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Essay on Slavery
by
Andrew Caffrey

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ESSAY ON SLAVERY,

WITH A

REASONABLE PROPOSITION MADE HOW TO DISPENSE WITH IT.

WITH A BRIEF INVESTIGATION OF WHAT IS TERMED CIVILIZED LIFE,
SHOWING UNMASKED, WITHOUT COLOURING, A PICTURE OF
SOME OF ITS PRACTICES AND RESULTS.

“WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?”—MAT. XVI. 26.

LET US ENDEAVOUR TO IMITATE THE GOOD PHYSICIAN, WHO HAVING DISCOVERED THE CAUSE OF SICKNESS, HONESTLY
AND SKILFULLY ENDEAVOURS TO EFFECT A CURE.

BY ANDREW CAFFREY.

MANKIND, born and brought up in “civilized” society, are, physically and morally speaking, with some exceptions, in a far worse condition than were the Aborigines of this and many other countries, before these countries were invaded by the “civilized,” who, having invented more destructive weapons of warfare than were used by those who still remained in a primitive state of nature, carried death and desolation amongst them, transported great numbers to work in slavery in other countries where they had annihilated the inhabitants, and reduced all that could not escape, into the lowest state possible of misery and degradation; took possession of their lands, and encouraged people to emigrate from Europe to settle on them, many of whom did not understand any thing more about it, than that they were told that there “were savages in the country, who, if they caught them, would kill them.”

To raise enough of produce for their own consumption did not suffice; artificial wants were imagined and encouraged, that of money in particular, the use of which might have been dispensed with; and to supply which, and to live entirely without labour, (a reasonable amount of exercise in which, is said by skilful doctors to add beauty to an invigorated frame,) ships were sent to the coast of Africa, to decoy, kidnap, and to barter for, and buy the people of that country; who were chained down between decks for a long passage, without the means of cleanliness or comfort, subjected to being struck and whipped, without appeal, and without distinction to age or sex.

It is immaterial in this case, whether the black man, or the red man, or the white, was the first or the last made, whether the descendants of Ham or of

Abraham. The judgments pronounced against the workers of iniquity, is proof sufficient to convince all sober and conscientious people who feel an abhorrence at, and are strongly opposed to acts of cruelty being committed, that God has implanted in every sane mind that will acknowledge it, this same evidence of his will. It is thought and expressed as such by some people, that "Africans are the descendants of 'Cain,'" and that "black is the mark by which to distinguish them." It would be as reasonable to say, without proof, that the feathers on some birds were turned black for a similar offence. It amounts, therefore, to a mere proposition, without any permanent ground for argument or discussion. From this, however, it may be inferred that there are many vague sayings made use of, even among white people, in regard to each other having a pernicious tendency, as for instance; "Those who are not with us, are against us." Here let us refresh our memory by a quotation from the life of "Girard, the rich banker of Philadelphia," "whose aid solicited, was often bounteously bestowed to applicants of various denominations of Christian professors," although not a professing Christian himself. In regard to him and many others who could be quoted for their benevolence, example went before precept. That saying, therefore, often applied for uncharitable purposes, cannot be reconciled with reason and common sense, as being by any means universally correct.

As human beings on whom our Creator has bestowed the faculties of reason and sound judgment, with conscience for a monitor to warn us against doing what is wrong; it is evident and convincing proof to those who are willing to be convinced, that however we may endeavour to hide, to forget, or to bury in oblivion by stupifying the senses, or by any means whatever, any wicked and cruel actions of which we are wilfully guilty, we are nevertheless held responsible by Him who cannot be deceived or cheated; and with feelings of sympathy and deep regret that such awful occurrences should have to be answered for as the horrible cruelties inseparable from a state of slavery, let us pause and ask ourselves the question, how are all these sins and miseries to be atoned for, thus entailed on the world, and how far may we be considered as guilty partisans in the course of events, although not having any direct hand in it, for allowing our white brethren to practise it? It is urged in some cases of cruelty, as an excuse for it, "that we are commanded to increase and multiply;" but surely not by cutting off and other barbarous acts of cruelty, which contradicts the term, and is a direct violation of the sacred ties of friendship, love, "charity and humanity." None of these cruelties have ever been encouraged or sanctioned by myself. And some other people in some countries, having become enlightened in regard to a system injurious to human nature in its evil tendencies, and revolting to the feelings of humanity, have wisely abolished it, and washed their hands clean of its stains. And we who are opposed to it, feel a conviction that not their conscience is consulted, who practise it, but their avaricious disposition, and their devotion to the lust of the world and mammon. It has been, and I believe is still urged, that an "increasing population in the world, creates an increasing demand for such articles of consumption as slave labour produces." Are we then to suppose that in proportion to the still fast increasing number of free, there must be a proportional number of the slave population? It would not, I think, be out of place to make a reference to the Bible account of the "plagues" with which "Pharaoh" was visited, for holding the children of Israel in bondage. It is therefore very reasonable to suppose that a heavy judgment awaits those of the present day, as well as those of days gone by. For any to say they do not consider it a "crime" to be guilty of extreme barbarity, in forcing away from their native homes, parents, brothers, and sisters: children also separated never to

meet again; and all in the most heart-rending and hard-hearted manner whipped and chained, and many of whom "sicken and are thrown overboard" to die.

