

FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS

1808

PARTICIPATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

IN THE

AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

FORWARDED BY PERMISSION OF A MEETING

REPRESENTING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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LEGISLATION OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE FOREIGN SLAVE
TRADE.

In the Constitution of the United States, the following restriction on the powers of Congress, was inserted as a compromise with the members of the Convention from South Carolina and Georgia:—

“The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person.”—Art. 9.

This restriction has always been understood to apply to the African slave trade; yet prior to the year 1808, several acts were passed to prohibit that traffic, in cases which did not fall under the constitutional restriction.

An act of 1794 provides that no citizen of the United States, or any other person residing therein, shall build or equip any vessel for the purpose of carrying on the traffic in slaves to any foreign country, or for the purpose of transporting slaves from one foreign country to another, under the penalty of the forfeiture of every vessel so employed, and the payment of a fine of two thousand dollars.

By an act of 1798, in relation to the Mississippi territory, the introduction of slaves, from any place without the limits of the United States, was prohibited under a penalty of 300 dollars for each slave so introduced; and all such slaves were declared free.

By a law of 1800, citizens or residents of the United States

were prohibited from holding any right or property in vessels employed in the transportation of slaves from one foreign country to another, on pain of forfeiting their right of property; and likewise a fine equal to the double both of that right, and of their interest in the slaves. They were also prohibited under a penalty, not exceeding 2000 dollars, and imprisonment of not more than two years, from serving on board any vessel employed in transporting slaves from one foreign country to another. The commissioned ships of the United States were authorised to seize vessels and crews employed in violation of this act.

By an act of 1803, masters of vessels were forbidden to bring into any port, where the laws of the state prohibited the importation, any negro, mulatto, or other person of colour, not being a native, a citizen, or registered seaman of the United States, or a seaman of countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, under a penalty of 1000 dollars for every person imported contrary to the provisions of this act; and no vessel having on board persons of the above description, was to be admitted to an entry; and if any such person should be landed from on board any vessel, the vessel was to be forfeited.

Soon after the acquisition of Louisiana, an act was passed for the regulation of the territory of Orleans, one of the governments into which that country was divided. Among the regulations then adopted, we find the following. "It shall not be lawful for any person to bring into the said territory, from any place without the limits of the United States, or to cause to be brought, any slave or slaves; and every person so offending, shall forfeit and pay for every slave imported the sum of 300 dollars; and every slave so imported, shall be free. It shall not be lawful for any person to bring into said territory from any place within the limits of the United States, any slave or slaves, which shall have been imported since the first day of May, 1798, into any place within the limits of the United States, or which may hereafter be so imported, from any place without the limits of the United States. And every person so offending shall forfeit for every slave imported, the sum of 300 dollars. And no slave shall be introduced into said territory, except by a citizen of the United States, removing into said territory for actual settlement, and being, at the time of remo-

val, the bona fide owner of such slave; and every slave brought into the territory, contrary to the provisions of this act shall receive his or her freedom."

Thus it appears that while the constitutional restriction in relation to the importation of slaves, was in full force, Congress exercised such authority as remained for the purpose of checking this odious traffic. In the early part of 1807, a law was enacted, in compliance with the recommendation of the president, Thomas Jefferson, for the total prohibition of this trade. This law was to come into force on the first day of the year 1808; the very day on which the constitutional restriction was to expire. By this act it is rendered unlawful to import into any part of the United States, from any foreign place or country, any negro, mulatto or person of colour, with intent that such person should be sold or held as a slave. Citizens of the United States and others are also prohibited from building, equipping or preparing within our jurisdiction, any vessel with intent of causing it to be employed in the importation of slaves into the United States. They are also prohibited from engaging in such importations. These prohibitions are supported by heavy penalties, amounting in one case to the forfeiture of the vessel, in another to 20,000 dollars, and in another to imprisonment from five to ten years.

By the same act the president is authorised to employ part of the naval force of the United States, to bring into port any vessels engaged in the slave trade, with slaves actually on board, which may be found hovering on our coast. Such vessel to be forfeited to the United States. He is also authorised to direct the commanders to seize and bring into port, all vessels of the United States which may be found any where on the high seas contravening the provisions of this act. The commanders of the vessels so seized are liable to a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars, and imprisonment of not less than two nor more than four years. One half of the proceeds of vessels thus seized and condemned, to be distributed among the officers and men by whom the seizure shall be made.

In the year 1818 further legislation was made, extending the prohibitions and penalties to the act of preparing vessels for the transportation of slaves to any place whatever. Goods imported in the same voyage with slaves are, by this act, rendered

liable to forfeiture. The penalties are by this act directed to be divided equally between the United States, and the persons who shall prosecute them to effect.

In 1819 and 1820 further provision was made for preventing the citizens of the United States from engaging in this nefarious traffic. In the latter year it was prescribed that any citizen of the United States, being of the crew or ship's company of any foreign vessel engaged in the slave trade; or any person whatever being of the crew of a vessel owned wholly or in part, or navigated for or on behalf of any citizen of the United States, who shall land on any foreign shore, and seize any negro or mulatto, not held to service by the laws of any state or territory of the United States, or who shall decoy or forcibly bring on board such vessel any such negro or mulatto, with intent of holding such negro or mulatto as a slave: every such person so offending, shall be adjudged a pirate, and on conviction thereof, before the Circuit Court of the United States, in the district where he may be brought or found, shall suffer death.

The last section of this act provides that, if any citizen of the United States, being of the crew or ship's company of any foreign vessel engaged in the slave trade; or any person whatever, being of the ship's company of any vessel owned wholly or in part by, or navigated on behalf of, any citizen of the United States, shall forcibly confine or detain, or shall abet in forcibly confining or detaining on board any such vessel, any negro or mulatto, not held to service or labour by the laws of either of the states or territories of the United States, with intent to make such negro or mulatto a slave; or shall on board any such vessel offer or attempt to sell as a slave any negro or mulatto not held to service as aforesaid; or shall on the high seas or anywhere on tide water, transfer or deliver over to any other ship or vessel, any negro or mulatto, not held to service as aforesaid, with intent to make such negro or mulatto a slave; or shall land or deliver on shore, from on board any such ship or vessel, any such negro or mulatto, with intent to make sale of, or having previously sold such negro or mulatto as a slave; such citizen or person shall be adjudged a pirate, and on conviction thereof before the Circuit Court of the United States, for the district wherein he shall be brought or found, shall suffer death.

PARTICIPATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN THE AFRICAN SLAVE
TRADE.

It is a subject of deep lamentation, that amongst a people so jealous of their own rights, and so keenly sensitive to the value of freedom as the citizens of the United States are acknowledged to be, there should any be found so regardless of the rights and freedom of others, as to require the restraints of law to prevent them from participating in a traffic so revolting to humanity, and so totally irreconcilable to the character of a Christian community as the African slave trade. When we advert to the legislation of the federal government on this subject, as briefly disclosed in the preceding pages, we rationally conclude that very few of our citizens would be so far stimulated by avarice as to expose themselves to the penal consequences of a participation in this piratical traffic, if the existing laws were rigidly enforced. It will however appear, by the testimony hereafter adduced, that American ships and American citizens have been deeply engaged in it; and that foreign slave-dealers have assumed the American flag as a protection from seizure by the cruisers of other nations. There can be no doubt that the existence of hereditary slavery in half the states of the Union, has blunted the sensibility of the community to the wrongs of the African race; and that the prosecution of a traffic, under the sanction of law, very similar in its essential characteristics to the African slave trade, must very much abate the horror of many among us to the latter traffic, and facilitate the evasion of the laws which were designed to suppress it.

