THE AFRICAN SQUADRON VINDICATED.

BY

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1850.
In the last few years, an opinion has grown up rapidly, and spread widely, that the whole of England’s once boasted efforts for the abolition of the African Slave Trade have been misdirected, futile, and even injurious. So widely spread, though we hope not deeply rooted, is this view, that in many circles it is looked on as a truth scarcely needing argument. The withdrawal of our African cruisers, and the subtraction of their annual cost from the sum of our taxation, is considered to be one of those reforms which interest and prejudice certainly obstruct for a time, but which must inevitably take effect at a very early date.

Those, then, who believe that the removal of the squadron would be the signal for the extension of the Slave Trade in all its horrors, to a degree far beyond anything conceived of in the worst of past times, have reason to bestir themselves, and to seek aid to their cause wherever they can hope for it. Glad should we* be, could we induce any among the leaders of opinion in society, or the rulers of the provincial press, to investigate for themselves the mass of evidence bearing on the subject. For we have little doubt that their independent judgment would differ widely from that which they are now content to derive from the reckless assertions of the “Times” or “Chronicle,” and their influence might then, as we most fervently desire, be brought to bear upon the apathy or weariness into

* The explanation of the use of “we” here and elsewhere is simply that this essay was originally intended for publication in a periodical as a review of certain blue books and pamphlets named in the Appendix I.
which the public seem to have sunk with regard to this question,—a question once felt as deeply interesting to England, and still deeply concerning her honour, and the welfare of millions of the human race. At present the public are indifferent; the enemy is powerful,—powerful, and made up of many bands: a considerable party, including the present Anti-Slavery Society,* who conscientiously believe that Slavery and Slave dealing can be abolished by moral suasion, whilst the squadron aggravates the horrors of the trade, or who condemn the employment of our cruisers, as being on principle adverse to all that is akin to war; fanatics of economy, seeking the suppression of the maritime police, because it costs money, because it renders sugar dearer, because profit and principle are one; West Indians, hoping perhaps that the removal of the cruisers may facilitate a real or pretended free emigration of labour from Africa; and lastly a body, small perhaps, but not without influence, whose pockets are concerned, whose profits are more or less directly bound up with those of the slavers, and who hate the squadron for the same reason that thieves hate the police, that smugglers hate the coast-guard. These are parties widely differing in motive and character; but in this one thing they unite.

Though the Lords have reported strongly in favour of the exertions and continuance of the squadron, the Committee of the Commons, we regret to say, has come to resolutions unfavourable to its utility, though not venturing positively to recommend its withdrawal. Still, let it be noted that these resolutions were carried only by

* Not the original Anti-Slavery Society. All its representatives nearly,—the Denmans, the Lushingtons, the Buxtons, the Wilberforces, the Stephens,—are staunch in behalf of the squadron.
the casting vote of the Chairman, Mr. Hutt, of whom Lord John Russell remarked,* that his opinions were known to be of so decided a character, that no evidence brought forward would be likely to alter the views he held that the present means of suppression were useless and ineffectual.

In considering this question of the efficiency of the squadron, let it be kept in mind that bad symptoms are abroad, not merely of indifference, but of a reactionary and degenerate feeling on the whole subject of Slavery. The "Morning Chronicle," apologises for it as a malum prohibitum, not a malum in se;† the "Daily News"‡ pleads for it with all the slang of the Economists; the Reverend Mr. Palmer writes a treatise to vindicate it; Thomas Carlyle (alas, that it should be so!) in "Fraser's Magazine," hints strongly at the re-establishment of Slavery, or something very like it, in our Western Colonies.

The following are the heads of argument against the continuance of the squadron, which we lately saw used in a highly respectable newspaper. They may be taken as a fair representation of the opinions which the opponents of forcible suppression are constantly putting forward as facts, and which a great part of the nation at this day, vaguely believe to be unquestionable truths. It is asserted ' that England and France ' have for thirty years used their utmost efforts to ' extirpate the Slave Trade, but in vain; that the ' trade, far from being suppressed, flourishes, the ' cruisers having made no impression on its amount, 'which has been regulated solely by the demand in the 'Western World; that the profits of the trade are so ' enormous, and our captures of such trifling amount

* House of Commons, 27th July, 1849.
† 30th August, 1848.
‡ 17th September, 1849.
that the probable loss by the squadron forms a very insignificant item in the Slave dealer's calculations; and that the presence of the cruisers has tended greatly to aggravate suffering, crowding, and mortality among the negroes on the passage.

It is incorrect to say in any sense, that since 1819, the squadrons of France and England have been stationed on the coast doing their utmost to extirpate the disgraceful traffic. France, up to 1845, had nothing that can be called a squadron on the coast of Africa. A few vessels occasionally cruised there to keep up a form, but nothing more. An officer who served in the British squadron for fifteen months in 1833-34, tells us that he never in that time saw a French flag of any description. By the treaty of 1845, France and England bound themselves each to maintain a force of twenty-six cruisers.* If it be true, as is reported, that France wishes to secede from this convention, there is not much to regret; though most deeply should we regret it, if we indeed believed that France has ceased to feel rightly on the subject, or that her withdrawal will lead, as our opponents anticipate, to that of England. France, repudiating on her side the right of search, has no treaties empowering her to act against slavers of other nations, so that the only service which her cruisers can render is to deter vessels bearing her own flag, from prostituting it to the purposes of Slave Trade; a service which probably a very small proportion of her present force would suffice to effect. "No assistance," says Sir Charles Hotham, addressing the Admiralty in December, 1848,† "has been given by the French; they cannot legally capture

* Twenty-two or twenty-three is the number however, which we have generally kept up.
† Lords' Com. Report, 176.
Brazilian vessels, and appear to decline interfering with those which are unfurnished with papers."

"Since October, 1846," (this is under date August, 1848) "they have not detained a vessel on suspicion of being engaged in the Slave Trade."

It is true that England's attempts to suppress the Slave Trade began more than thirty years ago; but that our squadron has had any fair trial of its powers to repress it, till within the last ten years, we deny. For nearly half that period of thirty years, the endeavours of England were limited to sending half a dozen unsuitable vessels to cruise on the coast, and even those for a long time continued to be withdrawn regularly from their stations, during the rainy season of each year. And even when our squadron was strengthened, and the system improved, our hands continued to be tied by defective treaties. Till 1835, no Spanish vessel could be touched by our cruisers, however manifestly equipped for slaving, unless she actually had her live cargo on board. The treaty with Spain in 1835 swept away this anomaly, so far as her ships were concerned, but little was gained as long as other flags afforded similar protection to the equipped Slaver. Spanish vessels immediately began to ply to Cuba under the Portuguese flag, and continued to do so up to 1839, when an act of the British Parliament, (confirmed soon after by treaty with Portugal) authorised our cruisers to detain Portuguese equipped vessels. Indeed up to 1839, Portuguese ships (and Brazilians made the claim even to a later date) not only had this impunity, when not actually caught with slaves on board, but south of the Line, they could not be touched at all; that is, the whole Slave trade to Brazil was absolutely protected from molestation, and not a single

British cruiser was stationed, or could act in south latitude.

Were this all we had to plead against the withdrawal of the squadron, is it fair to say that the experiment of suppression has been tried for thirty years, and is a failure?

