

## THE CASE OF NELSON HACKET.

TO JOHN SCOBLE, ESQ., SECRETARY OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

Washington City, Dec. 27, 1842.

DEAR SIR,—I hasten to communicate to you an interesting piece of information I have just obtained from the Hon. Mr. Cross, Representative in Congress from Arkansas. It is, that Nelson Hacket, the coloured man who was surrendered by the Governor of Canada on a requisition from the Governor of Arkansas, to answer to a charge of stealing, was taken to Arkansas, and without trial restored to the possession of his former master as a slave; that he escaped again, and was retaken; but finally escaped the third time, and has not been heard of since; and whether he has gone clear, or is destroyed, is not known.

As it is reported that systematic measures have been adopted here for the recovery of the vast number of slaves that are escaping, by claiming them as felons, the exasperation and dismay that exist here are indescribable; and if they should recover even one man, they would hope, by making him an example, to deter those that remain.

The Canadian authorities ought to be expressly instructed to give up no coloured man to the slave states, on any pretext whatever. There is no other security.

From a perusal of Mr. Benton's speech in the Senate, against the ratification of the Ashburton treaty, I have no doubt the idea was seriously entertained that the 10th Article would secure the surrender of slaves from Canada. He exposes its insufficiency for that purpose, and makes it a main ground of objection to the treaty itself, that it abandons the South. He says, "The South, left alone by the separate treaty, now made for the Northern States, and with the sympathies of half the Union and all the rest of the world against her, must now expect greater outrages than ever in all that relates to slave property." None of the slaves that have escaped from this neighbourhood have been recovered. Probably the loss in value is at least a hundred thousand dollars in the last six months.

We are expecting some exciting debates on the subject whenever the treaty shall come before Congress. I have no doubt the London Committee will exercise due vigilance in regard to the legislation of Parliament to carry the treaty into effect. Mr. Benton, in his speech, recites the proviso of Article 10, and proceeds to say—

"This reduces the engagement to the merest hoax. The offence is to be one for which the fugitive could be arrested and tried, if committed at the place of apprehension. And who supposes that in the abolition dominions of Great Britain, the murder or robbery of a master by his slave, will be admitted to be a crime for which the perpetrator should be delivered up to justice? Even admitting that, under the common law of England, there may be a killing of a master by his slave, under circumstances which would amount to murder, yet who would expect, in the present state of British feeling, that the law would be executed by a British Judge? Who would expect even such a murderer to be given up, much less when the killing takes the form of defence against violence, or escape from oppression!" We are beginning to flatter ourselves that the plot for annexing Texas to the United States has been defeated, by exposure, for this year.

(Signed,) JOSHUA LEAVITT.

## Parliamentary Intelligence.

As we are anxious to preserve whatever may occur in Parliament bearing on Slavery and the Slave-trade, we have extracted from the speeches of Hon. Members, delivered during the late debate on the distress of the country, such parts of them as indicate their sentiments, and the course they are likely to take when the points to which they refer lead to discussions and divisions in the House.

## RESTRICTIONS ON COMMERCE.—SUGAR.

(Debates 14th to 17th February.)

MR. LABOUCHERE observed, that the distress of the country produced an evident effect upon consumption, but on that point he should not say much; still there were some circumstances connected with it which did appear to him not unworthy of attention. He conceived that the sugar duties afforded an excellent test by which to judge of consumption. In the year 1841 the price of sugar was 38s., in 1842 it was 34s., and yet, though sugar was cheaper, the consumption diminished, for the quantity consumed in 1841 was 270,000 hhds., and in 1842 only 261,000 hhds. The falling off in the consumption was chiefly in the manufacturing districts; in fact, the import of sugar increased in London and in several other parts of the kingdom, while it decreased in Glasgow and Liverpool, the ports which supplied the manufacturing districts. The falling off in Glasgow alone during the last year was 3,500 casks. That was a strong proof of how the consuming powers of the country were diminishing.

MR. EWART called the attention of the house to a comparative statement of the quantity of Brazil coffee taken by England and the United States in 1841. The crop in that year was 1,130,915 bags; of this the United States took 431,000 bags, being an increase of 125,000 bags on the quantity taken by that country in 1840, while England took nearly 70,000 bags, being a decrease on the quantity taken in the previous year of 88,303 bags. If trade was established on sound principles between this country and Brazil, British ships would come direct to England as a market, with cargoes of coffee, without touching at any continental ports, and this country would consequently become a kind of *entrepot*. Indeed, he considered that England ought to be the *entrepot* of the world; and he was convinced that if they pursued the course he suggested this result would follow. He had, at the commencement of the session, alluded to the importance of concluding a commercial treaty with Holland, with respect to the produce of Java; and he thought that the report of Mr. Macgregor, on the state and trade of Holland, which had since been laid upon the table of the house, confirmed the view he had then taken. He hoped that some measures would be adopted for promoting a trade between this country and Java, for Holland was wholly unable to supply the demands of that island. In 1841, Java took 2,200,000l. sterling of imports, of which Holland supplied 815,000l.