In the year 1819, a member from South Carolina, stated on the floor of Congress, that in his opinion 13,000 Africans were annually smuggled into the United States. A member from Virginia estimated the number at 15,000. In the same year Judge Story, of the Supreme Court of the United States, in a charge to a grand jury, thus expressed himself: "We have but too many proofs from unquestionable sources, that it [the African trade] is still carried on with all the implacable rapacity of former times. Avarice has grown more subtle in its eva-

sions, and watches and seizes its prey with an appetite quickened rather than suppressed by its guilty vigils. American citizens are steeped to their very mouths, (I can hardly use too bold a figure) in this stream of iniquity."—Jay's Inquiry, N. York, 1839, p. 107. A letter from H. Moulton, now a minister of the Methodist Episcopal church, in Marlborough, Massachusetts, dated in 1839, states that he was a few years ago engaged in the service of a southern planter, and that he found a number of slaves there who could not speak English.—Slavery as it is. p. 140.

In the treaty of Ghent, by which the last war with Great Britain was brought to a close, the following article was introduced. "Whereas the traffic in slaves is irreconcilable with the principles of humanity and justice: and whereas his Majesty and the United States are desirous of continuing their efforts to promote its entire abolition, it is hereby agreed that both the contracting parties shall use their best endeavours to accomplish so desirable an object." Between four and five years afterwards, viz. in 1819, both houses of Parliament addressed the prince regent, requesting him to renew his beneficent endeavours, more especially with the governments of France and *the United States of America*, for the attainment of this object. In pursuance of this application a negotiation with our government was commenced, in which it was proposed to concede to each other's ships of war a qualified right of search, with a power of detaining the vessels of either state, *with slaves actually* on board. This proposal, however, was not acceded to.

In the 5th month, 1820, a resolution was adopted in the House of Representatives, requesting the president to negotiate with foreign powers, on the means of effecting an entire and immediate abolition of the slave trade; but if any negotiation ensued, it does not appear that any thing effectual was done.

In the 1st month, 1823, the British minister at Washington addressed a letter to the secretary of state, reminding him of the pledge in the treaty of Ghent, and calling on the American government either to assent to the plan proposed by Great Britain, or to suggest some other efficient one in its place. In answer to this letter he was informed that the plan proposed by

the United States was a mutual stipulation to annex the penalty of piracy to the offence of participating in the trade by the citizens and subjects of the two parties. To this the British minister replied, that his government had no other desire than that any of their subjects who might engage in this traffic, should be detected and brought to justice, even by foreign hands, and from under the protection of her flag. He communicated the fact, that as late as the beginning of 1822 it was stated officially by the governor of Sierra Leone, that the fine rivers of Nunez and Pongas were entirely under the control of renegade European and American slave traders. He then proposed, as the only practical cure of the evil, that a mutual right of search should be conceded, to be confined to a fixed number of cruisers on each side; to be restricted to certain parts of the ocean; and that these cruisers should act under regulations prepared by mutual consent. For some reason this proposal was not agreed to. But in the 6th month of the same year instructions were forwarded to the American minister in England, authorizing him to conclude a treaty with Great Britain on the basis of a legislative prohibition of the slave trade, by both parties, under the penalties of piracy.

As the American government had, previously to that time, enacted a law declaring the African slave trade to be piracy, but the English had not; the basis proposed did not fall within the powers of the British ministry. So confident, however, were they of the concurrence of Parliament, that the British plenipotentiaries gave their unhesitating consent to the principle of denouncing the traffic as piratical, provided the parties could agree upon the other parts of the plan proposed. A treaty was signed in London in the 3d Month, 1824, and before the end of the month a law was enacted by the British parliament, declaring that the slave trade should be adjudged piracy in every part of the British dominions after the first day of the year 1825.

It is generally understood that a pirate is an enemy to the human race, and may on conviction be put to death by any government into whose power he happens to fall. This authority is generally exercised without inquiry as to the nation to which he may have belonged. It would therefore appear,

that when the United States and Great Britain had each prescribed the punishment of piracy for their own citizens or subjects engaged in the African slave trade, they had abandoned them to any power under which they might happen to fall. The treaty however provided that the cruisers of either party on the coast of Africa, America and the West Indies, should be authorized to seize slavers under the flag of the other, and send them *home* to the country to which they belonged, where they should be proceeded against as pirates. This treaty was at length ratified by the Senate in a mutilated form, to which the British cabinet refused to agree. The negotiation appears to have been closed by a declaration of the American secretary of state, that from the views entertained by the Senate, it would seem unnecessary and inexpedient any longer to continue the negotiation respecting the slave convention, with any hope that it would assume a form satisfactory to both parties.

Negotiations were subsequently renewed on this subject, and France has united with Great Britain in urging the cabinet at Washington to co-operate with them in putting an end to the African slave trade. The correspondence on this subject does not appear to have been published, but the Edinburgh Review for 7th month, 1836, represents the final answer of the American government to have been, that under no condition, in no form, and with no restriction, will the United States enter into any convention, or treaty, or combined efforts of any sort or kind with other nations for the suppression of this trade.—Jay's View, pp. 107. 117. 125, and 19th Rep. Af. Ins. p. 85.

With such a determination on the part of our government, in relation to the foreign slave trade, and an active commerce of the same revolting character, legally prosecuted within our own limits,* we might expect that the American flag should be

* President Dew, of William and Mary College, Virginia, in one of the most ingenious defences of slaveholding which has ever appeared, observes, "We have made some efforts to obtain something like an accurate account of the number of negroes every year carried out of Virginia, to the south and west. We have not been enabled to succeed completely; but from the best information we can obtain, we have no hesitation in saying that upwards of six thousand are yearly exported to other states. *Virginia is in fact a negro raising state for other states; she*

extensively used' to cover this traffic, and that American citizens should participate in its guilty emoluments. We find, however, that the flag of the United States is seldom displayed after the slaves are taken on board. The arrivals from the African coast, at the great slave marts of Brazil and Cuba are mostly announced as Spanish or Portuguese. A few such arrivals, under the American character, have been noticed within the last three or four years.

Among the arrivals at Rio Janeiro in the first Month, 1837, from the coast of Africa, reported by the British commissioners, we find one American, the M. E. Foster, said to have arrived *in ballast*, or without any cargo. The meaning of this annunciation is readily understood by adverting to the fact that of 53 arrivals at that port, from the coast of Africa, during the first half of that year, 46 were reported to have arrived in ballast. Parliamentary papers, Class A. 1837.

To those who are unacquainted with the mysteries of this traffic, it may be instructive to be informed, that the slavers usually land their slaves on some part of the coast, and then enter a neighbouring port *without a cargo*.

In the same year we find that eleven American vessels, sailed from Havana for the African coast, whereas the arrivals from the same coast are all reported as Spanish or Portuguese. Class A. 1837. Furth. Series, 67, 68. One of these vessels the *Terrible*, which sailed from Havana in the 6th month, ostensibly for the Cape de Verde islands, was found about six weeks afterwards, on the coast proceeding to Gallinas, not having touched at the Cape de Verdes. She had no regular register or sailing license, but merely a bill of sale, officially authenticated, from one of the civil courts of New Orleans, to ——— of that city, who has appeared on former occasions, as the seller of vessels purchased for the slave trade of Cuba. This man consigned her to the house of Pédro Martinez & Co. of Havana (the owners of many slave vessels which have

produces enough for her own supply, and six thousand for sale."—page 49. This is the declaration of a Virginian, not uttered by way of reproach, for he pronounces this efflux of negroes to be salutary to the state, and an abundant source of wealth. This publication appeared soon after the Southampton riot; that is to say seven or eight years ago.

been reported,) who despatched her thence on an ostensible voyage to the Cape de Verde islands, under the command of ———, who declared himself to be an Englishman but to have naturalised himself as an American. The letter of instruction from Martinez & Co. which was written in very bad English, directed the master to consign himself to Pedro Rodriguez of the Gallinas, (an agent there for the supply of slave ships) who was if he wished it “to have the vessel at his command,” and should he desire to “change the colours,” he was to do so for himself. In this case the crew were to be paid off with two months’ additional wages. The lading consisted of 30 half pipes of agua ardiente, and 53 small packages of tobacco, a cargo by no means sufficiently assorted for carrying on lawful commerce on that part of the coast. Class A. 1837. pa. 4.

