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A

COUNTER APPEAL,

&c. &c.

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A
COUNTER APPEAL,

IN ANSWER TO

“AN APPEAL” FROM WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq. M.P.

DESIGNED TO PROVE THAT THE

Emancipation of the Negroes in the West Indies,

BY A

Legislative Enactment,

WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE PLANTERS,

WOULD BE

A FLAGRANT BREACH OF NATIONAL HONOUR,

HOSTILE TO THE PRINCIPLES

OF

RELIGION, JUSTICE, AND HUMANITY,

AND HIGHLY INJURIOUS TO

THE PLANTER AND TO THE SLAVE.

BY SIR HENRY WILLIAM MARTIN, BART.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.—EXODUS.

Blame not before thou hast examined the truth; understand first, and then rebuke.
ECCLESIASTICUS.

London:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL;

AND SOLD BY LLOYD, HARLEY-STREET.

1823.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

WILLIAM HENRY,

DUKE OF CLARENCE,

∫c. ∫c. ∫c.

SIR,

YOUR Royal Highness having acquired a perfect knowledge of the situation and treatment of the Negroes during your Naval career, by visiting every island in the West Indies, can fully appreciate the accuracy of any statement respecting the Colonial system.

I feel greatly honoured by the permission of dedicating to your Royal Highness this humble attempt to vindicate the cha-

racters, and to assert the rights, of the
West India Planters.

That your Royal Highness may enjoy
every blessing, both temporal and eternal,
is the fervent prayer of

Sir,

Your dutiful

And humble Servant,

H. W. MARTIN.

*Upper Harley-street,
29th April, 1823.*

PREFACE.

I MUST apologize, to those who may take the trouble of perusing this Pamphlet, for the defects, which I fear they will find but too numerous as to its style and execution.

My excuses are pressure of time, and inexperience in this sort of composition ; and my motives for writing, under such circumstances, an earnest desire of assisting to preserve the lives and properties of the Planters, and to refute the various calumnies which have been set forth against them in the " Appeal," and in other Publications of our adversaries ; for "*they speak not peace, but devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*" (*Psalms.*)

29th April,
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PREFACE

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(Peters)

1825
1825

A

COUNTER APPEAL,

&c. &c.

THE Mottoes in the "Appeal" of Mr. Wilberforce, are these :

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work."—**JEREMIAH.**

"Do justice and love mercy."—**MICAH.**

The first of these quotations (a direct anathema) is highly unjust, as applied to the Planters; for they give abundant *remuneration* to the negroes; I therefore reply,

"The curse causeless shall not come."

As to the second, "Do justice and love mercy,"

B

I have no reason to doubt that the Planters, as well as other persons, endeavour to make so good a precept the rule of their conduct.

For the better convenience of answering the statements of Mr. Wilberforce, I will arrange my argument under three heads, and endeavour to prove—

First, that slavery was not unjust in its origin, and is not unjust in its continuance, nor displeasing to God.

Secondly, that, as existing in the West Indies, it is not contrary to humanity.

And thirdly, that it cannot now be safely or advantageously abolished in the West Indies.

To begin with the first, I will refer to the Bible for the *origin* of slavery, and in the 9th chapter of Genesis, it is thus written,

Ver. 25. “ And he (Noah) said, cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

26. “ And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant.”

27. “ God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.”

This prophetic curse is still fulfilling in the descendants of Ham and Canaan.

Abraham, "the friend of God," and father of the faithful, who lived four hundred years before the Mosaic law was given, possessed servants "bought with money," and was not rebuked for it by the Almighty; but, on the contrary, when he and his household are commanded to perform that rite which answers to the sacrament of baptism in the Christian Church, servants "bought with money" are specifically included.

From Abraham I will proceed to the time of Moses, and in Leviticus he will be found instructing the Israelites in what manner to select their bondmen, (whom Bishop Patrick explains not only to be slaves, but slaves under the most absolute dominion of their owners *).

Chap. xxv. ver. 44. "Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids."

45. "Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families which are with you, which they

* Vide D'Oyly and Mant's Bible.

begat in your land, and they shall be your possession, and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, and they shall be your bondmen for ever.”

If it should be said that the Mosaic Law does not apply to us, I answer, that the curse of Noah was this—that Canaan should be a servant to Japheth, from whom we descend, as well as to Shem, from whom come the Israelites; consequently, as Moses sanctioned the descendants of the latter, in taking slaves, it must follow, that the descendants of the former were equally sanctioned, and the wording of the Law clearly alludes to slavery *as being then in a state of existence*, for it only instructs the Israelites *in what manner* they are to take their slaves.

