

he not confess that the application of his arguments would really afford protection to every lawless and piratical enterprise?

The Undersigned had also expressed his belief, that the practice was general, of ascertaining by visit the real character of any vessel on the high seas, against which there should exist reasonable ground of suspicion. Mr. Stevenson denies this; and he asks what other nation than Great Britain had ever asserted, or attempted to exercise, such a right? In answer to this question, the Undersigned can at once refer to the avowed and constant practice of the United States, whose cruisers, especially in the Gulf of Mexico, by the admission of their public journals, are notoriously in the habit of examining all suspicious vessels, whether sailing under the English flag, or any other. In whose eyes are these vessels suspicious? Doubtless in those of the commanders of the American cruisers. But, in truth, this right is quite as important to the United States as to Great Britain; nor is it easy to conceive how the maritime intercourse of mankind could safely be carried on without such a check.

It can scarcely be necessary to remind Mr. Everett that the right thus claimed by Great Britain is not exercised for any selfish purpose. It is asserted in the interest of humanity, and in mitigation of the sufferings of our fellow-men. The object has met with the concurrence of the whole civilised world, including the United States of America; and it ought to receive universal assistance and support.

The Undersigned cannot abstain here from referring to the conduct of an honourable and zealous officer, commanding the naval force of the United States on the coast of Africa, who, relying on the sincere desire of his Government for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and sensible of the abuse of the American flag, entered into an engagement, on the 11th of March, 1840, with the officer in command of Her Majesty's cruisers on the same station, by which they mutually requested each other, and agreed to detain all vessels under American colours employed in the traffic. If found to be American property, such vessels were to be delivered over to the commander of any American cruiser on the station; or, if belonging to other nations, they were to be dealt with according to the treaties contracted by Her Majesty with the respective States. The Undersigned believes, and, indeed, after the statements of Mr. Stevenson, he regrets to be unable to doubt, that the conduct of this gallant officer, however natural and laudable in its object, has been disavowed by his Government.

It is not the intention of the Undersigned, at present, to advocate the justice and propriety of the mutual right of search, as conceded and regulated by treaty, or to weigh the reasons on account of which this proposal has been rejected by the Government of the United States. He took occasion, in a former note, to observe that concessions sanctioned by Great Britain and France were not likely to be incompatible with the dignity and independence of any other State which should be disposed to follow their example. But the Undersigned begs now to inform Mr. Everett, that he has this day concluded a joint treaty with France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, by which the mutual right of search, within certain latitudes, is fully and effectually established for ever. This is, in truth, a holy alliance, in which the Undersigned would have rejoiced to see the United States assume their proper place among the great Powers of Christendom—foremost in power, wealth, and civilization, and connected together in the cause of mercy and justice.

It is undoubtedly true, that this right may be abused, like every other which is delegated to many and different hands. It is possible that it may be exercised wantonly and vexatiously; and, should this be the case, it would not only call for remonstrance, but would justify resentment. This, however, is in the highest degree improbable; and if, in spite of the utmost caution, an error should be committed, and any American vessel should suffer loss and injury, it would be followed by prompt and ample reparation. The Undersigned begs to repeat, that with American vessels, whatever be their destination, British cruisers have no pretension, in any manner, to interfere. Such vessels must be permitted, if engaged in it, to enjoy a monopoly of this unhallowed trade; but the British Government will never endure that the fraudulent use of the American flag shall extend the iniquity to other nations by whom it is abhorred, and who have entered into solemn treaties with this country for its entire suppression.

In order to prove to Mr. Everett the anxiety of Her Majesty's Government to prevent all reasonable grounds of complaint, the Undersigned believes that he