Let us now see what has been the effect of the squadron on the slave-trade, since the acquisition of efficient powers, taking the statistics of the trade from a table published by the Committee of the Commons, at the end of their session in 1848.* We know that the absolute numbers of such statistics in general are not of high value, and there are special reasons for believing these to be exaggerated in the later years, but the fluctuations are likely to be parallel to the truth, and the table may be considered as coming from a hostile source.

The annual average import of Africans into Cuba and Brazil, between 1835 and 1840, is in that document estimated (in round numbers) at 94,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>44,000</td>
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<td>28,000</td>
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<td>1846</td>
<td>54,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>59,000</td>
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Let us trace curious coincidences, if we may not venture to say cause and effect. Efficient powers are at last bestowed upon the cruisers in 1839, and the amount of negroes imported, falls at once from 94,000 to 44,000. The energetic measures adopted by our officers, during the latter part of 1840, and the suc-

* Vide resolutions in 4th Report of the Commons' Committee, 1848, p. 3.
ceeding eighteen months, in the destruction of the slave factories at the Gallinas, Ambriz, and Cabenda struck terror into the slave-dealers; their agents were embarking for Brazil;* “the caravans (at Ambriz) had ceased almost to bring slaves, and were bringing ivory and gum copal from the interior, of which the Americans carried off many cargoes.”† Mark the effect of these measures on the number of negroes imported during 1842. In four years, an average of the 94,000, is reduced to 17,000; the atrocious crime of the man-stealer is repressed in 77,000 instances during one year, and yet the squadron is a failure!

In 1842, was published Lord Aberdeen’s letter, calling in question the legality of orders issued by Lord Palmerston, which authorised the destruction of barracoons and factories. This, while it proved a great check to the success of the cruisers, immediately raised the spirits of the slave-dealers, gave a stimulus to the trade, and misrepresented as it was to the native chiefs, those who had just entered into treaties with us, under a strong impression of our power and resolution to suppress the traffic, were induced to refuse our subsidies, and to repudiate their engagements.‡ From this time too, sprang up the fatal feeling in Brazil, that England was not in earnest in her measures of suppression,§ a feeling which has been strongly and insightfully expressed in a letter addressed by Mr. Wise, the American Minister at Rio, to his British colleague there.|| No wonder that the numbers rise in 1843 and 1844, to 38,000 and 36,000.

* Commons’ Com. Report, 1st of 1848, q. 208, 567—1330—see also Lords’ Report, 3686.
† Letter from Captain Butterfield, quoted in “West India Interest, &c.” p. 27.
‡ Commons’ 1st Report of 1848, q. 1261, 1275.
§ Lords’ Report, q. 2938, 3174.
|| Matson, p. 65.
About July 1844, the system of in-shore blockade, so strenuously recommended by Captains Denman and Matson, was adopted on the coast.* Its result on the total amount of the trade is shewn in the fall next year from 36,000 to 24,000. Indeed on the northern part of the coast, which had always supplied the Cuba market, and which, on account of the obstacles to land transit, afforded the greatest facilities for carrying out the blockade, so effectual was it that the imports to Cuba, which in 1843 and 1844 amounted to 10,000, fell in 1845 to 1350, in 1846 to 1700, and 1847 to 1500.† An unfortunate sequence of events interfered to prevent the like gratifying success in the suppression of the Brazil trade. First came the expiry of the convention with Brazil, in consequence of which our squadron for several months of the year 1845 lost all power to act against the slavers of that nation, and our officers were compelled to allow scores of slave-ships to pass unmolested.‡ In the same year, by an unfortunate act of misplaced confidence, Commodore Jones removed the British cruisers from nearly the whole extent of the Portuguese settlements, and entrusted to the men-of-war of that nation the blockade of a sea-line stretching to fully three hundred and fifty miles. When the Styx steamer resumed watch over this part of the coast in January 1847, she took slavers at the rate of three and four in the week, a pretty clear sign of what had been going on in the interval.§ Lastly came the disastrous Sugar Act of 1846, which

* Commons' 1st Report, Q. 221-1287; and Denman's Pamphlet, p. 13.
† Table embodied in the Resolutions of the Commons' Committee, Rpt. 4th of 1848, p. 3.
‡ Lords' Report, Q. 4529; and Slave Trade Correspondence, quoted by Captain Denman, p. 13.
§ Lords' Report, Q. 3686.
might well have been entitled, "a Bill for the better promotion of Slavery and the Slave Trade in south latitude." These untoward circumstances go far to account for the rapid rise of crime in 1846, 1847. Other causes, however, for the success of the slavers in these years must also be considered, such as the permission by Sir Charles Hotham of distant cruising, instead of an inshore blockade,* and the inferiority of the ships, both steamers and sailing vessels, of which the squadron has latterly been composed. On the last point only a sailor's judgment can be of value. Hear what Commodore Sir C. Hotham himself says: "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."† For details on this head we may refer to Captain Matson's evidence before the Lords' Committee, or to a letter by the same officer, printed in the Times of the 14th of August last.

The interesting letter just mentioned contains a table compiled from official sources, from which we extract the following record, shewing the numbers and ratios of vessels captured by the (so-called) inefficient squadron in eleven years, from 1837 to 1847 inclusive.

The numbers agree substantially with the details given in the Appendix of the Lords' Blue Book.

* On this subject see Appendix II.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. D.</th>
<th>Numbers of Slave Ships which arrived in Brazil and Cuba.</th>
<th>Number of Slave Ships captured by the British Squadron.</th>
<th>Per centage captured.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13 per cent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>1839</td>
<td>148</td>
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<td>1840</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>31½ &quot;</td>
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In 1841-42 our cruisers captured 57½ per cent., and again in 1845, 59½ per cent. of all vessels fitted out in those years for the slave trade. Will the adversaries of the squadron still call it a failure? Is it no success to have repressed more than half of the attempted crime, to have destroyed so large an amount of the capital engaged? The depreciators of the squadron tell us that the fluctuations in the numbers of imported negroes have nothing to do with the futile efforts of our cruisers, but depend entirely on parallel fluctuations in the price of sugar in Brazil, or on the contingencies of coffee in Cuba. Do our gallant tars also accommodate the numbers of their captures to these sugar and coffee vicissitudes? Is it not marvellous that this table of captures should show the severest blow inflicted on the slavers by the squadron, in the very same years in which the table of the Commons' Committee shews the lowest numbers of imported negroes, and yet that there should be, as our opponents will have it, no connection between the two series of facts.

Again, it is asserted that the Slaver, in sitting down to count the cost of his horrid business, finds that the
probable loss by the squadron forms a very inconsiderable item in the reckoning, and is immensely over-balanced by the enormous gains he is sure to realise. And these gains we are constantly told are so great that if but one ship in four escape capture, the trade is profitable. Strange that the profits should be so enormous and disproportioned when the risks are so small! But is it not more consonant with probability and truth that the very greatness of the risk causes the greatness of the profits? There are mauvais sujets enough in the world ready to rush into competition for these enormous profits and reduce them, if a strong hand did not hinder; and if still one vessel saved in four renders the trade worth carrying on, is not that very fact a proof that the trade is but one-fourth of what it would be, were coercion withdrawn. Suppose that Commissioner Lin had been successful in his measures for the exclusion of opium from China; that for season after season one clipper only had succeeded in running her cargo, would not the profits of the owner in that case also have been enormous? So enormous, we dare say, that not merely one cargo run out of four, but one out of forty would have remunerated him: but would not that very immensity of profit be a proof of the deadly blow that had been struck at the contraband trade?