But finally, *to set the question quite at rest*, I will shew that slavery was recognized and sanctioned under the Christian Dispensation, for which purpose I will make a quotation from Bishop Tomline’s Elements of Christian Theology, vol. i. p. 448—451 (the subject is the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon).

“The occasion of writing the Epistle was this : Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, had run away

from him, and taken up his residence at Rome; St. Paul having met with him there, converted him to Christianity, and reclaimed him to a sense of his duty; he then sent him back with this Epistle, written with his own hand, to Philemon, requesting him to receive his slave thus converted and reclaimed, again into his family.”—
 “This is a plain proof that Christianity was not intended to make any alteration in the civil conditions of men. Paul considered Onesimus, although converted to the Gospel, as still belonging to his former master, and by deprecating the anger of Philemon, he acknowledged that Onesimus continued liable to punishment for the misconduct of which he had been guilty previous to his conversion.”

I hope the foregoing quotation is quite conclusive.

That slavery still exists to a very great extent in Africa, is universally known, indeed Mr. Mungo Park asserts, in his first travels in Africa, that “*seven-eighths* of the negro population of that country (the descendants of Ham) are in hopeless and irredeemable slavery.”

Having thus traced the origin and progress of

this state of servitude, who will presume to assert that it is an unjust punishment upon the descendants of Ham, for his individual transgression? He who does must also maintain, that toil, sorrow, and death, are unjust penalties upon the posterity of Adam for his personal crime: both were the denunciations of the Almighty, both therefore are equally just or unjust, both must stand or fall together.

I have shewn that slavery is the state which it has pleased God to allot to a particular race of men, and I have traced its existence through the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian Dispensations, under each of which it has been distinctly sanctioned in the Holy Scriptures, and St. John in the Apocalypse speaks of "bond and free," as existing classes to the end of the world*.

* But Mr. Wilberforce and his friends the Quakers, if they calculate upon the universal abolition of slavery, must think that "God who spake in time past by his prophets" is *mistaken* as to its *duration*, like some geologists, who, as the poet Cowper writes,

—————"drill and bore
 The solid earth, and from the strata there
 Extract a register, by which we learn
 That He who made it, and revealed its date
 To Moses, was mistaken in its age."—THE TASK.

I therefore maintain, that no person who respects the authority of the Sacred Volume can ascribe criminality to those who possess slaves bought with money, or received as an inheritance*. Nevertheless, the planters *are* vilified for such possession by Mr. W. and his partizans, in their various publications; for however these may be occasionally interspersed with idle and undesired compliments, the planters are not to be diverted from their real tendency: for, in the language of the Psalmist, “ Their words are smooother than oil, yet be they very swords.”

Having now disposed of the first head of my argument, and proved, *That slavery was not unjust in its origin, and is not unjust in its continuance, nor displeasing to God*, I shall proceed to the second, *That slavery, as existing in the West Indies, is not contrary to humanity.*

To explain this part of the subject, I had drawn up a very minute detail of the situation and treatment of the negroes upon a plantation, but deeming it too great an encroachment upon the time and patience of my reader, I have only retained the following outline.

* In my own case to the fourth generation.

The Negroes have moderate labour, estimated individually, even before the introduction of the plough *, at less than one half that of an English day labourer ; they have ample time allowed for their meals, viz. half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner ; they are well clothed twice a year ; they are abundantly fed by the planter, so as to need no other resources ; yet they have, *for their sole use*, mountain or other land on the estates, and considerable gardens round their cottages ; in both of which they have all the tropical fruit trees, as shaddock, mangoes, oranges, limes, lemons, and numerous others, also pine apples, melons, cassada, arrow-root, and most of the English vegetables ; and they breed pigs and poultry : all these articles they consume themselves, or sell at the markets. Their treatment, as to discipline and punishment, is certainly much milder than that of the sailor or soldier. The

* The English plough is now getting very generally into use ; my own land is wholly cultivated by it. I once measured the garden of a field negro on my property, it lay round his cottage, and was 120 yards in length, and 35 yards in width ; and fully cropped. In proof that their cottages, &c. are esteemed their exclusive property, I hired some houses and 17 rooms, at one dollar per month for each room, from the negroes upon my own property ; for the accommodation of a gang which I had purchased from an estate till houses were built for their occupation.

Negroes have the best medical care; each estate has an hospital, attended twice a week invariably by a professional gentleman of the first respectability; and, in cases of dangerous sickness, or surgical operations, daily, or as much oftener *as he may consider necessary*, for all which extra business he receives *additional payment*.