Another of these vessels the Cleopatra was entered in the name of the same great slave dealers P. Martinez & Co. and despatched in company with a Portuguese schooner the Sin Igual, ostensibly to the Cape de Verde islands. Class A. Furth. Series, 51. There can be no doubt as to the employment of these two American schooners. If the other nine had been designed for lawful commerce to the African coast, it is not likely that they would have cleared out at Havana, particularly as the slave trade appears to be almost the only commerce carried on between that port and the African continent. We have indeed something more than conjecture with regard to one of them. The brig *Two Friends*, which sailed on the 7th of Third month, is supposed to have carried out a slaving equipment for two Portuguese vessels which cleared out the same day. It also appears that a schooner which sailed in the Fifth month under the name of the Vibora de Cabo Verde, as Portuguese property, was one of two which arrived at Havanna in the year 1836, under the American flag, *fitted in every particular for the slave trade*; and took in a cargo which would at once have condemned as a slaver any vessel belonging to the nations which are parties to the equipment article. These vessels it appears cleared out for the Cape de Verde islands. Buxton, 29. It is probable that both these vessels changed their names during the voyage. The one

which under the American flag bore the name of the Viper, is found about seven months afterwards sailing on a slaving expedition, with the name of the Vibora de Cabo Verde, under the flag of Portugal. Class B. 1837, pa. 139.

In the spring of the same year, we find that a brig called the Latona arrived at Lisbon under American colours, which had been sold by an inhabitant of Philadelphia to a man who resided at Havana. Part of the purchase money was paid in Philadelphia, and the remainder at Havanna. The purchaser then proceeded in her to Lisbon, having a crew engaged only for the voyage. On the passage it was discovered that there were various articles on board, mostly concealed, which plainly indicated that the ultimate object was a slaving expedition. Whether these articles were shipped at Havanna, or previously to her arrival there is not explained. It however plainly appears that this slave equipment was carried across the Atlantic under the protection of the American flag. The circumstance of such articles being on board was disclosed to the British minister at Lisbon, who announced it to the Portuguese authorities and to the American Charge d'Affaires. The latter withdrew his protection from the Latona, which raised the Portuguese flag, and appears to have sailed from Lisbon for Mozambique. Class B. 1837, pa. 33, 40.

Among the vessels which are reported by the commissioners as having left Havana in the year 1837, is the American schooner Bee, which is said to have sailed "on the 22nd of February, for the Cape de Verdes, under suspicious circumstances." Class A. Fur. Series, pa. 68. On the 5th of 12th month following, the same vessel was captured by a British cruiser off Cape Tiburon, Hayti, with 163 slaves on board. A document found on board, states that this schooner was sold on the 11th of April, at one of the Cape de Verde islands. The new ostensible owner was a subject of the Portuguese government; and the vessel when captured bore the name of the Isabelita. The sale was attested by the American Vice-Consul at Villa da Praia, St. Jago, Cape de Verdes. Class A. 1839, pa. 31, 32.

That the sales of these slavers are often fictitious may be reasonably inferred from the nature of the case; but we are

furnished with a curious species of testimony on the subject, in the capture of the Portuguese schooner *Ingunane* on the 12th of 9th month 1837. This vessel sailed from Havana, one or two days before the *Bee* under the name of the *Lince*, and as Spanish property. She arrived at the Cape de Verdes, was there nominally sold to a Portuguese subject, and obtained the usual testimonials of sale, and Portuguese papers. When captured with slaves on board, a declaration signed by the ostensible purchaser, was found among her papers, stating that the bill of sale was procured for the purpose of enabling the vessel to navigate the sea with Portuguese colours and papers; and that he had not purchased the vessel or paid any money for her; and consequently had no interest in her. In another document dated two days later, the same man appears as the owner, giving authority to the captain to act on his behalf and for his benefit in the employment of the schooner. lb. 38.

In the 12th month 1838, the schooner *Sirse* was condemned as a slaver by the British and Spanish mixed court at Sierra Leone. The following is extracted from the account of this vessel. "Of the numerous papers found on board this vessel, the first in point of date is a bill of sale, which shows, that the *Sirse* was originally the *Thomas H. Smith*, of New York, built in 1828, owned by an American citizen, who obtained an American register for her in his own name, at New York on the 29th of August, 1837. On the 19th of the following month — sold his vessel at Havana to T. C. de Mello, for \$3000. A certificate from the American consul at Havana, dated on the same day, states that — had appeared before him and acknowledged the bill of sale as his own act and deed. It will be observed that there is an interval of only 21 days between the date of the New York register and the date of the bill of sale at Havana. The former document must therefore have been obtained for the express purpose of facilitating the immediate transfer of the vessel." On board was found, "a certificate from the receiver of customs at Porto Praia, stating that T. C. de Mello had paid the 15 per cent. duty required by law, on the purchase money of the *Sirse*, *bought by his empowered attorney at New York*. In the bill of sale, the purchase is said to have been made at Havana, and de Mello himself is

named as the buyer." There was also found, "a set of bills for 500 dollars, drawn by Pedro Blanco of Gallinas, on _____ of New York, in favour of the well known Theodore Carrot, and endorsed by the latter to P. M. Tito, who figured as a passenger, but actually conducted the proceedings of the vessel. They are dated the 1st of September." This vessel was captured in the 11th month, on the African coast, fully equipped for a slaving expedition, but without slaves on board. Class A. 1839. Fur. Series, 26, 27.

In 1837, as already mentioned, eleven vessels under the American flag, are reported to have sailed from Havana, for the African coast, under circumstances which excited a suspicion that they were designed for the importation of slaves. In 1838, the reports exhibit nineteen of similar character. Several of these have been discovered to be connected with the slave trade. Near the end of the year 1836, the brig *Veloz*, American built, was condemned as a slaver at Sierra Leone, and sold at auction. She was purchased and sent to London; from whence in the spring of the following year, she was sent with a cargo to Cadiz. At that place she was delivered to a Spanish captain and crew, and not long afterwards sailed for Cuba. In the 11th month 1838, the same vessel under Portuguese colours, and bearing the name of the *Vetvano*, was captured off the river Gallinas. In the examination which ensued it appeared she was then owned by P. Martinez & Co. of Havana, and was intended to carry from 400 to 500 slaves, on her return to Cuba. Letters found on board served to explain the employment of several of the American vessels which left Havana during that year. In a letter from P. Martinez & Co. to their slave agent at Gallinas, they mention their having transmitted their correspondence by one of those American vessels (the *Mary Jane*) up to the time of her sailing; and their having consigned to him, by another American vessel (the *Comet*) 290 demijohns of rum. The receipt for this rum, signed by the captain of the *Comet*, and an engagement to deliver it to the said agent, was endorsed. It also appears that eighty hogsheads of tobacco, were sent to the same agent by another American brig, (the *Alexander*.) It is likewise plainly intimated that they had some commercial connection

with another of those American vessels, (the Dido) which had sailed from Havana a few days after the Alexander.

