

IT ALL STARTED ON A PLEASANT AFTERNOON in August 1619, when, as Captain John Smith tells us, "there came to Virginia a Dutch man-of-war that sold us twenty Negars." It ended in New York on December 20th, 1861, when Nathaniel Gordon of Portland, Maine, master of the *Erie*, was convicted of slave-trading on the Congo. He was sentenced to be hanged in accordance with the statute of 1820, which declared slave-trading to be an act of piracy punishable by death. Gordon was the first and only slave-trader in the history of the United States to be tried, convicted and hanged in accordance with the Constitution and Federal law.

No one was more surprised at the verdict than Gordon himself. As an old hand at slave-running, who had made substantial profits out of the business, he knew that if he had the misfortune to be intercepted on the high seas by an American cruiser his slaves would be confiscated, and he would be fined, but he figured on recouping his losses on the next voyage. In this particular instance the district attorney, a certain Mr. Roosevelt, actually stated that "if the prisoner was found not guilty of piracy, which was highly probable, or even if the jury found him guilty, such an outside pressure would be brought to bear upon the President as would compel him to pardon him. In either case the prisoner would go scot free."

This statement, extraordinary though it was, excited no surprise. Everyone knew there was so much "influence" behind slave-trading that the law winked at it. Never had the trade been so active as during the last years of the Buchanan administration. The *New York Evening Post*, July 25th, 1860, listed thirty-nine American ships known to have been engaged in this supposedly hush-hush traffic. With the election of Lincoln things began to change. In dealing with slavery itself Lincoln had to walk delicately, at least during the early days of the civil war, so as not to disturb the Border States, but on the question of the slave-trade he was adamant. Under his administration the law against the traffic in human livestock would be enforced.

Captain Gordon's friends called at the White House, but they came away disappointed. Lincoln listened to them attentively, read the

# The American Slave-Trade

*Britain's determination to stamp out  
the traffic in slaves, which she had formerly  
done so much to promote, led to  
many clashes with the United States over  
"the right of search" at sea. These  
came to an end only in the  
Presidency of Abraham Lincoln.*

By ARNOLD WHITRIDGE

reprieve they had prepared, and handed it back to them. "You do not know," he said, "how hard it is to let a human being die when one stroke of your pen would save him." He threw down the pen, however, without signing the reprieve, and Gordon was executed. The slave-trade never recovered from the blow.

In the 242 years that elapsed between the arrival of the Dutch man-of-war with its twenty "Negars" off the coast of Virginia and the execution of Captain Gordon in New York, several million negroes were transported from the West African coast, between Cape Verde and what is now Angola, to the New World. The first Englishman to take part in the trade was Sir John Hawkins, who in 1562 sailed to Sierra Leone, where he acquired, "partly by the sword and partly by other means," 300 negroes whom he transported to Hispaniola. Subsequent voyages proved even more successful, so much so that Queen



Mansell Collection

*A Sale of Slaves at Charleston, South Carolina, 1856. After Eyre Crowe. The Slave-trade continued until Lincoln ushered in a "policy of uncompromising suppression"*

Elizabeth, who shared in the profits, awarded him a coat of arms, for which he selected as his crest appropriately enough a manacled negro. Earlier British merchants had been more interested in the precious metals and the spices of the Gold Coast; but it was soon obvious that Black Ivory, in the shape of negro slaves, was a better proposition. That the slave-trade was the very life of the colonies had become, by 1700, an almost unquestioned axiom of British economics. The colonists themselves declared slaves to be "the strength and sinews of this western world," and the lack of them the chief obstacle to their prosperity.

In Georgia, the one colony where the philanthropic founders headed by General Oglethorpe tried to exclude slavery, the planters became so eager for them that their regular toast when drinking together was, "Here's for the one thing needful." After fourteen years of steady pressure, the trustees of the colony were

prevailed upon to permit a limited importation of negroes on the grounds that they were as essential to the cultivation of Georgia as axes, hoes, or any other utensil of agriculture. With the planters begging for negroes, and the merchants at home clamouring to supply them, it became the settled policy of England to supply the new world with as many slaves as possible.