In estimating the amount of impression produced by our cruisers, it is manifestly delusive to be guided by the percentage of negroes captured and emancipated. Reckon the percentage of equipped vessels captured, whether light or laden; count how many Africans these would have carried off if left to proceed on their track of iniquity; estimate the diminution in the trade proved by the very fact of the enormity of profits; and then sum up the total
direct effect produced by our cruisers on the Slave Trade.

We now come to a part of the question which we admit to be painful and perplexing. It is maintained, as a reason for withdrawing the squadron, that its presence and vigilance greatly aggravate the sufferings of the negroes by leading the slaves to crowd their vessels much more than they would in an unmolested trade; to use unseaworthy vessels; and to hurry off with their live cargoes, when in fear of a cruiser, without sufficient supplies of water and food; and that from all these causes the rate of mortality on the middle passage is vastly increased. In addition to these general charges we lately saw it specified, that the pursued slaver rather than be taken with his cargo on board, and condemned as engaged in the trade, not unfrequently gets rid of his wretched captives by throwing them into the sea. This may have happened, and we believe has happened when our miserably defective treaties prevented the capture of a slave ship unless she had the living evidence of her guilt on board. But now that the mere fact of equipment for the traffic is sufficient to condemn her, it is not easy to conceive that even Slave Traders would be guilty of such motiveless barbarity. "We know," Captain Denman indeed says, "that slaves are often thrown overboard upon whom duty* would have to be paid, and who would not be saleable on arriving in Cuba or Brazil. It is a common practice"—an atrocity by which dollars are saved, and consistent enough with all we conceive of the character of the traffic, but in no way relevant to the exertions of our cruisers. It is curious, however, that in the ample index or Abstract of evidence which accompanies the Commons’ Report for 1848, this very answer of Cap-

* i.e. I suppose, a bribe to the authorities.
tain Denman's which we have quoted is entered thus: “It is a constant practice for slaves to be thrown “overboard to prevent their falling into the hands of “the cruisers.” An easy enough way to turn an adversary’s evidence to good account, especially considering how much more frequently the abstract will be consulted than the text.

Now, that the existence of our repressive squadron may have added in some degree to the sufferings of those wretched Africans whom they miss rescuing from bondage and early death beyond the Atlantic, is difficult to prove or disprove; but were it absolutely demonstrated it would be but analogous to the effect of nearly all remedial measures. The blessed Gospel itself (with awe be it spoken) plunges in deeper condemnation those who miss its benefits; the surgeon's knife is death to some, though it be life to many; very frequently must the dread of justice have led the thief to add murder to robbery. That the criminal will not spare fresh crime to shield himself from the vengeance of the law is no new discovery. But when before was this ever brought forward as an argument for relaxing in the prosecution of offenders? When before was it ever argued by disinterested men that the repression of crime effected by the law did not far more than compensate for the additional evil into which desperate criminals might plunge in search of safety? Granting, for argument's sake, a large addition to the sufferings endured on the middle passage by the unfortunates who are still transported from Africa, we say that the repression of crime effected by the squadron compensates for this; we say, that if you reckon the diminution in the amount of human suffering by the discouragement given to slaving raids in the interior; the tracts of coast, once
constantly harassed, now freed entirely from the visits of the slaver; the reduction in the numbers of negroes embarked at all (taken even from Mr. Hutt’s own statement), and the further numbers rescued by the cruisers, which have so escaped the miseries of a Cuban plantation or a Brazilian mine; then the aggregate of suffering has been much diminished by the action of the squadron.

In the words of Colonel Thompson, “The sufferings of the inhabitants of the shores of the Mediterranean in the times when they were exposed to be carried off by Barbary cruisers, might by possibility be enhanced by the contingencies arising out of the dread of the cruisers of civilized powers. But we are unwilling to commit ourselves to the belief, that any collection of the natives of the Mediterranean shores would have been found petitioning for the removal of such cruisers, in order that their transport to the Barbary shores might be made less difficult and distressful.”*

But let us see whether there is ground for believing that the sufferings of the negro on the passage have been really aggravated by the operations of the squadron. This is fully to be admitted, in comparing the trade, as it now exists, with what it was in the years immediately preceding Abolition, when nearly the whole Guinea trade (we grieve to say) was in British hands,† and consequently subject to regulation by the Slave-carrying Acts of 1788 and subsequent years. Of the health and felicity of the slaves on the passage, in those days, a glowing picture is drawn by Mr. Tobin, merchant in Liverpool, and

* Resolutions proposed to the Commons’ Committee, 2nd Report of 1849, p. 17.
† Commons’ 3rd Report of 1848, Q. 5679.
whilom captain of a slaver.* But we decline to make the same admission if our comparison be made, either with the unregulated, though legal, British trade of the last century, or with the traffic as carried on by foreigners twenty and thirty years ago, when our squadron had no effective existence.

Even from Mr. Tobin's admissions we may judge that Regulation Acts were not unneeded. His good ship Molly, he tells us, before the last Act, carried 438 slaves; that Act at once cut her quota down to 280. When we find that the operation of an Act of Parliament at once extruded one-third of the ship's complement, we may without rashness, suppose that previously there was no great amount of elbow room. But when we consider that the old number 438, was also an allowance regulated by the Act of 1788, to what pitch of abomination in crowding shall we raise our conceptions of the previous unlimited cargo? We have some guide. The plan and measurements of the slave ship "Brookes" of Liverpool, have been handed down to us, and her complement by the Act of 1788, is recorded to have been 451. These data, as is shown in evidence by Mr. Stokes,† allow each male slave a surface of six feet by sixteen inches, with two feet seven inches of height. And yet it is in evidence that this very ship, in a voyage previous to the Act, carried 609 slaves! In the same proportion the unregulated cargo of the Molly would be 580, or more than twice what the humanity of Parliament eventually fixed as a fair complement.

With regard to this subject of crowding, it is not easy to make a just comparison between past and present times, where our information records merely the number of slaves and the burden of the vessel, on

account of the changes which have been introduced in the mode of measurement for tonnage. The new rules of admeasurement which came into force in 1839, in order to encourage better building models, are highly favourable to sharp vessels; reducing, for instance, the Cowes yachts to half their former tonnage or less. The sharp built slavers are affected in the same way, and we happen to have two instances in proof. In the case of two vessels, the Reglano and the Vanguardia, condemned in 1840, the surveyor has furnished the measurement according to both old and new scale. The Reglano is reduced from 116 tons to 48; the Vanguardia from 194 to 81.*

The evidence of Captain Hoare, and some others, describes horrible instances of crowding and suffering on slavers lately captured. They tell us of “slaves stowed in bulk like figs or raisins,” “affected to a “man with ophthalmia, small-pox, crab crab, and “dysentery to a horrible extent;” “the decks in such “a state that it was with difficulty the captors could “stand;” “nine dead found in the hold.”† The American barque Pons, of less than 350 tons, captured by an U. S. cruiser in 1846, “had no slave deck; and upwards of 850 were piled almost in bulk on the water casks below.” “The stench from below was so great that it was impossible to stand more than a few moments near the hatchways.”‡ Other cases of modern slavers’ cruelty adduced, however, such as the horrible story narrated by Mr. Bandinel,§ “are,” as he himself acknowledges, “not consequent on the present state “of Slave Trade in particular, but have accompanied

† Commons’ 3rd Report, 1846, Q. 6008.
‡ Do. 1st Report, Q. 3412.
§ Do. Do. Q. 3415.
“all slave trade.” They are totally irrelevant to the
effect of our cruising, and prove only the truculent
ferocity of the gangs which our opponents would let
loose on Africa, and the African seas; slavers professed,
and pirates doubtless as occasion should serve.