It is recorded of a "slave ship having several hundred slaves on board," being "pursued by an anti-slave ship," and that finding they would be taken, and fearing the consequence of the law, if taken with slaves on board, which now makes it piracy; in the most cold-hearted cruelty, buried all the evidence they could of their guilt, by heaving the poor slaves into the sea, the weight of whose chains soon sunk them to the bottom. May it not be said with shame and deep regret, that in a country producing such monsters, there must be something wrong?

When a subject of such vital importance as that of the slave trade, is undertaken for examination, the investigation should be impartial and thorough, as far as it goes. And I hope it will not be counted sacrilegious to say, that which is a well known fact, that before this country became civilized, no such demonstration as that of slavery was known or made in it. To say that we copied it from, and followed the example (in establishing it,) of another country that has given it up, and not following the example of giving it up too, is equal to saying, "we have done that which we ought not to have done, and left that undone which we ought to do." The "Buccaneers" of America were a collection of desperadoes, such like, as if now living, would be likely to embark in the obnoxious trade. The Crusaders were an innocent people, comparatively speaking, as in their attempt to retake Jerusalem, they were actuated by an honest belief that they were doing what was right. But that consolation falls not to the lot of the slaveholder. And what security have we besides the law? What confidence can we place in a man that will, after what has been told of suffering, hold his fellow-man in chains and slavery? I say what security have we that such a man would not consign his fellow-white-man also into bondage?

It has been said by slaveholders, that their "slaves are better cared for than are the people of the free States," by their governors, and as it may result in some good, let us investigate a little into this subject also: as, properly speaking, there is some coincidence between free and slave labour in some cases, more especially so in this country, both being introduced about the same period. Both have rapidly increased in numbers, with an unceasing demand for more. The machinist and some others, when "trade is brisk," can, with economy, support a family, and if otherwise "fortunate" can save up a sum of money; and some have acquired riches by their carefulness and industry. These riches are not calculated to make them feel happier than they might feel in the simple, but comfortable and convenient cottage. But there in grim aspect, on the other hand, stand the poor-houses and the prisons, seeming to say with a sulphurous breath, and through lips besmeared with blood, come here if you dare? I have heard it said, and seen it in print, that the "discipline in prisons is not so severe as in poor-houses." I do not wish to try the experiment—having from necessity had quite too much proof of the want of humanity in poor-house-hospitals. And we having on record accounts of keepers being murdered by prisoners, do not appear to be any enticing invitation to them.

Vanity on the one side, and inhumanity on the other, in those two miserable abodes, may be counted as being the principal causes of all the sin and suffering in the world; and is therefore owing to the mismanagement of mankind amongst themselves, though the blame is attached to the "Wicked One," and often profanely to the Almighty himself, for allowing mankind to do these wrongs he has forbidden them to do by that conscience which he has implanted within them, if they would obey its dictates. There are now many thousands

of free coloured people in the free States, and also many thousands of white people, who have no employment during a great part of the year, and who are in want of many necessaries of life, for cleanliness, health, and comfort; and who would be both able and willing, for a fair remuneration of pay, to do all the labour now performed by slaves. Sober men, properly clothed and dieted, properly bedded and rested, with the most proper hours for labour selected; in every way good encouragement given, without "driving," and they would effect wonders, with a convincing proof that would suppress the wavering and puny opinion that it cannot be done. Slaveholders, try it with a determination to succeed, and you will not fail. There will be no occasion for task-masters to watch them work; they will work better and feel better satisfied without them; and being sober men, they will be intelligent; and a few directions given in turn to them, that none may assume the office of dictator permanently, with encouragement to be peaceable and improving, will be of great additional service. With a man or woman who can be satisfied with a reasonable amount of profit from a reasonable amount of labour, this proposed arrangement, if managed properly, cannot fail. Let no one that takes intoxicating liquor, have any thing to do with its management, or there will be faults made out, where there are none in reality, and which are silly, as they often create confusion, and tend to no good purpose. If any wish to know where are the thousands wanting good employment, and good homes, even now let the slave laws be abolished, and the standard be raised, not to deceive, but to carry out to the very letter, this proposition for a proof. Smoking of good tobacco allowed, and no danger of the climate to men in good health under such regulations.

By following this plan, there would be an end of "slavery" in this country, now so much noted for it throughout the world. There is then an alternative. Under a long established rule of what is called civilized life, many dreadful inconsistencies, the very reverse of it, have been, and are still practised and tolerated. The world contains multitudes of poor people, by whose labour the food and many other necessaries of life are produced; yet they are at the mercy of those, generally during some period of their life, who are cruel enough to add to their sufferings, by torturing them from a bad disposition. How unlike the "Good Samaritan," are sadly, too many people, even sometimes among those from whom better is, and ought to be expected. Brutality begets brutality, although kindness is repaid by some with ingratitude. But if slavery is continued, I will not undertake to say what may be the consequences thereof, to this country or to the world; and as I think my advice is both reasonable and good on that subject, I hope it will not be despised on the grounds of my not being a rich man.

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