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SLAVE TRADE.

RETURN to an ORDER of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 13 June 1839; — for,

COPY of the MEMORIAL to the LORDS COMMISSIONERS of HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY from Mr. *Joseph Woodhead*, on behalf of the Commander, Officers, and Crew of Her Majesty's Brig *Buzzard*, as Captors of the Spanish Schooner *Circe* of 98 Tons, condemned under the late Treaty, being illegally fitted for the TRAFFIC IN SLAVES, and declared to be 38 Tons British Admeasurement.

Whitehall, Treasury Chambers, }
24 June 1839.

F. BARING.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 25 June 1839.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF
HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

THE MEMORIAL of *Joseph Woodhead*, of *James-street, Adelphi*, in the County of *Middlesex*, Agent on behalf of the Commander, Officers, and Crew of Her Majesty's Brigantine *Buzzard*.

Humbly Sheweth,

THAT your Memorialist is agent to Lieutenant Charles Fitzgerald the commander, and the officers and crew of Her Majesty's brigantine *Buzzard*, one of the vessels stationed on the coast of Africa, and specially furnished with the necessary instructions authorizing him to seize and detain all Spanish, Portuguese, Brazilian, or Netherlands vessels found engaged in the slave trade, contrary to the several treaties with those Powers.

That in pursuance of those instructions, and more especially in virtue of the additional treaty with Spain of the 28th of June 1835, Her Majesty's said ship seized and detained the Spanish schooner *Circe*, *Serafin Antonio Spencer*, master, by reason of her being illegally fitted out for the traffic in slaves, and dispatched her to *Sierra Leone* for adjudication. Upon her arrival at that colony proceedings were commenced in the British and Spanish Mixed Commission Court there established, and at an adjourned meeting of the Court on the 21st of
December

December last, the vessel and cargo were condemned, including 37 Spanish doubloons and 96 Spanish dollars. The vessel was thereupon broken up as directed by the said treaty, and the net proceeds arising from the sale thereof, as also of the cargo and doubloons and dollars, amounting to 175 *l.* 11 *s.* 7 *d.*, have been paid over to Mr. Laurie, the Assistant Commissary-general of the said colony, as appears by his receipt hereto annexed, and to one moiety whereof the captors are entitled.

Your Memorialist begs leave to annex an official copy of the decree of the British and Spanish Mixed Commission Court at Sierra Leone, condemning the said vessel, and prays that your Lordships will be pleased to grant to the captors the usual bounties, as directed by the 1 & 2 Vict. c. 47, of 4 *l.* and 1 *l.* 10 *s.* upon each ton of the tonnage of this vessel, as also one moiety of the net proceeds of sale, in order that the same may be distributed to and amongst the captors.

Your Memorialist fears that under the strict interpretation of the abovementioned statute, as at present framed, the captors are only entitled to bounty on the burthen of the said vessel, agreeable to the present mode of British admeasurement, and your Memorialist therefore begs to annex a certificate from Mr. M'Cormack, the surveyor to the said Court, whereby she would appear to have been, agreeable to the present system of admeasurement, of the burthen of only 38 British tons, although she is represented in that certificate to have been a schooner-rigged vessel with two masts, 67 feet in length, above 18 feet in breadth, and above six feet in depth; and it is also stated in the certificate of the acting Registrar of the Court, also hereto annexed, that it appeared by the records of the Court that the said vessel was of the burthen of 90 Portuguese tons, which it is well known is always very much underrated; and your Memorialist has been informed, that if this vessel had been measured agreeable to the former mode of British admeasurement, her burthen would have been computed at 121 $\frac{3}{4}$ tons, in consequence of her great length and breadth, the principal and main features necessary for a vessel which is to be employed solely for the transport of slaves.

Your Lordships will therefore perceive, that by adopting this system of admeasurement, which was never intended to have been applied to slave-vessels (inasmuch as the odious traffic is unknown in the mercantile marine of this country), the bounties to the captors of these empty slave-vessels will be so much reduced, that the bounty of 1 *l.* 10 *s.* per ton, which in this case will amount to 57 *l.* only, and was intended to have reimbursed the captors for the loss they will sustain by reason of the vessel being directed by the additional treaty with Spain to be entirely demolished, will not even pay the expenses of demolishing the vessel; as your Lordships will perceive, that exclusive of the merchandize on board, there was bullion to the value of above 144 *l.* sterling, yet the whole proceeds of vessel and merchandize and bullion, after deducting the expenses of breaking up, only amount to 175 *l.* 11 *s.* 7 *d.* sterling. Your Memorialist begs leave also to observe, that the 4 *l.* per ton, which in this case will amount to only 171 *l.*, and was intended by the Legislature to have been an encouragement to captors for the seizure of empty vessels, by granting to them about the same amount of bounty as if the vessel had slaves on board, will not, after the payment of Exchequer and Treasury fees, and the expenses at Sierra Leone of prosecuting the vessel to condemnation, realize to the captors so much as 100 *l.*, to be divided amongst a crew, including Kroomen, of from 70 to 75 men, employed on the most unhealthy station, and engaged on a service of the greatest responsibility, so much so, that if this vessel had happened on the production of her papers before the Mixed Commissioners to have been considered as Portuguese (which might have been the case, in consequence of the fraudulent manner in which these slave-vessels are provided with papers), she must have been restored, and the captor amerced in costs and damages, which in many cases have far exceeded 1,000 *l.*; whereas this vessel, although of so small a British burthen, agreeable to the present British admeasurement, would have carried a cargo of between 270 and 300 slaves, or rather above three slaves to the ton, and if captured with those on board would have afforded to the captors encouragement for engaging in this unhealthy service, perilous alike to the lives and the finances of the captors, if hazarded in the capture of empty slave-vessels.

Your

CAPTURE OF THE CIRCE.

3

Your Memorialist therefore trusts, that your Lordships will extend your liberal aid to the captors of empty slave-vessels, and, if necessary, forthwith submit an Act to the Legislature, enacting that the former British mode of admeasuring vessels shall be adopted, whereby to ascertain the burthen of these slave-vessels, or that the tonnage-bounty to be awarded to the captors shall be increased.

And your Memorialist, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(signed) *J. Woodhead.*

Whitehall, Treasury Chambers, }
24 June 1839.

F. BARING.

SLAVE TRADE.

COPY of MEMORIAL of Mr. Joseph Woodhead on behalf of the Officers and Crew of Her Majesty's Brig *Buzzard*, as Captors of the Spanish Schooner *Circe*, illegally fitted for the TRADE in SLAVES.

(Captain Peckell.)

**Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
25 June 1839.**