The famous Asiento compact in the Treaty of Utrecht secured for England a virtual monopoly of the slave-trade. By the terms of this agreement British merchants acquired the right to supply the Spanish colonies alone with 4,800 slaves a year. Parliament declared that the trade was highly beneficial and advantageous "to this Kingdom and to the Plantations and Colonies thereunto belonging," a sentiment with which British subjects on both sides of the Atlantic heartily agreed. Compared to the Asiento compact, the winning of the Hudson



Mansell Collection

*Purchasing and branding slaves on the West Coast of Africa; after an imaginary scene by A. F. Biard, 1841*

Bay Territory, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Gibraltar were of minor importance. It was for the exclusive right to deal in human livestock that Handel composed a *Te Deum* that was sung in all the churches in London.

Though only the Royal Asiento Company was named in the agreement, private merchants were allowed to take part in the trade on the payment of ten per cent duty on English goods exported to Africa. The tax money was used to maintain forts and barracoons on the African coasts, where the negroes brought down from the interior could be stored until wanted. In America the New England colonies took the lead in the slave-trade. Many a farm boy weary of the stony New England soil, and eager to see the world, slung a pack over his shoulder, tramped to the nearest port, and shipped before the mast on a Massachusetts or Rhode Island slaver. Some of the greatest seamen of the

eighteenth century, among them John Paul Jones, the founder of the American navy, got their training on the decks of slavers. Rhode Island, the smallest of the American colonies, was the most active in the slave-trade and in the rum-distilling industry that grew out of it. It was this trade that raised Newport to her commercial importance in the years just preceding the Revolution.

Lucrative though the trade was, the Puritan conscience was made uneasy by the presence of slavery. Fortunately, by the middle of the eighteenth century it had become an anachronism in the Northern colonies. It was doomed not only by the growing belief that slavery was an evil thing, but also by the character and number of the settlers. Morality, whenever it is backed up by economics, will always carry the day, and it is not surprising that except in the Southern States slavery in North America

died a peaceful death. The Puritan conscience, however, is wonderfully elastic. Though New England wanted none of slavery for herself, it would have been quixotic to refuse to transport slaves for the benefit of others, particularly when the trade involved such handsome profits.

Molasses, rum and slavery were inextricably connected, and this unsavoury combination played a significant part in American history. As John Adams put it, "I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence. Many great events have proceeded from much smaller causes."

John Adams would never have admitted it, but molasses led directly to slavery. The trade formed a perfect circle. On the outward passage the New England captain sailed from his home port with a cargo consisting mainly of rum and antiquated firearms. These were traded on the African coast for slaves, who were shipped to the West Indies, or to the Southern colonies, on what became known as the "Middle Passage." The principal cargoes taken on for the homeward passage were molasses and tobacco. The molasses was made into the highly prized New England rum, and shipped to Africa on the next run for more slaves. What made a good market for the trading captain on the coast was a scarcity of rum and a superfluity of slaves. Often several ships arrived on the slave-coast at the same time and consequently trading was poor. Sometimes the slaver would be despoiled by a French privateer. It became the custom of French ships to lie off the coast of Africa and pounce on the American trader as he steered away for the West Indies. The cargo thus captured would be carried away to one of the ports of the French West Indies and sold for the benefit of the captors. This was much easier and much cheaper than the laborious trading for negroes on the pestilential coast.

In spite of these risks, merchants must have found the trade profitable, since just before the Revolution Rhode Island alone had no less than 150 vessels engaged in it. Rum was cheap, and by judicious watering it could be made cheaper still. 115 gallons of rum for males, or about eleven pounds sterling, and 95 gallons for females, seems to have been the average

price. The slaves were packed like spoons in a space between decks, often with only three and a half feet head room. The shrewder, or the more humane, captains brought their negroes upon deck for a few hours of exercise every day, during which time their so-called quarters were scrubbed with vinegar. Otherwise much of the cargo would spoil. In other words, the slaves died and had to be thrown overboard. When the trader reached the West Indies, he hoped to find a brisk market for his negroes, and the molasses market glutted. If landed in "helth and fatt," a negro could be sold for £35. By the time he reached home, and had sold his molasses to the distillers, he could count on a profit of at least twenty-five per cent.

