

Chapter 4: Enforcement

A. The British Enforcers

_ [circa 1820? This quote is based on Nicholas Owen's journal. He travelled in Africa from 1746-1757] The committee replied, not unfairly: *"Can the wildest theorist expect that a mere act of the British legislature should, in a moment, inspire...[the] unenlightened [sic] natives of the vast continent of Africa, and persuade them, nay more, make them practically believe and feel that it is for their interest to contribute to, or even to acquiesce in, the destruction of a trade not inconsistent with their prejudices, their laws, or their notions of morality and religion, and by which alone they have been hitherto accustomed to acquire wealth and purchase all the foreign luxuries and convenience of life?"* ST, Chapter 28 (7. E.C. Martin [12, 27], 153.)

_ On July 29, 1814, the duke of Wellington complained to his brother Henry Wellesley, in Spain, that the pressure by Wilberforce and his friends to secure the end of the trade was so strong that they seemed to want Britain *"to go to war to put an end to that abominable traffic; and many wish that we should take the field in this new crusade....I was not aware till I had been here [in London] some time of the degree of frenzy existing...about the slave trade."* ST, Chapter 28 (36. Duke of Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, 15 vols., ed. by the 2nd Duke (London, 1858-72), vol. 9, 165 (July 29, 1814); see also Betty Fladeland, "Abolitionist Pressures on the Concert of Europe," *Journal of Modern History* XXXVIII (1966), 361.)

_ [1814] Samuel Whitbread, the brewer and a philanthropic, though distrusted, member

of Parliament, thought that *"the country never has, and I fear never will, express a feeling so general as they have done about the slave trade."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (38. Francis Dorothy Cartwright, ed. *The Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright*, 2 vols. (London, 1826), 2, 84.)

_ [1814] That to the tsar ran in part: *"It is to be presumed you are totally ignorant of what takes place on the continent of Africa. [But] not to put an end to crime when you have the power makes you accomplice to it....Divine providence has restored you to your former comforts and to your hereditary dominions....Let the era of your own deliverance be known in the history of the world as that of the deliverance of others also...."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (39. Earl Leslie Griggs, *Clarkson, the Friend of Slaves* (London, 1936), 116.)

_ [1815?] The bill was eventually defeated in the Lords, as so many earlier bills had been in the days of the great campaign of Wilberforce. *ST*, Chapter 28 (45. PD, 1st ser., vol. 31, 172.)

_ [Between 1807 and 1816] Grenville, the final architect of abolition, would remark to Samuel Rogers, the poet, *"What a frightful mistake...to send such a person as Lord Castlereagh to the Congress of Vienna! a man so ignorant that he does not know the map of Europe; and who can be won over to make any concessions by only being asked to breakfast by the Emperor."* *ST*, Chapter 29 (1. *Table Talk of Samuel Rogers* (London, 1903), 198.)

_ Having been informed by the Africa Institution of London, in December 1816, that 60,000 slaves were still being carried across the Atlantic every year – 15,000 they said, in North American ships flying Spanish flags – Castlereagh, at the conference of five nations at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, remarkably proposed that the international right of search of slave ships – a *sine qua non*, in Britain's eyes, for effective control – should be complemented by *"the vigilant superintendence of an armed and international police on the coast of Africa....To render such a police either legal or effective in its object, it must be established under the sanction, and by the authority, of all civilized states."* *ST*, Chapter 29 (4. *Ibid.*, xii, 361.)

_ [1818] His [Sir George Collier] instructions from the Admiralty stated ambitiously, *"You are diligently to look into the several bays and creeks...between Cape Verde and Benguela."* *ST*, Chapter 29 (6. W.E.F. Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers* (London, 1969), 44.)

_ Sir Robert Mends, another experienced officer (he had lost an arm in a battle of the American Revolution, while still only thirteen years of age) who succeeded Sir George Collier as commander, wrote from his flagship, the *Owen Glendower*, on which he would die in 1823, off Cape Coast: *"The traffic in slaves has not decreased. Nor do I see how it can whilst it is supported by European protection in the most open and avowed manner...."* *ST*, Chapter 29 (8. Ward [29, 6], 98.)

_ [1822] He [George Canning] proposed that the powers should boycott the produce of

countries still engaged in the slave trade. *ST*, Chapter 29 (10. Canning to Stratford Canning in Washington, *BFSP* X, 254.)

_ [1818] Wilberforce praised God for the agreement; and if, in the debate on the matter in the House of Commons, Sir Oswald Mosley, the Whig member for Midhurst, declared that "*it was not for us to teach Spain humanity,*" the enlightened Sir James Mackintosh commented that "*the Right of Search was practical abolition.*" But it soon became clear that the treaty [between Britain and Spain] in practice would mean less than it seemed at first sight. *ST*, Chapter 29 (12. *PD*, 1st ser. vol. 37, col. 251.)

_ Kilbee reported to Canning in 1825, "*It is not from being in possession of better sources of information than formerly that I am enabled to state the number of slaves landed...but merely [because] transactions of this nature are now public and notorious, no mystery being found necessary.*" *ST*, Chapter 29 (21. Kilbee to Canning, February 25, 1825, published in *PP*, 1825.)

_ [1822] Canning then asked for the backing of his own Cabinet for an arrangement along these lines, arguing that "*the great mart of the legal slave trade is Brazil.*" *ST*, Chapter 29 (23. Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade* (Cambridge, 1970), 32-47.)

_ [1818] The "*admission of a right in officers of foreign ships of war to enter and search the ships of the United States in time of peace, under any circumstances whatever, would*

meet with universal repugnance in the public opinion of this country." ST, Chapter 29 (30. FRUS, vol. V, 72.)

_ All together, between May 1818 and November 1821, 573 Africans were captured by United States naval captains, from eleven ships. Sir George Collier, still commander of the equivalent British squadron, reported with unusual warmth that his North American counterparts *"have, on all occasions, acted with the greatest zeal...and it is extremely gratifying to me to observe that the most perfect unanimity prevailed between the officers of His Majesty's squadron and those of American vessels of war engaged in the same view...."* ST, Chapter 29 (36. Ward [29, 6], 77.)

_ For example, in 1822 he [Baron Portal] abandoned a possible action against Captain Pelleport, shipbuilder as well as master of *La Caroline* of Bayonne, because that officer was the brother of Pierre Pelleport, the commander-in-chief in Spain. ST, Chapter 29 (40. Op. cit., 43.)

_ The British could check whether the suspect ship had the right to carry the French flag: *"A boat might be sent to the suspected vessel, after she had first been hailed to give notice of the intention. The verification shall consist in an examination of the papers establishing the nationality of the vessel. Nothing can be claimed beyond [that]....Any search or inspection whatever is absolutely prohibited."* These arrangements would, of course, give rise to many misunderstandings in the years ahead. ST, Chapter 29 (47. C. Lloyd, *The Navy and the Slave Trade* (London, 1949), 50; an excellent account which

inspired this one.)

_ Kilbee reported to London that such things were "*regarded by the public as marks of the ingenuity displayed by this government in thwarting the attempt made by His Majesty's commissioners.*" *ST*, Chapter 30 (15. PRO Commissioners in Havana (Kilbee and Maclean) to Canning, March 19, 1827, FO 84/68, item 10. The letter included a translation of one from Vives which said that from the examination of the log-book of the ship concerned, it would not be suspected that the vessel had touched at any port in Africa, much less had carried slaves to Cuba.)

_ "*The whole thing,*" said Macaulay, "*was a complete fraud....In some cases the vessels that were boarded afterwards with the Portuguese or Spanish flag hoisted, and full of slaves.*" *ST*, Chapter 30 (18. Evidence of Judge Macaulay, in *The Trial of Pedro de Zulueta* (London, 1844), 11.)

_ "*The Brazen is still cruizing to leeward in the Bight of Benin, waiting the arrival of messengers from the interior. During her stay there she has succeeded in detaining, after a chase of 46 hours, the Spanish schooner Iberia with 423 slaves, and also the English palm-oil ship, for a slaving transaction, the master having, by depositions from his crew, disposed of four female negroes...to the master of a Spanish vessel lying in the river....*" (Commodore Bullen to the Admiralty, London, January 28, 1826. Quoted under Chapter 31 heading)

_ The British were weakened by the fact that, even with Collier's reinforcement, this West Africa Squadron was still composed of old ships with tall, easily detected masts, all left over from Napoleonic Wars. Lord Palmerston, in 1862, would complain that "*no First Lord and no Board of Admiralty have ever felt any interest in the suppression of the slaved trade,*" and added: "*If there was a particularly old, slow-going tub in the navy, she was sure to be sent to the coast of Africa to try and catch the fast-sailing American clippers.*" *ST*, Chapter 31 (1. A.E.M. Ashley, *Life of Palmerston* (London, 1846-65), II, 227.)

_ In the 1820s and 1830s, Captain Denman recalled, "*dull-sailing ten-gun brigs*" were all that were available – "*the model of which might have been taken from a haystack.*" *ST*, Chapter 31 (2. Joseph Denman, *West India Interests, African Emigration and the Slave Trade* (London, 1848), 12.)

_ From 1827 to 1834, the great entrepreneur Macgregor Laird thought that the famous old slave mart of the delta [in Sierra Leone] was, at "*the lowest calculation,*" exporting over 28,000 slaves a year. *ST*, Chapter 31 (3. PP, 1842, XI, pt. 1, Appendix and Index, No. 7, 29.)

_ He [Colonel Edward Nicolls] thought that Duke Ephraim, the leading chief at Old Calabar, would soon abolish the slave trade in his territory if he were asked to do so formally and paid a subsidy. But the British government had at that time no imperial ambitions on the West African mainland. *ST*, Chapter 31 (4. CO 82/6 1143 FP Nicolls to

Hay, Dec. 10, 1833, in Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Valley* (Oxford, 1956), 65.)

_ In September 1831, for example, Captain Ramsay, in the Bight of Benin, on H.M.S. *Black Joke*, sent two tenders in chase of two suspected Spanish slavers, the *Rápido* and the *Régulo*, which he observed as they were emerging from the Bonny River. Both "*put back, made all sail up the river and ran on shore. During the chase, they were seen to throw their slaves overboard, by twos, shackled together by the ankles, and left in this manner to sink or swim....Men, women and children were seen in great numbers, struggling in the water, by everyone on board the tenders;...One hundred and fifty of those wretched creatures perished in this way.*" Ramsay said that he and his men also saw sharks making for, and tearing apart, many of the struggling Africans. The *Régulo* was overhauled, with 204 slaves still on board, but the *Rápido* had none left, and only two slaves were saved from the river. *ST*, Chapter 31 (5. Spears [28, 19], 145.)

_ British captains could arrest vessels which carried slaves, but they could do nothing to a ship which merely planned to do so. Captain Joseph Denman recalled later: "*We had no power over the [intercepted] ship, till the slaves were on board. The consequence was that, if a man-of-war lay in a port full of slavers, as I have seen in Whydah, with ten or a dozen...at one time, as long as the man-of-war was in port, they would not ship their slaves; directly, the man-of-war was out of sight, they shipped their slaves, and every vessel in the harbour would weigh their anchor and set sail. The cruiser would probably chase the wrong ship and, after 100 miles, would be laughed at by the master of that*

vessel, who would say that he had only put on sail for a pasatiempo." *ST*, Chapter 31 (6. Denman evidence in Lords Select Committee on West Africa 1842, 405.)

_ [1830s] The eventual consequence was a new treaty with Spain which enabled the navies of the two powers to seize ships flying the flag of either of those countries if slave equipment were found on board – in effect, a license for the British navy to act more effectively against Spanish slavers. The "*equipment*" was carefully defined. The treaty also stated firmly, if extremely optimistically, that the Spanish slave trade was "*totally and finally abolished throughout the world.*" *ST*, Chapter 31 (7. Murray [29, 4], 93ff, and also W.L. Mathieson, *Great Britain and the Slave Trade* (London, 1929), 13-17.)

_ The treaty had occupied British diplomats a long time: in 1835, it was nine years since Canning had first mooted the matter and defined the word "*equipment.*" Yet the remarkable further delay in promulgating the law – even in Spain, much less in Cuba – encouraged the slave traders and planters of the latter island to think that it would never be put into effect. *ST*, Chapter 31 (8. AHN, Estado leg. 8035/4. A typical letter from George Villiers in Madrid included statements such as "*I deeply regret to have...to communicate to your Excellency that certain authorities of Her Catholic Majesty in the Havannah instead of zealously endeavouring to carry into effect the Treaty of 1835...appear to countenance the means which are reported to for its evasion.*")

_ Both the prime minister, the relaxed Lord Melbourne, and the flamboyant foreign secretary, Palmerston, were irritated by Buxton, as they now often were by embittered

men such as Lord Brougham, who brought his vast mercurial powers to mock his old friends in the government: "*We pause, we falter, and blanch and quail,*" jeered Brougham, on one occasion, "*before the ancient and consecrated monarchy of Brazil, the awful might of Portugal, the compact, consolidated, overwhelming power of Spain.*" *ST*, Chapter 31 (9. Sir Charles Webster, *The foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, 1830-1841*, 492.)

_ But the bill [a bill that would give the British navy the right to stop all Portuguese vessels, as well as those without a flag (vessels "*not justly entitled to claim the protection of any state*"), if they were found carrying "*equipment*" useful for slaving (page 658)] was then reintroduced, only slightly amended, in the next session of Parliament, and passed in August 1839, despite further opposition from Wellington (the duke now thought it better to declare war against Portugal than to proceed with a general right of visit; he said that that gave the bill "*a criminal character*"). *ST*, Chapter 31 (10. PD, 3d series, vol. 50, col. 309, 383. The Duke's protest is in col. 386.)

_ The duke [Wellington] was correct in his legal appraisal, but he neglected to take into account that, as Commander Riley of the British navy would tell a House of Commons select committee in 1849, "*anyone who has been on the coast for two months will know a slaver from her manouevres; a legal vessel will heave to for you*"; *ST*, Chapter 31 (11. Commander Riley in Hutt committee, II, 25.)

_ (continued from footnote 11) and a businessman, Francis Swanzy, told another such

committee that even *"an amateur could form an opinion [about what was and what was not a slave ship] by the raking of the mast, the colour of the sails, the squareness of the yards, her tautness and low hull."* *ST*, Chapter 31 (12. Francis Swanzy in Lords select committee, 1843, 67.)

_ The government in Lisbon offered to sign a treaty along these lines, but only if Britain were to cease pressing for payment of her debts. Palmerston rejected that idea out of hand. He wrote to the British minister in Lisbon that he should *"impress...that the conclusion of a slave trade treaty is a matter which now concerns Portugal only...."* So, he argued, Portugal was offering nothing. *ST*, Chapter 31 (13. Webster [31, 9].)

_ Palmerston replied that, though, of course, he well knew that *"British ships of war are not authorised to visit and search American vessels on the high seas, yet if a vessel which there is good reason to suppose is in reality Spanish property, is captured and brought into a port in which mixed British and Spanish court is sitting, the Commissioners...may condemn her, notwithstanding that she was sailing under the America flag."* *ST*, Chapter 31 (15. Palmerston to Stevenson, August 27, 1841, in Soulsby [28, 34], 54.)

_ Palmerston thought it absurd that a merchantman could exempt herself from search by *"hoisting a piece of bunting with the United States' emblems and colours upon it....Her Majesty's Government would fain hope that the day is not distant when the Government of the United States will cease to confound two things which are in their nature entirely different, will look to things, not words and, perceiving the wide and entire distinction*

between the right to search, which has, heretofore, been the subject of discussion between the two countries, and the right of...visit which almost all other Christian nations have mutually given each other for the suppression of the slave trade, will join the Christian league; and will no longer permit the ships and subjects of the Union to be engaged in undertakings which the law of the Union punishes as piracy." ST, Chapter 31 (16. Palmerston to Stevenson, August 27, 1841, in Soulsby [28, 34], 60.)

_ Though new Liberal governments in Rio did give some difficulties to the practitioners of the slave trade, they were soon overthrown – not without numerous little incidents between the British and the Brazilians, as when Lieutenant Cox, of H.M.S. *Clio*, landed in the Piumas Islands, half a mile offshore from Campos, about 150 miles north of Rio, and captured a slave ship with 300 slaves. The next week, when taking water in Campos, Cox and his men were attacked by men working for the slave traders, four sailors were wounded, and the rest were imprisoned. The British chargé d'affaires protested, and the sailors were released, but the Brazilian foreign minister, Aureliano, said, with some spirit, *"I would prefer that Brazil should be erased from the list of nations rather than she should subject herself to the disgraceful tutelage of another which should arrogate to herself the right to interfering imperiously in the internal administration of my country."* ST, Chapter 31 (18. Qu. Bethell [29, 23], 207.)

_ In the view of the British apostle of free trade, Richard Cobden, Turnbull interfered in Cuban affairs so as to *"embitter the feelings of Cuba and Spain more than anything else."* Yet to abolitionists he was a hero and even a martyr. ST, Chapter 31 (24. Murray [29, 4],

177.)

_ This sensational action [In 1840, Captain Joseph Denman "browbeat" the local king into accepting his "intervention." Denman destroyed Spanish slave barracoons on the Gallinas estuary and freed 841 slaves who were waiting to be shipped] caused a shock all along the African coast – particularly when other British naval officers followed, with other attacks: Captain Blount landed higher up the river Gallinas; Captain Nurse did so on a slave factory on the river Pongas, to the north of Sierra Leone; Captain Hill landed at *"Mr. François's barracoon"* at Sherbro; Commander Tucker did the same at the island of Corisco, off Gabon (he seized much merchandise, as well as a Spanish factor, Miguel Pons); and, Captain Matson destroyed eight barracoons, owned by Brazilian and Spanish merchants, at Ambriz and Cabinda in Loango-Angola. (Asked later by a House of commons committee how he knew that one merchant concerned was engaged in the slave trade, Captain Matson tartly answered: *"The only proof was finding slaves chained in the factories."*) *ST*, Chapter 31 (25. Hutt committee, I, 109.)