Convenient lock-up houses are built near the hospital, for the confinement of men and women, separately, as a punishment; which is substituted for personal infliction, whenever it can reasonably be done, and, in respect to women, invariably, as far as my own actual knowledge extends. No punishment on a plantation can exceed thirty-nine lashes, (without the order of a magistrate,) and this is generally for such crimes as in England would be death. Many, or most of their punishments arise from the idle and ill-disposed robbing the gardens of the industrious; and I can affirm, that even when a few lashes (eight or ten) are necessary (where confinement for similar offences may have failed) it is really trifling, as compared to one half the number given by the cat in the navy or army; and a white person always attends the punishment. If the Negroes consider themselves ill-treated, they can (and sometimes do) complain to the sitting ma-

gistrates for the week, or to the governor, who is generally a military officer of high rank, with every motive to act impartially, and their real grievances are properly redressed. For great matters they are always under the protection of the law. They have a regale, or harvest home, when the crop is finished, and three or four holy-days at Christmas, with presents of particular articles of provision*.

They are mostly members of the Moravian Church, many of the Church of England, and some, I am sorry to say, of *no Church*, I mean Dissenters, who are generally dissatisfied, self-sufficient, and troublesome; very few, I believe, are Heathens. They all have the opportunity of attending the Parish Churches or Moravian Chapels. On Sundays I have constantly noticed both men and women, neatly dressed, proceeding in parties to attend Divine Service. The Moravian Priests receive annual presents for their religious attendance upon the Negroes †.

* If it should be said, that I merely describe what is done upon my own property, I answer, that I certainly state such particulars *as have come under my own knowledge*; but I conceive they may be taken as a fair, medium specimen of general usage.

† I paid 100*l.* last year towards erecting a new Moravian chapel near my estates.

After the foregoing statement, my reader will probably be surprised at the following quotation from the first page of Mr. W.'s Appeal: "The Negro slavery in the British colonies is a system of the grossest injustice, of the most heathenish irreligion and immorality, of the most unprecedented degradation and unrelenting cruelty; a national crime of the deepest moral malignity: containing those essential and incurable vices which will ever exist wherever the power of man over man is unlimited."

This violent and abusive language I can readily forgive; but the last sentence, implying *unlimited power* to be possessed by the planter over the Negro, is an assertion too ridiculous for any person pretending to write on West India affairs.

Again, in page 21 he says, "Licentiousness is not confined to the Negroes; the fact is perfectly notorious, that it has been the general policy to employ, instead of married managers and overseers, single young men, as the immediate superintendants of the gangs, and hence it too naturally follows, that they who from their being the depositaries of their master's authority ought to be

the protectors of the purity of the young females, too often become their corrupters.”

This is a gross and disgusting charge, and I utterly deny the *notoriety* of such a policy, *for I never even heard of it*; and, if any planters pursued it, they must be blind to their *interest*, as well as careless of their reputation, *for the general policy is, to have black, and not mongrel children* *.

In page 24, Mr. W. favours us with his further opinion of the West India system, describing its physical evils as “cruel, odious, and pernicious, but that the almost universal destitution of religious and moral instruction among the slaves, is the most serious of all its vices.”

The planters *recommend* and *urge* the Negroes to attend to their religious and moral duties, but as they dare not presume to take upon *themselves* the office of the priesthood, like our modern methodists, what more can they do? Are they to force religion and morality upon the negroes, *vi et armis* †?

* I give my manager five pounds for every *black* child born alive upon my property, and five pounds annually for each increase beyond the decrease in the whole population.

† I conceive that English gentlemen would not be

It is affirmed, page 27, “that the gift even of the Sabbath is more than the established economies of a sugar plantation permit even the most independent planter to confer, while *the law tacitly sanctions* its being wholly withheld from them.”

I think it was Mr. Barham who said, “he had never met a person less acquainted with the *real state* of West India affairs than Mr. W. or who had more obstinately rejected information upon the subject.” Probably Mr. W. forgot this precept of the wise son of Sirach, “*Blame not before thou hast examined the truth, understand first, and then rebuke.*” Ecclus. xi. 7.

well pleased to have *their conduct* brought under public discussion by an accusation that they did not do every thing (which their accusers might deem right) for the religious and moral improvement of their servants, labourers, or dependents.

I can truly say, that I never heard the Liturgy more solemnly and impressively read, nor better sermons preached, both as to matter and manner, than by the Rev. Mr. Harman, rector of St. John's, in the Island of Antigua; the body of the church was always filled with Negroes, whose attention to the service, and punctuality in kneeling and standing, at the proper time, was truly commendable, and many made use of their Prayer Books. The clerks in all the Parish Churches are invariably men of education, which greatly adds to the effect of the church service.

The above assertion respecting the sabbath, as well as the numerous other mistatements in the "appeal" sufficiently confirm the remark of Mr. Barham.