But are we unable to produce parallel cases of
suffering in the days of licit Slave Trade? By the
evidence given at the bar of the Commons in 1792,*
we find that the “Tartar,” of 130 to 150 tons (old
scale mark you) carried 602 negroes, of whom “few
“had the breadth of their backs.” In another vessel
of 106 or 108 tons, the cargo was 450. What that
implies we may judge from the next statement, that,
in the “Elizabeth” of 370 tons, they were much
crowded below, so that the witness (a surgeon)
“generally took off his shoes, and was very cautious
“lest he should tread on the slaves.” In the “Brookes,”
Dr. Trotter testifies, “slaves were so crowded below
“that it was impossible to walk through them without
“treading on them. Those who are out of irons are
“locked spoonways (in technical phrase) to one
“another. It is the first mate’s duty to see them
“stowed this way every morning; those who do not
“got quickly into their places, are compelled by the
“cat.” “Has seen the slaves drawing their breath
“with all those laborious and anxious efforts for life,
“which are observed in expiring animals, subjected
“for experiment to foul air, or in the exhausted
“receiver of an airpump.” “Slaves were irrecoverably
“lost by suffocation, without previous indisposition.”
The gunner of the Medway said he “had been em-
ployed in stowing the slaves as close as he possibly
could.” “He has seen them under great difficulty

* See Lords’ Report, pp. 238 et seq.
of breathing.” Captain Sir G. Young, R.N. attempted to go down the fore hatchway of a slaver, but was deterred by the stench which was intolerable, though there were then only 300 on board, and they waited for 200 more. Mr. Claxton, surgeon in the “Young Hero,” says the slaves were “so crowded they could only lie on their sides.” Alexander Falconbridge, surgeon, “when employed in stowing slaves, made the most of the room, and wedged them in; they had not so much room as a man in his coffin, either in length or breadth;” “always took off his shoes, but could not avoid pinching them.”

Cross examination of witnesses, brought forward by the Slave trading party in opposition to Dolben’s Regulating Bill,* proved, that no slave had more than five feet six inches in length, by sixteen inches in breadth to lie in, that the floor was covered with bodies so stowed, and between decks were often platforms, and broad shelves also packed with bodies; the whole height between decks, including two tiers of negroes and timbers, not exceeding five feet eight inches, sometimes not more than four feet.

So much for crowding in the old times. The Preacher’s advice applies well here; “Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.” With regard to other miseries, we have such evidence as the following.† One witness says, “the sick slaves lay on the bare planks, which by the motion of the vessel, caused exorciations.” Another, “has known rice held in the mouths of sea-sick slaves until they were almost strangled; he has seen the surgeon’s

* Lords’ Report, page 240.
mate force the panniken between their teeth, and throw the medicine over them, the poor wretches wallowing in their blood or excrement, hardly having life, and this with blows of the cat.” The same witness declares “he has known the doctor’s mate report a slave dead and have him thrown overboard, when he has seen him struggle in the water.” “In most ships the men were in irons all the passage.” “The men slaves were all chained,” says Sir G. Young. “Sick slaves,” Falconbridge says, “lie on the bare planks; witness has frequently seen the prominent parts of the bones of the emaciated, about shoulder-blade and knees, bare. Most prevalent disorders were fever and dysentery; the consequence of numbers being ill of the latter extremely noxious; cannot conceive any situation so dreadful and disgusting. In the “Alexander,” the deck was covered with blood and mucus, like a slaughter-house; the stench and foul air intolerable.” “Slaves with painful diseases,” Mr. Claxton says, “were made to dance as they called it, and whipped with a cat if reluctant.” “The parts on which the shackles are fastened often excoriated by the violent exercise they are forced to take.” For other painful and disgusting details, we must refer to Mr. Stokes’s evidence.*

Such scenes marred the fair face of the Atlantic, when the legal trade in Africans was carried on by our countrymen, sixty years since. Shall we believe things better twenty or thirty years ago, when Spaniards and Portuguese carried on the traffic with little hindrance in North Latitude, and with none in South? We set aside at once the evidence of Mr. Hutt’s battle-horse, we mean José Estevano Cliffe, late of Louisville,

Kentucky, Doctor of Medicine, quondam slaver, and slave-dealer, and slave-holder still, with all his pleasant retrospect of those days of pious memory, when, not only the bodily comforts, but the spiritual needs also, of the living strata in the hold, were cared for; every vessel carrying a competent surgeon, and most of them a chaplain also, who administered the rites of religion, and taught the slaves to pray!* Our thoughts revert involuntarily to those pious Italian brigands, who kept a priest to confess their victims before the slaughter, or to those days in our own land, when Claude Duval robbed like a gentleman, and left a traveller change enough to carry him to town. We can fancy a veteran practitioner of those times bewailing the vulgar and unhandsome atrocities to which modern criminals are driven, to shun the close coercion of the new police. All the captains of slave-ships are in one key with their brother Cliffe. "Where they do agree," as Mr. Puff says, "their unanimity is wonderful." They all tell us what evils are wrought by the squadron, and insist at the same time, that we are highly advancing their interests.† Their accord on these points is a pretty good proof that the truth lies exactly on the other side. Were Father Æsop living in these days, he might tell us in his pleasant way, how the rats combined to prove to Man, what evils rose from keeping up the Cat; what quantities of milk now-a-days were spilt under fear of the Whiskered One; how wastefully and unsystematically the cheese was gnawed; how (nevertheless), she was working all the time for their interests, and the worst thing for them would be her removal; but (being disinterested) the rats must say

* Cliffe’s evidence. Lords’ Report, q. 2169.
† Lords’ Report, q. 4488, also 2514, 2218.
that it was highly for the public good, that the Pantry Blockade should be suppressed by hanging Puss.

Vague opinions and hearsay statements abound on both sides of the question, but persons are rare, who have been eye-witnesses of the state of slave-ships, both quarter of a century ago, and of late years. Mr. Consul Rendall is one of the few, and his testimony is decisive. He asks, "Did not the same evils exist, the same loss of life, the same crowding of the hold, the same scanty supply of provisions and water, the same amount of sickness, filth and stench, in the slave-ships of Spain and Portugal (which includes Brazil), at the period when they were quietly carrying on the slave-trade, without any annoyance from English cruisers, and keeping their dealings within the limits of treaties? Most certainly it was the case, and the facts can be proved by a reference to the records describing the state of the first prize slave-vessels brought into Sierra Leone, belonging to those nations. I was an eye-witness to such scenes in the early stages of abolition, . . . and can, therefore, speak to the facts I have stated." *

Much stress has been laid on the assertion that the British measures of suppression have vastly augmented mortality on the middle passage. This has not been left to float about as a mere opinion, but has been, somewhat audaciously as we hope to show, condensed into a column of formal statistics in the table which is embodied in the Resolutions of Mr. Hutt's Committee. This formal statement has been, and will be, quoted with so much respect that it is necessary at some length to show its utter worthlessness.