_ [Early 1840s] Under Denman's influence, various treaties were afterwards secured with several other kings on the coast to achieve the abolition of the traffic in slaves, in return for a modest payment. The treaties with native kings would be balanced by a *"vigilant and unremitting blockade,"* followed up by destruction of the barracoons. Captain Matson later recalled that he received orders that, *"wherever we found slave barracoons erected, we should endeavour to obtain the sanction of the native chiefs to destroy them; failing to obtain that consent, we were in certain cases to do it without. However, it was*

never difficult to obtain that consent, for it was really obtained for a trifling subsidy, and [so] most of the barracoons on the coast were destroyed." ST, Chapter 31 (26. Hutt committee, I, 88.)

_ [1840s?] At the same time, Aberdeen was prepared to criticize Palmerston's behavior towards the United States: *"I think the United States had cause to complain,"* he rather curiously said. Discussion and argument, however, continued for many years yet, in the privacy of legations and government offices, in Congress and Parliament, as in the press, about the exact nature of the right of visit. *ST, Chapter 31 (27. Soulsby, [28, 34], 100ff.)*

_ Finally, Aberdeen's advocate-general wrote in 1842 an opinion that the activities of Denman and other naval officers in destroying barracoons could not be justified *"with perfect legality."* *ST, Chapter 31 (28. The letter is published in Commons Select Committee 1850, 130.)*

_ In the opinion of Captain Matson, the change played into the hands of the slave merchants. It told the Africans, he explained bitterly to a committee of the House of Commons in 1848, that *"there had been a revolution in England; that the people had risen and obliged the Queen to turn out Lord Palmerston, because he wished to suppress the slave trade; that there was now a revolution going on in England to oblige the Queen to carry on the slave trade."* *ST, Chapter 31 (29. Hutt committee, I, 88.)*

_ Deponent Pepper said: *"I was a slave, and lived with my owner, don Crispo, at*

Gallinas. The barracoons were burnt; I ran away to the boats of the big ship. A man told me that if I went to the Englishmen they would make me free. Ran away the same day that the big ship arrived. Saw great many slaves, men, women and children, in the barracoons. I was brought from Cosso about four years ago by a black man, who sold me to the Spaniard, don Crispo....Don Crispo buys slaves and sells them to the Spaniards...."

(Evidence in the first report of the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, 1849 - quoted under Chapter 32 heading.)

_ Crews also received much more pay in the days of the illegal trade than they had in the past: an average seaman in the legal trade in Brazil might receive a dollar a day, but a sailor on a slaver might get ten. That explains why it was so easy to find crews. Seamen too might have their own slaves: Captain Birch, of the British navy, said that, sometimes after he had captured a slave ship, seamen "*came up and asked me to let them each take the slave that belonged to himself: he had paid for it....They stamp them [that is, brand them] with their own mark.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (3. Hutt committee, I, 170.)

_ Commander Charles Riley, for instance, a British naval captain who served off the Bight of Benin in 1848, described capturing a ship from Bahia, the *Rasparte*, of 105 tons, "*built to beat every vessel*" under British command (he captured her because her captain took no trouble): "*I never saw anything so beautiful,*" he said, adding that she could sail across the Atlantic regularly in twenty-four days from Bahia to Lagos. Ships for the trade also continued to be made in Portugal. *ST*, Chapter 32 (11. Hutt committee, II, 21.)

_ It was said that the factories in the Cacheu River were "*principally supplied by the British vessels,*" and there is even a possibility that some London merchants (Forster and Co., for example) were indirectly concerned in the slave trade here in the early part of the century. In 1828, "*the currency of the place, and in fact the representation of value...was according to the value of the slaves. The slave trade was the all engrossing object of the people there,*" reported an adventurous English businessman John Hughes, who was obliged to flee because of the threats to his life after the British detention of a Portuguese vessel. *ST*, Chapter 32 (16. Lords select committee, 1843, 523.)

_ The Portuguese still maintained third-rate garrisons at the two fortresses at Cacheu and Bissau, half the soldiers being Cape Verdeans. Disease, underpayment, and inactivity rotted the lives of all who worked here. The governor in the 1830s, Caetano José Nozolini, was, however, a remarkable official. Son of an Italian sailor who in the 1790s married a Cape Verdean heiress on the island of Fogo, Nozolini became a major slave trader at Bissau; he would send ships to Cuba as well as Brazil, perhaps buying good from the British on the Gambia River, paying with bills drawn on such respectable London houses as Baring Brothers, and then exchange them in his own territory for slaves. When Captain Matthew Perry on the United States sloop-of-war *Orbel* seized \$40,000 worth of property at Bissau in 1844, he found that most of it had been advanced by North American traders to Nozolini.

Nozilini was helped to reach his position by an alliance with the dominant merchant in Cacheu-Zingiehor, Honorio Barreto, a mulatto who succeeded him as governor in 1850. (He, too, traded in slaves.) But the strongest influence on Nozolini was his

African wife, Mãe Aurélia Correia, "*the queen of Orango*," the largest island of the Bissagos Archipelago, a tyrannical *nhara* (that is, *senhora*) of these rivers. By 1827, though not yet in control, Nozolini was strong enough to deceive the British navy by shipping sixty-one slaves as members of his own family; it was some time before the governor of Sierra Leone, Sir Neil Campbell, realized who these "*Nozolinos*" [*sic*] were. Nozolini was strong enough to resist a demand from the French that he be charged for the murder of a French trader named Dumaigne, killed by some of his guards in 1835; and in the 1840s, he was already cultivating peanuts on the island of Bolama, as well as assembling slaves there. *ST*, Chapter 32 (18. Hutt committee, II, 4.)

_ Just offshore in this zone [Ametite] lay Hen Island, previously uninhabited, which had been turned by Nozolini's predecessor as governor, Joaquim Antonio Mattos, into "*a perfect receptacle, a nest, for the slaves.*" These slaves were held in round houses, twelve to sixteen together. The place was raided in 1842 by the British Captain Blount, who felt free to act because it belonged, as it seemed to him, neither to Portugal nor to a native chief: just to Mattos, one of whose mulatto daughters was killed in the fray. *ST*, Chapter 32 (19. Capt. Blount evidence in Lords select committee, 1843, 408-9.)

_ [1842] Commander Sotheby, of H.M.S. *Skylark*, received news that a Spanish slave ship was in the river. This information was denied by a local chief, who insisted that the Spanish merchant living there, a certain Tadeo Vidal, alias Juan Pons, traded only in groundnuts. Sotheby inspected eighteen creeks, and only when he offered a reward of \$100 was he told where the slave ship was. He found her, equipped for slaving but

hidden in the mangroves. There was no sign of the crew. Sotheby thereupon blew up the ship. He was then informed that the chief was hiding slaves, ready for shipment, and some of them escaped and joined Sotheby. Sotheby sent the chief an ultimatum and said, *"Unless the slaves are brought down tomorrow, I will blow up the town."* *ST*, Chapter 32 (20. Ward [29, 6], 48-49.)

_ The British established a trading post fifty miles up this *"exceedingly unhealthy"* river, at Kacundy, but their presence did not seem to affect slaving unless there was a man-of-war there, though they did found some coffee farms. A local monarch named Sarah (according to John Hughes, *"one of the greatest barbarians....He thinks nothing of tying a stone round a man's neck and throwing him in the river"*) once threatened a British trader, Benjamin Campbell, with death, on the ground that his presence was preventing slavers from going up the river. *ST*, Chapter 32 (21. Lords select committee, 1843, 527.)

_ If a slaver were captured anywhere north of the equator, she would be taken to Freetown under a prize crew. The crew would usually arrive exhausted, because so few hands were available to sail the prize, guard the captured crew, and attend, with some pretense of humanity, to the needs of the liberated cargo. Even if, by sleeping on deck, the crew escaped the prevalent dysentery or ophthalmia, they exposed themselves to mosquito bites. Having handed over their slaves to the prize authorities at the port, the sailors would then themselves go ashore happy. Within an hour or two, most of them would be drunk on local spirits. To sleep off the effects, they would lie all night in the gutters. By the time they returned to sobriety, they would probably have been infected

with malaria, if not yellow fever. If they had to stay in town till they were drafted to another ship, the chance of death from one of those diseases was great. The danger of such proceedings became apparent in the 1820s, and henceforth leave ashore Sierra Leone was prohibited to seamen, though not to their officers. But those regulations were not strictly followed. *ST*, Chapter 32 (25. Lloyd [29, 47], gives a vivid picture, on which I have drawn freely, 132.)

_ [Late 1830s] There was then no procedure for baptizing the freed slaves [who were registered as British citizens] so, as Lord Courtenay put it, to a Select Committee of the House of Commons on the West Coast of Africa, "*Many of them remain a long time pagans.*" An experienced witness, Dr. Thompson, thought, "*Scarcely any of the immense numbers that are [taken] here...have risen to anything above mediocrity.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (26. Hutt committee, I, 402.)

_ Until 1808, slave trading and conventional trade had continued, uneasily, side by side, in Sierra Leone and Africans could see no reason why that state of affairs should not continue indefinitely. An Englishman, Alexander Smith, an agent of the government, seemed, at least to a United States traveler, to constitute "*the first mercantile house in the economy in the illegal slave trade*"; he told a North American trader, in the presence of the governor, that "*just round that point*" was a bay which was not subject to British rule. *ST*, Chapter 32 (27. Brooks [27, 9], 61.)

_ In the 1820s, the dominant slave trader was John Ouseley Kearney, a British ex-officer

who carried on the slave trade openly under the Union Jack. He once told some English petty officers, "*I buy nothing but slaves. My object is to make a little money, and then I'll embark 300 or 400 slaves on board a large schooner...and go in her to the Havannah.*" He had friends in Sierra Leone who kept him informed about all the details of the naval patrol. *ST*, Chapter 32 (30. Ward [29, 6], 73-75.)

_ [Theodore] Canot, according to his own account, became a slave captain in his twenties (with the *Estrella*, the *Aerostático*, the *San Pablo*) and made a fortune – which he soon lost in unwise speculations. After further adventures worthy of a picaresque novel, he established himself near Cape Monte about 1835. His establishment was destroyed in 1847 by an alliance of local people and the British commander of H.M.S. *Favorite*, with the connivance of the captain of U.S.S. *Dolphin*, an unusual example of British-North American collaboration. Canot then abandoned slave trading, and subsequently sold information about the traffic to British captains. *ST*, Chapter 32 (33. Commons select committee 1843, 466.)

_ He [Captain Charles Maclean, president of the British Council of Government at Cape Coast] created an alliance of coastal tribes to resist the Ashanti, but he never recovered from the accusations, apparently false, that he had been concerned in the death of his wife, the poetess Letitia Landon, or "*L.E.L.*" He was eventually made to resign, on the unproved accusation that he had himself dealt in slaves; remaining in Cape Coast as second-in-command to a new governor, he had the melancholy experience of seeing the alliances which he had founded unravel before he died in 1847. *ST*, Chapter 32 (35. Van

Dantzig in Daget [12, 16], II, 601.)

_ [1840s] A British captain in the palm-oil trade, Captain Seward, gave evidence to a House of Commons select committee that to cover the Slave Coast from the river Volta to the Calabar adequately (for naval patrol) would really require the permanent attention of fifty cruisers. This territory, another British captain pointed out, had *"water communication entirely round it, and by that...slaves [can be]...transferred from point to point and shipped anywhere on the beach, not just from Lagos, not just from Little Popo, but from any point, according to the position and arrangements of the slaves...."* ST, Chapter 32 (39. Hutt committee, II, 57.)

_ The king [Gezo] said that he was ready to do anything which the British government would ask of him *"except to give up the slave trade,"* for *"he thought that all substitute trades were pointless."* He said: *"The slave trade has been the ruling principle of my people. It is the source of their glory and wealthy. Their songs celebrate their victories and the mother lulls the child to sleep with notes of triumph over an enemy reduced to slavery. Can I, by signing...a treaty, change the sentiments of a whole people?"* ST, Chapter 32 (41. Andrew H. Foote, Africa and the American Flag (New York, 1862), 82.)

_ Admiral Hotham wrote in 1848, *"At certain times of the year, when the fresh breezes set into the Bight...a well-quipped slave vessel will escape even from a steamer."* One of the trading peoples there were the Muslim Filatahs, whose center was the town of Rabba. The english Captain Allen said of them, after a journey up the Niger: *"Their whole*

occupation is slave-catching and selling; they make excursions every year during the dry season into the neighbouring states to take slaves....All the tribes have to pay a certain sum [as tribute]....Frequently the sums are so great that they cannot pay, and then they seize the [people as] slaves." Rabba became an important city for slaving, for those gathered there were sold not only to Portuguese or Spaniards to take to the Americas, but to Arabs who would take them to Tripoli. *ST*, Chapter 32 (42. Hutt committee, II, 70-71.)

_ In 1822, Lieutenant Mildmay captured five Brazilian slavers in this river with remarkable courage; one of them, the schooner *Vecua*, had been abandoned by its crew, with 300 slaves chained in the hold. The departing crew left a lighted fuse over the magazine in the hope of destroying the British boarding party (as well, of course, as the slaves). *ST*, Chapter 32 (44. Ward [29, 6], 109.)

_ Commander Tucker, writing in the 1840s, reported, "*A constant supply of slaves are sent by canoe through the creeks to the rivers Nun and Brass for shipment, 360 slaves having been taken by a Spaniard previous to my arrival in the river.*" Tucker reported King Pepple as saying that he himself sold 3,000 slaves in the years 1839 to 1841, that he would continue to deal with Freixas, and that "*dollars and doubloons are plentiful in Bonny, which is always the case, after the arrival of a slaver in the Nun or Brass river, as most of the slaves shipped off from there are purchased at Bonny.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (47. PRO FO 84/383 HMS *Viper* at sea, Burslem to Tucker, Sept. 10, 1840, qu. Dike [31, 5], 83.)

_ Captain Midgley, of Liverpool, told a select committee of the House of Commons in 1842 that, unless the British government acted with more energy than they had thitherto, they would do well to *"keep out of the River [Bonny] altogether. [For] first comes a captain and makes a Treaty and then another comes and says the Treaty shall be null and void and tears it up."* ST, Chapter 32 (48. Papers relating to this treaty can be seen in FO 84/383, 87ff; also PP 1842, XI, 551.)

_ [1847] Sir Charles Hotham, commander of the British squadron, thought that here *"the speculation on the part of the Brazilians, is founded on the principle of employing vessels of little value, to be crowded to excess with slaves....Here it is, therefore, that the traffic assumes its most horrid form. At this moment, the Penelope [the vessel which he commanded] has in tow a slaver, of certainly not more than 60 tons, in which 312 human beings were stowed. The excess of imagination cannot depict a scene more revolting."* ST, Chapter 32 (53. Sir C. Hotham to the Admiralty, April 7, 1847, in RC 16, XXII (1847-48), 2.)

_ One of these was Pedro Maniett who, *"so far as regards his communication with Englishmen, who have been even blockading and preventing his vessels coming there, has behaved in the kindest manner"*; he even looked after English seamen wounded in one or another of the skirmishes which took place with slavers. ST, Chapter 32 (55. Surgeon Peters in Lords select committee 1843, 355.)

_ In 1846, Governor Abreu de Madeira was relieved from Quelimane from corruption;

his successor abandoned his post, and *"escaped in a slave ship, with a large cargo of slaves."* The next Portuguese governor of Mozambique, Captain Duval, seemed to the British *"one of the best persons we ever met"* and, within some years, had, on fifty miles either side of the city, brought the slave trade to an end. What usually happened, said Captain Duval, was that *"governors would receive a box soon after they took up their office: on opening it, there were found to be four compartments....[Inside] there was \$1,500; \$750 in one compartment, with a Crown on it and then, \$250 in each of the others. These sums were from the leading slave trader in the place, for the Governor, his deputy, the Collector of Customs and the Commander of the troops."* ST, Chapter 32 (67. Admiral Dacres in Commons select committee 1850, 14.)

_ The duke of Wellington told the Congress of Verona in 1822: *"All attempts at prevention, imperfect as they have been found to be, have tended to increase the aggregate of human suffering....The dread of detection suggests expedients of concealment of productive of the most dreadful sufferings to the cargo."* ST, Chapter 33 (1. PD, 3d ser., vol. 109, col. 1093-95.)

_ Several witnesses at a long inquiry into the trade by a House of Commons committee in 1848 said the same [first footnote of Chapter 33]. For example, J.B. Moore, chairman of the Brazilian Association of Liverpool, thought: *"Year after year, I look upon it that the evils connected with the slave trade have been aggravated by our squadron being on the coast of Africa to prevent it...by increasing the sufferings of the slaves."* José Cliffe, a North American-Brazilian slave merchant, abandoned the trade because of the *"loss of*

life and increase of human suffering" which he regarded as a direct consequence of British philanthropy. *ST*, Chapter 33 (2. Hutt committee, I, 322.)

_ Yet, for the first twenty or thirty years after British and North American abolition in 1808, the size and character of slave ships probably remained much the same as in the past. But in the midcentury, some ships were used, including steamships, which were capable of taking a thousand slaves across the Atlantic. On such slave journeys "*the suffering, though more intense, is of shorter duration,*" Captain Denman reflected in 1848. Still, one does not have to accept as true every sentence of the terrible account of Drake's life as a slave captain and surgeon to realize that confusion was frequent, and stowing of captives disgracefully done, so that there was often what he called "*a frightful battle among the slaves for room and air.*" The crossing was, just as much as it had always been, "*a pestilence which stalketh the waters.*" *ST*, Chapter 33 (3. Qu. Temperley [18, 9], 4.)

