

**A SECOND LETTER FROM LORD  
DENMAN TO LORD BROUGHAM:  
ON  
THE FINAL EXTINCTION OF THE  
SLAVE TRADE WITH REMARKS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649233540

A Second Letter from Lord Denman to Lord Brougham: On the Final Extinction of the Slave  
Trade with remarks by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**A SECOND LETTER FROM LORD  
DENMAN TO LORD BROUGHAM:  
ON  
THE FINAL EXTINCTION OF THE  
SLAVE TRADE WITH REMARKS**



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# SECOND LETTER

FROM

LORD DENMAN <sup>1st Baron</sup> <sup>Denman 1774-1854</sup> TO LORD BROUGHAM,

ON THE

## FINAL EXTINCTION OF THE SLAVE TRADE,

WITH

# REMARKS

ON A LATE

## NARRATIVE OF THE NIGER EXPEDITION

IN 1841.

LONDON:

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

1849.

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## SECOND LETTER.

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Jan. 1, 1849.

AN accident has directed my attention to the narrative lately published of the Expedition of the Niger in 1841, by W. Allen, R.N., Commander, second officer of the *Albert*, and Dr. Thomson, one of the medical officers in that vessel. The work is full of interest. While the melancholy record of sickness and death, deliberately braved and endured for an object of immense importance, inspires the highest respect for the heroic devotion of men suffering in the cause of humanity; the report of their transactions with several of the native chiefs, in execution of the powers with which they were entrusted, is highly valuable; and the information they afford on all subjects connected with that part of Africa will be found of great practical utility.

The authors paint in glowing colours the magnificent scenery, the rich and luxuriant vegetation, the beautiful sunsets behind lofty chains of mountain land, and stately forests. They saw with delight wild nature in some open spaces wearing the semblance of English parks and lawns. Large tracts presented the aspect of careful cultivation, and in some villages the cultivated fields were fenced in. There were markets in the towns, and some rude manufactures. They detail the numerous productions of that fertile soil—the ivory, the mineral treasures, inestimable articles of commerce. The exchange of these in regular trade would find useful employment for thousands, and their distribution in the more favoured communities of the civilized world would increase and diffuse the elegances of life, and add to the splendour and luxury of the highest classes, while they would promote the comfort of all.

They likewise found, among the various tribes which they visited, a strong propensity to avail themselves of these great natural advantages. "Among the people there is an established idea of justice, and the essential character of all is decidedly commercial." (Vol. ii. 431.) "The strongest characteristic of the inhabitants is their love of traffic. It is indeed their ruling passion, which, if rightly developed, may become the in-

strument for raising them in the scale of nations." (Vol. i. 398.) Nor is it merely the vagrant traffic of smugglers or gipsies, for their great men and princes are ready to negotiate and make treaties on a comprehensive scale. The model agreement sent out by Lord J. Russell in his admirable instructions was fully explained and distinctly understood by Obi, king of Abo, and by the Attah of Iddah, before they acceded to it. They freely condemned the traffic in slaves, and were highly pleased by the hopes held out of a commerce in other articles with England. The former "acknowledged that he had carried on the slave trade hitherto to a great extent, but that he knew it to be wrong; now, however, having heard the truth from us, he would no longer continue a practice which he knew was unjust." At the same time he said "that it had ceased in a great measure, from the *difficulty he found in selling the slaves,\** which we explained by telling him that the queen's ships kept up a strict blockade all along the coast in order to prevent the approach of slave vessels. *He seemed very much pleased with this;* but said repeatedly, if we wished him to substitute lawful trade in the produce of the country, we must send ships to take it away."

These two chiefs bear sway in extensive

\* This was in August, 1841.



territories, and govern numerous subjects. They appear to possess the qualities which are admitted as forming a natural right to dominion over an uncivilized people. Their capitals contain a population of near 10,000 inhabitants each. Their courts displayed a gradation of ranks; their manners, self-respect and a sense of what was due to others. A large multitude out of doors attended their *palavers*, and expressed a lively sympathy in what was passing. The Attah of Iddah sold the Commissioners a large tract of land, on which the experiment of the model farm was to be made.

The affectionate disposition for which the African is famed was evinced by the joy with which they greeted each other after a long separation. Captain Allen had the good fortune to meet with some who hailed him as an old acquaintance, having known him on an earlier expedition, in 1832; and where his former host, whom he describes as a man of sense and character, had been removed by death, his son on one occasion, on another his aged brother, received the captain on the footing of old friendship. They remembered and inquired after poor Lander. The minds of the natives had been improved in some respects by the intercourse with Englishmen. Vaccination was practised among them; they

had learned to prefer the medical skill of their visitors to the Fetiche charms anciently relied on. King Obi's sister, a personage of great distinction, and exercising some power, even went the length of declaring her conviction, that the African superstitions were absurd.

At the confluence of the rivers the steamers parted company, the *Albert* ascending the Niger, the *Soudan* navigating the Chadda, while the *Wilberforce* proceeded with many sick to the coast. In less than two months all were compelled by sickness to make for the coast for the recovery of health. In June, 1842, the Niger expedition, commenced under such high patronage, and with such auspicious circumstances, was declared to be at an end. Captain Bird Allen had fallen a victim to disease; Captain W. Allen, and the leader of the expedition, Captain Trotter, were on their way to England; Lieut. Webb was, however, commissioned to take the *Wilberforce* up the Niger with eight officers and a crew (as I understand) of native Africans. He likewise was soon compelled by sickness to give up his enterprise, the principal object of which seems to have been to ascertain the fate of Mr. Carr, who had remained behind his former companions, with the intention of erecting, and settling on, the model farm. There is every reason to fear, though no direct proof, that that unfortunate gentleman had been

murdered, for the sake of his property, by some native plunderers. But Lieut. Webb, on his return, appears to have met with a repulse rather than a reception from these new allies, King Obi and the Attah of Iddah, unpropitiated by the presents, compliments, and engagements of the preceding year. There is reason to fear that they were in some way connected with the murder of Mr. Carr, cognizant of it, if not conniving. Both had broken the treaties entered into, and permitted the slave trade to revive in their dominions, and for their own benefit.

The explanation here offered of the change thus wrought in their feelings does not appear altogether satisfactory. Captain Allen thinks that they were justified in neglecting to perform their part of the bargain by the breach of promise of which our commissioners were guilty, having sent no ships and no merchandize. It seems more reasonable to ascribe the loss of our influence to the melancholy contrast between the spectacle presented by our steamers in ascending the river and in returning. The dismal change probably weakened their confidence in the power and in the good sense of Englishmen, and threw the chiefs into the hands of their old accomplices in slave trading. My own conjecture is, that that inveterate and enormous evil at which the expedition was aimed, so long practised and