The aforesaid table, in the column headed "Average casualties during the voyage," records the rate of mortality among slaves on the middle passage from 1788 up to 1815 at 14 per cent. In 1815 the rate leaps at once to 25 per cent. Who after this dare deny the pernicious and deadly action of our suppressive energies? In all previous years within man's memory; in the good old time when the "Tartar" (Tartarus had been the better name) sped her unobstructed way to the Antilles with thirty score of negroes in her hold; when the "Brookes" of Liverpool lay fearless for months on the sunny Gold Coast until she had leisurely picked and packed her sable cargo "spoonways," tier over tier, on decks and shelves, not unaided by the cat; when the trade wind was polluted by the odours which rose from the "Alexander," with her deck like a slaughter-house; and in the haleyon days of regulated trade that followed when the captain of the good ship "Molly" took her from Liverpool to Loango, from Loango to Jamaica, from Jamaica back to Liverpool, without a finger-ache among crew or cargo, * in all those days, and up to the fatal year of Waterloo, the rate of mortality rose not over 14 per cent. But in that year at the Congress of Vienna, England first called on the nations of Europe to join her in condemning the Slave Trade. True it is that for several years thereafter she took no steps to act on her denunciations. True, that till fifteen years thereafter what armament she employed on the African coast was undeniably inefficient in force and system. True, that till four-and-twenty years thereafter miserably defective treaties cast a shield over the whole Brazilian trade. And yet from that

* Tobin in Commons' 3d Report, 1848, Q. 5632.
very year in which Europe denounced the trade on paper, by strange coincidence the rate of mortality rose at a bound from 14 to 25 per cent. There is no hint of gradual increase. As in the land of Egypt you pass at a step from the richest alluvial to the yellow Libyan waste, so here you spring without an intermediate stage from the mild mortality of 14 per cent, which would not depopulate the earth in less than seven months, to the pestilent height of 25, which would sweep away the race in four. *Credat Judæus Apella* —Mr. Hutt and Mr. Gladstone may believe it if they can.

These tables and averages were furnished to the Committee by the late Mr. Bandinel of the Foreign Office. Let us see what is their worth, and how far they bear on what they are intended to demonstrate, viz. the fatal action of the British squadron.

The ratio of deaths previous to 1815 is based on the average of 29 actual voyages between 1760 and 1788, and therefore has real value. The rate of 25 per cent. is founded on data so doubtful, insufficient, and inapplicable, that no one who reads the memorandum on its construction,* can fail to suspect a strong bias in the compiler. These data are—

1. The average of deaths on five voyages previous to 1818, viz. an average selected by the African Society in a report to Lord Castlereagh, in proof of the great mortality on board illicit slavers. 27 per cent.

2. The average of deaths, between capture and condemnation, in 12 vessels taken in 1830, viz. 24 per cent. to which Mr. Bandinel takes upon himself to add 6 per cent. “for the difference in length and circumstances of the voyage when not captured.” In all 24

* App. Commons, 2d Report, 1848
Brought over 51 per cent.

3. The corresponding average on 4 vessels condemned in 1839-40, viz. 13 per cent. with the same addition of 6 per cent. by Mr. B. 19

4. A corresponding average without details, furnished by Mr. W. Smith, a gentleman engaged in the Sierra Leone courts from 1825 to 1834, is 15 per cent. or with Mr. B.'s additional 6 per cent. 21

5. A statement ascribed to Dr. Cliffe 30

Total 121

Divide by 5

Resulting average 24 per cent.

which however is altered in the tables (for symmetry perhaps) to 25.

Observe, with regard to these deduced averages and the columns of figures built on them, that the former rate of 14 per cent. is inferred from evidence all prior to 1788, and the latter rate of 25 from evidence all subsequent to 1817. No record is offered of the mortality in the intermediate thirty years. On what ground then did Mr. Bandinel select the year 1815 for this enormous stride of death; as if that year had not already enough of mortality to answer for. Why not as well have fixed on the year King Louis died? or the year of Abolition? or the year of the comet? or that memorable year when "the King went mad and Humphries beat Mendoza."* These would all in truth have been as germane to the matter. But the tables were to show how fatal England's efforts at suppression have proved; in 1815 she began to gird herself to the work, and therefore 1815 was chosen.

* Early in the century on a homewardbound Indiaman hailing a ship from England for news, this was the skipper's budget:—"The King's mad and Humphries's beat Mendoza;" two prize-fighters of the day.
Observe again on the mode in which the rate of 25 per cent. has been extracted, that the whole principle on which the various averages are combined is wrong. Mr. Bandinel has taken the mean of the means, a very different thing, as a little reflection will show, from the mean of the whole.*

So much on the rates generally. A little is to be said on the averages and statements on which the rates are based.

The first average is on the face of it worthless as a general rate from the circumstances under which it was rendered.

With regard to the next three averages (2, 3, 4) we totally reject the additional 6 per cent. with which Mr. Bandinel arbitrarily swells them. Not only is mortality not greater in the slaver which escapes than in the captured vessel, but those who best know consider it to be decidedly less. "The mortality," says Captain Denman is always greater after we have cap-

* For illustration take an extreme instance. Suppose that—
1. The average of death on three voyages is 50 per cent.
2. The average on thirty other voyages is 10 %

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Divide by 2.} \\
\text{Average according to Bandinel (the mean of the means) } 30 \text{ per cent.} \\
\text{The true average would be found thus:—} \\
3 \times 50 = 150 \\
30 \times 10 = 300 \\
\hline \\
\text{450} \\
\hline \\
\text{Divide by 33} \\
\text{True average } 13\frac{7}{11} \text{ per cent.} \\
\text{instead of 30 per cent. (being the mean of the whole).}
\end{array}
\]
tured them, than it would be on the passage across."* Greater, Sir C. Hotham estimates, in the proportion of nine to five.†

As for the statement (5) ascribed to Mr. Cliffe, it is not necessary again to dispute the value of his authority. He himself, in his evidence before the Lords, repudiates this statement, and offers 15 per cent. as a common estimate of the loss now-a-days on the middle passage.‡

But suppose Mr. Bandinel’s table true; suppose it proved that in 1815 deaths on the middle passage rose from 14 to 25 per cent., and have so continued unto this day. Still can this have anything to do with our efforts at suppression? Till 1839 no vessel could be captured on the score of equipment; the Portuguese flag could not be questioned south of the line; and the whole multitude of vessels in the Brazilian trade plied without let or hindrance. How happened these also to suffer by restrictions which came not nigh them? How was it that when their privileges were swept away in 1839 the rate of mortality did not make another leap from 25 to twice 25? Really it is childish to believe that our efforts under the feeble system and defective treaties of the previous years, could have had any serious effect on the arrangements of the slavers. Save one, all the averages brought forward to prove this vast amount of death refer to periods prior even to 1834. That one is derived from the statistics of four Portuguese vessels condemned in 1839-40. The rates per cent. on board these were respectively 6, 25, 18 and 31. A valuable basis truly for an average. And yet it is

* Lords’ Report, Q. 4534.
† Commons’ Report, 1st of 1849. Q. 678, 679.
‡ Lords’ Rept. Q. 2170—2173.
on grounds like these that Mr. Hutt and half of his Committee venture to assert that the present amount of mortality is unexampled in the history of the Slave Trade.