_ Lord John Russell would tell the House of Commons in London in 1846 that a third of the captives intended as slaves for the Atlantic crossing died during the land journey on their way to the coast. But the time spent waiting in barracoons in Africa was probably longer in the 1800s than in the previous century for, as we have seen, the captains tried to pick up their cargoes in one sweep, rather than spend weeks negotiating: speed was necessary to avoid the interference of the British navy. Lord Palmerston commented: "*The liability to interruption obliges these slave traders to make arrangements for a rapid embarkation.*" Many children are said to have been carried on the illegal trade to

Brazil, because their size permitted the loading of a greater number. *ST*, Chapter 33 (4. Hutt committee, I, 2.)

_ "*Suppose that there were 500 slaves waiting in a barracoon,*" said the repentant slave merchant Cliffe. "*A cruiser is in the neighborhood, and the slave vessel cannot come in. It is very difficult to get on the coast of Africa sufficient food to support them.*" Thus 2,000 slaves were believed to have been murdered in 1846 in a barracoon at Lagos because, on the one hand, the slavers *Styx* and *Hydra* (ships with Sardinian flags) did not dare to brave the British patrol; and because, on the other hand, the king of the place had run out of food: the "*inducement...was simply that the feeding of so large a number of idle people was burdensome to him.*" It was sometimes suggested that, if the British navy (or anyone else) were to destroy all the barracoons, then the slave trade would have been fatally damaged. But the surgeon of the navy, who has been quoted before, Dr. Thomson, in evidence to the Hutt Committee, said, realistically, "*Whether there are barracoons or no, the slaves will be forthcoming.*" *ST*, Chapter 33 (5. Hutt committee, I, 401.)

_ However unpleasant the barracoon, slaves would no doubt have preferred to remain there than go to the "*finer country*" talked about by the slave captains. An ex-slave, John Frazer, for example, described how, in the nineteenth century, as in the eighteenth, the slaves often "*cried, they did not want to go.*" "*Would they have preferred to have stayed in the barracoons?*" Mr. Richard Monckton Milnes, the aesthetic member of Parliament for Pontefract, asked him. "*Yes,*" said Frazer. (All ex-slaves who were questioned on the

matter also said that they would prefer to remain in Sierra Leone than to return to their own birthplace, because, John Frazer insisted, Sierra Leone *"is a free country."* *ST*, Chapter 33 (7. Hutt committee, I, 82.)

_ Several survivors of the trade of the nineteenth century gave evidence to the committee of the House of Commons, previously mentioned, in 1848. One of these was William Henry Platt, then a prosperous merchant in Sierra Leone. He came originally from the region of Benin, and was kidnapped when so small that he *"could hardly give an account of myself...I and a friend went into a field to set traps for rice birds...and then I was kidnapped. I think we took about three weeks to travel towards the sea, when I was embarked in one of the vessels for Brazil."* He waited for three nights on the coast and (presumably, for his account did not embrace that part of his life) was liberated by a British cruiser and taken to Sierra Leone. Platt had no desire to return to Benin, whose language he scarcely spoke by the time he gave evidence. *ST*, Chapter 33 (9. Hutt committee, I, 655.)

_ Slaves were as always branded before their departure for the Americas. In this respect there was no difference between what happened in the legal, eighteenth century and the illegal, nineteenth: and iron with letters cut into it *"is put into fire on the beach, and a small pot containing palm oil is always at hand; the iron is heated, and dipped into his palm oil and dabbed on the hip [men] or [just above] the breast [women] or wherever the slave dealer may choose to have his slaves marked. The palm oil is to prevent the flesh adhering to the iron."* *ST*, Chapter 33 (11. Hutt committee, I, 211.)

_ As in the past, different peoples were preferred by different slavers. But in the nineteenth century, all agreed that a Kru, from the Windward Coast, made a bad slave, *"because they know that if he is enslaved he will commit suicide immediately."* ST, Chapter 33 (13. Evidence of Macgregor Laird in Lords select committee, 1843, 363.)

_ James Bandinel, who directed the efforts of the Foreign Office in London against the slave trade for many years, agreed that the British methods of suppression did result in increased suffering by the Africans: *"In addition to the general horrible treatment, the slave traders have an additional motive, the fear of being taken, which induces them to start when their ships are half-provisioned; and...care is not taken of their health which was taken when the trade was allowed..."* ST, Chapter 33 (14. Hutt committee, II, 257.)

_ Commodore Sir George Collier, on H.M.S. *Tartar* in 1821, found the slaves on the Cuban ship *Ana Maria* (captured in the *Bonny*) *"clinging to the gratings to inhale a mouthful of fresh air, and fighting with each other for a taste of water, showing their parched tongues, and pointing to their reduced stomachs, as if overcome by famine for, although the living cargo had only been completed the day before, yet many who had been longer on the boats were reduced to such a state as skeletons that I was obliged to order twelve to be immediately placed under the care of the surgeon..."* Four hundred and fifty slaves were discovered *"linked in shackles by the leg in pairs, some of them bound with cords; and several had their arms so lacerated by the tightness that the flesh was completely eaten through."* ST, Chapter 33 (15. PP, 1822, 561, 633.)

_ Diseases continued to turn one out of every ten slave ships into a condition comparable to one of the most unpleasant circles in Dante's Inferno. Thus Captain Matson described finding a slave ship, the *Josefina*, after a chase of a few hours and discovering that *"many of the slaves had confluent smallpox: the sick had been thrown into the hold in one particular spot, and they appeared on looking down to be one living mass; you could hardly tell arms from legs, or one person from another, or what they were; there were men, women, and children; it was the most horrible and disgusting heap that could be conceived."* ST, Chapter 33 (17. Hutt committee, I, 106.)

_ The work of the naval officers responsible, as has been mentioned, was often tedious. Captain Eardley Wilmot pointed to this in a statement before a parliamentary committee in 1864. *"The incessant rolling, which is most trying, the constant rumbling of the heavy surf upon the beach which becomes tedious from its monotony, the low and uninteresting appearance of the land, all have an effect upon the best organised mind which is sometimes distressing and we have, I grieve to say, examples of the effect of these trials in the invalidating of officers and others from mental disorganisation."* ST, Chapter 33 (21. PP, 1865, vol. v, 165, 171.)

_ But there were also moments of excitement – a pleasure fully shared, it would seem, by the African traders. A British surgeon who knew both Brazil and Africa said that he thought the presence of the navy even stimulated the slave trade: *"The blacks, like other people, are fond of excitement. [The slave trade]...is now more a gambling transaction*

than it has ever been. It requires great activity and a great combination of means to effect the escape of the slaves, and of the slavers, from the coast....The excitement is one of the great inducements of the natives to keep it up...It is the sort of wild excitement which is most palatable to the African character....All parties are kept in excitement while there is a cargo waiting....The prohibition lends not only a charm to it with the Africans, but a direct stimulus" – and, he might have added, to the British navy, too. ST, Chapter 33 (22. T.R.H. Thomson to Hutt committee, I, 256.)

_ A specially exciting chase, in 1841, was that of the Josephine, "the fastest slaver out of Havana," though Portuguese owned. At dawn on April 30, the British naval vessel H.M.S. Fantôme (a ship designed by the naval surveyor Sir William Symonds), Captain Butterfield, sighted – off Ambriz – a strange brigantine. Butterfield gave chase and "immediately shook out all reefs set fore and maintop, with scuddings sails and main royal flying jib, and went eleven knots." By the afternoon, the mate of the Fantôme could see the Josephine cutting away her anchors, and throwing a gun overboard, to lighten the ship. By nightfall, the distance between the ships was reduced to six miles. The Fantôme was now trimmed so that every ounce of speed could be obtained: "At 1 a.m., I took in scudding sails and main royal, and carried through a tremendous squall of wind and rain – a thing I should never have attempted in any other...vessel; and gallantly she went through with it. [Though] the slaver was very nearly lost,...the Fantôme kept gaining on her prey by moonlight." At dawn on May 1, when off the island of Ana Bona [Annobon], Butterfield "fired two shells...to bring the stranger to. I slackened sail as requisite. We hove to and boarded and detained the Portuguese brigantine Josephine,

with two hundred slaves. Sent Mr. W.S. Cooper, senior lieut., and eight men to navigate the prize into Sierra Leone...." The two vessels had covered 240 miles in twenty-four hours. *ST*, Chapter 33 (23. Log of *Fantôme* in PRO Adm 51/3718, nos. 7-10, Oct. 31, 1839–Oct. 20, 1834; *Memoirs of Sir W. Symonds*, ed. J. A. Sharp (London, 1858), 651.)

_ The chase by the *Rifleman* in 1849 (under Commander S. S. L. Crofton) off Brazil raised a different issue. Crofton sighted a suspicious-looking sail fifty miles south of Rio. He entered Brazilian territorial waters to give chase. The quarry was thereupon run ashore, with all sails set, as darkness fell. When the *Rifleman* reached the stranded ship, heavy seas were breaking over her. The slaver's crew had abandoned ship and left the cargo of slaves to die; some were washed overboard, others died because they had been manacled to the deck. Two midshipmen from the *Rifleman*'s boat crew remained on board the wreck and, at daybreak, a hawser was brought. Hutchings, the second master of the *Rifleman*, lashed himself to the slaver's stern and, as each successive wave broke over him, passed the remaining slaves one by one from the slaver to the deck of the *Rifleman* by swinging them along the hawser in a cradle. *"This tedious and dangerous service occupied the entire day....[Thus] Commander Crofton rescued 127 Africans from death and slavery...."* *ST*, Chapter 33 (24. Hudson cit. Mathieson [31, 8], 199.)

_ Then there was the chase in 1852 of the *Venus* off Havana. It appears to have belonged to Antonio Parejo. It was thought to be the fastest ship in the slave trade at this time. But Captain Baillie Hamilton, in the *Vestal*, a twenty-six-gun British fast frigate, was in Havana Bay. The captain of the *Venus* determined to slip away while the *Vestal* was

undergoing repairs. One night, before dawn, Hamilton was onshore and told that, during the night, the *Venus* had sailed from Havana. Within minutes, the captain was back on board his ship. He sailed off in pursuit, the men on a nearby United States warship cheering as if a race had been engaged. Hamilton saw several ships on the horizon. He identified the *Venus* by her white colors and the spread of her canvas. The *Vestal* gained on her prey, but a tornado sprang up. The two vessels were parted. When the sky was clear again, there was no sign of the *Venus*. Hamilton assumed that her captain had sought refuge in one of the Bahama channels, perhaps hoping that those dangerous waters would deter pursuit. As Hamilton neared the shoals, he caught sight of the *Venus*, with two other vessels which he presumed were also slavers. They were trapped, but the *Vestal* could not go close, since she had a deep draft. Hamilton steered as near as he could, and fired a shot at an extreme range. He scored a hit. The master of the *Venus* hove to, and allowed a boat crew from the *Vestal* to board. Hamilton in person accompanied this boat and, putting a revolver to the head of the Spanish captain, said that he would shoot him if he did not make a course in the direction of the two other ships. He obeyed, and all three were captured, each with slave equipment. Hamilton brought all three of them back to Havana. *ST*, Chapter 33 (25. Ward [29, 6], 122.)

_ There were also some outright naval battles. For example, the *Pickle* (with Lieutenant J. Hardy as captain), cruising in 1829 off northern Cuba, saw a heavily laden ship. He nearly reached this stranger by nightfall. No colors were hoisted even after a warning shot. As she came alongside, the *Pickle* was raked by musketry and cannon. The British crew had only one long eighteen-pounder and two eighteen-pound carronades (that is,

short pieces of ordnance), whereas the Spanish ship had 65 guns. Three British seamen were killed, eight wounded. All the same, a close battle ensued, at pistol range. After half an hour, the Spaniard's mainmast fell and she surrendered, her captain and most of her crew being wounded. A prize crew was put on board. They put the Spanish crew in irons and released 350 slaves. *ST*, Chapter 33 (26. Nautical Magazine 1834, 649, qu. Lloyd [29, 47], 77-78.)

_ The British sometimes suffered. For example, in 1826, H.M.S. *Redwing* captured a Spanish schooner, the *Invencible*, with slaves in the hold. A prize crew was put on board, and the ship set off for Freetown. Soon this vessel captured another slaver, a Brazilian schooner, the *Disunion*, carrying slaves from the Cameroons. But both were shortly met by a Spanish pirate and themselves seized and taken to Havana. There the slaves were sold, but the ships set adrift. The *Disunion*, with five Brazilians, eventually reached Rio. Of the *Invencible*, with her British prize crew, no more was ever heard. *ST*, Chapter 33 (27. Ward [29, 6], 122.)

_ The case of the *Felicidade* in 1845 had a different conclusion. This Portuguese ship was capture by H.M.S. *Wasp*, en route for Luanda, empty but equipped for slaves. The *Wasp* put a prize crew on board. Two days later, another Brazilian vessel was sighted and, when chased and captured, was identified as the *Echo*, with 400 slaves on board. The *Wasp* had been left behind, so the prize crew on the *Felicidade* sent a detachment to take over the *Echo*. The two prizes separated. The remaining British sailors on the *Felicidade* were attacked by the original Portuguese crew, who killed some and threw the

rest overboard. After the *Felicidade* briefly chased the *Echo* (and her prize crew), the ships again separated. But soon H.M.S. *Star* came up, with the *Felicidade*. The latter ship was searched, and bloodstains were found on the deck. The crew confessed what had happened; Lieutenant Wilson and six men were put on the *Felicidade* to go to Saint Helena, recently established as the seat of a prize court. But a storm caused Wilson to abandon ship. He and his men took to a raft and were eventually rescued, after many hardships, by Commander Layton, on the *Cygnets*. Meantime, the prisoners had reached England. The judges had to decide about the "pirates." Did an English court of law have jurisdiction over a vessel owned by a Brazilian who had murdered an English prize crew? The assize judge found the pirates guilty of murder. There was an appeal. In the event, the men were freed and sent back to Brazil, at British cost. There was uproar in the *Times*. "*Remember the Felicidade*" was a cry heard for many years in the British naval circles. *ST*, Chapter 33 (28. Summarized in Lloyd [9, 47], 87-88.)

_ The seizure of a slaver was, of course, the occasion for a celebration: "*When you take a slaver,*" Captain Broadhead explained in 1843, "*you will find lashed on deck puncheons of rum and puncheons of wine, and great quantities of ham and cheeses; and you cannot expect that those men [sailors from an English naval ship] who have been cooped up for such a length of time will not break out when they get on board that vessel....*"

(Broadhead's crew, on one voyage, included eleven men who had "*never put their foot out of the vessel in three years and a half.*") *ST*, Chapter 33 (29. Hutt committee, I, 168.)

_ The crews of captured slave ships suffered diverse fates. They were rarely treated as

fellow seamen by British naval officers, though there were some instances of their officers being admitted to mess with those who captured them. If the seizure was close to the American coast, whether Cuba or Brazil, the seamen would be handed over to the authorities there, and their punishment would be at worst a token spell – of days, not months – in a local prison: *"In the case of one prize which we took in the Racer,"* reported Dr. Thomson in 1848, *"I saw the crew after they were supposed to have been put in prison; I saw several of them walking about [in Rio] and conversed with them."* *ST*, Chapter 33 (30. Commons select committee, 1850, 108.)

_ In 1836, Lieutenant Mercer, on the *Charybdis*, on the other hand told a legitimate United States merchant that his orders were to *"put all [such] crews on shore and starve them."* Sometimes the crews were left for months in Sierra Leone, where they exercised *"a decidedly bad influence,"* it was generally agreed. On one such occasion, a group of such men – eleven slave captains and seventy-six crew – bought a vessel, the *Augusta*, which the governor of Sierra Leone supplied with six weeks' worth of provisions, to take them to Havana. But their intention surely was to buy slaves, as another captain in a similar plight, Francisco Camp, had done, obtaining 357 slaves on the river Gallinas only nine days after leaving Sierra Leone with the *Dulcinea*, which he had bought for only £150. *ST*, Chapter 33 (31. Lords select committee, 1843, 168.)

_ A Liverpool merchant, Robert Dawson – a kinsman of John Dawson, of Baker and Dawson, the shipbuilding firm of the 1790s – wrote with respect to this practice in May 1842: *"The natives laugh at our philanthropy, when they allude to the system of our*

cruisers of landing poor Spaniards on the beach without food or clothing to a certain but lingering death." ST, Chapter 33 (32. Lords select committee, 1843, 770.)

_ Captain Bosanquet recalled that, when he captured the *Marineto* in 1831, he put the crew onshore: *"Nine of them attempted to escape in three small canoes; two of the canoes were never heard of again; one of them was picked up by us after it had been fourteen days at sea; one of the men had died and, almost in a dying state, they were [all] landed at Fernando Po."* Asked whether, if captains were hanged by the yardarm for trading in slaves, it would be one of the *"modes of suppressing slavery,"* another naval officer, Captain Thompson, replied that would indeed have this effect. Most British officers thought that to treat Spanish or Portuguese crews as if they had been pirates would bring the trade to an end very soon. *ST, Chapter 33 (33. Lords select committee, 1843, 283.)*

_ It was frequently necessary, off both Cuba and Brazil, for slave captains to try to confuse the British navy about where slaves would be landed. Thus catamarans might take the slaves from their ship and deliver them in small harbors along the coast. Canot reported that, so far as Cuba was concerned, *"a wild, uninhabited portion of the coast, where some little bay or sheltering nook exists, is commonly selected by the captain and his confederates. As soon as the vessel is driven close to the beach and anchored, her boats are packed with slaves, while the craft is quickly dismantled to avoid detection from sea or land. The busy skiffs are hurried to and fro incessantly till the cargo is entirely ashore, when the secured gang [of slaves], led by the captain, and escorted by armed sailors, is rapidly marched to the nearest plantation. There it is safe from the*

rapacity of local magistrates who, if they have a chance, imitate their superiors by exacting gratifications." ST, Chapter 33 (34. Canot [32, 12], 107.)

