vessel engaged in honest commerce, that detention and search shall be regarded as a wrong, and the British government shall pay the actual damages caused by it. The British government has long conceded its obligation to pay the actual damages in such cases, and has often paid them. The latest case of this kind is that of the Jehossee, and the latest document is the letter of Secretary Cass to the owners, informing them that the British government were ready to pay the actual damages, as soon as ascertained, and calling for proof of their amount. All that hinders any British cruiser from visiting and searching every vessel under the American flag is this liability to pay damages, if the vessel proves to be an honest one. That risk is in no case very great, and in most cases, nothing. Generally, almost universally, an American trader will gladly receive a visit from a British lieutenant, who will come on board like a gentleman, and civilly request a sight of the vessel's papers and cargo, and will readily give him all the information he asks. It is only when he comes by British authority, and makes demands, and threatens, that there are objections to his "visit." The search and detention have been so mismanaged in some cases, as to make the Britsh government liable for damages to the amount of some thousands of dollars. In one case, eleven thousand dollars was paid without controversy, and some thousands more after controversy. But the actual damage never need be great, and commonly is nothing, or so little that nothing is said about it. British cruisers habitually disregard it and "visit" suspected vessels freely, notwithstanding any flag they may choose to display. The slaver Storm King, lately captured by the San Jacinto and brought into Monrovia, with more than six hundred slaves on board, had been "visited" three times by a British cruiser on her outward voyage. As for the capture of vessels under the American flag, when found with slaves on board, take the late well-known case

of the Orion, for example. The Orion cleared at New York, and was seized on her outward voyage, and sent home by an American cruiser, on suspicion of being engaged in the slave trade. The evidence was found insufficient to condemn her. On her discharge she returned to the coast. She was boarded by the U. S. steamer Mystic. The boarding officers found suspicious circumstances, but not enough, they thought, to secure her condemnation. The captain said he was bound to the Congo river for palm-oil, and that his crew were sick, and he needed assistance to enter the river. The Mystic granted the desired assistance, and then stationed herself near the mouth of the river, to watch her movements. Being ordered to Loanda to carry despatches, the Mystic engaged the British steamer Pluto to watch the Orion. The Pluto, in a few hours, steamed off out of sight. The Orion, supposing the coast now clear, took in nearly nine hundred slaves, and set sail. The Pluto, having kept out of sight just long enough for her ruse to operate, pursued, and in a short time overtook her, with the American flag flying, made a prize of her without ceremony, and took her to St. Helena. After escape had become evidently impossible, her American flag and papers were thrown over board, and she appeared without nationality. According to the first accounts, this was done by the advice of the British boarding-officer, after coming on board, and before declaring her a prize. According to the statement which appears most authentic, it was done in his sight, just before he came on board. It was done, because, if she had been taken with the American flag and papers, the ship and all on board must be delivered to the American squadron, who would have landed the recaptives at Monrovia, and sent the ship, officers, and crew to the United States for trial; but if taken without nationality, the ship and cargo would be a prize to the British captors, and the officers and crew

would be discharged at the first port. Slavers, in such circumstances, usually pursue the same course for the same reason. In this case, this device for escaping punishment was unsuccessful. The Mystic, having delivered her despatches, anticipating the result, had proceeded directly to St. Helena, arriving before the Pluto and her prize. When the officers of the Orion were discharged, the United States Consul demanded them of the authorities of St. Helena as fugitives from justice. They were arrested, delivered up, and sent to Boston for trial, convicted, and sentenced to fine and imprisonment for serving voluntary on board of a slaver. In order to secure this conviction, it was necessary to delay the trial till the Secretary of State could obtain from the British government the attendance of two witnesses who were present at the capture. If they had been indicted for the higher crime committed in the Congo river, they might, perhaps, have escaped conviction, for want of proof of their personal participation in it. This case differs from others only in the fact, that the Mystic first set the Pluto to watch the Orion, and the fact, that her officers, after their discharge by the British cruiser, were brought to punishment. In all other respects it was like all other cases of frequent occurrence. It is not true, therefore, that the American flag actually portects slavers from capture by British cruisers. *

But, as we have seen, if Great Britain would only enforce her rights, there would be no slave-trade on the ocean for the American or any other flag to cover. Why does she not enforce them? We are not bound to answer this question; nor can we be reasonably expected to know all the secret reasons of her policy. Doubtless her rulers honestly desire the suppression of the slave-trade, and are using, in good faith, the means which they have been induced to regard as wisest for that end. We may, however, mention several British interests which might be unfavorably affected by the use of the most effectual means.

The British government may well desire to avoid a war with Spain for the enforcement of her treaties, not only from a humane unwillingness to incur the evils of war, or to inflict them on any nation, but also because the indebtedness of Spain to British subjects is enormous, and in case of any serious calamity to Spain, and especially in case of a war with Great Britain, the pecuniary loss of British creditors, by the depreciation of Spanish securities, would be immense. The holders of these securities have a deep interest in every thing that is profitable to Spain, or to Cuba, her dependency. They form a powerful body, under temptation to desire the continuance of the slave trade, and, with good reason, averse to the use of the last resource of nations for its suppression.

*Mr. Robert Campbell, an intelligent colored citizen of Philadelphia, and "one of the Commissioners of the Niger Valley Exploring Party," has, since his return, published a brief statement of some of his observations. The pamphlet has come into our hands since this article was put in type. The party left Lagos, on its return, in the British Royal Mail Steamship "Athenian," April 10, and arrived at Liverpool May 12, 1860, touching at Sierra Leone and elsewhere on the way. We copy one paragraph

"At Freetown we saw a large slaver, brought in a few days before by H. M. Steamship Triton. The officers and crew, consisting of about thirty persons, were there set at liberty, to be disposed of by the Spanish Consul as distressed seamen. They were as such, forwarded in the same ship with us to Teneriffe, the nearest Spanish port. No wonder that the slave trade should be so difficult to suppress when no punishment awaits such wretches. What scamp would fear to embark in such an enterprise if only assured that there was no personal risk; that he had only to destroy the ship's flag and papers on the approach of a cruiser, not only to shield himself and his crew from the consequences of their crime, but to receive the consideration rightly accorded to distressed

[To be continued.]

Maryland Historical Society

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