is not supposed that they will always continue in this dependent condition. Some of them are comparatively new, and have not acquired sufficient maturity and strength to maintain their own rights, or to enforce the principles of justice and order among the tribes by whom they are surrounded. Others, though much older, sustain a new relationship to the aborigines, in consequence of having exchanged the trade in slaves for lawful commerce; and although the people generally are beginning to appreciate the advantages of this, there are, no doubt, evil-minded persons among them that would gladly unite in any hostile measures that might be set on foot as soon as the Squadron was withdrawn.

The time will doubtless come when they will need no such aid. But those who have allowed themselves to be persuaded that they have already acquired sufficient strength to protect themselves, or depend upon them to do anything effective in putting down the Slave-trade without the co-operation of the Squadron, will find out ere long that they have leaned upon a broken reed.

All that has been said in relation to the importance of the Squadron in developing the commercial resources of the country, and in promoting the cause

of civilization, may be applied with equal force to the countenance it has lent to the cause of missions. The writer is not aware that the officers of the Squadron have been in the habit of regarding any mission stations on the coast as under their special protection: but the mutual good feeling that has always existed between them and the missionaries; the readiness which they ever have manifested to repress all lawless violence; and especially the peace and quiet which they have restored to those parts of the coast where the missionaries are labouring, are favours and advantages more highly appreciated than the officers of the Squadron have any idea of.

At the same time it will readily be granted by all those who have reflected seriously on the subject, that Africa can never be restored to peace and happiness, or enjoy any high degree of internal prosperity, without the aid of Christianity. The highest degree of civilization and commercial prosperity, even if they could be attained without her assistance, would be but a doubtful boon. Christianity is capable of doing for her what no other agency ever can; and the missionary societies, both of England and America, have addressed themselves to the task of giving her the Gospel, with a degree of earnestness and energy which promises the most cheering results. The incipient stages of their efforts were not without difficulties and discouragements, arising chiefly from the insalubrity of the climate; but they have been continued long enough, and with sufficient success, to demonstrate the practicability of the undertaking. *To the south of Sierra Leone, and between that and the Equator, that part of the coast where the efforts of the Squadron to put down the Slave Trade have*

been most successful, there have been founded, in fifteen or sixteen years, as many as twelve independent mission, at the distance of 100 or 200 miles from each other, embracing three times that number of distinct stations along the coast, and a still greater number of out-stations interiorwards. Some of these stations are in the immediate neighbourhood of the European and American settlements above mentioned; but others, and the greater part of them, are far off from the abodes of civilization. The Gospel is statedly preached to thousands and hundreds of thousands, not only along the frontier regions, but far in the interior. More than 10,000 youths are now receiving a Christian education in the schools connected with these missions, and will, ere long, be sent forth to spread the blessings of education and Christianity far and near among the benighted inhabitants of this land.*

At the same time, as many as a dozen different dialects have been studied and reduced to system, and as many printing-presses are industriously employed in printing books in these dialects for the thousands who have been already taught to read. All this varied agency has been put into operation in the last fifteen years; and as every step gained in this work prepares the way for more accelerated progress, it must be seen at once that Christian missions are destined to exert a vast influence over the future destinies of Africa; and they will therefore receive,

* The interesting Station of the Wesleyans at Coomassie, the capital of Ashantee, may be mentioned, as well as the Church Missionary Society's flourishing Station at Abbeokuta, which is in the heart of the slave-trading country, 50 miles inland from the Bight of Benin.—H. D. T.

as they certainly deserve, the countenance and support of every friend of humanity.

The line of policy marked out for most of these missions is, that while their main object will be to push their operations towards the central parts of the Continent, where it is supposed the climate will be more congenial to European constitutions, and where the population is greater and better organised, they must at the outset acquire a firm footing on the sea-coast, without which it will be impossible to maintain a line of communication with the interior, or keep up any intercourse with the civilized world.

As yet, the missionaries have done little more than possess themselves of the outposts; but, in accomplishing even this much, they feel themselves greatly indebted to what has been done by the Squadron, and they will feel the increased importance of this influence just in proportion as they approach those larger and more powerful kingdoms in the interior, where the agitations caused by the Slave Trade are more sensibly felt than even along the sea-coast.