_ British ships were still not permitted to search ships flying the French flag even if their captains' suspicions about the real identity of a vessel were aroused. The French too would continue to limit themselves, insofar as power of capture was concerned, to ships flying their own flag and ships with no flag, and they would not seek any authority to interfere with Spanish, Portuguese, and Brazilian ships: *"The effect of the French squadron,"* Palmerston said, *"is more to prevent than to capture; they effectively prevent any slave trade under the French flag."* ST, Chapter 34 (4. See Palmerston's evidence in Hutt committee, II, 6-7.)

_ The treaty of 1826 obliged Brazil, but only Brazil, to treat her slave traders as pirates. Britain had nothing to do with the matter. That treaty had anyway lapsed, and no one in Brazil would make any effort to renew it. The court at Rio was also wound up in 1845. It seemed, therefore, in the middle of the 1840s, that all Britain's efforts were being made to seem pointless. ST, Chapter 34 (7. Ibid., 270. [Ibid = Qu. Bethell [29, 23]])

_ The slave merchants now made careful studies of maneuvers of the British fleet in Africa, they devised decoys, and they brought fast new steamers into use (including, apparently, some of *"the best that England could manufacture,"* as *"Hurry"* Hudson observed when he was British minister in Rio). The British government's records suggested that there were over 3,000 slave voyages to Brazil between 1821 and 1843. ST,

Chapter 34 (8. PP, vol. 49 (1845) 593-633, gave a list of 2,185 voyages. David Eltis, in Henry Gemery and Jan Hogedorn, ed., *The Uncommon Market* (New York, 1979), pointed out that the Foreign Office had record of another 914 probable expeditions.)

_ The fact was, as the minister in Rio told Palmerston (foreign secretary in London again, after the fall of the Tory government in June 1846): *"Brazil [still] lives upon slave labour. The government is carried on by the daily receipts of the Customs Houses. Foreign trade depends upon exports, and they cannot be obtained at present, unless by that most expensive of all systems of production, the labour of the slave."* ST, Chapter 34 (11. Qu. Bethell [29, 23], 289.)

_ Hutt and his friends disliked the threat of force implicit in Britain's antislavery policy. They thought that Palmerston's menaces to Brazil over the slave trade were ruining Britain's long-term trading interests: no good cause was worth the trouble if it damaged trade. They also thought the naval patrol too expensive. Hutt called the West Africa Squadron *"buccaneers,"* and denounced Britain's *"blundering and ignorant humanity."* Not only, he declared, had Britain failed to suppress the slave traffic, but it was growing (180,000 slaves were being exported a year, in his opinion, rather than the Foreign Office's figure of 36,758). Nor, he thought, could the country afford the cost of the naval detachment off Africa; that expense was serious, since *"England is annually weeded of her best and bravest in order to carry on this idle and mischievous project of stopping the slave trade."* Hutt argued that quarreling with such good commercial partners as France and the United States over the right of search was threatening the peace of the world; and

that *"our unavailing attempts to suppress the traffic worsened the lot of the slaves by making the misery of the Middle Passage worse than ever."* He also pointed out that, merely during the previous five years, the cost in wages of the naval operations against slavery had totaled £655,000, that of the mixed courts had mounted up to £103,000, while 385 sailors had died on the coast or had been killed in action. *ST*, Chapter 34 (16. PD, 3rd ser., vol. 93, col. 1000 (June 24, 1845; PP, 1847-48, xxii, appendix.)

_ Cobden, the great Free Trader, who lived in Cottonopolis – Manchester – put the matter even more brutally: what moral right had the English, the largest sellers of textiles to Brazil, made from slave-grown cotton, to refuse to take slave-grown sugar in return? The government, he and his friends thought, were merely advocating *"lucrative humanity."* Did not British firms sell three-eighths of the sugar, half the coffee, and as much as five-eighths of the cotton exported from Brazil? *ST*, Chapter 34 (17. PD, 3d ser., vol. 96, col. 1096 (Feb. 22, 1848): the figures are for 1843. Cf. A. K. Manchester, *British Pre-eminence in Brazil* (Chapel Hill, 1933), 315.)

_ In 1845, another voice was heard: that of [Thomas Babington] Macaulay, the Whig historian, who had distanced himself from his father Zachary's concerns, and who believed that his obligations *"in respect to negro slavery had ceased when slavery itself ceased in that part of the world for the welfare of which I, as a member of this House, am accountable."* He insisted on the hypocrisy of importing, for refining and re-exporting, Brazilian sugar: *"We import the accursed thing; we bond it; we employ our skill and machinery to render it more alluring to the eye and to the palate; we export it to Leghorn*

and to Hamburg; we send it to all the coffee houses of Italy and Germany; we pocket a profit on all this; and then, we put on a pharisaical air, and thank God that we are not like those sinful Italians and Germans, who have no scruple about swallowing slave-grown sugar...." ST, Chapter 34 (18. PD, 3d ser., vol. 77, col. 1290.)

_ Free Trade created difficulties for British abolitionists. The Sugar Duty Act, passed in 1846, seemed to *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, the journal of Buxton and Sturge's British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, to be causing the House of Commons to vote for the entry of the "*blood stained sugars of Brazil and Cuba.*" Year after year, these idealists, such as Sir Edward Noël Buxton, would introduce motions in Parliament to reinstate the sugar duties at least against Brail and Cuba. Year after year they would be defeated; and the cause evaporated. The affair was the occasion for eloquence, if not action. Disraeli's hero in the debates against the Corn laws in 1846, Lord George Bentinck, thought that it would cost far less to seize Cuba than to maintain the naval squadron "*paying ourselves thereby...a just debt.*" *ST, Chapter 34 (19. PD, 3d ser., vol. 96, col. 41.)*

_ In March 1845, the first of the apostles of abolition, Clarkson, then aged eighty-five, with the great prize of the international abolition of the slave trade still beyond his grasp, presented Lord Aberdeen with a memorandum arguing that Britain would never have the resources adequate to patrol all the potential areas of slaving. Nor was there hope of negotiating anti-slave-trade treaties with all the powers concerned; were it to be done, some countries would have bad faith, and "*the cunning, fraud and audacity of slave dealers,*" with their fast ships, would always outmaneuver the navy. So why did not the

government turn its attention to slavery itself? *ST*, Chapter 34 (20. Bethell [29, 23], 297.)

_ [Lord John] Russell told the radical Free Traders that Britain "*would have no right to further blessings from God*" if "*this high and holy work,*" the naval patrol, were to be abandoned without success. Yet Gladstone, still a conservative, said that "*it was not an ordinance of providence that the government of one nation should correct the morals of another and that it was impracticable to try and put down a great branch of commerce.*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (21. PD, 3d ser., vol. 109, 1160-70.)

_ [Late 1840s?] That statesman [Palmerston] had recently told the British consul in Zanzibar to "*take every opportunity of impressing on the Arabs that the nations of Europe are destined to put an end to the African slave trade and that Great Britain is the main instrument of Providence for the accomplishment of this purpose.*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (22. David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York, 1984), xviii.)

_ Palmerston himself was more hostile than ever to the slave trade. When out of office, he had told the House of Commons in 1844, with some hyperbole: "*If all the crimes which the human race has committed from the creation down to the present day were added together in one vast aggregate, they would scarcely equal...the amount of guilt which has been incurred by mankind in connection with this diabolical slave trade....*" One of his biographers looked on this speech as the greatest of his life, though most of the details which he recounted had figured in speeches by Wilberforce and others in the 1790s. *ST*, Chapter 34 (23. PD, 3d. ser. vol. 93, col. 1076, July 16, 1844.)

_ In 1847, when again foreign secretary, Palmerston returned to his most bellicose stance and told the Admiralty that the commander of the West Africa Squadron, Sir Charles Hotham, *"ought to be instructed to compel king Pepple and the chiefs of Bonny by force, if necessary, to respect the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects, and that the Commodore will be justified in enforcing the payment of debts due to British subjects."* This was not at first sight a matter of slave-trade politics but, it undoubtedly was under the surface. For Hotham instructed one of his captains, Commander Birch, to overthrow the chief priest, Awanta. Regardless of King Pepple, Birch did as asked, and imprisoned Awanta on a man-of-war. Lord Grey, in the Colonial Office, suggested that the priest should be set onshore as far as possible from Bonny, *"leaving him to take his chance."* That Whig policy of extreme laissez-faire was carried out, Awanta was landed alone in a remote part of Angola, and no more was heard of him. Soon after, Birch imposed a new treaty on Pepple, by which that king guaranteed to afford protection to British subjects in Bonny, and to accept a new version of the slave treaty concluded in 1839. *ST*, Chapter 34 (24. See Hutt committee, II, 123.)

_ Many witnesses were interviewed. Sir Charles Hotham, for instance, admitted that, if the trade were stopped in one place, it would be likely to break out again, like an epidemic, in another. There was also Thomas Tobin, the main Liverpool trader in palm oil, who had happy memories of his old days in the slave trade. The committee listened to an ex-slave merchant, José Cliffe. They heard the dynamic Macgregor Laird insist that the solution for Africa was to arrange voluntary emigration of Africans to the British

West Indies, with free return passages available. James Bandinel, by then in retirement but for so long head of the Foreign Office's Slavery Department, admitted that the naval patrol had in no way diminished the traffic. The committee heard how the naval patrol had, in the opinion of several witnesses, interrupted legitimate trade, by wrongly accusing certain ships of preparing to slave (for example, the brig *Guiana*, wrongly held in 1840, or the *Lady Sale*, in 1845). They heard Commander O'Bryen Hoare explain that the consul in Bahia had told him in 1844 on no account to land at that port, since \$3,000 had been offered to anyone who would murder him, as a member of the naval patrol; he went on to suggest that, in the interests of the slaves, the slave trade should be legalized to Cuba and to Brazil, and the patrol withdrawn! Above all, they heard reports of naval officers who had spent months on the West African coast, watching for slavers, risking their lives, through ill-health more than enemy action; and they familiarized themselves quickly, as politicians can, with the names of a hundred inlets, sandbars, creeks, and slaving islands. The committee also received a great quantity of papers, of the greatest interest to historians even if they exhausted the members. For example, there was the Foreign Office's remarkable list of slavers which apparently delivered slaves between 1817 (the abolition of the Spanish slave trade) and 1845: and the Committee even heard the evidence of onetime slaves, such as James Frazer, who brought the reality of enslavement home to the legislators as they sat calmly in the new Palace of Westminster. *ST*, Chapter 34 (25. House of Commons, Accounts and papers, Slave Trade, 22, session Feb. 4- Aug. 9, 1845, vol. xlix.)

_ Gladstone though: *"if we really felt it our duty to cut down the slave trade at all costs,*

we should repeal the Sugar Duties Act, persuade America and France to allow us to search their ships, double the strength of our naval squadron, and be ruthless in using force against Spain and Brazil." ST, Chapter 34 (26. PD, 3d ser., vol. 109, 1850, col. 1093.)

_ [1840s] This heated debate in the House of Commons would probably have been lost by the supporters of the West Africa Squadron had it not been for the eloquent advocacy of the prime minister, Lord John Russell, who said: "*It appears...to me...that if we give up this high and holy work, and proclaim ourselves to be no longer fitted to lead in the championship against the curse and the crime of slavery, we have no longer a right to expect a continuance of those blessings which, by God's favour, we have so long enjoyed. I think...that the high, the moral and the Christian character of this nation is the main source and secret of its strength.*" It was no doubt the right line to take in reply to Gladstone, who had spoken just before. The motion was defeated by 232 to 154. *ST*, Chapter 34 (27. Op. cit., col. 1185.)

_ Captain Dunlop described how he received fifty-five slave merchants and their assistants on his ship – four Spaniards, the rest Portuguese – "*in a miserable plight, exhausted from bad living....Many of them came on board with nothing but their shirts....*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (28. Dunlop evidence in Lords select committee 1850, 135ff.)

_ Yet January 1850 turned out to be the British navy's best-ever month against the Brazilian slave trade – thanks largely to the activities of an informant, Joaquin Paula

Guedes Alcoforado, and ex-slave trader who gave the British details of many journeys. Another British agent was the captain of the port of Rio, Leopoldo da Câmara, who organized the mulatto dockers to give the British information about movements of ships on a regular basis. At least one newspaper, the *Correio Mercantil*, seems to have been in those days in receipt of a subsidy from the British secret fund, as was the editor of *O Brasil*, the most important newspaper. The new anti-slavery societies in Brazil probably also received financial support from their mother country's oldest ally. *ST*, Chapter 34 (29. A partial list of British agents, which included at least one foreign minister (Caetano Mario Lopes Gama, and one vice president of the parliament, Leopoldo Muniz Barreto, can be seen in Eltis [32, 5], 115. Alcofarado was still being paid an allowance by the British in 1860: see his letter of March 9, 1860, to Lord Palmerston requesting the continuance of this stipend, where he says that he had by then worked for Britain for twenty years. He says the proof of this is not only in the archives of the Foreign Office, but also in "*the personal knowledge which your lordship possesses of such services*" (FO 84/1130, f. 79). In Palmerston's papers now in the University of Southampton there are receipts for secret service payments though they do not indicate what the services were.)

_ The difference between these actions and what had gone before is that the Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, and the Foreign Office (not always the same thing), openly approved. Palmerston told the Admiralty that his predecessor Aberdeen's Act of 1846 contained no restrictions on "*the limits within which the search, detention and capture of slave traders...are to take place...in Brazilian waters as well as on the high seas.*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (30. Schomberg's evidence in Lords select committee, 1853, 58ff; letter from

Under Secretary of the Foreign Office to Admiralty, April 22, 1850, published in Commons select committee, 1853, 60.)

_ Lord Palmerston in 1864, the year before his death, said that *"the achievement which I look back on with the greatest and purest pleasure was forcing the Brazilians to give up their slave trade."* *ST*, Chapter 34 (34. Ashley [31, 1], II, 263-64.)

_ The bill [Anglo-Spanish Treaty of 1835] caused trouble in Spain. Even liberal politicians were hostile to it, and the opponents of the measure sought to ruin it by introducing wrecking amendments. The bill became law, only because it seemed not to damage the institution of slavery. Indeed, one of the amendments which the government did accept allowed that, once slaves had reached a plantation in Cuba, they could not be touched. *ST*, Chapter 35 (4. Murray [29, 4], 202.)

_ [Lord] Malmesbury's successor, Lord Clarendon (who as George Villiers had been the successful minister in Madrid in the 1830s), then promoted a plan for a tripartite guarantee of Spanish interests in Cuba by France, Britain, and the United States. But both Daniel Webster, briefly back as secretary of state under Millard Fillmore, and his successor and disciple, the splendid orator Edward Everett, rejected any such idea of European involvement in Cuba. Everett explained, *"There was no hope of a complete remedy [for the slave trade] while Cuba remained a Spanish colony."* *ST*, Chapter 35 (10. Qu. Murray [29, 4], 230.)

_ Lord John Russell would tell Howden in Madrid: *"your lordship may rest assured that, however, friendly the Councils of her Majesty may be to Spain; whatever may be the interest of this country not to see Cuba in the hands of any other power...; yet...the destruction of a trade which conveys the natives of Africa to become slaves in Cuba will furnish a large compensation for such [a] transfer."* ST, Chapter 35 (11. PRO Russell to Howden in FO 84/871, Jan. 31, 1853.)

_ The pattern of the recent past was thus repeated: Captain Baillie Hamilton testified in London that, in 1853, he stopped the slave ship *Arrogante Emilio* outside Havana and found, as he expected, *"an immense quantity of stone ballast, [and] the beams and planks for a complete slave deck; that, on examining the captain's trunk [he found that it] was ingeniously contrived with false sides....They found concealed...419 Mexican ounces [of gold], and a track chart with tracks in pencil to the Bight of Benin.."* ST, Chapter 35 (17. Consul Crawford in Havana in evidence of Capt. Hamilton in Lords select committee, 1853, 19.)

_ Their first, the *Advance*, left New York for Africa on September 18, 1852. This trading from New York was, of course, intended to serve the Cuban market. There was little trading to the United States itself. Even the Texan gate of entry had declined after the entry of that state into the Union in 1845. Captain Denman testified in a British inquiry in 1843, *"I have no reason to believe that any slave trade whatever exists there, except the slave trade from one part of the coast to another. I believe that no new slaves are introduced."* ST, Chapter 35 (18. Lords select committee, 1843, 457.)

_ The United States naval patrol was easily circumvented. The British diplomat John Crampton reported from Washington in 1853: *"The United States naval officers are zealous enough in capturing slavers, but the force is so small, particularly now that they have sent the greater part to Japan [with Matthew Perry], that little is done."* He sensibly added: *"The difficulty of getting slavers condemned by Admiralty courts when captured and brought into American ports is another encouragement to the slaves traders."* Crampton also pointed to another weakness: that difficulty of ensuring conviction was, it seemed, *"much greater in the northern states, which profess abolitionism, than in the south, where slavery exists."* Shipbuilders of the North were interested in the prosperity of the trade, for which, the diplomat reported, they still furnished *"by far the greatest part of the vessels under whatever flag they afterwards sail."* *ST*, Chapter 35 (20. James and Patience Barnes, *Private and Confidential* (Selinsgrove, 1992), 165.)

_ *"Joint-cruising"* off Africa between the United States Navy and the British was decided upon in the 1850s. But the policy was *"from the first and in spirit dead....The flagships of the American and British squadrons on the coast in the years 1855, 1856, and part of 1857 met only once and that at sea. They were two miles apart; they recognized each other by signal and, by the same means, held the following exchange: 'Anything to communicate?' to receive the inaccurate answer, 'Nothing to communicate.' "* *ST*, Chapter 35 (21. Ward [29, 6].)