There was one aspect of the New England slave-trade that worried the home government, and for which they could find no remedy. The colonists could buy cheaper molasses from the French West Indies than they could from the British islands, and consequently the rum that they made from this French molasses undersold that of their English competitors. France, anxious to protect its brandy distillers, would not permit the importation of rum or molasses. The ban on rum in France naturally brought about a surplus in the French West Indies, of which the colonists were quick to take advantage. In 1733, the British Government, no less anxious than France to protect its own interests, passed a bill known as the Molasses Act on foreign rum and molasses.

This Act was so unpopular in the colonies that it could never be enforced. Without molasses there could be no rum, and rum was the medium of exchange in the all-important slave-trade. The South Carolina planter was just as dependent on it as the West Indian sugar merchant or the Rhode Island ship captain. How else but with molasses could the New England fisherman expect to be paid for the low-grade pickled fish he sold to the West Indies? The best fish went to the Catholic countries in southern Europe, but the "refuse" codfish paid for the molasses that poured northward into the distilleries of Boston and Newport.

The fact was that New England was doing more business with the West Indies than with

the mother country. Had the Molasses Act been rigorously enforced it would have ruined the whole commercial structure of the country. For a long time it was systematically eluded, with the connivance of the revenue officers, until in 1764 George Grenville, the newly appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, decided that the illicit commerce in the colonies must be suppressed. Grenville argued, plausibly but erroneously, that if the tax on sugar were reduced the Customs officers, with some help from the Royal Navy, would be able at last to collect the revenue that was due. His effort to compel obedience to the trade laws proved disastrous. The colonists resented the tax on sugar almost as much as the tax on stamps, and the efforts of high-handed naval officers to enforce it succeeded only in proving the truth of John Adams's epigram.

After the peace was signed, and while the thirteen colonies were struggling to establish a Federal government, any dispassionate observer of the American scene would have concluded that slavery and the slave-trade were well on the way to extinction. It was natural to suppose that, just as slavery had already outlived its usefulness in the northern tier of colonies, it would fade away in the South as well. Of the original thirteen colonies, seven became free States almost at once. The remaining six were bound to follow. The new philosophy of freedom and "the rights of man" seemed to lead inevitably to emancipation.

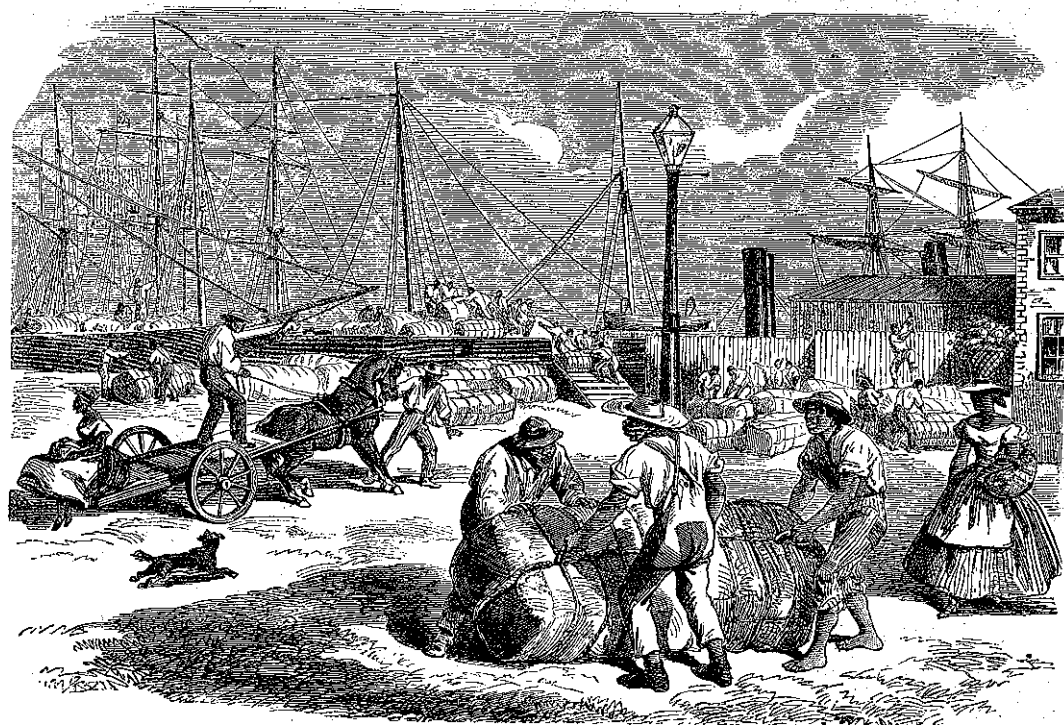
In the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson included a severe arraignment of Great Britain as the real promoter of slavery and the slave-trade. George III was charged with waging "cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who had never offended him . . ." Unfortunately, Jefferson's conception of an impatient people struggling to free themselves from a monstrous evil imposed on them against their will bore no relation to the facts. The clause was struck out, Jefferson admitted, "in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, wished to continue it. Our northern brethren also," he added, "felt a

