as it would do, only with British settlements, would be substantially effective. But we would earnestly recommend that it should rather be undertaken altogether by the Government itself. In that way only can perfect security be given and felt against the abuses which might arise from the competition of the agents of rival colonies; in that way only can perfect confidence be given, whether to the African himself or to the public opinion of England and the civilized world, that nothing shall be done which shall even bring suspicion upon a reputation, of which we are justly jealous, of which we can still be proud, and which it is of the highest importance that we should sustain. But under these sanctions, whether we look to the effect of the prosperity of our free colonies in discouraging the slave trade, or to the advantage of placing the African in that position where he will be most likely to raise himself in the moral and social scale, and to react beneficially upon the destinies of his mother country,* your committee cannot but strongly urge upon Parliament not only not to prohibit the emigration of free blacks from our African settlements to our West India colonies, but to encourage and promote it by the authority of Government, under the sanctions and regulations above suggested, or such other as further consideration may supply.

As we have said before, the way in which this question is disposed of will affect materially other questions connected with the internal administration of the colony.

If emigration should go on to any great extent from the settled pupulation of Sierra Leone, which we believe it might without in any way injuring the condition of the colony, but rather the reverse, (for the rate of wages would probably rise, and it appears that it is not the successful and thriving who are inclined to go,) it will probably be possible to dispense with some of the establishment which is now requisite for watching over the interests of the liberated Africans. If, on adjudication, they are mostly located in the West Indies, the much-discussed question of the best means of disposing of them, of the necessity of maintaining them, as now, for six months, or the expediency of leaving them at once to their own resources and the charity of their countrymen; the question of the best means of disposing of the children, and the ever-new devices of successive governors for escaping from the inevitable evils of apprenticing them to persons on whose character no dependence can be placed, will be got rid of; and the British Government will be relieved from the necessity of attempting to overcome the obstacles which nature seems herself to have interposed at Sierra Leone in the way of ensuring a prosperous condition to the objects of its humane care.

We now come to the question which has of late excited so much interest and feeling—that of the facilities which British commerce is charged with having furnished to the slave trade, and to the extent and nature of the

* To prove that this expectation is not altogether even now unsupported by facts, we beg to quote a passage from a letter in the appendix, from Messrs. Anderson & Co.:

"DEMERARA, *April* 30, 1842.

"The Superior is off to-day for Sierra Leone; sixty-eight people have gone in her, including children, and, with the exception of three or four, who are old soldiers, the whole of them are people who came seven or eight years ago from the Bahamas, (liberated Africans;) and they return to their native country with a good deal of money; three of them have not less than $5,000 each."



connexion which exists between them—a question which must be considered dispassionately and soberly, rather with a view to what is best for the object, upon the whole, and to what is practicable, than to what might at first appear to be desirable, and what might be perhaps a partial good, producing possibly, in other ways, a greater evil. Now, in the first place, it is fair to state that we have no evidence, or reason to believe, that any British merchant, concerned in the trade with the west coast of Africa, either owns or equips any vessel engaged in the slave trade, or has any share in the risks or profits of any slave-trade venture. The charge is this, and it must be admitted, that whether by selling condemned slave vessels back to slave dealers, which is the rarer case, or, which is the more common, by selling to slave dealers lawful goods, which are afterwards employed in barter for slaves, (whether circuitously by sale to merchants in Cuba and Brazil, or directly on the coast of Africa,) the British merchant and manufacturer does, in common with the merchants of other nations, furnish very considerable facilities for the slave trade.

It must further be admitted, that, owing to the equipment article in our recent treaties, which has prevented the actual slaver from hovering on the coast in safety, a large portion of the goods necessary for the slave trade is driven into vessels innocent in their apparent character, but subserving the purposes of the slaver; and that, in consequence, a somewhat larger portion of this kind of traffic may possibly now pass directly from the English or other merchant to the coast of Africa than heretofore, when those supplies went round by Cuba and Brazil in the slavers themselves, without risk of capture.

Now, an opinion has prevailed, and that in very influential quarters, and it runs through Doctor Madden's report, that at least such direct dealing is illegal, and punishable under the statute of 5 Geo. IV, c. 5; and, if not so already, the same parties would urge on Parliament to make it so by new enactment; and some even would extend it to all connexion, however indirect, in which a guilty knowledge of the destination of the goods or of the vessel could be presumed. Now, this view of the act is not unnatural, owing to the general and comprehensive nature of its language, and to the desire which must naturally exist to understand it in as comprehensive a sense as possible, for the obstruction of so odious and detestable a traffic as the slave trade. But, looking closely at the language of the act itself, and to the interpretation put upon it by the law officers of the Crown, as alluded to by the under secretary of the colonies, in his letter to Doctor Madden, April, 1842, and to the opinion of the attorney general in the case, inserted in the evidence, we cannot affirm it to be illegal now, and we shall presently state to the House why, however reluctantly we may come to the conclusion, we are not prepared to recommend that it should be made so.

Now, in the first place, it is difficult to consider or to make that illegal which is and has been done at Sierra Leone for years, by a court of judicature, (in doing so, acting under treaties and under the sanction of an act of Parliament, namely,) selling publicly, and to the highest bidder, prize vessels and prize goods condemned for slave dealing, indiscriminately, and without precaution or restriction, to persons of all descriptions, including slave dealers themselves, and which, in regard to vessels at least, had been practised in that colony, by persons of high character and station, unreproved. But, if it should be made illegal hereafter to sell a vessel to a

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XIV. Books

2. Report of Mr. Kennedy, of Maryland
H.R. report no.283, 27th Congress
3rd session, Washington, D.C. 1843