_ The year 1857 was a good one generally for the interception of slave ships: H.M.S. *Prometheus* overtook the U.S. brig *Adams Gray*, a fully equipped slaver, with \$20,000 in cash aboard. Between then and January 1858, the British seized twenty-one slavers, while the United States, Spanish, and even Portuguese naval patrols captured six more. From that time, the British had the services of an effective spy, a Cuban shipbroker, Manuel Fortunat, a Cuban equivalent of the agents whom Palmerston had inspired in Rio. He passed much information to the British consulate in New York. It was this which probably led the British commander on the coast of Africa, Commodore Wise, to believe that, despite everything, the trade to Cuba was still growing: "*Slaves are procurable in thousands; the natives are selling their children, and the traffic in slaves is rapidly destroying legal trade. These ill effects,*" he added, "*are produced by the shameful prostitution of the American flag for, under that ensign alone, is the slave trade now conducted....Out of 23 vessels said to have escaped, eleven were repeatedly visited by Her Majesty's cruisers but, though known to be slavers, they were necessarily left unmolested, through being bona fide American vessels. Had we a treaty with the United States, every one of these vessels would have been captured....Last year, slavers were (in the majority of cases) captured through their captains forgoing the protection of the American flag; but now American slaves are arriving and sailing with almost as much impunity as if they were engaged in legal trade.*" *ST*, Chapter 35 (22. Wise to the secretary of the Admiralty, October 28, 1858, in BFSP 1859-60, 763-65.)

_ At much the same time, Commander Moresby of the British West Africa Squadron seized the *Panchita* off Africa and sent her to New York. The United States minister in

London protested and stated firmly that the "*question whether the Panchita's journey [was] with the slave trade could have no bearing on the violation of sovereign right.*" *ST*, Chapter 35 (23. Ward [29, 6].)

_ Charles Buxton repeated all the old arguments, with an urgency which would have suggested the subject was a new one for that legislature; the prospects for peaceful trade with Africa were as never before; cotton could be grown there on a large scale; and why not ask the navy to do in Cuban waters, as the *Times* suggested, what she had done so successfully in Brazilian? Palmerston replied with a defense of his policy of inactivity which might have surprised his own personality of twenty years before: Spain, he rather feebly said, had a different kind of treaty with Britain from that which Brazil had had. *ST*, Chapter 35 (24. PD, 3d ser., vol. 186, col. 1492-1501 (1857).)

_ In the continuing fortunate absence of the international telegraph, it was some time before this capitulation was communicated to British captains in Cuban waters, and several more incidents occurred. Sir Houston Stewart had begun his naval career under the command of the brilliant Lord Cochrane and knew, therefore, very well the importance in naval matters of audacity, courage, and imagination. Even when the naval captains knew that they could not board and search United States vessels, they still believed that they could board ships which showed American colors to which they had no right. The question when a vessel might or might not be visited remained, therefore, as the historian of the right visit says, "*more nor less a matter of guesswork.*" *ST*, Chapter 35 (26. Soulsby [28, 34], 168.)

_ Thus, in 1860, the persistent English liberal Lord John Russell (now foreign secretary again, in a government headed by Palmerston) proposed a conference of the main powers (Spain, Britain, France, the United States, Portugal, and Brazil) to put an end to "*an increasing traffic [in slaves] and finally to assure its complete abolition.*" Eighty-five ships, Russell understood, presumably from his secret agent's reports, had been fitted out in the previous eighteen months, and a mere twenty-six of these had landed from twelve to fifteen thousand slaves in Cuba. *ST*, Chapter 36 (1. Corwin [31, 20], 127; Soulsby [28, 34], 159.)

_ The British consul in New York reported that, out of 170 slave-trading expeditions, presumably to Cuba, fitted out in the three years preceding 1862, 74 were known or believed to have sailed from New York. For example, in the summer of 1859, the bark *Emily* set off from New York with all the equipment necessary for a slaver: 15,000 feet of lumber, 103 casks of fresh water, 100 barrels of rice, 25 barrels of codfish, 20 barrels of pork, 50 barrels of bread, 150 boxes of herring, two boilers, 10 dozen pails, and two cases of medicines. Commander John Calhoun on the U.S.S. *Portsmouth* sent her home under guard. But the case was dismissed. Then there was the case of the *Orion*, under Captain John E. Hanna, 450 tons, owned by Harrison S. Vining, a merchant who seems to have only dabbled in the slave trade. H.M.S. *Pluto* caught her, bound for Havana, with 888 captives. She was sent home, under escort, from Africa, and some of the traditional difficulties followed between Britain and the U.S. But on this occasion the ship was condemned by Judge Nathan Hall, an honest if austere magistrate the climax to whose

parochial life had been his service as postmaster-general under Millard Fillmore. Then, while Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey urged the rather lazy United States commander of the Africa squadron, Commander Inman, to "*renew his exertions*," United States Special Agent Benjamin Slocomb found what he described as evidence of a slave company directed by "Colonel" John Newman of Tuckpaw River, Louisiana, with agencies in Mobile, Nashville, and New Orleans. Its purpose was to dispose of African slaves from a diversity of sources, including some brought by the *Wanderer*, some bought in Cuba, and some kidnapped in the Bahamas. But Newman turned out to be a liar, and eventually Slocomb would assure Secretary of the Interior Jacob Thompson that, despite the endless rumors, the only real expedition to Africa from the United States during these years had been that of the *Wanderer*. Stories continued, however, of slave dealing and there were frequent tales of large secret companies, with headquarters in New York. The case of the *Clotilde*, under Captain Meagher, alleged to have landed 116 slaves in South Carolina in July 1859, may have been a hoax, despite accusations to the contrary by many historians, including the great Bancroft. *ST*, Chapter 36 (6. Howard, [33, 6], 302.)

_ The British thought that, in 1859-61, nearly 80,000 slaves were imported. These cost \$1,000 each, so only the rich could buy them, but there were an increasingly large number of rich men in the island. There seemed no reason to suppose that the state of affairs would change. The size of Julian Zulueta's new steam-powered ships grew and grew: one such brought in 1,500 slaves in 1860. Thomas Wilson, a British merchant in Havana, thought that "*the only remedy is to back the Americans to acquire the island.*"

ST, Chapter 36 (9. Wilson letter to Lord John Russell, Sept. 12, 1860 in PRO, FO 84/1130, f. 85. Wilson, who had spent twenty-seven years in Havana, thought Spaniards were "*similar to Moors.*")

_ Joseph Crawford, in his twentieth year as British consul-general in Havana, wrote in February 1861 to Palmerston that there was still no will on the part of the Spanish government, or its officers, to carry out any of the provisions of the treaty banning the slave trade. He thought, therefore, that, "*we have to abandon our efforts of persuasion with Spain to put an end to the traffic...and proceed to the immediate adoption of the most energetic measures to compel its observance.*" *ST*, Chapter 36 (10. PRO, Crawford to Palmerston in FO 84/1135 of February 5, 1861 (f. 14). Crawford complained that some slave merchants had even been ennobled. The calculation in chapter 33, fn 40, appears in this essay.)

_ Palmerston, in a fine speech in the House of Commons that same month, said that, over the slave trade, "*the conduct of Spain might have given us just cause for war if we had thought proper to avail ourselves of it.*" (The origin of this debate was a motion by Stephen Cave, whose interest in the subject may derive from his Bristol origins, to the effect that the means chosen by the government for suppressing the slave trade had failed. Cave made one of the strongest anti-Spanish speeches that the House of Commons had heard: Spain, he said, "*enjoyed a pre-eminence for barbarity in the dark annals of the New World....*") *ST*, Chapter 36 (11. PD, 3d ser., 1861, vol. 161, cols. 950-89.)

_ On October 5, 1861, the Admiralty in London received an astonishing memorandum from the Foreign Office: "*The American Secretary of State, in speaking of the jealousy of the United States respecting the Right of Search, has expressed to Lord Lyons [the tactful British minister in Washington] the willingness of the Washington cabinet that British cruisers should overhaul any vessels which gave reasonable grounds of suspicion....Mr Adams, the United States Minister...has apprised Lord John Russell that the fitting out of vessels designed for the Slave Trade will no longer be permitted at New York.*" *ST*, Chapter 36 (13. FO 84/1150, October 5, 1861.)

_ The treaty with the United States should have been a great satisfaction to the aging Lord Palmerston who, for all his intolerable pride, bombast, and condescension towards those peoples whom he considered inferior, had done almost as much as Wilberforce and Clarkson to secure the end of the international slave trade. But his own and his Cabinet's attitude to Lincoln and the North in the Civil War had been lukewarm (if not actually hostile) until this moment and he and Russell had already recognized the Confederates in the United States as belligerents. Palmerston believed for a time that the North was planning to invade Canada, and his hostility to slavery as such, as opposed to the trade, had never been strong. He was also exercised by the thought of the slaves of the cotton-producing and aristocratic South being freed by democratic generals from the North. Adams, whose work in London was made much easier by the fact that he had gone to school in England, reached the conclusion that, though the matter of slavery had previously been the main question dividing the United States and Britain, "*the sentiment of anti-slavery had disappeared.*" *ST*, Chapter 36 (15. Henry Adams, *The Education of*

Henry Adams (New York, 1918), 56.)

_ The only way in which the British really intervened in Africa at this time was, with some reluctance, to accede to a suggestion of Consul Beechcroft in Lagos and agree to the occupation of that city in order to complete the abolition of the slave trade in the Bight of Benin. That at least was the explanation offered by Lord John Russell, then foreign secretary, in June 1861: the government *"are convinced that the permanent occupation of this important point in the Bight of Benin is indispensable to the complete suppression of the slave trade in the Bight."* King Docemo was dismissed by Acting Consul William McCoskry, a legitimate trader of long experience on the coast, and subsequently allowed an annual income of one thousand pounds, to be paid in cowries. *ST*, Chapter 36 (17. FO 84/1135, 21. An official wrote on April 20, 1860: *"if it should be considered advisable to take possession of the place, no consideration founded on the insalubrity of the climate should be allowed to have any weight."*)

_ So now at last the British and other nations' West Africa and South America squadrons, not to speak of their North America stations, could be brought to an end; about 200,000 slaves had been freed from slave ships in consequences of their efforts, even if not far short of two million had been carried. The British West Africa Squadron, which had done so much for the cause of abolition, was merged with the Cape Squadron in 1870. Its captains had over sixty years freed about 160,000 slaves, probably about 8 percent of the slaves shipped from Africa, mostly (85 percent) off Africa. They or their French, North American, Portuguese, and Spanish colleagues captured about 1,635 ships

altogether: about a fifth of 7,750 or so ships which set off for the trade in that time.

Perhaps another 800,000 additional slaves would have been shipped if there had been no Africa squadron. Many British seamen died (1,338 in all, between 1825 and 1845) as a result of skirmishes at sea or, even worse, yellow fever and malaria contracted on land or in the rivers of the slave coast still in an age of ignorance of the causes of those diseases. *ST*, Chapter 36 (26. These calculations derive from Eltis [32, 5], 97-101.)

B. The American Instigators or Receivers

_ In Providence in the same state in 1816, an unidentified correspondent wrote to Obadiah Brown, philanthropist and pioneer of cotton manufacture, saying: *"The impunity with which prohibited trade is carried on from this place has for some time past rendered it the resort of many violators of commercial law...The African slave trade is one of this description now most successfully and extensively pursued."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (15. "The Rhode Island Slave Trade in 1816," *Proceedings of the Rhode Island Historical Society* VI (Jan. 1899), 226.)

_ On January 11, 1811, the United States secretary of the navy, Paul Hamilton (himself a slaveowner and planter who had earlier urged the legislature of South Carolina to abolish slave trade), wrote to Captain Campbell, the naval commander at Charleston: *"I hear, not without great concern, that the law prohibiting the import of slaves has been violated in frequent instances at [the port of] St Mary's [Georgia], since the gunboats have been withdrawn....Despatch them [the gunboats] to St Mary's with orders to use all practical*

diligence"; and President James Madison, whose opposition to the slave trade had been continual, if occasionally tactical, told Congress, in his message of December 10 of that year: *"It appears that American citizens are [still] instrumental in carrying on a traffic in enslaved Africans, equally in violation of the laws of humanity and those of their country."* He added: *"The same just and benevolent motives which produced the interdiction by force against the criminal conduct will doubtless be felt by congress in devising further means of suppressing the evil."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (17. House Journal, 11 Cong., 3d session, VII, 435.)

_ [Between 1804 and 1812] Louisiana, newly acquired from France, was a specially difficult problem: Governor William Claiborne was quite unable to enforce the abolition of the trade in slaves, and dealing with the smuggling of them *"proved to be one of the most troublesome problems in the administration of the prohibitory legislation."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (18. D, IV, 249.)

_ As for South Carolina, as early as 1804, Representative William Lowndes of that state said: *"With navigable rivers running into the heart of it [the state], it was impossible, with our means, to prevent our eastern brethren [that is, New Englanders] who, in some parts of the Union in defiance of the general government, have been engaged in this trade, from introducing them [slaves] into this country."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (19. John L. Spears, *The American Slave Trade* (London, 1900), 122.)

_ In 1817, John Quincy Adams, then secretary of state, would tell the United States

minister in London that the *"admission of a right in the officers foreign ships of war to enter and search the vessels of the United States in time of peace under any circumstances whatever would meet with universal repugnance in the public opinion of this country."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (34. See commentary in H.G. Soulsby, *The Right of Search and the Slave Trade in Anglo-American Relations* (Baltimore, 1933), 17.)

_ [Between 1825 and 1829] The British minister in Washington, a few years later, asked [John Quincy] Adams, after he had become the sixth president of the United States, whether he could think of an evil greater than the slave trade. The president replied that he could: to grant the right of search, and *"so to make slaves of ourselves."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (35. Davis [26,5], II, 69.)

_ Sir William , who had already declared his irritation with the language of the Portuguese treaty of 1811, concluded that *"to procure an eminent good by means that are unlawful is [not] consonant with private morality."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (43. J. Dodson, *Report of Cases Argued Before the High Court of Admiralty* (London, 1828), ii, 263-64; see also Daget [28, 42], 21-22.)

_ John Quincy Adams, who became minister to London after the Treaty of Ghent, recorded the passionate language with which Castlereagh spoke: *"He passed immediately to...the slave trade which, he said, was now carrying on to a very great extent, and in a shocking manner; that a great number of vessels for it had been fitted out in our southern states; and that the barbarities of the trade were even more atrocious than they had been*

before the abolition of it had been attempted." ST, Chapter 29 (2. The Diary of John Quincy Adams, ed. Allan Nevins (New York, 1928), 177-78.)

_ [1819?] He [Joseph Story] bravely concluded, with regard to the slave trade: "*If we tolerate this traffic, our charity is but a name, and our religion is no more than a faint and elusive shadow.*" ST, Chapter 29 (31. William Wetmore Story, *Life and Letter of Joseph Story*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1851), I, 336-47.)

_ [1818] Collector Chew of New Orleans assured the government that "*to put a stop to that traffic a naval force suitable to these waters is indispensable,*" for, otherwise, "*vast numbers of slaves will be introduced to an alarming extent....*" ST, Chapter 29 (32. House Docs., 16 Cong., 1 sess., III, no. 42, 7.)

_ [Early 1820s] Of these captains, Captain Perry (brother of the hero of Lake Erie, and future instigator of trade with Japan) would report, "*I could not even hear of an American slaving vessel.*" ST, Chapter 29 (35. For the relationship, see Howe [14, 21], 213; see also Samuel Eliot Morison, *Old Bruin* (Boston, 1967).)

_ All together, between May 1818 and November 1821, 573 Africans were captured by United States naval captains, from eleven ships. Sir George Collier, still commander of the equivalent British squadron, reported with unusual warmth that his North American counterparts "*have, on all occasions, acted with the greatest zeal...and it is extremely gratifying to me to observe that the most perfect unanimity prevailed between the officers*

of His Majesty's squadron and those of American vessels of war engaged in the same view...." ST, Chapter 29 (36. Ward [29, 6], 77.)

_ [1820 or 1821] He [John Quincy Adams] told Stratford Canning, the British minister in Washington (the self-assertive cousin of George Canning): *"A compact giving the power to the naval authorities of one nation to search the merchant vessels of another for offenders and offences against the laws of another...backed by a further power to seize and carry into another port, and there subject to decision of a tribunal composed of at least one half foreigners, irresponsible to the supreme corrective tribunal of this nation...was an investment of power...so adverse to the elementary principles and indispensable securities of individual rights that...not even the most unqualified approbation of the ends...could justify the transgressions."* ST, Chapter 29 (37. BFSP, 1820-21, 397-400.)

_ The French minister, Jean-Baptiste Hyde de Neuville, called on Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in fury: *"In a loud and peremptory tone, rising from his seat and with vehement gesture [he] said, 'Well sir, since you think it proper to report to the President what I came here to say to you in confidential conversation with you, I desire you to tell him from me, as my individual opinion that, if satisfaction is not made to France...la France doit leur déclarer la guerre.'" These last words, Adams reported, "he spoke in a manner nearly frantic, dwelling on the word 'geurre' with a long and virulent emphasis and, without waiting for a reply, rushed out of the room, forgetting his overcoat...."* (Hyde later became a strong abolitionist, at least in words; in 1823, he castigated the

trade in slaves as being "*barbarous in a way up till now unknown in the history of barbarity.*") *ST*, Chapter 29 (38. *Memoirs of John Q. Adams Comprising Portions of His Diary...*, 12 vols., ed. C.C. Adams (Philadelphia, 1874-1877), V, 416.)

_ Trist owned property in Cuba. He poured out his prejudiced views to the British commissioners in an memorandum, in Palmerston's expression. His conduct was investigated by a United States minister in Madrid, Alexander Everett, and he was condemned, and later dismissed. All the same, he would be President Polk's emissary to Mexico in 1848 and draw up the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. *ST*, Chapter 30 (17. L.M. Sears, "Nicholas P. Trist, A Diplomat with Ideas," *Miss Valley Hist. Rev.*, June 1924.)

_ Abolitionists, even in the North of the country, were still a minority; in proper Boston, a leading enemy of slavery William Lloyd Garrison had recently been paraded bound through the streets in mockery of his ideals. *ST*, Chapter 31 (14. Miller [29, 11], 366.)