little tender under these censures; for though their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others."

On second thoughts, therefore, Jefferson left the whole question of slavery and the slave-trade severely alone. It was enough to have startled the world with his self-evident truths without quarrelling with his compatriots as to how literally those truths should be taken. The language of the Federal Constitution was equally non-committal. Like the Declaration of Independence, it steered clear of any condemnation of slavery. Without ever mentioning the word "slave," the Constitution stated that "The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person."

That was a long way from the ringing declaration about "the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but Roger Sherman of Connecticut was probably speaking for a good many besides himself when he maintained with extraordinary complaisance that "the abolition of slavery seemed to be going on in the United States, and that the good sense of the several States would probably by degrees complete it." The notion that Christian idealism, marching side by side with the laws of economics, would vanquish the forces of slavery died hard. Unfortunately, Christianity and economics were neither of them as clearly on the side of emancipation and the suppression of the slave-trade as Roger Sherman and his friends believed.

Holy men were able to quote Scriptures in support of slavery. Had not St. Paul himself, far from condemning slavery, accepted it as a perfectly natural state? And if it were admitted, as it surely had to be, that a negro slave was better off in the Southern States than in the African jungle, who could maintain that the trade was immoral? On the economic side of the question Senator Brown of Rhode Island, a man held in the greatest respect by his community, set forth the commercial philosophy of his State with astonishing frankness. He



Mansell Collection

*The Slave-trade, West Indian molasses and Southern cotton were inextricably mixed. Unloading cotton at Nassau, Bahamas*

argued, again with some truth, that the slave-trade was the training school for the navy, that the United States needed a navy and ought to use every means to obtain it. Furthermore, he saw no reason why the United States should not be enriched by the slave-trade as well as Great Britain.

The answer to these arguments came from an unexpected quarter. It was inspired by fear rather than by morality. The revolt of slaves on the island of Haiti under the leadership of the famous Toussaint l'Ouverture, and the birth of a nation of negro freemen, frightened the pro-slavery advocates and gave new heart to the agitators in the other camp. As a result of the revolution in Haiti, a Quaker petition for a law against the traffic in slaves was received without a murmur, and on March 24th, 1794, the first national act against the slave-trade became a law. If the Quakers thought this a triumph of anti-slavery sentiment, they were

quickly undeceived. The law was designed to prohibit the carrying on of the slave-trade from the United States to any foreign place or country, but it was still lawful to import slaves from Africa into any State permitting the trade.

In spite of prohibitory State laws, the American slave-trade continued to flourish. New England traders carried on the traffic without secrecy, shame or apprehension. One of South Carolina's congressmen confessed that although his State had prohibited the trade since 1788, she was unable to enforce her laws. "With navigable rivers running into the heart of it, it was impossible," he complained, "with our means to prevent our Eastern brethren, who, in some parts of the Union, in defiance of the authority of the General Government, have been engaged in this trade, from introducing negroes into the country. The law was completely evaded, and for the last year or two (1802-3) Africans were introduced



THOMAS CLARKSON (1760-1846), whose "righteous indignation" helped to inspire the British people to stamp out the traffic in slaves

into this country in numbers little short, I believe, of what they would have been had the trade been a legal one."