The exports of Java amounted to 6,000,000l. In 1831, the quantity of sugar produced in that island was 7,000 tons; it was now 65,000 tons. He hoped that a treaty would be concluded with Holland, by which the trade in coffee with Java, hitherto a monopoly, would be thrown open; and such a measure would undoubtedly have the effect of materially reviving our commerce.

SIR C. NAPIER believed, with respect to sugar, that there was a disposition on the part of Government to lower the duties on foreign sugar, and he hoped this impression was correct. He trusted that Government would soon be enabled to effect this important measure, by inducing the Government of the Brazils to make some concessions with respect to the slave trade. Such a measure would, he was aware, be productive of injury to the West India proprietors; but surely, when the people of this country were suffering such extreme distress, the whole community would not be sacrificed to support any interests whatever, whether those of the West India proprietors or of the landed proprietors of this kingdom. He thought that if the West India proprietors who resided in this country went out to the West Indies, and looked after their own estates, such a step would promote their own interests.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, with respect to sugar, the subject on which the right hon. gentleman had been very energetic, he would reserve his opinions till it came properly before the house; but he could not help congratulating the country on the fact that the price of this necessary article had decreased below that at which even the right hon. gentleman calculated it would now be by his proposed budget. And this had been obtained without the reproach of encouraging the revival of that hateful traffic which it had been for so long the object of the nation, and at such great sacrifices, to suppress. No one could value more than did he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) the extension of trade; but to that he thought it would be unwise to sacrifice too much; and in our eagerness to promote universal freedom of trade, it would be well to remember financial considerations—so essential to the commerce, because so important to the credit, of all trading communities.

MR. M. PHILLIPS observed, there was a ready market for sugar, and a greatly increased demand would arise for it, if we were only placed in communication with the countries that produced the article. Those who had the interests of the poor at heart could confer on them no greater boon than to place within their reach this article of daily necessity. Every hour they delayed the settlement of this question by the abolition of differential duties tended seriously to compromise our trade, and prolong that misery now complained of.

MR. M. GIBSON remarked, that the house was also told that stipulations were to be obtained from the Brazils with respect to the slave trade; and that this was to be the condition on which the duties on foreign sugars were to be reduced. On this subject had not they got all that treaties could give them? Had not the Brazils acknowledged the slave trade to be piracy? Then why not enforce existing treaties, instead of saying that, unless new ones were obtained, the sugar duties should not be reduced? The hon. gent. further stated, that whilst the Brazils put duties, averaging from 20 to 40 per cent., upon British manufactures, Great Britain was levying a not less duty than 400 per cent. upon Brazilian sugars.

SIR ROBERT PEEL observed, we certainly did not apply the new tariff to the article of sugar, and I admit at once there can be no article of greater importance to this country than that—no article with respect to which a reduction of price could be more important than sugar. But this I can with truth affirm, that it was no desire to protect monopoly that induced us to except sugar. Whenever you deal with the article of sugar, I very much doubt whether you will not deal with it in a manner which will be for the advantage of the West Indian colonies as well as the East Indies. But we reserved sugar from the operation of the tariff, partly because we wished to use it as an instrument to obtain a reduction of duty upon our own produce into other countries, but more upon this distinct ground—that we did not think it right to give the free and unlimited admission of sugar, without reference to the consideration of its being the produce of free or slave labour. I maintained that principle in opposition—I maintained it last year in Government—I still adhere to it; that is, I think you ought, if you possibly can, to make some stipulation, not only in favour of the abolition of slavery, the prevention of the slave-trade, but of the mitigation of slavery itself; you ought to try to get some conditions with respect to slavery before you grant an indiscriminate admission of sugar. I retain the opinion upon which I acted in opposition, and which I expressed last year; and I think, considering the discussions in which the country has lately been involved—considering the doctrines it has maintained with regard to the United States, the principles it has avowed with regard to France, never was there a period when it was more important that this country should declare to the world that she did not relax, for any pecuniary advantage, the same principles which she has maintained with respect to slavery. There is a great disposition to charge this country with having been influenced, in the zeal we have shown for the suppression of the slave-trade, by mercantile and pecuniary considerations. I certainly think it would very much abate the moral influence we have attained with regard to that question, if it could be supposed, or if there were any appearances which might fairly lead to the supposition, that for the sake of obtaining free trade in sugar, we did anything that could be instrumental in continuing the slave-trade, or lending it our sanction.

## RIGHT OF SEARCH.—Feb. 14.

MR. HARDY, seeing the noble lord lately the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in his place, felt very desirous to put a question to him. It was in relation to the treaties with France, entered into in 1831 and 1833, relating to the right of search. His question was, Did the proposition for the original treaty and the supplementary one for 1833 originate with the Government of this country or with that of France?

LORD PALMERSTON.—When the new Government acceded to office, in 1830, they proposed to the Government of France a treaty by which the two countries granted reciprocally the right of search within certain latitudes. There were certain details connected with the instructions to be given to the cruisers of the respective nations which did not appear in and were not settled by the treaty of 1831, because the Government were most anxious to record the general principle which had been conceded.