So long as the African seas were given up to piracy and the Slave Trade, and the aborigines, in consequence, were kept in constant excitement and warfare, it was almost impossible either to have commenced or continued a missionary station on the coast. And the fact that there was none anywhere between Sierra Leone and the Cape of Good Hope previous to the year 1832, shows that it was regarded as impracticable. Christianity does not invoke the aid of the sword; but when she can be shielded from the violence of lawless men by the intervention of "the powers that be," or when the providence of God goes before and smooths down the waves of discord

and strife, she accepts it as a grateful boon, and discharges her duty with the greater alacrity and cheerfulness. And whilst the missionaries cherish the conviction that their strength and reliance is in the unseen arm, there is, nevertheless, no class of men on the coast of Africa who would regret the removal of the squadron with more heartfelt sorrow.

In all these varied ways it does seem to us that the British Squadron has rendered important service to the cause of humanity. It has put down piracy on the African seas; has restored peace and tranquillity to a line of sea-coast of more than 2000 miles; has called into existence a large and flourishing commerce, and, at the same time, has thrown the shield of its protection over the cause of Christian missions, and all the varied agency that has been employed to promote the cause of humanity and civilisation among the benighted inhabitants of this great continent. IF THESE GREAT OBJECTS ARE NOT WORTHY OF BRITISH PHILANTHROPY, WE KNOW NOT WHERE TO FIND THOSE THAT ARE.

The opinion has long been entertained by many sincere friends of Africa that, so long as the demand for slaves in Brazil is so great, it will be impossible to break up the Slave-trade by any forcible measures.

More recently, but from a different source, we have heard the opinion gravely expressed that the most certain and effectual way of breaking it up will be to let the Brazilians have unlimited access to the coast of Africa, and so glut their own markets that slaves will become comparatively valueless. We confess we have never heard this latter sentiment avowed without feelings of mingled astonishment and indignation, and have scarcely been able to refrain from

exclaiming Treason! as often as we have heard it uttered. What does it amount to when expressed in plain English? Something like this: that, after toiling so long for Africa, we have come to the conclusion that she is not worth contending for, and therefore deliver her over to the destroyer without condition or mercy.

Who can tell how many slaves it will take to glut the market of Brazil? The half of the population of the continent of Africa would scarcely be sufficient to supply the demand that would spring up under such circumstances. Treated as her slaves are, and as the Brazilians think it their interest to treat them, the time will never come when they will dispense with the necessity of fresh importations from the coast of Africa. But let her be forced to adopt a different line of policy in relation to the treatment of her slaves, and be made to rely upon the natural increase of those already in the country, and the time is not far distant when we may reasonably expect the Brazilians themselves to be utterly opposed to any further accessions to her slaves from the coast of Africa. There is in the southern parts of the United States a state of feeling, in relation to slavery, that we may expect to see in Brazil before the lapse of many years. However strenuous planters in the Southern States are in defending the institutions of slavery, it would be difficult to find an individual among them that would consent to receive a fresh cargo from the coast of Africa. And the thing which awakens more serious apprehensions in their minds about the stability of the institution than anything else is, the unparalleled increase of the slaves among them. This one thing makes it perfectly obvious to every man

*

of reflection, that it cannot be controlled for any considerable length of time to come; and the engrossing inquiry now is, What shall we do with our slaves? Let Brazil take the same care of her slaves, the result will be the same, and the inquiry will soon follow, not how we shall wring more slaves from the coast of Africa, but how we shall dispose of those we already have?

A great deal has been said about the expense of this enterprise, and the inseparable loss of life connected with it.

As a matter of expense, we have too little knowledge of financial affairs to speak with confidence; but there has always appeared to us much misapprehension, if not misrepresentation, on this subject. The people of Great Britain are scarcely divided in opinion in relation to the necessity of maintaining a naval as well as a military force in times of peace. Whatever speculations peace-men may entertain on the subject, we fancy it would be a difficult task to persuade the nation at large to abolish either their army or their navy in the present state of the world. And if a navy must be maintained in times of peace, where is the great additional expense of having a small section* of it stationed on the coast of Africa?

* A Return furnished to the Lords' Committee by the Accountant-General (Vide Appendix A. Report, 1850), shows the expense of the African Squadron, exclusive of stores, and wear and tear, to be £166,840 per annum. The additional expense for stores, and wear and tear, is between £60,000 and £70,000 more, making a total of about £230,000. It is admitted on all hands, that at least one-half of the force employed would be required for the protection of our commerce, if all repressive measures were to be abandoned.—H. D. T.