Another package, found in the same vessel (the Veloz alias the Vetuano,) contains the duplicate of a letter from a slave trading house at Havana to their agent at Gallinas, enclosing the agreement between them and the master of the Comet, together with a list of the merchandise which they had shipped in her, from which it is obvious that this vessel, though sailing with the character of an American, and no doubt under the protection of the American flag, was loaded chiefly if not wholly by foreigners, and with merchandise sent expressly for the African slave trade.* Among the articles enumerated are 15 cases containing 300 guns, 315 packages of powder, 4 cases containing 40 doz. cutlasses, 30 quarter casks, 197 ankers and 60 loading barrels of rum, and a large quantity of tobacco. Another document is the duplicate account of the cost of a vessel the Fuor Africano, despatched by the same house to Gallinas. Among the expenses of the expedition are the following curious items.

Gratifications to the Portuguese consul, the commissioner of our own nation, the commandant of the marine, and other persons concerned in despatching this vessel 750 dollars.

Gratifications in the office of the maritime captain general, in that of the Senor Naval Commandant, to the person who interceded with the English consul to smooth things as far as possible, 576 dollars. To La Barca for sundries for delivering suspicious articles 637 dollars.—Ibid. pages 32, 51.

This vessel, the Fuor Africano, three-fourths of which belonged to the merchants who loaded the American brig Comet, was captured on the 15th of 8th month in the river Gallinas, under the Portuguese flag and bearing the name of the Diligente. She was fully equipped for the slave trade and accordingly condemned at Sierra Leone, in the 10th month 1838.—Ibid. 11, 24. It is a striking illustration of the perseverance of these unlawful

* The same letter contains the following significant passage. "As you wished we should send you a month later, an *American* private boat, able to carry 250 or 300 bultos (slaves) to embark the return cargo, we have taken care to purchase one, on purpose to send it to you, with some rum and tobacco prepared with the greatest economy," p. 47.

traders, that the same vessel had been seized in the 1st month 1837, with 576 slaves on board, and condemned at Sierra Leone in the 3rd month following. She had previously to that time borne at least two different names, and was then called the Paquete de Cabo Verde, and belonged to P. Martinez & Co. though ostensibly a Portuguese vessel. At the time of the second seizure, 17 months after the first condemnation, she was owned in part by the same Martinez & Co. See Class A. 1837, p. 46.

In a letter from the commissioners at Havana to Lord Palmerston, dated 25th of April, 1838, they say: "In addition to the arrivals mentioned in our despatch, we have learned since it was forwarded, that in the month of February, a schooner under American colours, landed a cargo of between 200 and 300 negroes at or near Camoira not far from Matanzas. She had been sold to Spanish owners, and was to have been transferred to the Portuguese flag at the Cape Verde islands: but the master dying before they arrived, and the crew, not knowing what to do, proceeded to the coast of Africa, and having procured a cargo of negroes, returned with them under American colours. Information of this having been forwarded to Philadelphia, and thence to Pensacola, the Grampus, American schooner of war, was sent from the latter place to Matanzas, to inquire into the circumstances; when it is said to have been satisfactorily proved that there were none but Spaniards on board." Class A. 1839, pa. 91.

A letter from the British judge at Havana to Lord Palmerston, dated 22d Aug. 1838, contains the following passage. "Another vessel of like character arrived here the 4th inst., and is thus reported in the Diario of the 5th. 'From Baltimore in 24 days, the American ship Venus, Captain Wallace, tons 460, with bricks, to Don José Morana, passengers, 2. Of this vessel there is the following notice in a Baltimore paper, the American, of July 4th. A noble corvette ship the Venus, Captain Wallace, pierced for 18 guns, built in this city for foreign account, is also ready for sea. She is we learn the sharpest clipper built vessel ever constructed here, and, according to the opinion of nautical men, must outsail any thing that floats.'

The *Venus* is destined for Mozambique, and is designed to bring as many as 1000 negroes.

“On the subject of vessels going equipped under the American flag, to the coast of Africa, then to be pretended to be transferred for the first time, to some Portuguese or Spanish owner, I have had several conversations with the American consul at this place, a gentleman of high character, as well as of considerable reading and observation. I regret, however, to say, that I have received only the most discouraging replies, on every point, relating to the prohibited traffic, and to add that this seems the general feeling here of the American community. They all seem to declare, that it would be a question not to be entered upon, of inquiring into their equipments, as interfering with their trade, not knowing how far such interferences might be led to extend; and that England may as well think of closing up the work shops of Birmingham, where, they say, the bolts and shackles are manufactured, as to call on America to forbid the sailing of vessels equipped with them. In answer, I have not hesitated to express my disbelief of the shackles coming from Birmingham; and to declare my full conviction that at no port whatever in England, would they allow any such articles to be shipped, had they any idea of their being intended for the traffic in slaves.

“I regret to have also to inform your Lordship, that during the suspension of the Portuguese consul, as I have previously stated, the American consul has been acting *pro tempore* in that character, thus unquestionably giving a certain degree of effect to the abuse of the flag of his republic, under its association with the slave trade, and the pretended transfers to other owners on the coast of Africa.”—*Ibid.* 126.

Charles D. Toliné, consul at Havana, in a letter to the Vice Admiral Sir C. Paget, dated June 14, 1839, has thus noticed the *Venus*. “A first rate Baltimore three master, of 460 tons, arrived here on the 4th, and sailed for the coast of Africa on the twenty-fifth of August last, as the American ship *Venus*. Whilst she was here, some of the officers of her majesty’s navy saw and examined her, among the rest Commander Fraser of the *Nimrod*. She has returned, within a few days from Africa, as the Portuguese ship *Duqueza de Braganza*, after landing on

the coast of this island above 800 negroes. Her Portuguese papers are said to be those of an old vessel, originally French, subsequently Spanish, and ultimately transferred to the Portuguese flag under the name which the Venus now bears." Class B. Further Series, 1839. On the 19th of the same month the English commissioners at Havana, in a letter to Viscount Palmerston, give the subjoined account of this vessel. "The Venus sailed hence under the American flag, with several American citizens on board, but in the ship's articles, of which a glance, in bravado, was afforded her majesty's commissary judge, it was expressly stipulated, that she was to be taken to Bahia, there to be transferred to the Portuguese flag. This however appears not to have been done, for in the almost incredibly short period of four months, the ship has returned, and in the beginning of this month landed on the coast the extraordinary cargo of 860 slaves. At this time the name was changed to the Duqueza de Braganza, and she bore the Portuguese flag; but it was a matter of doubt whether a valid, if any, transfer of her had taken place; and it was currently believed that the American subjects [citizens] who had sailed in her from this port, were present when the slaves were taken on board. Indeed it was reported, from the parties themselves, that they had been visited on the coast of Africa, when bearing the American flag, by the officers of a British cruiser; and upon being asked what they were doing there, answered the inquiries by saying, it was no business of theirs, and that they were Americans. They boasted also, that though one of the cruisers watched and saw them take part of their cargo on board, and attempted afterwards to follow them, yet the chase was made in vain.* And undoubtedly the wonderfully short time in which this unprecedentedly successful voyage has been made, fully warrants the character which the ship brought here of her fast sailing qualities.

"Under these circumstances we felt it our duty to call the attention of the American consul, who is also acting as Portu-

* Captain Popham of the British sloop Pelican, states, that on 28th of November, when about 100 miles south of Lagos, he chased this ship, and at first gained on her; but she was lightened by throwing her deck cargo and spars overboard; when she sailed away from him with ease, notwithstanding his utmost efforts to come up with her. Class D. 1839. Further Series, p. 34.

guese consul, to so gross a violation of the laws as well as of the flag of the United States."

The commissioners add, that the cost of the ship, and cargo including all expenses, was estimated at 100,000 dollars; and that the slaves sold for nearly 300,000 dollars. They also stated that she was preparing for another voyage.