From such accounts it was obvious that no State acting by itself, however sincere in its efforts, could cope with the enormous difficulties involved in suppressing the traffic in negroes. Gone was the easy optimism of the early days of the Republic about the peaceful extinction of slavery. Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin, which riveted slavery on the South, coinciding as it did with the acquisition of a vast new territory in the south-west ideally suited for the growing of cotton, made plantation slavery possible in larger and larger units. The world, and particularly Great Britain, was demanding cotton, and "King Cotton" demanded slavery. Under these conditions it began to appear that slavery was not an anachronism after all. As to the slave-trade, against which Quakers and Evangelicals were mounting a tremendous propaganda, its sup-

pression would require not only the united efforts of individual States and the national Government, but also the whole-hearted co-operation of foreign countries. When finally Great Britain and the United States abolished the trade in 1807—Denmark led the way in 1802, and the other nations of Europe fell into line afterwards—it began to look as if this co-operation had been achieved. The United States went so far as to declare the trade piracy, punishable by death.

President Jefferson had hardly finished congratulating his fellow-citizens on the great step forward they had taken, when the more realistic among them began to discern the mountainous difficulties that lay ahead. The slave-trade was, after all, nothing but a transfer from one master to another. If it was a crime to trade in slaves, then surely it was equally a crime to own a slave; but the American Government did not consider slavery a crime. How then could it punish the trade so severely? The answer was the American Government never did punish it. It was difficult for even the most acute mind to understand how the trade could be wicked, and the institution itself a positive good, as many Southerners believed it to be. A resolute attack on the slave-trade might too easily be interpreted as the preliminary to an attack on slavery itself. This was the dilemma that bedevilled American politics for over half a century.

While the British Government was vigorously combating the trade by posting ships to the coast of West Africa with orders to intercept all traffickers in negroes, and at the same time badgering foreign governments to recognize Great Britain as the policeman of the seas, Congress had allowed the Act of 1807 to become practically a dead letter. The apathy of the Federal Government is revealed in Presidential messages, in the reports of naval commanders, and in the complaints of home and foreign anti-slavery societies. The evidence is overwhelming. The laws were adequate, but the execution of the laws was criminally lax. The African Society of London reported that ships bearing the American flag continued to trade for slaves until 1809, when, in consequence of a decision in the English prize appeal courts, which rendered American slave-ships liable to

capture and condemnation, that flag suddenly disappeared from the coast. Its place was immediately taken by the Spanish flag, which was now seen for the first time on the African coast; engaged in covering the slave-trade. This sudden substitution of the Spanish for the American flag seemed to confirm what was established in a variety of instances by more direct testimony, that the slave-trade, which now assumed a Spanish dress, was in reality only the trade of other nations in disguise.

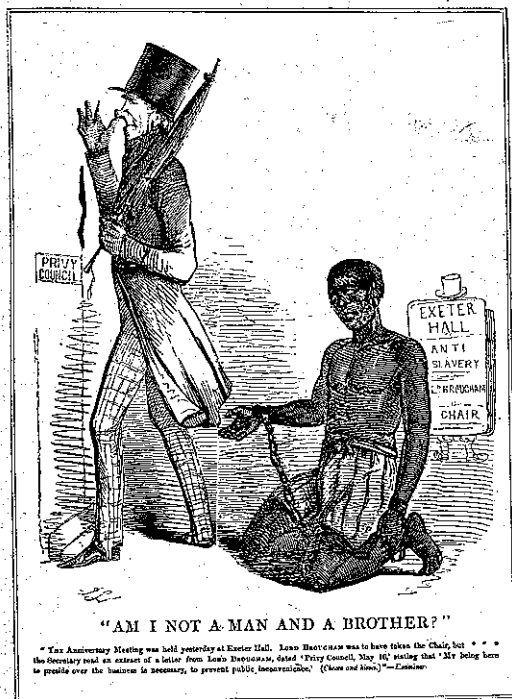
The practice of what Lord Palmerston once impatiently described as the "juggling with flags" was the last card left to the slave-holders, and they played it very effectively. Obviously the slave-trade could never be suppressed without the closest co-operation. To win this co-operation, the British Government and the British tax-payer devoted all their energies. After the Napoleonic wars, British statesmen set to work to form a confederacy against the slave-trade. For a long time all they could obtain from other governments was a free field for their own exertions. Foreign nations were puzzled to find a motive for England's expenditure of so much time and effort and money on such a quixotic enterprise. Having once been the greatest slave-traders in the world, the British people, inspired by the righteous indignation of such men as Granville Sharp, Clarkson and Wilberforce, were now grimly determined to stamp out the traffic their ancestors had done so much to promote. No wonder foreigners did not understand.