Some additional expense is incurred, it is true, in the way of prize-money, the support of a Court of Mixed Commission, and the temporary support of recaptive slaves, but nothing in comparison with the great objects which are accomplished by the enterprise. If the resources of Great Britain were really tasked by this comparatively small outlay, it would become a matter of just inquiry how far it should be continued; but so long as this is not the case, it will be difficult to point out any object more worthy of her care and patronage.

In relation to the exposure of life, it is admitted that much sickness has been endured and many lives lost, but this was in the earlier stages of the enterprise, when the officers of the squadron were inexperienced in relation to the best means of preserving the health and lives of their crews. The practice more recently adopted of employing Kroomen and other natives of the country to perform all that kind of labour which requires special exposure, has placed this enterprise on an entirely different footing, and made cruising along the coast of Africa nearly as safe as anywhere else. The fact is already known to the Board of Admiralty; and if the limits of this article would allow, we could prove from our own observations, not only in connexion with the operations of the squadron, but likewise in regard to trading-vessels, the justice and truth of this assumption. Commander Chamberlain, of her Britannic Majesty's brig *Britomart*, informed the writer that he had been cruising on the coast nearly two years without having lost a man, or having had, so far as he knew, a single case of African fever on board his vessel; the United States sloop of war, *Yorktown*, with a crew

of nearly 200 men, cruized on the coast two years without having lost a single man; and the writer was informed by Captain Bell, that he had never had a healthier crew in any part of the world. Facts of a similar character without number have come under the observation of the writer in connexion with trading-vessels. It has uniformly been observed, that where sleeping on shore has been avoided, and where temperance and cleanliness have been enforced, there has been little or no sickness that could be attributed to the climate. Since these and other measures for preserving health have been adopted on board of the cruisers, there has been little sickness, and still less mortality.*

If the Government of Great Britain would give efficiency to this enterprise, and bring the Slave Trade to a speedy termination, vessels of a better class should be designated to this service than those which have been stationed on the coast for a few years past. The writer pretends to no personal knowledge of the sailing qualities of vessels; but an article has recently appeared in the *London Times*, by one of the commanders who has been in the service, in which it is conclusively proved that a large number of the

* Sir Charles Hotham, the late Commander-in-chief of the station, stated, in his evidence before the Lords (May, 1849), that the annual mortality of the squadron had only been $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the previous two years. The great mortality formerly was chiefly occasioned by the necessity of boat-service up the rivers, which has scarcely ever to be resorted to now, the Slave Trade having been driven from the rivers, excepting the Congo. The recent plan adopted by the Admiralty of relieving the Cruisers at the expiration of two instead of three years, has also, doubtless, conduced to the diminished mortality.—H. D. T.

vessels in the African service for a few years past have been of the poorer class, and utterly unfit for the kind of service in which they are engaged. None but the fastest sailers can be of any real use. Those employed by the Slave Traders are the fastest that can be procured; and to send in chase of them second or third-rate cruizers is but to subject the officers of the navy to disappointment and mortification. A small number of the fastest sailers would be more effective, and accomplish the undertaking with much more certainty. We do not pretend to define any particular length of time that it will be necessary to keep a squadron on the coast—this must of course be determined by circumstances; but for our own part we do not suppose that the period will be long before these exertions may be gradually diminished, until no further necessity will exist.

In conclusion, we would suggest also the importance of forming a larger number of military and commercial stations along the coast, like those of Cape Coast and Accra. They might be erected on a small and economical scale, and being garrisoned by black soldiers, as they ought to be, the expense of maintaining them would be comparatively small. These stations, whilst they would form important centres for the promotion of commerce and the spread of Christianity, might be rendered very efficient in putting down the Slave-trade. Treaties for this purpose might easily be formed with the African chiefs more immediately concerned; and if they were thrown open to the free trade of all nations, as the English settlements on the Gold Coast are at the present time, very little jealousy would be felt in relation to any new territory which Great Britain might

acquire for this purpose. The importance of such establishments is enhanced, too, by the necessity which is felt for consular agents to adjudicate differences between captains of trading-vessels and the chiefs of the country ; and this necessity will increase just in proportion to the increase of lawful commerce.

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Vide page 10 and 11. See also MAP.