_ Thereafter, he [Captain Peter Flowery was sent to prison in 1845 for two years] set off again in the slave ship *Mary Ann*, whose crew abandoned him on finding, after setting out, the purpose of their voyage. The sailors put Flowery ashore in Africa. Under the command of a mate, they returned to New York, where they surrendered themselves to the authorities, only to be themselves charged with piracy. *ST*, Chapter 32 (2. J.C. Furnas, "Patrolling the Middle Passage," *American Heritage* IX, 6 (October, 1958).)

_ The North American brandy merchant George Coggeshall once dined at Ponce, in Puerto Rico, with a captain and a supercargo of a recently arrived slave ship: "*They were intelligent, sociable men,*" he reported, who, "*when conversing on the slave trade, said that it was a most humane and benevolent traffic; that, in many parts of Africa, the negroes were cannibals and extremely indolent; that the different tribes were constantly at war with each other; that if there were no purchases for their prisoners, they would all be put to death; [and] that they were in lowest state of degradation and of no service to the world. [But] on the contrary, when they were transported to the West Indies, they soon became useful to mankind.*" Coggeshall said to one of these captains that it would be better if the slaves were carried in large, comfortable ships, rather than the crammed, small crafts in which they suffered so much. The captain replied that "*those who were engaged in the trade had been driven to every expedient in consequence of the persecutions which they had received from short-sighted and ill-informed philanthropists*": that is, the British navy, government, and publicists. *ST*, Chapter 32 (13. George Coggeshall, *Second Series of Voyages to Various Parts of the World* (New York, 1857), 123.)

_ [Early 1820s?] A United States merchant, Samuel Swan of Medford, Massachusetts, reported, "*Since the abolition of the slave trade, the nations along the Gold Coast have been continuously embroiled in war,*" adding that, still, "*nothing can be done*" without "*American Rum.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (34. Bennet and Brooks [17, 2], 35, 38.)

_ Another North American traveler, Peter Knickerbocker, wrote: "*The Congo river, at its*

mouth, is some twenty miles in width, and runs with the force of a mill sluice into the ocean; and the current continuing in strength and speed far out to sea, the slaver has greater facilities in obtaining a good offering at this point than any other slave mart on the coast. One dark night and an ebb tide will take him forty miles down the river and sixty miles [out] from the coast, let him sail ever so badly, and the probability of falling foul of a cruiser at this distance is very small." ST, Chapter 32 (57. Peter Knickerbocker, Sketches in South Africa (1850-51), vol. 37, 38, 39.)

_ Another picture of slaves waiting in a barracoon was given by an American naval commodore, Henry Wise, who wrote from Cabinda, in July 1859, how, *"in chained gangs, the unfortunate slaves are driven by the lash from the interior to the barracoons on the beach; there the sea-air, insufficient diet, and dread of their approaching fate, produce the most fatal diseases: dysentery and fever [often] release them from their sufferings; the neighboring soil grows rich in the decaying remains of so many of their fellow creatures, and the tracks are thick-strewn with their bones...On a short march,"* he continued, *"of 600 slaves, a few weeks back, intended for the Emma Lincoln [of the United States], 125 expired on the road. The mortality on these rapid marches is seldom less than 20 percent. Such, sir, is the slave trade under the American flag." ST, Chapter 33 (6. Warren Howard, American slavers and the Federal law, Berkeley, 1963.)*

_ A mulatto chef unwisely joked to the slaves, a little before they reached Guanajay, that, on arrival, they would all be killed and salted as meat. The wit was not appreciated. A certain Cinqué led a revolt, broke the slaves' irons, and threw captain and crew

overboard. Cinqué then ordered the owners, Mantes and Ruiz, to sail the ship back to Africa towards the rising sun. These two Cubans arranged between them to sail their ship off course at night so that, after two months, with water and food very short, they were able to anchor off Long Island, at Culloden Point, New York. The vessel was first held as a smuggler. The slaves were sent to jail at New Haven, and the ship was seized. The Spanish minister in Washington demanded that both ship and merchandise be handed over to him, as provided by a treaty of 1795 between his country and the United States. But the abolitionists, led by Joshua Levitt and Lewis Tappan, became apprised of the case, and a lawsuit followed. The central issue was whether the blacks had lawfully been made slaves. John Quincy Adams, the ex-president, now the serving congressman for Massachusetts and the leading abolitionist in the House of Representatives, was persuaded to represent Cinqué and his friends, and he successfully argued before the Supreme Court that they had not lawfully been made slaves; so they were released into freedom – or, rather, to Sierra Leone. Some senators tried to have the owners indemnified, but they failed. *ST*, Chapter 33 (19. Madden [30, 11], 228-41; Dubois [24, 29], 142; William A. Owens, *Slave Mutiny* (London, 1953).)

_ [Matthew] Perry's enthusiasm for putting down the slave traffic was modest: he even wrote on September 5, 1843, to the Virginian Secretary of the Navy Abel Parker Upshur (he supported slavery and disliked England): "*I cannot hear of any American vessels being engaged in the transportation of slave; nor do I believe there has been one so engaged for several years.*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (1. Spears [28, 19], 155.)

_ [1840s] These United States naval vessels were not concerned with any equipment clauses with respect to the slave traffic, and indeed their main task was to protect trade – as was made clear by an order of Secretary of the Navy John Mason to Perry's successor, Admiral Charles Skinner: *"The rights of our citizens engaged in lawful commerce are under the protection of our flag. And it is the chief purpose, as well as the chief duty of our naval power to see that those rights are not improperly abridged."* ST, Chapter 34 (2. Mason to Skinner, in Lawrence Cabot Howard, *American Involvement in Africa South of the Sahara* (Garland, 1989), 118.)

_ Perry was succeeded by Admiral Skinner in 1844, and he by Captain Andrew Hull Foote in 1849. As a temperance captain, Foote was responsible for abolishing the liquor ration in the United States Navy, not the slave trade. He sought good relations with Britain, but the inferior size of his squadron prevented joint cruising, and he no doubt agreed with a subordinate who wrote: *"It is the policy of the English ship-masters to represent the Americans as engaged in the slave trade;...if, by such accusations, they can induce British or American men of war to detain and examine the fair trader, they thus rid themselves of troublesome rivals."* ST, Chapter 34 (3. Horatio Bridge, *Journal of An African Cruiser*, ed. Nathaniel Hawthorne (Boston, 1845), 53.)

_ Nevertheless, imaginative slave captains continued to make fun of this parade of an international police. One who did so was a United States shipbuilder, Joshua Clapp, from New York, who first came to public notice in 1845, when he was tried in his home city, but acquitted, for taking a ship of his own, the *Panther*, to buy slaves in Africa. He then

removed to Rio, where he bought two fully rigged ships, three barks, three brigs, and two schooners, several of which he had himself built. In reality, these ships belonged to Brazilians, but Clapp was the formal proprietor. About half the vessels bringing slaves to Brazil were, in the 1840s, thus owned by citizens of the United States. George Profitt, United States minister in Rio, reported in 1844 that the trade *"is almost entirely carried out under our flag, in American-built vessels."* *ST*, Chapter 34 (5. Foote [32, 41], 218.)

_ [Henry] Wise asked the Brazilian authorities to arrest four United States citizens on the ship [the *Porpoise*] so that they could be sent to North America for trial. While waiting for a reply, he went on board himself and instituted a United States guard at the gangway. No one could land, not even Brazilians. There was an outrage in the city, the Brazilian naval authorities threatened to seize the *Porpoise*, and Wise abandoned the prize. He sent home a dispatch: *"I beseech – I implore the President...to take a decided stand on this subject. You have no idea of the effrontery and the flagrant outrages of the African slave trade and of the shameless manner in which its worst crimes are licensed here....Every patriot...would blush for our country did he know and see how our citizens sail and sell our flag to the uses and abuses of that accursed traffic....We are a byword among nations...the only people who can fetch and carry...everything for the slave trade."* But all he received was a reprimand for exceeding his instructions. *ST*, Chapter 34 (10. Wise despatch, Feb. 18, 1845, XIII, qu. L. F. Hill, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Brazil* (Durham, N.C., 1932), 114.)

_ The United States consul in Rio, for his part, wrote in 1847: *"The slave power in this*

country is extremely great, and a consul doing his duty needs to be kindly and effectually supported at home. In the case of the Fame, where the vessel was diverted from the business intended by her owners, and employed in the slave trade...I sent home two mates...for trial, the first mate to Norfolk [Virginia], the second mate to Philadelphia. What was done with the first mate I know not. In the case of the man sent to Philadelphia, Mr Commissioner Kane states that a clear prima facie case is made out, and then holds him in bail in the sum of \$1,000 which would be paid by any slave trader in Rio...!" ST, Chapter 34 (12. House Exec. Doc., 30 Cong., 2 sess., VII, no. 61, 18.)

_ Daniel Webster, secretary of state under President Tyler, was skeptical, but concerned enough to inform the Spaniards of the alleged conspiracy [Escalera Conspiracy]. *ST, Chapter 35 (1. Murray [29, 4], 167.)*

_ After the repression of 1844, even the serene Aberdeen was roused to anger, and he exerted himself to secure his withdrawal. *"Unless they remove him, I do not see what we can do but recall you,"* Aberdeen wrote to the minister in Madrid, the languid but effective Henry Bulwer, *"Unless they make reparation for his monstrous cruelties and acts of gross injustice...we shall be obliged to order reprisals."* *ST, Chapter 35 (2. Aberdeen to Bulmer in BM add. Mss. 43146 f. 343.)*

_ [1840s] But Bulwer knew that such a thing would be far from easy, because of that general's friends in Madrid. Palmerston summed up the position, when he returned to the Foreign Office, in another letter to Bulwer: *"It appears that the practice of re-selling*

emancipados which has been going on for some time past, under the sanction of the captain-general of Cuba was the public topic of conversation [in Havana]....It is also stated that upwards of 5,000 of these unfortunate persons have been re-sold at rates varying from 5 to 9 ounces of gold – for example, 50 emancipados were sold to the Gas Company of Havana for a period of five years to serve as lamplighters, by which means a profit of upwards of \$600,000 has been made by persons in Government house [sic]....400 emancipados have been transferred to the Marquis of las Delicias, chief judge of the mixed court, to be held by him for the benefit of the Countess of Guerega, wife of General O'Donnell...[so] You will express the confident hope that the Government of Spain will give positive and peremptory orders to General O'Donnell to obtain...liberty for these nominally emancipated negroes." *ST*, Chapter 35 (3. Qu. Corwin [31, 20], 82.)

_ [1844] Washington Irving, the inspired author who had become, so curiously, yet so appropriately, the United States minister in Madrid, reported to Washington: "*It seems beyond a doubt that, under...captain-general O'Donnell, slaves are again admitted in great numbers*" to Cuba. *ST*, Chapter 35 (5. Irving to Calhoun, April 23, 1844, in William Ray Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* (Washington, D.C., 1925), vol. XI, 339.)

_ A special agent of the United States in Cuba, Charles Davis, told [Secretary of State, William] Marcy that, if all slaves imported since 1820 were freed, there would be "*a disastrous bloody war of the races....Should the United States remain passive spectators of the consummation of the plans of the British ministry, the time is not distant when they*

will be obliged to rise and destroy such dangerous and pernicious neighbours." *ST*, Chapter 35 (13. Manning [35, 5], 789.)

_ A certain George Francis Train declared that Cuba should be seen as a deposit of aluminum from the Mississippi: "*What God had joined together let no man put asunder,*" he curiously proclaimed. *ST*, Chapter 35 (14. Qu. David Potter, *The Impending Crisis* (New York, 1976), 182, fn. 15.)

_ The United States naval patrol was easily circumvented. The British diplomat John Crampton reported from Washington in 1853: "*The United States naval officers are zealous enough in capturing slavers, but the force is so small, particularly now that they have sent the greater part to Japan [with Matthew Perry], that little is done.*" He sensibly added: "*The difficulty of getting slavers condemned by Admiralty courts when captured and brought into American ports is another encouragement to the slaves traders.*" Crampton also pointed to another weakness: that difficulty of ensuring conviction was, it seemed, "*much greater in the northern states, which profess abolitionism, than in the south, where slavery exists.*" Shipbuilders of the North were interested in the prosperity of the trade, for which, the diplomat reported, they still furnished "*by far the greatest part of the vessels under whatever flag they afterwards sail.*" *ST*, Chapter 35 (20. James and Patience Barnes, *Private and Confidential* (Selinsgrove, 1992), 165.)

_ "*Joint-cruising*" off Africa between the United States Navy and the British was decided

upon in the 1850s. But the policy was *"from the first and in spirit dead....The flagships of the American and British squadrons on the coast in the years 1855, 1856, and part of 1857 met only once and that at sea. They were two miles part; they recognized each other by signal and, by the same means, held the following exchange: 'Anything to communicate?' to receive the inaccurate answer, 'Nothing to communicate.' "* ST, Chapter 35 (21. Ward [29, 6].)

_ Senator John Hays Hammond of South Carolina said, *"We had just and ample cause for war, for we had received a flagrant insult [a British gunboat seized a U.S. vessel Cortez in April 1858]."* ST, Chapter 35 (25. Ward [29, 6].)

_ The *Wanderer* returned to Georgia about December 1, losing about seventy or eighty dead slaves en route, and landing her cargo of about 325 slaves at Jekyll Island, off Brunswick Georgia, in small boats. A local sailor reported that *"a few of them appeared sick, but the majority appeared lively."* Most were then taken up the river Saltilla, in a steamer of Lamar's (the *Lamar*), to his Duigbonon plantation; a few others passed by Savannah itself. Over the next few months, numerous reports occurred all over the South of these slaves being seen. Some were taken to New Orleans by train. But the true story came out; the ship was confiscated at Brunswick in December; several of the owners, including Corrie, were arrested. Lamar raged: *"I distributed the negroes,"* he wrote, *"as best I could; but I tell you things are in a hell of a fix; no certainty about anything....The yacht has been seized. They have all the pilots and men who took the yacht...to testify. She will be lost certain and sure, if not the negroes. Dr. Hazelhurst [has] testified that*

he attended the negroes and swore that they were Africans of recent importation....All of these men must be bribed. [And] I must be paid for my time, trouble, and advances...." ST, Chapter 35 (29. Letter of Charles Lamar to Trowbridge in *North American Review*, Nov. 1886, 456.)

_ Secretary of State Lewis Cass discussed Russell's idea of a conference with Tassara, the Spanish minister in Washington. Conferences did not then have the automatic charm for diplomats that they have in the twentieth century. Cass was certain that, at such an occasion, the British would assert their claim to inspect foreign ships. Neither he nor Tassara accepted that the trade was on the increase: "*In this policy of the English,*" he agreed, "*there is something of fanatic self-interest.*" ST, Chapter 36 (2. Corwin, [31, 20, 128 fd 67.]

_ Cass knew that the efforts to prevent the slave trade adopted after the Webster-Ashburton Treaty [of 1842] had failed. But he considered that American captains destroyed their papers only because of the wanton threats of British captains. He sought every argument to defend the United States and, even in September 1860, was ready to announce that his country had reached "*the happy condition of having no objects of concern to engage the philanthropic care and sympathies of the government and people, so that their benevolent energies, having no employment in their own country, must necessarily seek it in other countries less blessed...."* ST, Chapter 36 (3. Cass to Dallas in London qu. Soulsby [28, 34], 155.)

_ Cuba was on everyone's mind in the United States during those last months before the Civil War. In 1860, for example, Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey, insisting that his department was active in the pursuit of slavers (a boast which, in the late 1850s, was beginning to have a basis of truth), added, in his report to Congress, that *"Cuba is the only [legal] mart in the world open to this [international] trade....If Cuba were to pass under the constitution of the United States by annexation, the trade would then be effectively suppressed."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (4. Report of the secretary of the navy, 1860, 9.)

_ In 1856, the New York deputy marshal declared that the business of fitting out slavers *"has never been prosecuted with greater energy than at present. The occasional interposition of the legal authorities exercises no apparent influence for its suppression. It is seldom that one or more vessels cannot be designated at the wharves, respecting which there is evidence that she is either in or has been concerned in the traffic [to Cuba]."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (5. Friends' appeal on behalf of the coloured races, 1858.)

_ The British consul in New York reported that, out of 170 slave-trading expeditions, presumably to Cuba, fitted out in the three years preceding 1862, 74 were known or believed to have sailed from New York. For example, in the summer of 1859, the bark *Emily* set off from New York with all the equipment necessary for a slaver: 15,000 feet of lumber, 103 casks of fresh water, 100 barrels of rice, 25 barrels of codfish, 20 barrels of pork, 50 barrels of bread, 150 boxes of herring, two boilers, 10 dozen pails, and two cases of medicines. Commander John Calhoun on the U.S.S. *Portsmouth* sent her home under guard. But the case was dismissed. Then there was the case of the *Orion*, under Captain

John E. Hanna, 450 tons, owned by Harrison S. Vining, a merchant who seems to have only dabbled in the slave trade. H.M.S. *Pluto* caught her, bound for Havana, with 888 captives. She was sent home, under escort, from Africa, and some of the traditional difficulties followed between Britain and the U.S. But on this occasion the ship was condemned by Judge Nathan Hall, an honest if austere magistrate the climax to whose parochial life had been his service as postmaster-general under Millard Fillmore. Then, while Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey urged the rather lazy United States commander of the Africa squadron, Commander Inman, to "*renew his exertions*," United States Special Agent Benjamin Slocomb found what he described as evidence of a slave company directed by "Colonel" John Newman of Tuckpaw River, Louisiana, with agencies in Mobile, Nashville, and New Orleans. Its purpose was to dispose of African slaves from a diversity of sources, including some brought by the *Wanderer*, some bought in Cuba, and some kidnapped in the Bahamas. But Newman turned out to be a liar, and eventually Slocomb would assure Secretary of the Interior Jacob Thompson that, despite the endless rumors, the only real expedition to Africa from the United States during these years had been that of the *Wanderer*. Stories continued, however, of slave dealing and there were frequent tales of large secret companies, with headquarters in New York. The case of the *Clotilde*, under Captain Meagher, alleged to have landed 116 slaves in South Carolina in July 1859, may have been a hoax, despite accusations to the contrary by many historians, including the great Bancroft. *ST*, Chapter 36 (6. Howard, [33, 6], 302.)

