

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

# ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS

FOR PROMOTING THE

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, &c.


PHILADELPHIA :

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## REPORT.

In presenting our annual report, we are sensible that much remains to be done to accomplish the slave's liberation; at the same time we are encouraged to persevere in our efforts, from the conviction that we have not laboured in vain, and from the abundant evidence of the spread of anti-slavery principles, and the increasing interest that is every where manifested in the great cause of human freedom.

The meetings of the Association have been regularly held, on the evening of the first Fourth-day in each month. The education of the coloured people has claimed our attention.

The evening school under the care of this Committee, was continued as heretofore, during the winter months, and satisfactory reports of its progress were read from time to time. One hundred and twenty-four pupils were enrolled. Two teachers were employed who were assisted by members of the Association. Lectures on such scientific subjects as were deemed most likely to interest, were occasionally delivered.

In remembering that several of the pupils, who, a few years since entered our school ignorant of the letters of the alphabet, have, by attention to their

studies through this medium, made very considerable progress in reading, writing, and arithmetic, thus becoming better qualified for the necessary business of life, we are assured that a blessing has rested upon this labour, and would encourage all to faithful attention to the monitions of Truth, in aiding these, our oppressed and much despised fellow creatures. The expenses of the school amounted to \$112 60, exclusive of sundry donations.

A committee has been set apart to visit the coloured people in their families and associations, as way may open, to encourage them to exertion to advance their condition in society, and do all they can for their own elevation.

It is with much satisfaction that we observe a marked improvement in intelligence and respectability among them. The schools appropriated for coloured children by the public, are now generally well attended, giving evidence of an increased desire to partake of the blessings of education. We are aware, however, that there is still great room for further advancement in their physical and intellectual condition, but we are encouraged to believe from the favourable changes of the few past years, that those to come will witness a still more rapid improvement.

Petitions have been presented to Congress for the abolition of slavery, and the prohibition of the domestic slave trade. A tract for gratuitous distribution has also been published.

The standing committee on collecting and dissemi-

nating information on the subject of slavery, have made monthly reports, comprising a few of the many events that are now transpiring on this deeply interesting subject, from which it is evident that the principles of freedom are spreading among the people, who are coming to see that the best means of securing their own liberty, is to grant it to others, and who are learning a deeper wisdom, and discerning more clearly the meaning of religion, and the promptings of love.

Another evidence of the spread of anti-slavery principles, is derived from an increased and wider spreading desire to obtain goods that are free from the contaminations of slavery.

The supply of free goods and groceries is increasing, and it has been lately ascertained that large quantities of cotton can be procured from the southern states, which is the produce of free labour.\*

Since our last annual meeting many events have transpired, both in this country and among other nations of the earth, bearing more or less directly on the interests of the great cause in which this Association is particularly engaged. The rights of the oppressed of all grades and complexions, have been held up to view, and asserted and maintained in almost all quarters of the world. The spirit which the author of our being has implanted in every human bosom, inspiring its possessor with the sentiment of personal in-

\*Goods of this description can be obtained at the store of Geo. W. Taylor, corner of Fifth and Cherry streets, who keeps such goods only as are believed to be free from the stain of slavery.

dependence, a conviction that no one man can rightfully assume to be lord and master of another, has struggled, and is now struggling, to break the bonds of tyranny and oppression, to a greater extent, and with greater force than has ever before been witnessed in the history of our race.

It is common for objectors to the cause of emancipation, to point to retrograde movements which they allege have taken place in this country, in the last twenty years. We are told that the efforts of the friends of the slave, within that period, have only served to fasten the chains more firmly on his limbs; that a number of the more northern slave states were preparing for emancipation, when the interference of the Abolitionists turned them from their design, and threw back the cause; that instead of better treatment and better laws for the bondman, his condition has been aggravated by harsh and cruel legislation; that the excitement and alarm produced among slaveholders by the efforts alluded to, have steeled their hearts against the promptings of justice and humanity, and closed their ears to all argument and counsel. These statements are sometimes made, not only by the advocates of slavery, but by its professed enemies, who, though they would rejoice in its downfall, are opposed to any active movement now in operation for that purpose.

If all these assertions were true—if it could be shown that the cause of emancipation had apparently been thrown back by the efforts of its friends, still we do not consider these objections valid. We regard the



testimony against slavery, to be in itself an important and a righteous one, and in holding it up and pressing it upon the world, we are not to be discouraged by supposed consequences. It is enough for us to know, that we are inspired by the love of truth and humanity. Our forefathers did not hold their peace, when they saw the community excited and convulsed by their doctrines; they did not sit down with folded arms, and quietly wait for the storm to subside before they should venture forth afresh on the field of reform. When the apostle to the Gentiles saw the Ephesians stirred up to great wrath by his preaching, he did not close his lips and suspend his labours; nor did the great reformer of Nazareth, when he rebuked the vices of the people, change his course and preach smooth things, because they gnashed their teeth with rage.

Circumstances do not indicate a retrogression of this cause the last twenty years; the reverse we believe to be true. We have seen the good fruits of the labours in behalf of the slave, and we are encouraged to persevere.