Even when the leading powers had abolished the trade, England had to goad them or bribe them into granting her the right to stop and search their vessels to see that their laws were being enforced. The right of search was reciprocal but, as there were no English slave-traders left, foreign nations were not interested in it.

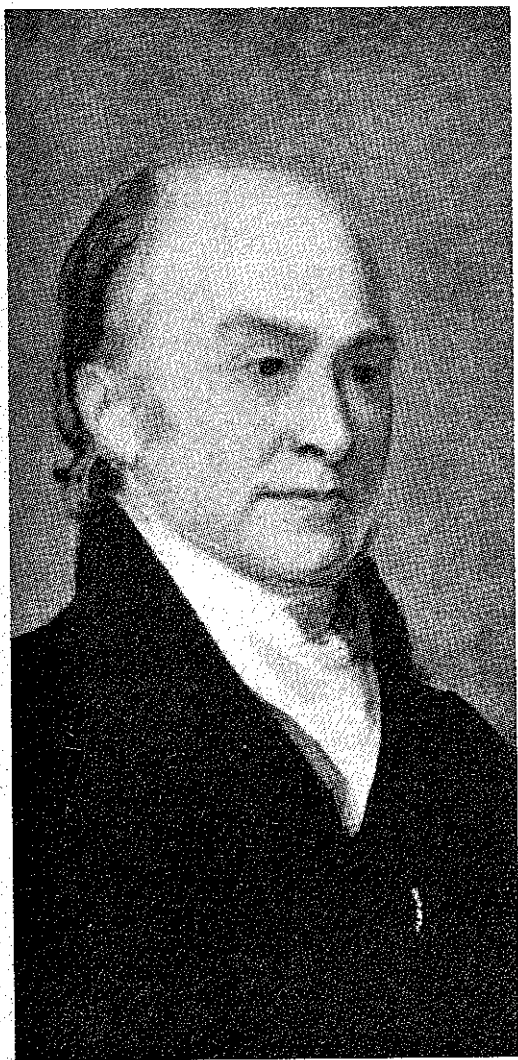
After Great Britain had seen the light, Spain became the leading slave-trader of Europe, but finally even Spain agreed, on receiving a tip of £400,000, to allow any Spanish vessel suspected of slave-trading to be searched. As it turned out, the concession of the coveted right of search did not amount to much, since no matter how completely the suspicion might be confirmed the vessel could be detained only if

slaves were found actually on board. The presence of shackles and handcuffs, of water tanks and food supplies far beyond the needs of the crew, and of stacks of planks fitted for being laid down as slave deck, were not enough. When closely pursued the slaver was not above throwing his cargo overboard so as to escape condemnation. In that case, unless the British cruiser could pick up a few drowning negroes, there was no hope of securing a conviction. Similar agreements, granting a limited right of search, were signed with other countries, but they all suffered from the same fundamental defect. The difficulty was finally overcome by the insertion of what was called an Equipment clause in all later treaties. Spain was induced to sign an Equipment Treaty in 1835, and once again anti-slavery societies imagined that the trade was as good as abolished.

But there was still one nation, the United States, which refused to grant the right of search, and until that right was granted, or until the United States agreed to send out her own cruisers to visit and search suspicious



Mansell Collection  
LORD BROUGHAM attacked by Punch for not presiding over an anti-Slavery meeting



By courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington  
 JOHN QUINCY ADAMS (1767-1848): the "right of search by foreign officers" was a more atrocious evil. Portrait by Thomas Sully

vessels, no one could say that the end was in sight. The slave-traders who had been sailing under the Spanish flag now hoisted the Stars and Stripes. The American prejudice against any further extension of the right of search was not entirely irrational. It was based upon a fixed association of the right of search with the still unsettled impressment controversy. The recollection of injuries suffered during the Napoleonic wars, from what was considered an