_ [Nathaniel] Gordon took strychnine, but the prison doctor saved him for the gallows.

He was hanged in public on February 21, 1862: the first, and only, North American to be executed for slave trading. *ST*, Chapter 36 (12. Lloyd, [29, 41], 69.)

_ On October 5, 1861, the Admiralty in London received an astonishing memorandum from the Foreign Office: *"The American Secretary of State, in speaking of the jealousy of the United States respecting the Right of Search, has expressed to Lord Lyons [the tactful British minister in Washington] the willingness of the Washington cabinet that British cruisers should overhaul any vessels which gave reasonable grounds of suspicion....Mr Adams, the United States Minister...has apprised Lord John Russell that the fitting out of vessels designed for the Slave Trade will no longer be permitted at New York."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (13. FO 84/1150, October 5, 1861.)

_ Thus, in a single document, Lincoln abandoned the principles of United States foreign policy which John Quincy Adams had enunciated, and which every United States president and secretary of state, not to speak of every minister to London, had referred to as if they had been Holy Writ. The establishment of a mixed court was also a great concession, since it had always been maintained that no foreign judge could ever play any part in deciding United States law. Secretary of State Seward remarkably wrote to his protégé, Charles Francis Adams, in London: *"Had such a treaty been made in 1808, there would have been no sedition here."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (14. C.F. Adams Jr., *Life of C. F. Adams* (Boston, 1900), 241.)

_ The treaty with the United States should have been a great satisfaction to the aging

Lord Palmerston who, for all his intolerable pride, bombast, and condescension towards those peoples whom he considered inferior, had done almost as much as Wilberforce and Clarkson to secure the end of the international slave trade. But his own and his Cabinet's attitude to Lincoln and the North in the Civil War had been lukewarm (if not actually hostile) until this moment and he and Russell had already recognized the Confederates in the United States as belligerents. Palmerston believed for a time that the North was planning to invade Canada, and his hostility to slavery as such, as opposed to the trade, had never been strong. He was also exercised by the thought of the slaves of the cotton-producing and aristocratic South being freed by democratic generals from the North. Adams, whose work in London was made much easier by the fact that he had gone to school in England, reached the conclusion that, though the matter of slavery had previously been the main question dividing the United States and Britain, *"the sentiment of anti-slavery had disappeared."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (15. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York, 1918), 56.)

_ On April 3, 1866, *The New York Times* published an extraordinary report: *"The negroes of the haciendas of Zulueta, Aldama and the other big owners of slaves, in the jurisdiction of Matanzas, have declared themselves on strike in the last days, demanding that they be paid for their work....Some troops have been sent to the haciendas to oblige them to start working again. If the mania of not wanting to work without payment extends to other haciendas, it would be difficult for their proprietors to accustom themselves to such a revolutionary state of affairs."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (24. *New York Times*, April 3, 1866.)

C. The Spanish Accessories and Collaborators

_ Then, on April 2, the radical deputy Agustín de Argüelles (who had had, he said, *"the sweet satisfaction"* of having been in the House of Lords in London in 1808, on the night when it passed the bill of abolition) proposed the condemnation of the trade. He insisted that *"Spain ought to be in line with Britain."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (31. Speech printed in Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Los abolicionistas españoles, siglo XIX* (Madrid, 1996), 106.)

_ All the same, the municipality of San Juan in Puerto Rico did instruct their deputy, Ramón Power y Giralt, to support all measures in Madrid which favored the immigration of Europeans and the gradual extinction of slavery, which they termed *"the worst of ills from which this island suffers."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (33. *Instrucciones a Power*, in Luis Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud md negra en Puerto Rico* (Madrid, 1953), 126.)

_ The duke of San Carlos was incensed: it was *"inconsistent with his duty as head of the Catholic Church, by which he was bound to use his best endeavours to make converts to the Catholic faith; and that every Negro became a Catholic from the moment he set his foot in any of the Spanish possessions."* *ST*, Chapter 28 (37. Castlereagh to Henry Wellesley, August 1, 1814, in *Memoir and Correspondence of Castlereagh*, 3rd series, ed. by the Marquis of Londonderry, 2 vols. (1848-53), vol. 2, 73.)

_ But he soon convinced himself that the governments of both countries were "*well matched in dishonesty and shabbiness*"; for Castlereagh never appreciated the difficulties under which these two nations labored, the need to face revolutionary movements of independence in South America being an all-consuming matter; while both governments knew that too many concessions to Britain on the slave trade would jeopardize the loyalty even of Cuba, and certainly of Brazil. *ST*, Chapter 29 (3. *Memoir...of Castlereagh* [28, 37], 1853, xi, 309.)

_ The minutes of the meeting show several expressions of loyalty, as befitted citizens of that "*ever-faithful*" (*siempre fiel*) island, which designation the captain-general had recently secured formally for the colony. But the gathering unanimously requested the governor to refrain from publishing the Anglo-Spanish Treaty as it was and suggested a committee to reflect on the matter. The committee would include Santiago de la Cuesta, who would know what was happening in the field. *ST*, Chapter 29 (14. David Murray, *Odious Commerce* (Cambridge, 1983), 56.)

_ It seems also that the Spanish government secretly decided to permit their subordinates in Cuba to break the law on slave trading: a later captain-general of Cuba, General Tacón, wrote in 1844 to the then ministers of foreign affairs and the navy that in 1818, the king sent a confidential order to his predecessor in Cuba and to the same official in Puerto Rico, instructing them to overlook the illegal importation of slaves since, without slaves, he accepted, the agriculture of the islands could not make progress. *ST*, Chapter 29 (15. Tacón to the ministers of foreign affairs and the navy, in AHN Estado, Leg. 8035, June

27, 1844. The paragraph is one of the most important in the history of the slave trade: "*al efecto creé deber observar que al concluirse el tratado de 1817 se comunicó una Rl. Orden reservada á los capitanes generales de las Islas de Cuba y Puerto Rico, y al Intendente, superintendente delegado de ellas, para que se disimilase le importación de negros procedentes de Africa, fundandose en que se consideraban necesarios para la conservación y fomento de la agriculture.*" I found this document thanks to David Murray's reference in *Odious Commerce*.)

_ Comment at a luncheon in Havana in the 1830s, reported in a letter of Domingo del Monte: "*When we were in the barracoon, the country people said that the reason of our being stopped...was that the Spaniards said that the ships of war belonging to the English kept us from going to the Spaniards' country.*" James Campbell, once a slave, afterwards a mason in Sierra Leone, to Hutt Committee, 1848. (Under Chapter 30 heading.)

_ The British commissioners in Havana commented in 1826: "*The exhortations of the clergy upon this subject [that is, the slave trade] are, we suspect, neither zealously given nor seriously listened to.*" *ST*, Chapter 30 (12. Kilbee and Macleay to Canning, January 1, 1827, in *PP*, 1827.)

_ But privately he [General Francisco Dionisio Vives] had written the previous year to his minister of foreign affairs: "*I conceal the existence of the slave trade and the introduction of slaves as much as is possible, given the treaty obligations, because I am completely convinced that, if there is no slave labor, the island's wealth will disappear*

within a few years, for prosperous agriculture is dependent upon these laborers and, at the moment, there is no other means of obtaining them." (No doubt he had seen, or knew of, the letter sent by the king in 1817 asking for the trade to continue, to which Governor-General Tacón referred in the 1840s.) *ST*, Chapter 30 (14. Archivo Nacional (Havana) Reales Ordenes y Cédulas, leg. 178, no. 40, qu. Franco [28, 20], 325; Vives to minister of foreign affairs, Jan. 6, 1825, qu. Murray [29, 14], 85.)

_ [1830s] The eventual consequence was a new treaty with Spain which enabled the navies of the two powers to seize ships flying the flag of either of those countries if slave equipment were found on board – in effect, a license for the British navy to act more effectively against Spanish slavers. The *"equipment"* was carefully defined. The treaty also stated firmly, if extremely optimistically, that the Spanish slave trade was *"totally and finally abolished throughout the world."* *ST*, Chapter 31 (7. Murray [29, 4], 93ff, and also W.L. Mathieson, *Great Britain and the Slave Trade* (London, 1929), 13-17.)

_ The treaty had occupied British diplomats a long time: in 1835, it was nine years since Canning had first mooted the matter and defined the word *"equipment."* Yet the remarkable further delay in promulgating the law – even in Spain, much less in Cuba – encouraged the slave traders and planters of the latter island to think that it would never be put into effect. *ST*, Chapter 31 (8. AHN, Estado leg. 8035/4. A typical letter from George Villiers in Madrid included statements such as *"I deeply regret to have...to communicate to your Excellency that certain authorities of Her Catholic Majesty in the Havannah instead of zealously endeavouring to carry into effect the Treaty of*

1835...appear to countenance the means which are reported to for its evasion.")

_ Mariano Torrente, an economist and littérateur, argued that Spanish slaves had a standard of living *"much more favorable than that of the peasants of Europe....What right has Britain, having paid so little recompense to Spain, to demand the destruction of the huge investment of blood and money in the Antilles? Having destroyed her own prosperity in Jamaica, she now plainly wanted to do the same in Cuba."* *ST*, Chapter 31 (21. Mariano Torrente, *La cuestión importante sobre la esclavitud* (Madrid, 1841), 4-7.)

_ Captain-General Tacón, in another section of that extraordinary letter of 1844, previously noticed, said as much: the government, said Tacón, *"did not allow any doubts that its will was to resist, so far as it was possible, the demand of Her Britannic Majesty to prevent whoever was continuing to infringe the first treaty."* Thus it is not surprising that Cuban officialdom remained obdurately hostile in the face of aggressive British philanthropy. *ST*, Chapter 31 (22. AHN, Estado leg. 8035, June 27, 1844.)

_ [1840s] It was also supposed that behind Britain's advocacy of abolition lay a real intention to capture the island [Cuba]: Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, an enlightened planter, wrote to his friend, the writer Domingo del Monte, that Britain had the force, the knowledge, and the will to ensure the end of the slave trade: if they did not act, it meant that there *"are sinister designs which will be realized by sinister means."* *ST*, Chapter 31 (23. *Centón epistolario*, vol. v, 14, 24, 31.)

_ [Narciso López] He was eventually arrested by the Cuban authorities and garrotted [sic], his last words being a ringing appeal: *"Don't be frightened, Cubans, of the scarecrow of the African race that has served so often the tyranny of our oppressors. Slavery is not a social phenomenon exclusive to Cuba or incompatible with the liberty of citizens....Nearby you have the example of the United States, where three million slaves did not prevent the flourishing of the most liberal institutions in the world..."* ST, Chapter 35 (8. H. Vidal Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros martires* (Havana, 1916), I, 165.)

_ This new captain-general [General Valenín Cañedo] accurately reported to his government that the planters, great and small, all defended the slave trade: *"Without exception,"* he wrote, *"they all eagerly desire it, protect it and almost sanctify it."* ST, Chapter 35 (12. Qu. Murray [29, 4], 250.)

_ On the other hand, [General José de la] Concha opposed the inspection of estates by officials looking for illegally imported slaves, and he repeals Pezuela's decrees on the matter. He also repeals Pezuela's scheme to declare the trade piracy. Instead, he placed faith in the idea of offering bribes to informers, and prize money to officials who denounced slave ships. None of these arrangements was effective. So the slave trade continued *"to be carried on...almost with impunity."* ST, Chapter 35 (16. Murray [29, 4], 244.)

_ In 1864, José Agustín Argüelles, governor of Colón in Central Cuba, despite his famous name in antislaving circles, fled to the United States when accused of selling 141

slaves who he had freed after intercepting a ship of Zulueta's (the two were probably in collaboration). He was sent back to Cuba, to be tried and sentenced to life in the galleys (which sentence, admittedly, he did not serve). *ST*, Chapter 36 (18. Murray [29, 4], 311.)

_ All the same, 1863, the second year of that conflict, saw the entry into Cuba of nearly 25,000 slaves, according to Spanish archives. A leading merchant of Havana summed things up as they still seemed to him: *"For many reasons Spain would gain with the abolition of the slave trade...but the government recognizes, as does everyone here, that the economic problem is connected with the existence of slavery, since the island's wealth depends on slave labor. Hence the benign tolerance and leniency that is employed in dealing with such an infamous trade."* *ST*, Chapter 36 (19. Antonio Barras y Prado, *La Habana a mediados del siglo xix* (Madrid, 1925), 52.)

_ It was in consequence of [Puerto Rican planter Julio] Vizcarrando's activity that, on May 6, 1865, Antonio María Fabié, a *sevillano*, could rise in the Cortes to second a motion on abolition: *"The war in the United States is finished,"* he declaimed, *"and, it being finished, slavery on the whole American continent can be taken as finished. Is it possible to keep...this institution in the dominions [of Spain]? I don't think so....The Government must comply with its great obligations...."* Fabié admittedly had preceded this with the by then customary, even obligatory, eulogy of Spanish slavery in comparison with that of the Anglo-Saxons: *"In all the history of slavery,"* he said, *"no country has known how to organize it as Spain has, no country has made the situation of the Negro race more elevated, more tolerable or, at times, more sweet....This explains*

why we have preserved the institution longer than in other countries." ST, Chapter 36
(20. Diario del Congreso, 1864-65, May 6, 1865.)

_ [1865] A few days later, the liberal Cuban planters associated with the newspaper *El Siglo* sent a memorandum to the still influential Captain-General Serrano in Madrid (12,000 Cuban criollos signed), requesting his support for Cuban representation in the Cortes, a reform of tariffs to allow the import of flour from the U.S. and, astonishingly, an end to the traffic in slaves, which they spoke of as "*a repugnant and dangerous cancer of immorality....Private interests have shown themselves more powerful than the honor and conscience of the nation.*" Here was a remarkable transformation! *ST, Chapter 36* (21. Corwin [311, 20].)

_ [Antonio de] Cánovas replied that the belief that the prosperity of the island demanded the slave trade was out of date. The government would accept slavery for the time being "*as it now exists.*" But "*I am obliged to suppress the slave trade...and I will stop at nothing in order to achieve this result.*" His bill passes the Senate in April 1866 but, because of further procedural complexities associated with the fall of the Spanish government, it did not become law till May 1867, and was only promulgated in Cuba in September 1867. Its article 38 provided at last for the registration of all slaves. Black men and women not included in the registration would be deemed free. Anyone connected with the trade in slaves was to be liable to heavy punishments. As had by then occurred in most other European countries, any slave who reached Spain was also to be declared automatically free. *ST, Chapter 36* (22. Diario del Congreso, 1865-66, April 20,

1866.)

_ Colonial officials still found it very difficult to carry out inspections within plantations; and many believed that, "*while slavery exists, all efforts to suppress the traffic will prove futile.*" Even General Dulce thought the law inadequate: he favored the arbitrary exiling of all slave merchants, men who "*are very well known in the island, those who prepare slave ships; [for] in the secretariat of the civil government, information can be found concerning the most prominent people engaged in this odious speculation.*" *ST*, Chapter 36 (23. *Diario del Senado*, 1865-66, April 20, 1866.)

D. "Everyone Else"

_ "*I see clearly that we have not yet begun the golden age.*" (Tuscan diplomat, after the failure of the plans for suppressing the slave trade, at the conference of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1818. Quoted under heading of Chapter 28)

_ The bishop of Pernambuco, José Joaquim da Cunha, for his part, had in 1808 denounced the "*insidious principles of a sect of philosophers*" concerned to preach abolition; he went on to insist that "*the commerce of slavery is a law dictated by circumstances to barbarous nations.*" *ST*, Chapter 28 (11. In his "analysis," qu Rev. R. Walsh, *Notices of Brazil* (London, 1830), 318.)

_ The judges at Sierra Leone had found that over a thousand slaves had been produced

for emancipation at their court. *ST*, Chapter 28 (25. PD, 1st series, vol. 19, 233)

_ Finally, in February 1815, the governments of Britain, France, Spain, Sweden, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Portugal were prevailed upon, by Castlereagh, to sign a general declaration that, since "*the commerce known by the name of the African slave trade is repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality,*" those powers possessing colonies accepted that it was their "*duty and necessity*" to abolish it as soon as possible. The timing, however, like the detail, was a matter for negotiation. Indeed, it was conceded that no nation could be made to abolish the trade "*without due regard to the interests, the habits, and even the prejudices*" of its subjects. *ST*, Chapter 28 (40. General Treaty signed in Congress at Vienna (London, 1816), 132.)

_ The conference at Aix was also the first to be held of the great powers of Europe when they were not at war to try and resolve their difficulties: an innovation which has been persistently followed in later days. But there were few supporters among other foreign ministers for the scheme which Castlereagh proposed, which still appeared as a way whereby "Perfide Albion" could morally justify her mastery of the seas, if not of the world – though Tsar Alexander had already thought of establishing a "*neutral institution,*" with a court, international fleet, and headquarters all of its own, in Africa. He had even suggested that the main nations might concede to this body "*the right of visit*" of suspected slave ships without arousing national jealousies. But nothing came of this, the tsar lost interest, and the Tuscan diplomat was right who wrote home to Florence from this conference: "*I see clearly that we have not yet begun the golden age.*" *ST*,

Chapter 29 (5. Stern, *Gesichtes Europas*, 1, 474, qu. Sir Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh* (London, 1925), 168.)