When application was made to the national government, in 1820, for the admission of Missouri into the union as a slave state, the opponents made a powerful and united effort to prevent it. They were unsuccessful. Disheartened by their failure, many of them folded their arms, and sat in despondency. Then indeed there was a retrogression. During the period of calm that ensued, the slave power, left to itself, was encouraged and strengthened; the interest of trade, and the influence of political power, gradually infused

into the hearts of many of the freemen of the North, a passive and servile spirit, inimical to the sentiment of universal liberty, and incompatible with the faithful and fearless assertion of human rights.

After a few years, some individuals came forth with a plain and fearless testimony against the sin of slavery. In the spirit of George Fox, and the early Quakers, they proclaimed before the world, the wickedness of slaveholding, and the duty of immediate unconditional emancipation. By their preaching, the peace of society was disturbed; its false rest was broken up, yet those who exposed the diseased state of the public mind, were charged with producing it. They who merely probed the wound, to bring to light its existence and extent, were blamed with its infliction.

From that time to the present, there has been a decided advance. The little band of active abolitionists has increased and extended, until it covers the free states, and even pervades the house of bondage. Many of the efficient advocates of emancipation, are among those who once were in the opposition, and some of them held slaves twenty years ago. See the change that has taken place in the national legislature, where a few years since the petitions of the people against slavery were treated with contempt, and but a few individuals dared to open their lips on the subject. Behold the action of the legislatures of the northern States, many of which have enacted laws within a few years, calculated to prevent the arrest of fugitive

slaves within their borders. In some of the slave states, measures are in progress to change the constitution and enact laws for the emancipation of the slaves.

If we turn our eyes abroad, we shall find that the cause of the slave has not retrograded in foreign lands in the last twenty years. Witness the emancipation of the slaves by Great Britain, in their West and East India colonies. The recent proclamation of liberty to two hundred and thirty thousand slaves by the government of France. “Denmark has proclaimed deliverance to her captives, and the royal edict of Sweden has spoken liberty to her bondmen. In Bohemia and Wallachia many thousands of serfs have been emancipated, and some of the nobles of Russia have added their example to the efforts of the Emperor, to secure the freedom of the serfs of that vast empire. In Holland the leaven of liberty is at work, and her colonies will doubtless be now freed from the yoke of slavery. The overthrow of monarchy, and the proclamation of republicanism in France, is a terrible testimony to tyrants that the people will have their liberties, and that governments must yield to their demands, or be broken in pieces. A former Pope denounced the slave trade, and counselled all catholics to withdraw their aid from it. The present head of the Roman church has distinguished himself in the reform of abuses, and the adoption of a liberal and humane policy. Mohammedanism, cold and conservative as it is, yields to the warm humanity of the age

Tunis and Egypt have followed in the footsteps of some of the monarchs of Europe, and decreed entire emancipation to their slaves. And the Sultan of Turkey has cleansed his capital from the defilement of its slave mart. Even Paganism is bending before the potent spirit of progress, which is everywhere rousing man to nobler deeds, and a better faith. One kingdom of India, (Lahore) at least, has forbidden the slave trade, and the enslavement of human beings.”

In view of all these and other facts that might be stated, how can any honest mind believe, that the labours of abolitionists have retarded the cause of freedom. It is but a few weeks since, a prominent advocate of slavery declared on the floor of Congress, from the progress made by free principles, that he perceived the South was doomed.

In the United States there are now about three millions of slaves. In this highly civilized and professing Christian country, in this boasted home of liberty, there are probably nearly as great a number of negro slaves as in all the world besides. This single fact should lead us to enquire, seriously, solemnly, and religiously, what duties we have to perform in relation to the interesting question. Truly if there be a single testimony, which there is occasion to uphold and promulgate in this nation, under present circumstances, the testimony against slavery appears to have special claims to such consideration.

We would affectionately and earnestly urge those who say, they have as yet seen nothing for them to do in the great work of emancipating the slave, either as

individuals or in an associated capacity, to enquire diligently, whether they are standing on safe ground, or are following the example and precepts of him “who went about doing good.” Are there not some who are ever ready to ascribe to self-righteousness, or worldly wisdom, or the will of the creature, or human reason, the labors of those with whom they are not prepared to unite? feeling that the activity of others is a reflection on them, they seek this excuse for their indolence. And do not others, under the idea of waiting for a special and luminous revelation, condemn those who go forward, as running before they are called, while they themselves wait and wait, till there is reason to believe they have neglected their duty when it was set before them, or allowed themselves to be blinded by prejudice or misconception? When we find men labouring in a good cause, let us not be too ready to judge their motives, or to pronounce them wanting in proper authority. Works of humanity improve the motives and purify the heart. The world is not so overstocked with practical benevolence, as to need the chilling rebuke of censorious judges. If we are well assured there is nothing for us to do in the vineyard of labour, let us be content at least in refusing our own aid, without attempting to drive out others, lest we share in the condemnation pronounced on those who neither enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer others to enter.

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

JACOB M. ELLIS, } Clerks.  
 LYDIA GILLINGHAM, }