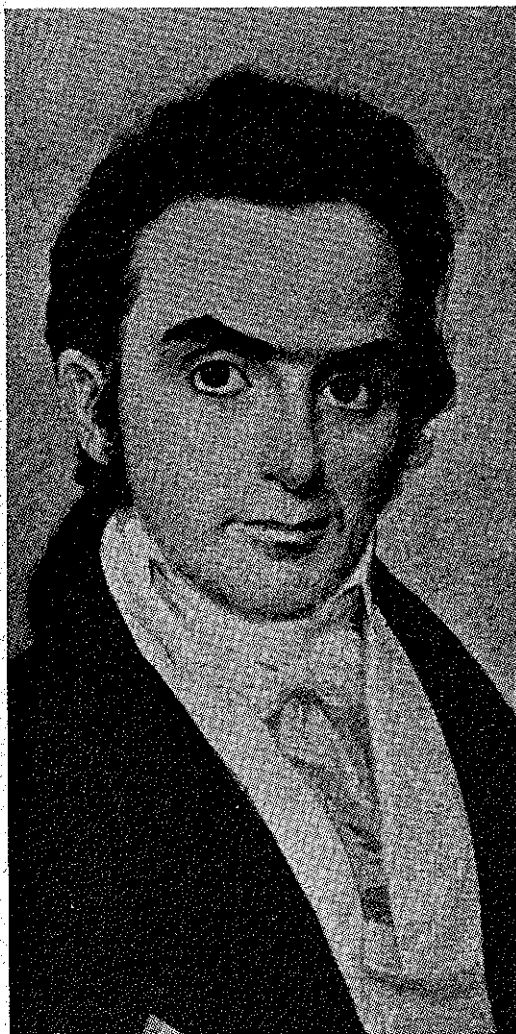
abuse of the belligerent right, was still very much alive in American hearts. From the British point of view this resentment was irrelevant, for between the right of belligerents to search neutral ships wherever encountered and the right for which British statesmen were now negotiating there were great differences. In the first place, the right now requested was to be reciprocal. It was not to be exercised by one party at the expense of the other, but by both equally. Furthermore, this right was to be limited to specified coasts and to a definite number of ships. These were real differences, and they were in fact well appreciated in the United States, but the combination in the Senate of Southern reluctance to do anything at all to suppress the trade, and the feeling among some of the Northern Senators that Britain was masking her ambition under the guise of humanity, was just sufficient to prevent any real co-operation on the part of the United States.

Stratford Canning, who was sent out by Castlereagh to secure the concession of a mutual right of search, finally had to accept a disappointing compromise. The utmost that John Quincy Adams, at that time Secretary of State, would concede was a system of joint cruising, whereby British and American vessels would "give each other every assistance which may be compatible with the performance of their service." In vain did Canning point out that one cruiser commissioned with a right of search could do the work which, under the American plan, would require the presence of two cruisers sailing constantly in company. His logic was irresistible, but Adams refused to continue the discussion. In a later stage of his career Adams made a great name for himself in Congress as an anti-slavery man, but he was never willing to commit his country to an all-out war against the slave-trade. Political considerations induced him to think that some means of regulating the trade would be more effective than attempts to suppress it altogether. When Canning inquired if he could think of a more atrocious evil than the slave-trade, he replied: "Yes; admitting the right of search by foreign officers of our vessels upon the seas in time of peace; for that would be making slaves of ourselves." After such an admission

there was nothing left for Canning but to return home "feeling that sickness of heart which arises from the consciousness of being engaged in a hopeless task."

In the years between the Canning-Adams deadlock and the signing of the Webster-Ashburton treaty of 1842, no agreement was reached between the two countries for the suppression of the slave-trade. The system of joint cruising proved a failure owing to the very infrequent appearance on the West African coast of any American cruisers, and the slave-ships went their ways in comparative freedom from interruption. On one occasion when an American lieutenant, anxious to use his ship as effectively as possible, agreed with the officers commanding the British patrol to institute what amounted to a mutual right of search, his action was promptly disavowed by the American Government. The arrival of Lord Ashburton in the United States opened up a new phase of the problem. The fact that the slave-trade was being carried on almost entirely under the American flag was not denied. Just as American ships had formerly masqueraded as Spanish, scoundrels of all nations were now taking refuge under the American flag.

