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FURTHER PAPER
RELATING TO THE
S L A V E T R A D E :

VIZ.

OBSERVATIONS by WILLIAM DAWES, Esquire, one of
the Commissioners;—in addition to the Report made by the
Commission of *African Enquiry*.—1811.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed, 22 April 1812.

AGREEING in general with the Report of Captain *Columbine*, there are nevertheless a few points, on which I feel it incumbent on me to express an opinion, differing in some degree from his. These points I proceed to specify.

S L A V E T R A D E.

Ist. I perfectly concur in the Statements contained in the first sixteen paragraphs of the Report on the subject of the Slave Trade. Unquestionably, while it is permitted to continue on its present extensive scale, little hope can be entertained, either that our commercial intercourse with that country will advance, or that its internal condition will be ameliorated. The suggestions which are thrown out on the subject of Bissao, I deem peculiarly important. Without either the absolute cession of that Settlement, or the interdiction of the Slave Trade from its ports, by the Portuguese Government, it would be impossible to free even that limited district of Coast, namely, the Windward Coast, to which Captain *Columbine* proposes chiefly to confine our efforts, from the direct effects of this Trade. I cannot however agree, that it would be right so to confine them. It is admitted by Captain *Columbine*, that the chief part of the Slave Trade is carried on from the Gold Coast, Whidá, the Bight of Benin and Angola; and it cannot be denied, that if the same vigorous means were resorted to on these parts of the Coast, which he proposes should be adopted to windward, the same beneficial effects, which he so confidently anticipates in the one case, would not fail equally to follow in the other. The Naval force which would be required in this case, would be much larger than that proposed by Captain *Columbine*. It would require to be at least doubled; but that if the force were adequate, its effects would prove equally efficacious to Leeward as they have been to Windward, there can be no doubt.

While Great Britain possesses her present Naval means, it would seem hardly justifiable in any point of view, to adopt the policy which Captain *Columbine* has proposed, of abandoning the whole of the African Coast beyond Cape Mount, to the unrestrained ravages of the Slave Trade. Captain *Columbine* appears evidently to have proceeded on the assumption, that Government would allow only a certain extent of force to this object. In that case it might be expedient to limit the range of its operations, but surely not otherwise. When Captain *Columbine* wrote, it was also unknown to him, not only that the decision of Sir William Scott, in the case of the *Fortuna*, had greatly enlarged the powers of our Cruizers under the Abolition Acts; but that the late Treaty of Amity with the Court of Brazil, exposed to capture and condemnation all Portuguese vessels trading for Slaves on any part of the African Coast, not immediately subject to the Crown of Portugal. Had Captain *Columbine* lived to become acquainted with these material changes, I am persuaded that his representations on this subject would have been materially modified. By far the greatest

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greatest part of the Slave Trade being carried on from Leeward, it would seem unfair to our Cruizers to debar them from the advantages which they could not fail to derive from the suppression of the illicit Commerce on that part of the Coast; and notwithstanding the ill success which attended the four visits of a ship of war to Leeward, to which Captain *Columbine* refers, I think it extremely probable, that there was not one of the many Slave Ships which it was then deemed expedient to liberate, which would not now be judged by our Courts of Admiralty good and lawful prize.

In a National point of view, I would also suggest that it is well worth the expense of an adequate Naval force to prevent the importation annually into the American Continent and Islands of such vast masses of African population as Captain *Columbine* represents, and represents, I believe, justly, to be now carried across the Atlantic.

I feel myself called upon for these reasons to dissent entirely from that part of the Report, which would restrain the Naval efforts of Great Britain to suppress this Trade within narrower limits than are fully adequate to meet all the exigencies of the case on every part of the African Coast; and I cannot doubt that Captain *Columbine* would have concurred in my views, had he known of the circumstances to which I have alluded as affecting the capture of Slave Ships, or could he have believed that a Naval force sufficient to scour the whole Coast would be afforded by Government.

I feel it incumbent on me to express my decided opinion, that a powerful and concurrent effort by an adequate number of Cruizers along the whole line of the African Coast, continued during the succeeding twelve months, would do more effectually to suppress this Traffic, than the continuance of a smaller force on the Coast for a much greater length of time. The Trade might receive a blow during that time, from which it would hardly recover. Should His Majesty's Government determine on making such an effort, the Island of Princes would afford a most convenient rendezvous for a small Squadron, such as Captain *Columbine* proposes should be stationed to windward, from whence it would give most effectual annoyance to illicit Slave Ships throughout the Bight of Benin, and even occasionally as far as Cape Three Points, westward, and Angola, southward.

2. SIERRA LEONE.

I concur also in the general Statements of the Report, with respect to this Colony. Its situation is extremely well chosen, and it possesses other advantages which give it a decided superiority over every other possession of the Crown in western Africa. I also anticipate many benefits to Africa and to Great Britain, from its maintenance. Many of the evils of which the Report complains, as existing in the administration of the Law within the Colony, will, it is hoped, be removed on the arrival of the Judge, who, being an experienced Lawyer, will be able to correct the irregularities which may have sprung up from the want of legal knowledge. By the new Constitution of Sierra Leone, the Judge will preside both in the Criminal and Civil Court.

3. BANCE ISLAND.

I concur entirely in the recommendation which is contained in the Report with respect to this Island, that it should be taken into the hands of Government. It would serve greatly to strengthen Sierra Leone, and to increase the British influence in that part of Africa. The present Proprietors would, I apprehend, be willing to part with it on very reasonable terms. They formerly offered to dispose of it for £. 12,000. and it is now, as it appears to me, not worth to them above half that sum.

4. CAPE MESURADO.

I fully agree in this part of the Report.

(Slave Trade.)

FURTHER PAPER;

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