Sir Charles Hoitham, whose opinions are so strongly relied on by the enemies of the squadron, gives us a return of the deaths, before adjudication, among 13,582 slaves recaptured in his time. The rate on the whole is 9 per cent., and Sir Charles at the same time tells us, that this is with the worst measures, which, he considers, are whilst the slaves are under our control. The Brazilian loss he estimates at not more than 5 per cent. * We have seen that, on tolerable data, the mortality previous to 1788, may be reckoned at 14 per cent. Here we carry the war into the enemy’s country; we show in their own way, but with better data, that the effect of the squadron has actually been to decrease the rate of mortality! Can it be so? It is not impossible. The sharp-built vessels now used by the Slave traders, even if they be more crowded, are far faster sailing, and accomplish the passage in much less time; the unhappy layers of negroes too are necessarily nearer the hatches than in the heavy, deep hulled, three decked “slaughter houses” of former times.

The adversaries of the squadron tell us that, were the Trade left uncoerced, the Slaver’s own interest would make him look well to the health and safety of his live investment. Will it do so less now, when every life is worth to him from £45. to £60. sterling; than when unrestrained competition shall have reduced the value to a minimum? “In Cuba,” says Judge Kennedy of Havanna, † “the treatment of the slaves

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* Commons, 1st Report for 1849. Q. 678, 679.
† Lords’ Report. Appendix, p. 87.
"is notoriously much ameliorated, by the increase in "their value; still it is exceedingly vile, in many "cases, and the lower the value of the slave may be "reduced, the more horrible will be the cruelty exer-"cised." But we lay not much stress on the argument. The love of lucre is not the only evil passion in man's breast. It is the "righteous man," who "regardeth the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," and cruelty has ever been the daughter and handmaid of Slave Trade. "I have seen," says Mr. Richardson, "with my own eyes slaves driven on with relentless speed, or whipped to death, not because the wild Bedouin has been hanging on the flank of the man trafficking caravan, but simply to gratify the savage caprice of the moment."*

From the style in which the adversaries of the squadron denounce it, as aggravating suffering and mortality on the middle passage, they appear to regard, as of small comparative account, the suffering and morta-"lity of which the survivors of the voyage have yet to be the victims beyond the Atlantic. From the value of life, we may form a tolerable estimate of the amount of suffering. Among the coffee and sugar carriers, a considerable class of the Brazilian slaves, the average duration of life after importation, is not more than eight years; among the other classes, it is given at sixteen years, so that twelve years may be taken as the average expectation of life;† the expectation of life, remember, for men usually not exceeding 20 to 28 years of age.‡ This simple fact implies an aggregate of misery far beyond what the most unfeeling of

† Dr. Thompson's evidence, Commons' Report, 2nd of 1848, Q. 5124.
‡ Commons' 3rd Report.—5771. Lords' Report.—2182.
Slavers could well compress into the thirty days of the middle passage. And we marvel at the delusions of men who yet come forward in the name of Humanity, and call for the removal of the only restraint, if it be nothing more, on this rampant system of iniquity, without their having ever offered in its place a single substitute that could twice be seriously named.

'Leave the trade to itself,' says one party; 'it will thus receive a stimulus which will produce a speedy glut in Brazil, and the trade will expire or change to a small steady demand.' What? In a country containing three or four millions of square miles of the finest soil in the world; where a very high authority 'sees no bounds to the demand for slaves;' where the excess of deaths over births among the present slave population even is calculated at 100,000;† where you will, on throwing open the trade, have slaves at half the present price or less, and consequently can profitably use them up in half the present time or less;‡ in such circumstances we are to look for a glut, and the spontaneous expiry of the trade! "The "horse leech hath two daughters, crying Give, give; "there are three things that are never satisfied, yea, "four things say not, It is enough." And when they are glutted so will be the Brazilian slave market.

"Leave the trade to itself," says another party, "and the fear of an overwhelming black population "will soon drive Brazil to stop the importation." Such a fear might possibly induce a Government to stop the trade. But all the evidence concurs in the utter im-
potence of the Brazilian Government to carry any such measure into effect without the concurrence of the public. And when will the public, that is the mass of interested slave-holders, ever be moved by the fear of consequences, which may always be pronounced so remote and vague, to let go their grasp of present gain?

"Legalise and regulate the trade," says a third, we fear a growing party. For those who wish to see England steep herself so deep in shame we have no arguments.

A fourth body, sincere in their detestation of slavery and slave-trade, but infected with a morbid and exaggerated aversion to every thing of warlike hue, seems to have extended to the gallant cruisers of our maritime police, an antipathy which we do not hear that they exhibit towards the blue guardians of the metropolis; though these worthy civilians also, we greatly fear, sometimes use violence in suppressing crime. Moral suasion in Brazil; agriculture, commerce, the Gospel in Africa; these are the means, they tell us, by which Slavery and the Slave-trade are to be suppressed. Let them do their best with moral suasion on the Brazilians. We wish them good speed; but desirous meanwhile to save the myriads of victims who will perish before their suasion is likely to take effect, we would fain keep up the squadron.

Agriculture and commerce in Africa, whilst the Slave-trade is unchecked! How shall the negroes be brought to endure the steady toils and moderate gains of agriculture and lawful commerce, whilst the easy lucre of the Slave-trade is attainable? What power of suasion shall induce a chief to bind himself to its suppression, who, like the King of Dahomey, draws from the trade an income of 300,000 dollars, a sum which even in India would be the revenue of a power-
ful prince. "I do not know an instance," says the experienced veteran, Captain Beecroft, "where ever the Slave-trade existed, without seriously embarrassing legitimate commerce."* "It drives out the legitimate trade, on account of its being the more profitable."† "The presence of Slave-trade prevents the growth of legitimate trade," thinks Governor Winniett of Cape Coast Castle.‡ "It takes away the stimulus to produce other articles fit for merchandise; it interrupts lawful trade by producing wars," says Missionary Townsend.§ Mr. Macdonald, late Governor of Sierra Leone, tells us that Slave-trade entirely destroys legitimate trade; its profits are so enormous; "they will not engage in legitimate trade, because it does not pay them so well, but if you destroy the Slave-trade they are all willing enough to go into legitimate trade."¶ And as Mr. Macqueen clearly explains, "It is utterly impossible for any merchants in legal trade to compete with the Slave-traders, because the Slave-trader does not care what he sells his goods for, provided he gets a return cargo of slaves; therefore he can undersell the legal trader to any extent, and in fact ruin him; it is quite impossible for the latter to compete with him; his profit consists not in the sale of his goods on the coast of Africa, but in the sale of his slaves in Brazil and Cuba; whereas the profit of the legal trader is on the sale of his goods on the coast." "Even if he were to give away his goods he would make a large profit." "Slave-trade produces the greatest possible immorality and want of security; it paralyses all energies of every description which are legitimate