It may be observed that the communication to the American consul, was contained in about 15 lines, and that the language was altogether respectful. To that communication the consul returned a reply, filling no less than three printed folio pages, manifesting a strangely morbid sensibility in relation to the independence of his nation, and the interference of foreigners with the execution of our laws. He took occasion to taunt the British nation with manufacturing fabrics expressly for the African trade, and particularly of producing and exporting to Cuba large quantities of shackles, the distinctive instrument for carrying on the slave trade. See Class A. Fur. Ser. 1839, pp. 108. 112. To this angry address Viscount Palmerston directed the commissioners to reply, by assuring the consul that if he could at any time furnish the English government, through them, with any information which might, directly or indirectly, enable them to enforce the penalty of the law against British subjects who may be concerned in the slave trade, that government would feel most sincerely obliged to him.—Ib. p. 120.

It is remarkable that a few days after the British commissioners announced to the American consul the arrival of the *Venus* on the coast, and the landing of her human cargo, they addressed a note to the French consul general, informing him of the return of a French brig from Africa; with a cargo of slaves, which she was understood to have landed in the neighbourhood. To this note the French consul returned an answer next day, informing the commissioners that a brig of war had been ordered to prepare immediately to go in search of the suspected vessel.—Ibid. 115. This vessel was run ashore and lost soon after discharging her slaves, not without suspicion that the wreck was intentionally incurred to prevent detection and exposure.—Ibid. 114. Class B. 1839, Fur. Series, 31.

A letter from Viscount Palmerston to H. S. Fox, minister at Washington, dated 31st of May, 1838, contains the following:

“ I have received information from her Majesty’s commissioners at Havana, that persons who are engaged in the slave trade in Cuba, and who are desirous to evade the effect of the stipulations of the treaty between Great Britain and Spain, have lately made a practice of purchasing vessels in the United States, and of sending them equipped for the slave trade, under American colours, to the Cape de Verde islands, or to the coast of Africa: that a mock sale is there made, and the vessel is pretended to be transferred to Spanish or Portuguese owners: the name being changed, and all vestiges of her former character lost.” Class D. 1838-9, p. 50.

On the 3d of 6th mo. 1838, a Portuguese schooner named the *Prova*, was captured in the Calabar river, with 225 slaves on board. It was found that this vessel had cleared out from Havana, about 10 months previously, with a custom-house clearance for the *river Calabar*, and a certificate from the Portuguese consul, dated one day later, declaring that she was cleared out solely for *the island of St. Thomas*. In the official manifest, 20 bundles of shaken casks for bringing back palm oil, and 2000 feet of boards, are mentioned as part of the legitimate cargo. The casks were no doubt designed to hold water for the slaves, and the boards to form slave decks. The *Prova* being injured in a gale, soon after leaving Havana, put into Charleston to refit, and remained there nearly three months. A document was furnished, with the signature of the American custom-house officers, declaring that no part of her cargo was landed at Charleston. The cargo, however, was described, and the 20 *bundles of shooks* included in the description. Thus equipped for a slave voyage, she was permitted to leave an American port without interruption. Class A. 1839. p. 73, 74.

Extract of a letter from Lieutenant Kellett to Admiral Elliott, dated 19th of July, 1838. “ When cruising for the interception of slave vessels from the Gallinas and Sherbro, I boarded the American schooner *Mary Hooper*, belonging to Philadelphia, who received at Havana her cargo of *agua ardiente*, navigated by a crew of seven men. She had on board nine passengers, Spaniards and Portuguese, with a Spaniard as supercargo; and is consigned to a notorious slave trader at the Gallinas. Charles M. Bugstraud, the master and nominal owner, has been twice

taken for breaches of the slave laws. The vessel called at Port Praya, and I have no doubt received other papers there; the master did not deny the fact. The passengers, I have no doubt, are intended to assist in navigating the vessel when the slaves are on board. As she was under the American flag, I did not feel myself justified in making search for any other papers." Class D. Fur. Series, 1839, p. 21.

Among the vessels detained by the British cruizers near the end of 1835, we find the schooner *Constituçao*, detained in Aura roads, without slaves on board, having a crew of 24 men. Upon this the following note is made by the captor. "She produced a Cape Verde island paper dated 10th of December, stating her to be American built, in which the name of the captain differs from that on the muster roll: found Spanish custom-house clearances, to which are affixed the name of Mr. Trist as American consul, there being no Portuguese at Havana. All eleven passengers had Spanish passports, and evidently held the highest offices on board. One stated himself to be the owner of both vessel and cargo; found in his desk a certificate of his birth as a Spaniard, and several printed forms signed by Mr. Trist, *left blank* for them to fill up at pleasure. Found a Spanish log in the main hold, and a Spanish ensign secreted. She had four men, neither accounted for by muster roll nor passports, making a total of thirty-nine. Her cargo is rich, consisting of powder, spirits, silks, Manchester goods, and tobacco: has slave irons, plank for decks, large coppers and leaguers." This vessel was under Portuguese colours. Ibid. 26.

Extract from a letter from Lieutenant Birch to Commodore Sullivan, dated 12 November, 1838. "The American brig *Dido* of Baltimore, her master, ——— Phillips, and ——— Manuel, supercargo, when under American colours, and vice versa when under Portuguese colours, left the Havana about March, 1837*, with a general slave cargo, consisting of arms, ammunition, spirits, tobacco, &c., and touched at Cape de Verde islands, where it is probable she got Portuguese papers, after the sham sale was effected. From thence she proceeded to

* This is unquestionably an error, probably in the printing. The commissioners at Havana report that the *Dido* left that port Feb. 27, 1838.

Lagos, in the Bight of Benin. From Lagos she finally sailed with 575 slaves on board. After three weeks passage she made the sand hills to the windward of Bahia. On reconnoitering the port, her majesty's sloop Sparrow-hawk was observed at anchor; upon which they hauled off, hoisting, however, their distinguishing flag forward, and American colours abaft, which was acknowledged from the village outside the bar. That same evening 570 slaves, (five having died on the passage) were landed close to the point Itapacan, at the village. During the night the Dido was cleaned out, and made her appearance in Bahia, next day, under American colours. The Dido left Bahia again on the 27th of July with a general cargo for the coast, and was expected [reported] by the Mary Lushing of Baltimore, as having been left by her in September, in Lagos river, in the Bight of Benin."

The same writer in a subsequent letter informs that they had boarded the Mary Lushing, of Baltimore, under American colours, Reynolds, master, with a crew all of whom were Portuguese or Spaniards. The master voluntarily allowed them to inspect the vessel between decks. The equipment plainly proved her destination, but there were no slaves on board. The vessel had been sold to parties at Havana, for the purpose of carrying on the slave trade, the former American master remaining on board with the register, that she might still bear the flag of the United States. Upon some allusion being made to the colours which were flying, the master observed, that if he had negroes on board, they should not see those colours up. Ibid. 28, 29.

The case of the brig Eagle appears worthy of notice. This vessel was reported by the commissioners at Havana as one of the nineteen American vessels which left that port in 1838, supposed to be engaged in the slave trade. Her departure is stated to have taken place on the 9th of May. Lieutenant Birch, in a letter to Commodore Sullivan, informs him, that on the 16th of September, he boarded the Eagle, of Baltimore, near Bahia, under American colours, — Littig, master, in ballast, with a crew and passengers, in all 21 men. Her American papers were produced, and he did not conceive himself warranted in searching her. It was reported at Bahia

that she had landed slaves to the northward, and her appearance, on boarding, warranted the supposition. On the 19th of October she again sailed with a general cargo for the coast of Africa. *Ibid.* 28. A letter from Lieutenant Reeve, commander of the sloop *Lily*, dated at Gambia, April 2, 1839, states that he had captured the *Eagle* at Lagos, she being under American colours, but the crew all Spaniards, except one man, who called himself both master and owner. The captor sent her to Sierra Leone for adjudication, but the mixed commission there refused to decide the case, on the ground that the ship's papers set forth that she was an American. She is stated to have been sold at Havana, and that the American vice-consul attested the sale, and granted American papers. The writer adds his opinion, that in a short time no other flag than the American will be seen on the coast, for under existing laws it affords all the protection which a slaver can desire. *Ib.* 30.

