

of the sugar cane, which they were then promoting in the Brazils.

Our African provinces contain rich mines of gold, copper, iron, and precious stones. We can there cultivate all that is cultivated in America. We possess lands of the greatest fertility in the Capè de Verd Islands, in Guinea, Angola, and Moçambique: great and navigable rivers fertilize some of our provinces, and facilitate their commerce. In those vast regions we can cultivate, largely, the sugar-cane, rice, indigo, coffee, cotton, and cocoa; in short, all those articles commonly called colonial, as well as all the spice plants of the Moluccas and Ceylon, in such abundance as not only to suffice for the consumption of Portugal, but for exportation in very large quantities to the other markets of Europe, and at a less price than those of America; since the African cultivator would not be obliged to seek for and purchase labourers, and then transport them across the Atlantic, while the high price paid by the Brazilian for the slaves he employs, is further increased by the risks attendant upon the contraband traffic by which he obtains them.

Let us promote, in Africa, the colonisation of Europeans, the development of its industry, the employment of its capital, and in a few years we shall again derive the same benefits that we formerly did. But for this purpose, a thorough reform of our colonial laws is necessary.

If any system of legislation can be judged of by its results, none can be worse than that by which our colonies have been ruled. Centuries have passed away since first they came under our dominion, and they are but little more civilized than they were when we conquered them; while, as a contrast, the neighbouring colony of the Cape of Good Hope has, within much less time, increased rapidly in white population, and in wealth.

The glory of continuing the great undertaking commenced by King John the Second, was reserved for your Majesty. The civilization of Africa, of which so many powerful nations have despaired, is more feasible to the Queen of Portugal, who holds in her hands the key of the principal gates at which it can enter, and whose authority is obeyed in various parts of that vast continent, at distances of more than two hundred leagues from the sea; and as it was possible for the former Sovereigns of Portugal to open roads for civilization, a step which no other Prince had ventured upon, so it will be possible to make that beneficial plant thrive and flourish in those regions.

As an indispensable preliminary to any measures which for this great purpose your Majesty, in accordance with the General Cortes, may take, your Secretaries of State have the honour to propose the following project of a Decree for the entire and complete abolition of the slave-trade in your dominions.

*Foreign-Office, 10th December 1836.*

(Signed by all the Ministers.)

#### DECREE.

Taking into consideration the reports of the Secretaries of State of the different departments, I hereby issue the following Decree:

#### Article 1.

That the exportation of slaves be henceforth prohibited, both by sea and land, in the Portuguese dominions, as well to the north as to the south of the equator, from the day on which the present Decree shall be published in the different capitals of the said dominions.

#### Article 2.

The importation of slaves by sea is also strictly prohibited under any pretext whatever.

S. 1. Due notification must be given of any slaves that may be brought by land into any of the Portuguese territories.

#### Article 3.

Any planter, whether native or foreigner, who, from any part of the Portuguese dominions, in Africa, may establish himself in any other part of the said dominions, on the continent or islands on the coast of Africa, is exempted from the rules laid down in the first and second article relating to the exportation and importation of slaves.

S. 1. The same exemption from the rule established, in Article second, also extends to the importation of slaves by sea made by any planter, whether native or foreigner, who, from any port not subject to my power, may establish himself in any of my dominions in Africa.

#### Article 4.

The powers granted by the preceding article of this Decree shall be regulated as follows:

S. 1. The number of slaves exported or imported under the exceptions treated of in the said third Article, can never exceed ten.

S. 2. Previous to the exportation of slaves the owner of the same shall make a declaration, before the chief authorities of the Custom-house of the port of embarkation, of the number intended to be shipped, giving substantial bond equal to double the value of the slaves to be shipped, and also that they shall be actually landed at the place of their declared destination.

S. 3. The object of the foregoing clause being complied with, the transaction shall be registered in a book, to be kept for that purpose at the Custom-house, with the addition of the declaration made by the owner of the slaves, and the conditions of the security given.

S. 4. The chief authority of the Custom-house, wherein the documents referred to in the foregoing clause shall be registered, shall transmit an authenticated copy of the same, under the official seal, to the chief authority of the custom-house of the port, declared by the owner of the slaves to be their destination.

S. 5. The owner of the slaves may, by virtue of the certificate of their delivery, given by the chief authority of the Custom-house of the port of their declared destination, demand the cancelling of the bond given at the port of their shipment, and it shall be immediately granted.

S. 6. Should the owner of the slaves not appear personally with them, within six months from the date of the Act treated of in the third section, before the superior authority of the port of the declared destination, the latter shall make an official communication to the superior authority of the custom-house where the transaction was registered, in order that