* Beecroft’s Evidence, Lords’ Report, Q. 3424.
† Ditto, Q. 3466.
‡ Ditto, Q. 685.
§ Ditto, Q. 656, 657.
¶ Ditto, Q. 1251-1254.
and honest, and it is quite impossible while it continues that you can ever extend civilization and instruction in Africa.”* “The gains are so enormous,” says the Rev. T. Peyton, “that no legitimate trade can compete with it.”† “I think there is not an instance,” says Captain Matson, “where the legal trade has stopped the Slave-trade; I defy any person to point out an instance on the whole coast of Africa.”‡

Christianity itself can scarcely take effect on a soil overrun with this noxious growth. In addition to the deeply-rooted prejudices of Pagan superstition, or the sevenfold shield of Mussulman arrogance, so rarely pierced by the arrows of the Gospel, when you have to contend with all the case-hardening habits of cruelty and love of gold which the Slave Trade directly genders, how shall those who are sent find a hearing? Listen to what the missionaries themselves say: “The “Slave Trade,” says Mr. Townsend, “is the chief hindrance to our mission; the Slave Trade in “Africa, as a hindrance, is just what caste is in “India.”§ “When we (the Missionaries) were at “Badagry, we received notice from the Chiefs that “they were about to export slaves, and that we were “not to interfere.” “Another Chief came to us with “notice that we should quit the country, because the “Slave merchants wanted to come to Badagry.”‖ “The Wesleyans wished to send a young man as a “schoolmaster to a small village a short distance from “Badagry. In this village was a Slave merchant. “The young man was not able to remain because the

* Macqueen’s Evidence before the Lords, Q. 3798-3800-3801-3815.
† Ditto, Q. 2574.
§ Lords’ Report, Q. 977.
‖ Ditto, Q. 1035.
"Slave merchant had influence with the Chiefs to expel him."* The same Missionary "certainly thinks" that Slave Trade existing anywhere excludes the possibility of introducing Christianity and civilization.† "The Missionary settlement at Canoffie, on the Pongos," says Mr. Peyton, "was relinquished through the revival of the Slave Trade, and the Society's property destroyed. In the same year, the settlement of Yongroo was abandoned, from the effects of Slave Trade."‡ The same witness is sure, "from his own personal experience, and from information which he has received, that the Slave Trade is the one great obstacle to the civilization of Africa."§

When we trust to tracts and pulpits only for the repression of crime at home, we may hope to suppress the Slave Trade in Africa by moral means alone. The squadron must precede the missionary and the lawful trader. As the slaver is driven from district after district by the former, let these be ready to garrison each conquered post.|| But for them to expect any beneficial results from their exertions, as

* Lords' Report, Q. 1054. † Ditto, Q. 1055.
‡ Ditto, Q. 2576. § Ditto, Q. 2614.
|| As has already happened to a certain extent on the Gold Coast and the Bight of Biafra. In the latter, where the Slave Trade in 1830 flourished, and three or four ships engaged in lawful trade lay for many months without being able to obtain full cargoes, the Slave Trade is now effectually extinct, and 20,000 tons of British shipping were lately lying there. Mr. Jackson, M.P., and other adversaries, as usual, tell us that the squadron has had nothing to do with this result. But plain people, when they learn that the last twelve slave vessels which left Havana for the Bight of Biafra were, every one of them, captured by the cruisers, will be simple enough to think that this had some connection with the stoppage of Slave Trade.—See Lords' Report, Beceroft's evidence, 3394, 3401, 3406; Matson's 2779, 2842; Denman's, 4456.
long as Slave Trade is in vigorous existence, is as rational as it would be for the backwoodsman to plough and sow before he had cleared away the forest. When the strong hand shall have rooted out the pestilent weed, then may the sower go forth to sow; spiritual and literal cultivation, and lawful commerce may then hope to prosper, and to attain such vigour as shall enable them to defy the enemy in all future attempts at revival.

Some of the opponents of the squadron, especially among the Economists, argue that, even granting the cruisers efficient towards the suppression of the Slave Trade, the interference of Britain, merely to prevent outrage being perpetrated by subjects of American states on natives of Africa, is officious and Quixotic meddling, and its cost an unjustifiable burden on the finances of the country.* Perhaps these men acknowledge nothing of moral identity, and moral responsibility, in the history of a state. If they do, we may ask if they think no reparation due by England for all the wars, cruelties, and miseries with which she scourged Africa for two hundred and fifty years, as a chief abettor and agent in the system of man-stealing?

It is time, however, to conclude, and we must leave many interesting points untouched. We trust we have shewn some reason to doubt whether the aggravation of suffering on the middle passage alleged to arise from the presence of the squadron has taken place at all; and strong reason to believe that the aggregate of misery inflicted by the Slave Trade has by means of the squadron been vastly diminished. We have demonstrated that the grounds on which

* See, especially, Mr. Cobden's questions addressed to Lord Palmerston. First Report of Commons' Committee, 1848, pp. 18, 19.
mortality among the negroes on the voyage is asserted to have fearfully increased, are trivial or absurd; whilst the assertion itself is directly opposed to the truth. We have shewn that it is only within the last eleven years that the cruisers have obtained such powers as gave them a chance of making an impression on the trade. We have shewn that, whilst they were unthwarted in the exercise of their powers by the untoward acts of our own authorities, and the foe had not yet been backed and stimulated by the measures of our own legislature, their success was most complete; in three years cutting down the amount of the traffic to one-fifth of what it was. We have shewn that the amount of the trade has not been (as our adversaries pretend, believing seemingly that Mammon only can cast out Mammon,) dependent on fluctuations in the price of sugar; but has risen and fallen just as our squadron has been less or more successful in captures. And we have shewn that these captures, in three seasons since 1840, have embraced from 56 to 60 per cent. of all vessels fitted out for the Slave Trade in those years.

Satisfactory as it is to review even this measure of success, far more glorious will be the day when our cruisers shall have no captures to boast of; when, by the energetic continuance of the system so well begun in 1840 to 1842, backed, if possible, by powers to inflict summary chastisement on the captured criminals,* the risk shall become so great, that a

* "In every case where a personal penalty has been added to the chance of seizure, the Slave Trade has ceased to be pursued. There are no French, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, or English, either ships or subjects, found in the traffic; none but Spaniards, and Brazilians, who are secure from punishment." [Captain Donnan's evidence; Lords' Report, 4539.] With respect to the Spaniards,
slaver from Brazil shall not dare to approach the coast of Africa, or if she does pass in, shall lie in the Congo till she rots. And that day we may yet hope to see, if the people of this country can be roused from their present apathy to something of their old interest in the subject; roused to judge of this matter, not in the haze of inapplicable economic theories, and the evidence of mere opinions, but by the light of Christian morality, common sense, and the evidence of facts.

The question now is not, Shall we commence a crusade against the Slave Trade? but, Shall we retrace the steps of thirty years, and recant all that we have for that time been dinning into the ears of Europe?