The papers produced were the following :

1. A power of attorney for the disposal of the brig *Eagle* of Baltimore, made by William G. Harrison and Walter Price, both of the city of Baltimore, to T. I. Wingate, master, signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of John Gill, notary public, Baltimore.

2. A bill of sale of the *Eagle* of Baltimore, signed 1st of December, 1837, from T. I. Wingate, master, on part of owners, to Joshua W. Littig, signed by the said Thos. I. Wingate, and duly attested by J. A. Smith, vice-consul.

3 & 4. Two certificates from N. P. Trist, consul of the United States, Havana, dated 10th of March, 1838, attesting that annexed was a correct copy of the power of attorney granted by William G. Harrison and Walter Price, to Thos. I. Wingate; and that the said Thos. I. Wingate had that day acknowledged before him, that the accompanying bill of sale was his act and deed. That there was inserted in the bill of sale a correct copy of the original register of the brig, and likewise that the original register was deposited at the consulate, to be sent to the collector of the customs at Baltimore.

The commissioners at Sierra Leone having refused to take cognizance of the *Eagle*, on account of her American character, the prize-master returned with her to Lagos, and thence to

Fernando Po, where Charles Fitzgerald, commander of the brigantine Buzzard, took charge of her with a determination to deliver her to the government of the United States. The commander and nominal owner, not finding the American character of the Eagle likely to be of any further advantage, then declared, that though he was an American citizen, the vessel and cargo were Spanish property; that she was equipped in May of the preceding year, at the port of Havana, for the purpose of carrying on the slave trade; that he had not purchased the Eagle, or paid any thing for her; and that the bill of sale was made out without his being a party, or privy to it; that he was engaged by F. Morales at Havana, as a citizen of the United States, in order to cover the brigantine Eagle with the flag of the nation to which he belongs; and that he had no interest in the adventure except the wages which might be due at the end of the voyage." Dr. Madden's letter to W. E. Channing, p. 29. 31.

The Eagle, and two others of like occupation, arrived at New York in the 6th month, 1839, under charge of the British brigantine Buzzard. But it appears that our government declined receiving them. Jay's View, 132.

Extract from a letter from Captain Popham, of the sloop Pelican, dated December 24, 1838, to Admiral Elliott. "The Pelican sailed from West Bay, Prince's Island, on the 15th inst. On the 17th, at day break, a suspicious sail was reported. We made all sail in chase, and at 7 A. M. detained the Portuguese slave schooner Magdalena, with a cargo of 320 slaves. Among her passengers was a citizen of the United States, who had on the 1st of December made over to a Spaniard the schooner Ontario, of Baltimore. The sale was no doubt effected at Havana, though the bill of sale mentioned it to have taken place at Brass.

"In this instance the American flag gave unqualified protection to the slave trade; for the Ontario was boarded by the boats of her Majesty's ship Viper in November, and she was then reported as preparing for the reception of slaves, but having American papers and colours.

"After a little conversation with the Portuguese commander of the Magdalena, he informed me that the Ontario was in

company on the preceding afternoon. Of this information immediate advantage was taken; and sailing in the proper direction, we came next morning at day-light in sight of the Ontario, and captured her at 11. 30 A. M. with 220 slaves on board. She was under Spanish colours, but had no papers whatever. Ontario of Baltimore was painted in large letters on her stern.

“Both these vessels I sent to Sierra Leone for adjudication, informing the British commissioners of my intention to detain the American —, until I received your orders respecting the disposal of him. However, on a careful perusal of the instructions in my possession, and of the correspondence between Great Britain and the United States on the subject of the slave trade, I was induced to alter my intention, feeling that I should not be borne out in interfering with a citizen of the United States, which it appeared to me, the American government evinced no disposition to tolerate, *even in very extreme cases*. It has been mentioned by Spaniards and Portuguese slaving on this coast, that, were it not for the active co-operation of the Americans, the slave trade would very materially decline; in fact be but feebly carried on. I do not doubt, from all I hear, that the citizens of the United States, (generally of Baltimore) are more deeply interested in the slave trade to the Havana and Brazil, than is generally supposed.” Class D, 1839, Fur. Series, p. 34.

Rear Admiral Elliott, in a letter to Charles Wood, dated Feb. 13, 1839, expresses his opinion that the use of the American flag is rapidly becoming more general in the protection of Spanish slave vessels. In so barefaced a manner do the slavers proceed, that in some instances they have not even one American to personify the captain; but satisfy themselves with furnishing one of the crew with a certificate of naturalization for the occasion. He adds, “If her majesty’s ships were at liberty to send some of these pretended Americans to the United States, and the government of that country were to uphold the honour of their flag, by subjecting such lawless felons to prosecution and punishment, it would soon put an end to the nefarious usurpation of their flag by the most notorious slave dealers belonging to Spain and Portugal.” Ib. 35. (Printed list.)

Further evidence of the participation of American citizens in

this guilty traffic could be readily produced, but it is apprehended that what has been already exhibited is amply sufficient not only to remove all doubt upon this subject, but to evince the imperious necessity that some measures of a more efficient character than any yet adopted, should be resorted to for the purpose of redeeming our citizens from the guilt, and our national character from the infamy, of encouraging and supporting a traffic which the civilized world has agreed to condemn, and which our own laws have placed in the catalogue of the blackest crimes.

OF THE DESTRUCTION OF LIFE ATTENDANT UPON THE SEIZURE.

On this head a few facts and observations will suffice. It is obvious from the nature of the case that great numbers of persons must perish in the contests by which the slave trade is supplied, even if the assailants always kept their primary object steadily in view. But it is well ascertained that the rage which a determined resistance sometimes excites, causes the barbarous warriors to forget their original object, and to sacrifice to their vengeance, those whom their avarice would have taught them to spare. Thomas Clarkson gives, on the authority of an eye witness, an instance in which a large party attacked a town on the Niger,* for the purpose of procuring slaves, but meeting with an obstinate resistance, a furious battle ensued, which after lasting about half an hour, resulted in the flight of the townsmen, who took to the river, and endeavoured to swim to the opposite shore. They were closely pursued by the victors, who in their fury put all who fell into their hands indiscriminately to the sword. Even the children were not spared.—*Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the human species.* p. 72.

Major Denham, who visited Africa in 1822, 3 and 4, observes, —“ On attacking a place, it is the custom of the country instantly to fire it; and as they are all composed of straw huts only, the

* Probably the Senegal, or one of the neighbouring rivers, which were formerly supposed to be the outlet of the Niger.

whole is shortly devoured by the flames. The unfortunate inhabitants fly quickly from the destructive element, and fall immediately into the hands of their no less merciless enemies who surround the place; the men are quickly massacred, and the women and children lashed together and made slaves." Denham & Clap. Narrative, Boston edition, p. 125. In another place he informs us that a marriage was negotiated between the Shiekh of Bornou and the daughter of the Sultan of Mandana, in which the marriage portion was to be the proceeds of an expedition into a neighbouring country by the united forces of the contracting potentates. The result was, that three thousand unfortunate wretches were dragged from their native wilds and sold into perpetual slavery, *while probably double that number were sacrificed to obtain them.* Ibid. 89.

