

Denying, as we did and do, all color of right to exercise any such general police over the flags of independent nations, we did not demand of Great Britain any formal renunciation of her pretension; still less had we the idea of yielding anything ourselves in that respect. We chose to make a practical settlement of the question. This we owed to what we had already done upon this subject. The honor of the country called for it; the honor of its flag demanded that it should not be used by others to cover an iniquitous traffic. This Government, I am very sure, has both the inclination and the ability to do this; and, if need be, it will not content itself with a fleet of eighty guns, but sooner than any foreign Government shall exercise the province of executing its laws and fulfilling its obligations, the highest of which is to protect its flag alike from abuse or insult, it would, I doubt not, put in requisition for that purpose its whole naval power. The purpose of this Government is faithfully to fulfil the Treaty on its part, and it will not permit itself to doubt that Great Britain will comply with it on hers. In this way, peace will best be preserved, and the most amicable relations maintained between the two Countries.

Washington, February 27, 1843.

JOHN TYLER.

No. 2.—*Mr. Webster to the President of the United States.*

*Department of State,
Washington, February, 1843.*

THE Secretary of State, to whom has been referred a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 22d instant, requesting that the President of the United States "be requested to communicate to that House, if not in his opinion improper, whatever correspondence or communication may have been received from the British Government, respecting the President's construction of the late British Treaty, concluded at Washington, as it concerns an alleged right to visit American vessels," has the honor to report to the President that Mr. Fox, Her Britannic Majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, came to the Department of State on the 24th instant, and informed the Secretary that he had received from Lord Aberdeen, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a despatch, under date of the 18th of January, which he was directed to read to the Secretary of State of the United States. The substance of the despatch was, that there was a statement in a paragraph of the President's message to Congress, at the opening of the present session, of serious import, because, to persons unacquainted with the facts, it would tend to convey the supposition, not only that the question of the right of search had been disavowed by the plenipotentiary at Washington, but that Great Britain had made concessions on that point.

That the President knew that the right of search never formed the subject of discussion during the late negotiation, and that neither was any concession required by the United States Government, nor made by Great Britain.

That the engagement entered into by the parties to the Treaty of Washington, for suppressing the African slave trade, was unconditionally proposed and agreed to.

That the British Government saw in it an attempt, on the part of the Government of the United States, to give a practical effect to their repeated declarations against that trade, and recognised with satisfaction an advance towards the humane and enlightened policy of all Christian states, from which they anticipated much good. That Great Britain would scrupulously fulfil the conditions of this engagement; but that from the principles which she has constantly asserted, and which are recorded in the correspondence between the Ministers of the United States in England and herself, in 1841, England has not receded and would not recede. That he had no intention to renew, at present, the discussion upon the subject. That his last note was yet unanswered. That the President might be assured that Great Britain would always respect the just claims of the United States. That the British Government made no pretension to interfere, in any manner whatever, either by detention, visit, or search, with vessels of the United States, known or believed to be such; but that it still maintained, and would exercise when necessary, its own right to ascertain the