_ That this interpretation was shared by many high-minded men, who were not English, is indicated by a comment by Goethe, whose compatriots were not engaged in the slave trade, who had no personal interest in the matter but who, in a conversation with Eckermann, would remark: *"While the Germans are tormenting themselves with philosophical problems, the English, with their great practical understanding, laugh at us and win the world. Everybody knows their declamations against the slave trade; and, while they have palmed off on us all sorts of humane maxims as the foundations of their proceedings, it is at last discovered that their true motive is a practical object, which the English always notoriously require in order to act, and which should have been known before. In their extensive domains on the west coast of Africa, they themselves use the blacks, and it is against their interest for blacks to be carried off...so they preach with a practical view against the slave trade. Even at the Congress Vienna, the English envoy denounced it with great zeal; but the Portuguese envoy had the good sense to reply quietly that he did not know that they had come together to sit in judgement on the world or to decide upon principles of morality. He well knew the object of England; and he had his own which he knew how to plead for and to obtain."* ST, Chapter 29 (11. Goethe, in *Conversations with Eckermann* (London, 1930), 329 (Sept.1, 1829).)

_ [1822] Canning then asked for the backing of his own Cabinet for an arrangement along these lines, arguing that *"the great mart of the legal slave trade is Brazil."* ST,

Chapter 29 (23. Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade* (Cambridge, 1970), 32-47.)

_ In May 1830, Dom Pedro, in his annual speech from the throne, confirmed that the Brazilian slave trade would soon be declared illegal. But a year later, convinced of his own unpopularity, he abdicated in favor of his six-year-old son; and though one reason for his bad reputation was his continuing link with the now hated Portuguese, another was his treaty on abolition with Britain. Yet this resignation did not prevent a new Brazilian government, in November 1831, from passing legislation which would make the import of slaves illegal. Canning's onetime interlocutor, General Brant introduced the bill into the Senate. Article 1 stated that all slaves entering Brazil would automatically be free. The police were given powers to examine ships which they suspected of bringing in captives. Fines, imprisonment, rewards, bounties were all prescribed. Various regulations followed, included one which enabled Africans who thought that their import had been illegal to present themselves to judges. *ST*, Chapter 29 (26. Conrad [22, 3], 80-81, for commentary.)

_ But even the Anglo-Dutch Treaty was evaded. For example, the Dutch judge at Sierra Leone, Van Sirtema, intervened on the side of the slavers. This was shown when, in 1819, H.M.S. *Thistle*, captained by Lieutenant Hagan, arrested the Dutch ship *Eliza* off the so-called Grain Coast. She had certainly been carrying slaves, but they had all been unloaded save for one, who provided the overt reason for Lieutenant Hagan's action. Van Sirtema ruled Hagan out of court on the legalistic ground that the treaty spoke of

"slaves," not "a slave." ST, Chapter 29 (29. Ward [29, 6], 82.)

_ The French minister, Jean-Baptiste Hyde de Neuville, called on Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in fury: *"In a loud and peremptory tone, rising from his seat and with vehement gesture [he] said, 'Well sir, since you think it proper to report to the President what I came here to say to you in confidential conversation with you, I desire you to tell him from me, as my individual opinion that, if satisfaction is not made to France...la France doit leur déclarer la guerre.'" These last words, Adams reported, "he spoke in a manner nearly frantic, dwelling on the word 'geurre' with a long and virulent emphasis and, without waiting for a reply, rushed out of the room, forgetting his overcoat..."* (Hyde later became a strong abolitionist, at least in words; in 1823, he castigated the trade in slaves as being *"barbarous in a way up till now unknown in the history of barbarity."*) *ST, Chapter 29 (38. Memoirs of John Q. Adams Comprising Portions of His Diary..., 12 vols., ed. C.C. Adams (Philadelphia, 1874-1877), V, 416.)*

_ It was the longest oration made till that time in that chamber. *ST, Chapter 29 (41. Serge Daget, "L'abolition de la traite des noirs en France," Cahiers d'Études Africaines 11 (1971), 14-58. The speech of Broglie is in his "Discours prononcé le 28 mars 1822."*)

_ The same year [1823], the duchess of Duras, a daughter of a Martiniquaise and granddaughter of a sugar planter (she had herself lived in Martinique, as well as in London during the great days of the slave-trade debates in the 1790s), published her romantic story, *Ourika*, in which a black slave girl adopted by the mysterious Madame de

B— is the heroine. It met with an extraordinary success: Humboldt, Walter Scott, Talleyrand, and Goethe loved it. *ST*, Chapter 29 (42. Duchesse de Duras, *Ourika* (Paris, 1825).)

_ A year later [1826], Victor Hugo published his *Bug-Jargal*, in which he recalled the memories of his grandfather, Jean-François Trébuchet, a captain of Nantes who spent most of his life as a slave captain. Again the central figure is a black, but this time a revolutionary of imagination. *ST*, Chapter 29 (43. Victor Hugo, *Bug-Jargal* (Paris, 1825).)

_ Eventually, after 1830, the bourgeois king, Louis-Philippe, an Anglophile, and himself a member of the Society of Christian Morals, agreed with a recommendation of another enlightened officer, Captain Alexis Vilaret de Joyeuse, to make trading in slaves a crime. A third abolitionist law was then prepared and introduced by a new naval minister, Antoine, Count Argout, an ex-Bonapartist and old friend of the duke of Broglie. He was only minister for four months, but that was enough to conclude what one historian has named "*seventeen years of tautology, bad faith, good reasons and countertruths.*" *ST*, Chapter 29 (46. Serge Daget in *La France et L'abolition de la traite des noirs* (Thesis) (Paris, 1969), 304.)

_ For a time in the 1830s, all the same, the [Brazilian] government seemed to condemn the trade: "*The shameful and infamous traffic in blacks continues on all sides,*" the Minister of Justice Feijó complained in 1832, because, he added, the authorities

themselves were *"interested in the crime."* *ST*, Chapter 30 (4. Cit. Conrad [22, 3], 86.)

_ By the late 1830s, imports of slaves into Brazil had reached *"fearful and impressive"* levels, according to the British minister in Rio (whose legation was virtually the abolitionist headquarters on the continent). The illegal trade was now responsible every year for landing over 45,000 slaves. The law of 1831 was a dead letter. One conservative prime minister, Bernardo Pereira de Vasconcelos, declared, before he entered office: *"Let the English carry into execution this treaty which they have forced upon us by abusing their superior power; but to expect that we should co-operate with [them]...in these speculations, gilded with the name of humanity, is unreasonable."* *ST*, Chapter 30 (6. Qu. Bethell [29, 23], 84.)

_ In 1836, a report was published in Rio which sought to show that the slave trade was to the benefit of the slaves; *"without slavery,"* the author went on to ask, *"what would become of America's export trade? Who would work the mines? The fields? Carry on the coastal trade?"* *ST*, Chapter 30 (7. Freyre [8, 8], 346.)

_ The government in Lisbon offered to sign a treaty along these lines, but only if Britain were to cease pressing for payment of her debts. Palmerston rejected that idea out of hand. He wrote to the British minister in Lisbon that he should *"impress...that the conclusion of a slave trade treaty is a matter which now concerns Portugal only...."* So, he argued, Portugal was offering nothing. *ST*, Chapter 31 (13. Webster [31, 9].)

_ The French refusal to ratify [the Quintuple Treaty] prevented the right of search from becoming a common maritime policy in Europe. Cass had sent Guizot, the French foreign minister, on his own initiative, a note warning the Europeans against using force to accomplish their ends. *ST*, Chapter 31 (17. Kenneth Bourne, *Palmerston* (London, 1982), 596; Jasper Ridley, *Lord Palmerston* (London, 1970), 281-82.)

_ Though new Liberal governments in Rio did give some difficulties to the practitioners of the slave trade, they were soon overthrown – not without numerous little incidents between the British and the Brazilians, as when Lieutenant Cox, of H.M.S. *Clio*, landed in the Piumas Islands, half a mile offshore from Campos, about 150 miles north of Rio, and captured a slave ship with 300 slaves. The next week, when taking water in Campos, Cox and his men were attacked by men working for the slave traders, four sailors were wounded, and the rest were imprisoned. The British chargé d'affaires protested, and the sailors were released, but the Brazilian foreign minister, Aureliano, said, with some spirit, *"I would prefer that Brazil should be erased from the list of nations rather than she should subject herself to the disgraceful tutelage of another which should arrogate to herself the right to interfering imperiously in the internal administration of my country."* *ST*, Chapter 31 (18. Qu. Bethell [29, 23], 207.)

_ Crews and captains in these years came from even more unexpected places than the ships, including Sardinia and the Papal States, though all participants were always ready with the pretense that they were not what they seemed to be. A few English or Irish sailors were to be found. On the French schooner L'Oiseau of Guadeloupe, for example,

which sailed for Africa in 1825, the captain, second captain, and lieutenant when questioned said that they had been born in "*Europe*," though actually Captain Jean Blais was Dutch; the mate came from Saint-Malo, the carpenter from Le Havre, the steward from Toulon, while the cook and one seaman came from Curaçao, and other sailors derived from Marseilles, Puerto Rico, Danish Saint Thomas, Germany, Saint-Barthelémy, and even India. *ST*, Chapter 32 (1. Daget [12, 16], 419.)

_ The Portuguese still maintained third-rate garrisons at the two fortresses at Cacheu and Bissau, half the soldiers being Cape Verdeans. Disease, underpayment, and inactivity rotted the lives of all who worked here. The governor in the 1830s, Caetano José Nozolini, was, however, a remarkable official. Son of an Italian sailor who in the 1790s married a Cape Verdean heiress on the island of Fogo, Nozolini became a major slave trader at Bissau; he would send ships to Cuba as well as Brazil, perhaps buying good from the British on the Gambia River, paying with bills drawn on such respectable London houses as Baring Brothers, and then exchange them in his own territory for slaves. When Captain Matthew Perry on the United States sloop-of-war *Orbel* seized \$40,000 worth of property at Bissau in 1844, he found that most of it had been advanced by North American traders to Nozolini.

Nozilini was helped to reach his position by an alliance with the dominant merchant in Cacheu-Zingiehor, Honorio Barreto, a mulatto who succeeded him as governor in 1850. (He, too, traded in slaves.) But the strongest influence on Nozolini was his African wife, Mãe Aurélia Correia, "*the queen of Orango*," the largest island of the Bissagos Archipelago, a tyrannical *nhara* (that is, *senhora*) of these rivers. By 1827,

though not yet in control, Nozolini was strong enough to deceive the British navy by shipping sixty-one slaves as members of his own family; it was some time before the governor of Sierra Leone, Sir Neil Campbell, realized who these "*Nozolinos*" [sic] were. Nozolini was strong enough to resist a demand from the French that he be charged for the murder of a French trader named Dumaigne, killed by some of his guards in 1835; and in the 1840s, he was already cultivating peanuts on the island of Bolama, as well as assembling slaves there. *ST*, Chapter 32 (18. Hutt committee, II, 4.)

_ The governor [Hermann Willem Daendels] was himself far from hostile to the slave trade in Africa; he merely had instructions to bring the international traffic to an end. Thus, when approval for his great road (which he wanted to prolong to Timbuktu) was slow in coming, and when his envoy, Huydecoper, was delayed in his return from Kumasi, Daendels sent the Asantahene a request for "*twelve stallions, fifty oxen and bulls, and one hundred Donko slaves, with three cuts on both cheeks, including not more than twenty-five girls*" – for use on his plantation, Orange Dawn. So he seems to have been far from convinced of the desirability of abolition. He wrote a letter to a Spanish slave captain whom he had met at Tenerife, on his way out from the Netherlands: "*My dear friend, it was with great but very pleasant surprise that I learnt that your ship has anchored off Apam, and that it is doing slave trade there. This means that the English are complaisant enough to furnish you with cargo that you would never have obtained on this coast.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (36. Edward Reynolds in Daget [12, 16], I, 576.)

_ After Daendels died, [Jan] Niezer went to Amsterdam to plead his case. He won, and

returned in triumph to Elmina, but his fortunes never recovered from the abolition of the trade in slaves. All the same, in 1817, about thirty Spanish or Portuguese slave ships were identified off the Gold Coast, and Niezer must have helped to load them. The next year, an English merchant, James Lucas Yeo, wrote: "*I find the trade almost as active in the neighbourhoods of our forts as at any time.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (37. Brooks [27, 9], 235.)

_ The *obi* of Osai of Aboh declared, too, that he was willing to abandon the slave trade "*if a better traffic could only be substituted.*" The *obi* had been impressed by a Sierra Leone interpreter who put the case for the abolition, and who concluded a long speech by saying, "*Do you not see that it is harder to continue it than to give it up?*" The *obi* agreed. *ST*, Chapter 32 (49. Lords select committee 1843, 430.)

_ The *obi*, impatient of contradictory European professions, put one part of the African case to the members of the Niger expedition in 1841: "*Hitherto, we thought that it was God's wish that black people should be slaves to white people; white people first told us that we should sell slaves to them and we sold them; and white people are now telling us not to sell slaves....If white people give up buying, black people will give up selling.*" All the same, there was suspicion: when Britain concluded the treaty against selling slaves in 1841, King Pepple of Bonny inserted a clause in the document stating: "*If, at any future time, Great Britain shall permit the slave trade, King Pepple and the chiefs of Bonny shall be at liberty to do the same.*" *ST*, Chapter 32 (50. The treaty was enclosed in a letter from Captain William Tucker in PRO FO 84/385, Aug. 22, 1841.)

_ "Next day we saw an English man-of-war [H.M.S. Maidstone] coming. When the Portuguese saw this, it put them to disquietness and confusion. They then told us that these were the people which will eat us, if we suffered them to prize us; and they also enticed us, if they should ask, how long since we sailed, we must say it was more than a month. And they also gave us long oars and set us to pull. About ten men were set on one oar, and we tried to pull as far as we are able, but it is of no avail. Next day, the English overtook us and they took charge of the slaves...." (Joseph Wright, a slave, in Curtin, *Africa Remembered*. Quoted under Chapter 33 headline)

_ "Sailing rapidly on a strong land breeze, the vessel was soon out of sight of the coast of Africa." (Prosper Mérimée, *Tamoango*. Quoted under Chapter 33 headline)

_ British ships were still not permitted to search ships flying the French flag even if their captains' suspicions about the real identity of a vessel were aroused. The French too would continue to limit themselves, insofar as power of capture was concerned, to ships flying their own flag and ships with no flag, and they would not seek any authority to interfere with Spanish, Portuguese, and Brazilian ships: "*The effect of the French squadron,*" Palmerston said, "*is more to prevent than to capture; they effectively prevent any slave trade under the French flag.*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (4. See Palmerston's evidence in Hutt committee, II, 6-7.)

_ The Brazilian Parliament debated the matter [another anti-slave-trade act in 1842]. That chamber was against all recent British antislave measures. A fine speech was,

however, made by Antônio Carlos de Andrada, a younger brother of that José Bonfácio who, as prime minister, had opposed the slave trade in the 1820s: *"I am an enemy of the traffic in slaves. I see in this commerce all possible evils, an attack on Christianity, on humanity, and on the true interests of Brazil....This commerce is carried on for the benefit of one race, is anti-Christian, and I do not believe that man was born for slavery. I believe that the blacks, the mulattoes, the greens, if there are any, are quite as good as we are."* *ST*, Chapter 34 (6. Qu. Bethell [29, 23], 245.)

_ The treaty of 1826 obliged Brazil, but only Brazil, to treat her slave traders as pirates. Britain had nothing to do with the matter. That treaty had anyway lapsed, and no one in Brazil would make any effort to renew it. The court at Rio was also wound up in 1845. It seemed, therefore, in the middle of the 1840s, that all Britain's efforts were being made to seem pointless. *ST*, Chapter 34 (7. *Ibid.*, 270. [*Ibid* = Qu. Bethell [29, 23]])

_ The foreign minister, Barão de Cairu, told the British minister, in January 1847, with astonishing frankness, that he could not see how any government of Brazil could enforce the law of 1831 or, indeed, any other such law: *"I know of none who could do it or attempt it and, when ninety-nine men in every hundred are engaged in it [the trade in slaves], how is it [abolition] to be done?...The vice [of trading slaves] has eating into the very core of society. Who is so sought after, so feasted in this city as Manuel Pinto [da Fonseca]? You know him to be the great slave trader par excellence of Rio. Yet he and scores of minor slave dealers go to court – sit at the tables of the wealthiest and most respectable citizens – have seats in the Chamber as our representatives, and have a voice*

even in the Council of State. They are increasing in vigilance, perseverance, audacity....What they touch turns to gold....You know my individual abhorrence of this cursed traffic – but...what am I to do?...I cannot be the man in Brazil from whom all his countrymen would turn away in contempt and aversion. I will not bell the cat...." ST, Chapter 34 (15. Qu. Bethell [29, 23], 290.)

_ He [Soares de Souza, Brazilian foreign minister] pointed out that all countries except Cuba had abolished trade: *"Can we resist the torrent? I think not."* Brazil could no longer resist *"the pressure of the ideas of the age in which we live....And ought we indolently to sleep on and not take steps to find a substitute for African labor?" ST, Chapter 34 (31. Qu. Rodrigues [14, 14], 170.)*

_ The quarrels in the Chamber of Deputies in Rio continued: an ex-minister of the navy, Joaquim Antão, called on the government to *"destroy the ladders by which you have risen to power!" "What ladders?" "Can it be that noble ministers did not require the support of friends in the slave traffic in order to come to power?"* Soares de Souza later admitted: *"During the period when fifty to sixty thousand Africans entered the country annually, when speculation concerning Africa was at its peak, there were many people more or less directly engaged in the trade. Who amongst us did not have relations with someone engaged in the traffic when it was not condemned by public opinion?" ST, Chapter 34 (32. Rodrigues [14, 14], 190-92.)*

_ Borges Ferras for a long time denied his real identity, but was eventually tried in 1858

and imprisoned for three years. When he had served his term in Rio, he returned to Whydah, where he lived out the rest of his days. He was not bitter: talking to the Abbé Pierre Bouché, who met him in the late 1860s, he said, "*I was admitted to the academy; and I came out with my diploma.*" *ST*, Chapter 34 (33. Verger [13, 27], 437.)