Daniel Webster, a far more tactful Secretary of State than John Quincy Adams, suggested a way out of the difficulty. He proposed that the two countries should maintain independent squadrons on the coast of Africa, with instructions to their commanders to act in concert in order that no slave-ship, under whatever flag it sailed, should be free from visit and search. Lord Ashburton accepted the proposal enthusiastically. It was a compromise between the British objective of a maritime police, armed with an effective right of search, and the American ideal of the complete immunity of commerce in time of peace. In its final form the Webster-Ashburton Treaty did not mention the right of search, but it did stipulate for a force of not less than eighty guns to be employed on the coast of Africa by each party. Once again the agreement was not what Great Britain wanted, but a permanent force of a fixed size on the West African coast was at least more satisfactory than John Quincy Adams's proposal of an occasional visit of a single cruiser.



By courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society

*He suggested a way out of an Anglo-American difficulty;*  
DANIEL WEBSTER (1782-1852). Portrait by Joseph Wood

In spite of objections, the treaty was approved, and the public on both sides of the ocean assumed that the presence of an American squadron on the scene of action would obviate the necessity of England's exercising the right of search. Webster's friendliness played a great part in eliminating friction, but under Lewis Cass, his successor in the State Department, the old issues were soon revived. A westerner who had fought against Great Britain

in the War of 1812, Cass spoke as a representative of the class that frankly hated England. When Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen made it clear that though England had given up the right of search she had not given up the right of visit, Cass accused them of bad faith. To the British statesmen the distinction was a perfectly valid one. The right of search extended not only to the vessel but to the cargo also. "The right we claim," said Sir Robert Peel, "is to know whether a vessel pretending to be American, and hoisting the American flag, be *bona fide* American . . ." Cass was always readier to tolerate the abuse of the American flag in the slave-trade than to concede anything to Great Britain. While he and Sir Robert Peel indulged in maritime metaphysics, Washington lost interest in the American squadron, and the slave-trade, now entirely confined to American ships, flourished more widely than ever. Although American cruisers captured a certain number of slavers, no convictions were ever obtained against them in the American courts until Lincoln became President. The slave-ship captains, when taken to New York for trial, were released on bail, which they could well afford to forfeit, or acquitted because of technical flaws in the evidence against them.

In those discouraging days when Britain and the United States were still squabbling over the right of search, Lord Palmerston was the one statesman who never gave up hope that the slave-trade could and would be exterminated. He was not even supported by the liberals in his own party. Cobden and John Bright, who took no particular interest in the suppression of the trade, warned him that people were becoming tired of his "benevolent crotchet for patrolling the coasts of Africa and Brazil," but Palmerston knew better. Hatred of the slave-trade and of the bestial cruelties it entailed was steadily mounting, not only in England but in America as well.

Lincoln ushered in a new policy of uncompromising suppression. The conviction and execution of Captain Gordon was only one of the many indications that the temper in Washington had changed. For the first time the work of enforcing the slave-trade laws was

concentrated in one responsible department. Caleb Smith, the Secretary of the Interior, quickly proved that where there was a will there was a way. As soon as the withdrawal of the Southern members had untied the hands of Congress, an appropriation of \$900,000 was voted for the work of enforcement. It was the first appropriation ever made commensurate with the vastness of the task. During the next six months, five vessels were seized and condemned, and four slavers convicted. New York, which during the Buchanan administration enjoyed the unenviable reputation of being the principal port in the world for this infamous commerce, suddenly became a law-abiding city, at least as far as the slave-trade was concerned, in consequence of what the British consul described as "a vigilance and energy never before witnessed."

At the same time the United States, on the initiative of Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, re-opened negotiations with Great Britain, and in 1862, within two years of Lincoln's election, a treaty was signed subjecting American commerce to the operation of the right of search that had been so long resisted. Ships of war of both nations, armed with anti-slave warrants, were authorized to search suspicious merchantmen within specified areas. If such vessels carried slaves, or were equipped for slave trading, they were to be sent for condemnation to one of the mixed courts established at New York, Sierra Leone and the Cape of Good Hope.

In a moment of unusual candour Seward admitted that had such a treaty been ratified in 1808, "there would have been no sedition here, and no disagreement between the United States and foreign nations." The upheaval of the Civil War thus produced that abandonment of the traditional position for which Castlereagh and Canning, Peel, Aberdeen and, most of all, Palmerston had laboured in vain. The treaty of 1862 signed the death warrant of the slave-trade. Three years later, slavery itself was abolished by the terms of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. After all, the Southerners had been right. You could not stamp out the slave-trade without ultimately stamping out slavery itself.