Again he observes, "The season of the year had arrived when the sovereigns of these countries go out to battle, and the dread of the bashaw's expedition had prevented the sheikh from making an inroad into the Beghermi country, they in consequence took the opportunity of attacking him, notwithstanding their discomfiture in five former expeditions, when at least twenty thousand poor creatures were slaughtered, and three-fourths of that number, at least, driven into slavery."— Again, "a direful war of extermination had been for years carried on between Bornou and Beghermi, the fury of which had not in the least abated. No males were spared on either side, except on terms worse perhaps than death." Ib. 163, 164. He afterwards relates the circumstances of a contest between these people, in which seven sons of the Sultan of Beghermi, besides seventeen hundred of their warriors were slain; in addition to which many were drowned in attempting to escape. The plunder in this case is said to have been four hundred and eighty horses, nearly two hundred women, and two of the other sex. Ib. 191.

Of the sufferings and mortality usually attendant upon the journeys performed by the slaves between their capture and embarkation melancholy accounts are given by numerous travellers. The author last quoted, speaks of thousands of skeletons whitening in the blast between Houka and Mourzuk, on the route usually pursued by the slave caravans on their way to Ferran; p. 131.

Under date of December 16th, 1822, he mentions their leaving the wells of Omah, where he observes, "numbers of skeletons or parts of skeletons lay scattered on the sands." Next evening they arrived at a well near Meshroo. "Round this spot were lying more than one hundred skeletons, some of them with the skin still remaining attached to the bones, not even a little sand thrown over them. The greater part of these unhappy people had formed the spoils of the Sultan of Fezzan the year before. They were marched off with chains round their necks and legs: the most robust only arrived at Fezzan in a very debilitated state, and were there fattened for the Tripoli slave market. We bivouaced in the midst of these unearthened remains of the victims of persecution and avarice, after a long day's journey of 26 miles, in the course of which one of our party counted 107 of these skeletons." Under date of the 22d he observes, "During the last two days we had passed on an average from sixty to eighty or ninety skeletons each day; but the numbers that lay about the wells at El Hammar were countless; those of two women whose perfect and regular teeth bespoke them young, were particularly shocking; their arms still remained clasped round each other as they had expired."—p. 6—10.

Richard Lander, in his narrative of his journey from the interior of Africa, after the death of Captain Clapperton in 1826, mentions that he left Saccatoo with a large company, among whom was the king of Jacoby with 50 slaves. The company moving on rapidly, these slaves who carried heavy loads on their heads were unable to keep up with them, and were consequently left behind. Two days afterwards he was informed that the slaves not having overtaken the caravan, a company of horsemen was sent back in quest of them, who had just returned with an account of having found the bodies of 35 of them on the road. The other 15 had not been discovered, but were supposed also to have perished. The water was carried on the camels, and the poor slaves had doubtless died of thirst.—p. 337. 339.

These are a few of the shocking facts which abound in the narratives of travellers who have visited the interior of Africa. Whether the slaves were on their way to the ports frequented

by the traders of Europe and America or to those of Egypt or Tripoli, their sufferings and mortality must be very similar.

MORTALITY OF THE MIDDLE PASSAGE.

A LITTLE attention to the crowded condition in which the slaves are usually transported across the Atlantic, must convince any reasonable person that this transportation cannot fail to be attended by an awful waste of human life. To give the reader some faint idea of the horrors of the middle passage, it may be premised, that in W. Dolben's bill regulating the transportation of slaves, five men were allowed for every three tons, in ships under one hundred and fifty tons; and three men for two tons in ships of greater burden, the space between decks being in both cases, at least five feet; and it was found that in vessels thus freighted the bodies lay so close together as scarcely to leave any part of the floor uncovered. Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In the law of the United States for regulating passenger ships, enacted in 1819, only two passengers are allowed for every five tons. Laws of 1819, p. 37.

Bearing these things in mind, let us advert to the following cases.

In 1824 the following were sent into Sierra Leone.

The Diana, of 66 tons. No. of slaves 156, and a crew of 18. Height of the men's room 2 feet 7 in. Height of women's 3 feet 11 in.

The Brazilian Friends, 95 tons. No. of slaves 260. Height of men's room 2 feet 6 inches; do of women's 3 feet 10 inches.

The Aviso, of 165 tons. No. of slaves 465. Height of rooms 3 feet 2 in.

The whole number shipped in these three vessels was 881, of whom 712 were adults. 19th Rep. Af. Ins. p. 262, 3.

A few months previously the Lisboa was sent to the same port, having 336 slaves on board, though the tonnage was only 92. Ib. 275. In the following year this vessel was found by a British brig abandoned by her crew, with 31 negroes holding to the top of the main-mast; and ten more were cut out of the

side. The crew and 138 slaves had been taken off by another slaver, and the rest left to perish.—20th Report, p. 38.

In 1825 two Brazilian vessels were sent into Sierra Leone, one of 51 tons with 160 slaves, chiefly adults, the other of 82½ tons, with 285 slaves. In the same year a Spanish slaver measuring only 51 tons was captured, with 285 slaves on board. Near the same time two other Spanish slavers were sent into Sierra Leone, one of them measuring 41 tons, and the other 60. The former had 132 negroes, and the latter 135, crammed into a space capable of containing about 30 at full length. *Ibid.* 40. 42. 55. In the same year we have an account of 17 slaves, the remainder of 23, being found at sea, on board a schooner boat of five tons. The space allotted to these slaves was only 18 inches in height between the water casks and the deck. *Ibid.* p. 109.

If we turn to the recent accounts, we shall find that the same barbarous practice of crowding the vessels to suffocation is continued. The following account of the tonnage and cargoes of Spanish and Portuguese vessels condemned at Sierra Leone during the years 1837 and 1838, composing only a small part of the whole, may serve as a specimen. The tonnage it may be observed is generally given on the authority of the masters; and it is well known that the slavers frequently rate the tonnage of their ships considerably above its amount.

In 1837.—		Slaves.	
The Gata	32 tons cargo	111	Class A. 1837, p. 19
The Dolores	107 do do	314	30
Paquette Cabo Verde	182 do do	576	47
Josephina	120 do do	350	54
Latona	126 do do	325	56
Lafayette	184 do do	448	59
Providencia	60 do do	198	67
Vibora de Cabo Verde	100 do do	269	“ Fur. Ser. 15
Florida	88 do do	296	20
Ligeira	78 do do	313	(four to a ton) 25
In 1838.—			
Deixa Falar	72 do do	210	Class A. 1839, 12
Arrogante	150 do do	473	30

			Slaves.	
Isabelita	36	do	do	150
Felicidades	218	do	do	559
Dons Irmaos	64	do	do	305
Piova	91½	do	do	225
Flor de Loando	90	do	do	289
				34
				43
				68-70
				74
				80

The American ship *Venus*, which in the beginning of 1839 landed 860 slaves in Cuba, and was said to be calculated to carry 1000, is stated at 460 tons.

Sometimes the efforts to conceal the slaves from discovery add greatly to their sufferings. A letter dated in 1826 from a British naval officer, mentions having boarded a vessel, under Dutch colours, with a view of examining her papers. The Captain represented her as laden with sugar, and after considerable search nothing to the contrary was discovered. Suspicion however being excited, one of the officers descended into the hold, where he at length perceived the leg of a black man under a curtain, on the removal of which 240 slaves were discovered. They were nearly starved, having only one day's provision on board; and a yam being thrown among them they fought for it like hungry dogs. They had been at sea 47 days, during which time sixty at least had died. 21st Rep. Af. Ins. p. 86.