Withdraw the squadron, and you bring dishonour on the name of England, by casting down in a day the result of all her long and costly efforts for the redemption of Africa, and throwing suspicion on the sincerity of all her past endeavours for the abolition of the Slave Trade; you wipe off half the stigma from the traffic; you give an evil bias to the already waver-ing public feeling, and you will speedily see English capital, if not English ships and crews, directly engaged in slaving. You will, it is true, shake off the charge of inconsistency in which the measure of 1846 involved our country, but only by casting her weight

Judge Hook of Sierra Leone speaks of "the excellent effect of the "penal law of Spain, dated 2nd March, 1843, upon the Spanish "slave traders; since its promulgation, upwards of two years ago, "we have had only one vessel under Spanish colours brought before "the mixed courts of Sierra Leone." [App. to Lords' Report, p. 111.] See also Q. 3673—3710, and Dr. Lushington's evidence. The law of the United States adjudges the slaver to death, and the reluctance to execute this has caused it to prove less effectual than the milder law of France and England. [Denman as above.]"
more entirely and consistently into the scale of wrong; by halving the price you will at least double the number of slaves carried to Brazil, and in the opinion of a high authority you will extend it without bounds. Withdraw the squadron, and you throw the Trade into the hands of hundreds of greedy, competing, petty speculators, with small vessels and little capital; so increasing vastly the horrors of the trade, and inducing calamities incalculable.* Withdraw the squadron, and "the desire now awakening in Africa to be free from this vile traffic will be crushed,"† and "such a rush to obtain slaves will follow, that a price will be set on every man's head, and no human being will be safe."‡ Your lawful trade will be struck down; your missionaries left alone to stem the torrent, will speak to deaf ears, and be expelled or murdered; the republic of Liberia, a growing nucleus of civilization for Africa, will be destroyed; the Bight of Biafra and the whole coast from the Bight of Benin to Cape Verde, now cleared of the nuisance, will again be darkened by the vulture-like presence of the slaver; "the whole of Western Africa will present a scene of cruelty and devastation too fearful to contemplate; all the progress of Christianity, civilization, and commerce will be annihilated; and the coast will become the resort of the most degraded renegades and pirates of Brazil and other nations."§ "The Slave Trade will revive in the "palm-oil rivers to the exclusion of legitimate trade;"||

* Sir C. Hotham's evidence, Commons' Report, 1849, Q. 689.
‡ Do. Do.
§ Judge Hook of Sierra Leone, Lords' Report, App. p. 111.
∥ Dawson's evidence, Lords', 3085; also the Rev. Hope Waddell, quoted by Captain Trotter, Q. 4404.
"the thousands of palm oil carriers and labourers will instantly be kidnapped and carried on board slave vessels; after a time the remaining natives will avoid the coast as they would the locality of a plague."*

Finally, in the terse expression of Mr. Monckton Milnes,† the withdrawal of the squadron, "or any such diminution of its force as would imply the abandonment of that resolution to suppress the Slave Trade which the moral sense and religious feeling of this country, so earnestly adopted, would give such an additional impetus to that traffic as would largely increase all the horrors of slave capture in Africa itself, multiply in an incalculable degree the miseries of the middle passage, by augmented competition of the lesser capitalists, re-introduce into British commerce the custom and habit of slave dealing in defiance of British law, as Brazilian slave dealing is carried on in defiance of Brazilian law, and bring national discredit on this country throughout the world, by avowing that the English people were ready to abandon the greatest social reformation ever undertaken by a portion of mankind, as soon as the difficulties and cost of the enterprise somewhat exceeded their expectations."

* Judge Hook, as above.
† Resolution proposed to the Commons’ Committee, 2nd Report of 1849, p. xxiv.
APPENDIX I.

I. First, Second, Third and Fourth Reports from the Select Committee on the Slave Trade. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 1848.

II. First and Second Reports from the [re-appointed] Select Committee on the Slave Trade. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 1849.

III. Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed to consider the best means which Great Britain can adopt for the final extinction of the African Slave Trade. Ordered to be printed, 23rd July, 1849.

IV. 1. A Letter from Lord Denman to Lord Brougham, on the final extinction of the Slave Trade. London, Hatchard, 1848.


APPENDIX II.


There can be no question between the two systems; out of sight of land, cruisers can exercise no control whatever over the shipment of slaves; they cannot even know from what places they are shipped, and must remain in profound ignorance of every particular as to the mode in which the traffic is carried on. What should we say if the coast-guard were removed from the beach, and stationed twenty miles inland? It is scarcely less unreasonable, to station the cruisers on the coast of Africa, sixty, or even thirty, miles from the shore.

Under the system of distant cruising, a perfectly marvellous amount of skill and energy is naturally attributed to the slave-dealers, every difficulty is supposed to vanish before them; their own reports constitute almost the only source of information (which appears to have implicit credence), and they, of course, take care to encourage the idea that no effort can prevail against them, in order to induce us to abandon the attempt. On the other hand, the obstacles in the way of the squadron are as much over-rated, and to vessels cruising out of sight of land the task may well seem hopeless; when, upon rare occasions, the shore is approached, every canoe on the beach is supposed to indicate a shipping-place, every hut a slave factory. But, if we look searchingly into the matter, and grapple vigorously with the difficulties, they will vanish before us, and we shall learn before what a shadow we were ready to recoil—equally to the injury of our naval prestige and of our national character, which must suffer, when such despair is rendered popular through the medium of the slave-trading interest in this country, direct and indirect, aided by a perverted application of Free-trade principles, and a narrow and short-sighted economy.

The squadron should be employed close to the shore, and charged to prevent the slave trade. Clearly defined districts should be committed to each cruiser, on which, by the use of boats, and by actively traversing and examining every spot, each commander would soon become familiar with the real facilities and the real difficulties, equally of the slave-dealers, and of his own duty. Every commander should construct a chart of
the coast under his immediate charge, on which the slave-factories and the places available for shipping slaves should be carefully marked. He should also be required to keep a notebook, comprising all useful information as to the rainy and dry seasons, the currents, the prevailing winds, the accessibility or otherwise of the shipping places under various circumstances, the landmarks, the signals of the slave-dealers, and also of the capabilities of the country for lawful commerce. The means of inland communication, and plans of the slave-factories should be also mapped out, and every opportunity improved of obtaining accurate and precise information as to their approaches and means of defence, and of the best places and seasons of the year for landing to destroy them. All these particulars should be forwarded to the commodore, from time to time, and a record of them kept, for the purpose of being transmitted, with the chart, from officer to officer appointed to the charge of each district.

It is perfectly obvious that it is on the shores of Africa, and not upon the open sea, that any real knowledge of the slave-trade can be acquired, and that we can thus alone succeed in baffling the slave-dealers, and putting down the traffic.

The prevention of the Slave Trade must ever be held paramount to that of making prizes; because, to leave open the slave depots to the access of other vessels, for the chance of making a capture by a long and doubtful chase in the offing, would be to sacrifice the end to a part, and that a small part, of the means, and to incur the risk of a great impulse to the traffic which we are striving to suppress. It is the shipment of slaves which can alone stimulate it; and, as long as this is prevented, the slave vessel is only a loss to her owners. She will probably try again and again, and at last fall into the hands of the cruizer, without the great principle of prevention having been compromised. Thus the chances of capture would occur repeatedly to a cruizer steadily devoting herself to prevent embarkation as the great object; whereas, in distant cruising, the probability is that the slave vessel would not be seen at all, and if seen, that she would escape.

THE END.