

No. 2.

Lord Ashburton to the Earl of Aberdeen.—(Received May 11.)

(Extract.)

Washington, April 25, 1842.

I BEGIN with our relations with this country with regard to the Slave Trade, and the so-called Right of Search or Visit; and I do so because I have a communication to make on this subject which I am sure will give your Lordship great satisfaction.

Your Lordship's last letter to Mr. Everett, which has been published here only since the arrival of the "Great Western," has with all reasonable persons settled this controversy. But still there remains the clamour about the right of search, liberty of the seas, &c., which has been sounded through the country: and many who are better informed, entertain the idea that the French Chambers have made their opposition in support of America, and that therefore it does not become this country to abandon the cause. Any efficient right of search would, however, with difficulty be conceded; and I need not add that the practice of visitation, limited as it now is, would give little practical remedy against the tricks of the slave traders. Considering this state of things, I put it to several persons of influence, what remedy they could suggest, and whether America could remain in the position of refusing all remedy against crimes which they had been the most vehement to denounce, and of the existence of which they could not doubt. This view of the case has brought Mr. Webster to the consideration of a scheme for joint cruising on the coast of Africa, on the plan suggested by the Commissioners at Sierra Leone in their Report to Lord Palmerston, of the 31st of January, 1839, and by his Lordship's order communicated by Mr. Fox to Mr. Forsyth in his note of the 29th of October of the same year.

It is proposed that each country shall engage to maintain at least cruisers on the coast of Africa, one of each nation to cruize constantly together, or, to use the expression of the Commissioners, to hunt in couples.

This plan would be executing on a larger scale the arrangement made between Captain Tucker and the American Lieutenant Payne, which was afterwards disavowed; and I have the satisfaction of adding, that this same Lieutenant Payne has been ordered here with a view to a consultation with the Navy Department as to the best scheme for executing this arrangement.

If this arrangement can be brought to execution by treaty I shall consider it to be the very best fruit of this mission. The vexed question of the Right of Visit will settle itself under this arrangement; and if any formal assurance becomes necessary from me in consequence of my special mission, I shall strictly take for my guide your Lordship's last despatch to Mr. Everett, which leaves nothing to be desired or altered.

No. 3.

The Earl of Aberdeen to Lord Ashburton.

(Extract.)

Foreign Office, May 26, 1842

WITH reference to that portion of your Lordship's despatch of the 25th of April, which relates to the Right of Search, and to a scheme of joint cruising on the coast of Africa for the suppression of the Slave Trade carried on in American vessels, I have to inform you, that if you should not find it possible to induce the Government of the United States to become a party to any Convention conferring a mutual Right of Search, Her Majesty's Government would willingly accede to an arrangement of the nature described in your Lordship's despatch.

Your Lordship has already been furnished with a return, showing the amount of the British naval force on the African coast. In the event