In the same year, a British officer boarded a steam-boat which was supposed to be carrying newly imported Africans from one Spanish port to another. The Captain of the steamer denied having any negroes on board; and the passengers appeared to be ignorant whether there were or not. Upon descending into the hold, no person was to be seen; but upon removing some furniture from between the bulk heading which separated the steam boilers from the vessel's side, fourteen male negroes were discovered stowed beneath those articles and exposed to the intense heat arising from the lighted stoves. When these slaves were made to understand that their visitors intended to deliver them, their joy became unbounded; and one of the most intelligent pointed to the forepeak, where, after diligent search, six females were found under rope, sails and a hawser; the whole of which had evidently been coiled over

them for the purpose of concealment. The greater part of these slaves were afflicted with severe ophthalmia, and nearly deprived of sight.—Ib. p. 59.

In the recent parliamentary papers we have an account of the Spanish schooner *Vincedoza*, which arrived at Cadiz from the coast of Africa in the year 1837, with a number of slaves on board. These slaves were, no doubt, kept in the hold during their stay at Cadiz; for we find they were concealed during a passage from Cadiz to Porto Rico, from the sight and knowledge of the passengers taken in at the former port. On the voyage the passengers were much annoyed by the effluvia arising from the vessel's hold, but were not permitted to see the interior of it. At Porto Rico a number of these slaves were landed and the remainder brought out to view. On the passage from this island to Havana, the *Vincedoza* was detained by a British cruizer, when the number of slaves still on board was 26. It therefore appears that this number, besides those who were landed at Porto Rico, had been carried across the Atlantic concealed in the hold of a vessel ostensibly engaged in the packet service. Class A. 1837, p. 38.

With regard to the number of deaths which occur in the voyages across the Atlantic our information is often very uncertain, as the testimony on this subject is generally of a questionable character. A few cases will be noted in which the voyage was not longer than that usually performed by the slave vessels, and the care of their health likely to be greater. In the beginning of 1837, the Portuguese brigantine *Temerario*, was taken with 349 slaves who had been just shipped, and sent to Sierra Leone, where she arrived in 33 days; yet 98 died before they were landed; and 13 more in a few days afterwards. Class A. 1837, p. 51.

The *Cobra de Africa* was detained on the 27th of 5th month in the same year, with 162 slaves, and arrived at Sierra Leone on the 14th of the following month; and yet 52 had died on the voyage, and 44 of the survivors required hospital treatment. The vessel is stated at 110 tons, and of course was less crowded than slave ships usually are. The slaves however are said to have been confined in the baracoons about three months previous to embarkation.—Ibid. 62. The *Paquete de Cabo Verde*

was detained on the 11th of 1st month, in the same year, and arrived at Sierra Leone on the 20th of the 2nd month. The number of slaves at the time of capture was 576; and the deaths previous to her arrival 106; with 112 requiring hospital treatment.—Ib. p. 47.

On the 23d of 12th month, 1836, the Brazilian ship *Incomprehenivel* was captured about midway between the cape of Good Hope and Rio Janeiro with a cargo of slaves, and sent to Sierra Leone, where they arrived on the 27th of the following month. According to the declaration of the master, he had shipped 785 slaves at Mozambique. When they arrived at Sierra Leone it appeared that 83 had died subsequent to the capture, and that 180 more required medical treatment. By the decree of the court the vessel was condemned, and the surviving slaves, 586, emancipated. It thus appears that 199 must have died between the time of embarkation and the condemnation of the vessel. Ib. 74. 83.

The *Princeza Africano*, with 222 slaves, was captured about the last of the year 1837, on the same day on which the slaves were embarked, and arrived at Sierra Leone in six days. An inspection of the slaves took place the next days; when it was found, that although the slaves had been only a week on board, there were 49 cases of disease among them, of which 33 were ophthalmia. Class A. 1839, pa. 11.

The *Arrogante* was captured 23d of 11th month, 1837, and conveyed to Montego bay, Jamaica. The whole voyage from Gallinas to Jamaica occupied 52 days; the number of slaves shipped was stated by the master to be 473; but the survivors delivered at Jamaica were only 332; showing 141 deaths out of 473 individuals, in less than two months.—Ib. 28. 30.

The *Felicidades* was detained on the 8th of 3d month, 1838, with 559 slaves on board, which had been embarked three days before. The vessel arrived at Sierra Leone on the 7th of the following month; and notwithstanding every attention on the part of the captors, 134 of the slaves perished previous to their arrival, and 14 afterwards.—Ib. 42.

The destructive character of the middle passage is strikingly illustrated by the case of the *Prova*, which was captured in the summer of 1838, with 225 slaves on board, and taken to

Sierra Leone. The clean and comparatively comfortable condition of the vessel and slaves is said to have reflected great credit on the officer who had charge of them; and out of the 225 slaves, who were embarked just before the capture, only 20 died during a passage of twenty days. That is, only $8\frac{2}{7}$ per cent. had perished in 20 days. Now the usual mortality in a year is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It therefore appears that this naval officer, by very superior attention, and he probably did all that the nature of the case allowed, so far impeded the march of death, that about six days were required to take off as many as usually die in a year.—Ibid. p. 74.

Besides the usual causes of mortality, the slaves are exposed to greater danger, and to more frequent destruction from casualties incident to sea voyages. In case of the vessel being wrecked, the slaves, from their confined situation, have very little chance of escape. We have an account of the *Estella* schooner, with upwards of 300 slaves, being wrecked in the summer of 1838 on the coast of Jamaica. The crew it appears escaped to the shore, leaving the slaves and vessel on the shoal. They did not for some days, disclose the circumstances of the wreck, and when at length search was made, it was found that the slaves had all perished.—Ib. 11. Near the same time it appears a slaver arrived at Havana, the outline of whose history, given by the British judge at that place, is the following.

“She sailed it is said to Madagascar and Mozambique, and not finding any negroes on the coast to be bought, forcibly and piratically took from the other vessels engaged in the same errand, the cargoes they had collected, and gave the robbed vessels a quantity of gunpowder, &c. with a recommendation for them to adopt the same course. Having thus got together about 560 negroes, the report further states, that before they got out of the range of the monsoons, they encountered very violent weather, which lasted two days, and compelled them to shut down the hatches, without being able, during that time to afford the slaves either air or food. The consequence was, that when the storm abated, and they went to examine their condition, they found that about 300 negroes had perished from suffocation and hunger, and with the ordinary mortality afterwards attending such voyages, they arrived here with only about 200 surviving.”—Ib. 114.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

THE documents from which the preceding accounts are extracted, not only prove that up to a very recent date, an active and extensive traffic in slaves has been prosecuted, in which foreigners and American citizens are engaged; that this traffic involves a fearful destruction of human life in every stage of its progress; and that perjury and fraud, as well as cruelty, pervade this system of complicated wickedness; but they afford reason to fear, that the government of the United States has failed to exercise its proper influence towards arresting this appalling evil. It is not easy to believe that so many vessels built in the United States, would be or could be engaged in this nefarious traffic under the protection of our national flag, if proper vigilance were exercised by all those who are required, by their official stations, to prevent the infraction or evasion of our laws. It appears indeed an extraordinary circumstance, that although more than twenty years have passed since this trade was declared to be piracy by the American government, and we have ample testimony that numerous vessels, really or ostensibly American, are engaged in it, we should scarcely ever hear of an instance in which these violators of our laws have been called to answer for their conduct. It is certainly a question demanding the serious consideration of those who are entrusted with the management of our national concerns, how far the great responsibility resting upon those who possess the power to arrest a system so abominable, and so awfully destructive to human life, as well as the obligation incurred by the pledge included in the treaty of Ghent, to use our best endeavours to promote the abolition of this traffic, have been regarded.