In pages 39, 40, Mr. W. recommends attaching the Negroes to the soil, against which theory I will state a case.

A planter has a sugar estate, which from the low prices of sugar and rum, and the enormous duties upon them, is become wholly inadequate to the support of himself and his Negroes; he is therefore obliged (like hundreds of others) to break up the establishment. The Negroes now become useless, might be sold in a body or in families *, and the estate appropriated to the pas-

* When so to be sold they have permission to object against any particular master, or property; and if upon good grounds, their objection usually prevails: I could prove this by several instances *from my own knowledge*, if proper to be done, without leave; but I may speak in my own case, for having agreed to purchase the whole gang of Negroes from an estate, (situated exactly as the above) they came to me and said, that though they had no objection to make against me personally, that my land was stiff and laborious, and that I had no houses to accommodate them. I explained to them first that many hands made light work,

ture of cattle, or partially (where sufficiently fertile) to the growth of provisions. But if the Negroes were attached to the soil, they must either be employed as task gangs, to work upon other properties (which of all other situations is the most laborious and injurious) or they, and the planter, must be ruined, if not starved.

In page 42, Mr. W. accuses the Colonial assemblies for imposing fines on the manumission of slaves, by which I infer that he is ignorant of their object, viz. to prevent unfeeling persons from emancipating old or crippled slaves merely to elude the expence of their care, maintenance, and taxation ; for by this act, the owners must pay into the Treasury a sufficient sum to support the freed person, or give a bond to that effect, in case they should become a burthen upon the community.

Page 43, it is said—" In truth West Indians must be exempt from the frailties of human na-

and that I purposed to cultivate the land *wholly* with the plough. Secondly, that I had agreed to hire from my own Negroes some houses and several rooms for their use till houses were built, on which they cheerfully agreed to come. The same gang of Negroes had previously objected to another property, and their objection *was allowed*.

ture, if living continually with those wretched beings, and witnessing their extreme degradation and consequent depravity, they could entertain for the Negroes in any unimpaired degree, that *equitable consideration, and that fellow-feeling which are due from man to man* so as to sympathize *properly* with them in their *sufferings and wrongs*, or form a just estimate of their claims to personal rights and moral improvements: and proves the criminality of committing to the Planters the destiny of the slaves." This is a severe assertion from a person who has *no local knowledge*; and comes with very bad grace from one *so peculiarly charitable!* As far as my own experience and information extend, I can give it the most *unequivocal contradiction as to its general application*: individual instances of bad feeling and bad conduct, may no doubt be produced against Planters, as well as every other class of persons, but I affirm that a mutual and very considerable degree of kind feeling does generally exist between the Planter and his Negroes; and I utterly deny that the latter are the "wretched and degraded beings" which he describes them; but, on the contrary, I contend that they have much shrewdness, ability, and feeling; and continually evince the utmost attachment to the Planters, and their

families : it is therefore highly disgusting to hear them so traduced, and by a Gentleman, professing himself *their great friend* : but in his anxiety to disgrace and disparage the Planters, he overwhelms the Negroes in the general calumny *. Their good humour, cheerfulness, and gaiety of disposition is *notorious*, I believe I may say *proverbial* †.

In page 45, Mr. W. expressess himself to be extremely shocked and displeas'd at the assertion of the Planters and their partizans, " that the

* If proof were wanted that the Negroes do not consider themselves so ill treated as their soi-disant friends assert, continual instances might be given of Negro servants (slaves) gladly returning to the West Indies with their masters. Last year a friend of mine sent his servant back at his request. I have twice been applied to by Negroes personally who had run away from my property, and came to solicit me to send them out again ; thus voluntarily offering to return to slavery.

† It surpris'd me on first visiting the West Indies to observe the unchecked and often disputatious familiarity of the house Negroes, or servants ; and at large dinners I have frequently observed them wholly engrossed by listening to any good stories, and laughing loudly at them. If singing took place, it was impossible to keep them out of the room. I mention these anecdotes to confirm my statement, and to prove that the Negroes are not in a wretched state of servitude.

Negro slaves are as well, or even better off than the British peasantry, a proposition so monstrous as to shew the extreme prejudice which must exist in the minds of its assertors."

Nevertheless, *I do assert it*; the Negroes, as I stated before, are generally Christians, and equally, with the British peasantry enjoy the rest of the sabbath, and the opportunity of attending Divine Service on that day: both are the slaves of necessity, both are compelled to labour for their daily bread; the peasant has no claims upon his employer beyond his daily wages, and if these should not be sufficient to support himself and his family, while he is able to work, and also to lay by enough for their maintenance when he can no longer labour, they have no alternative but quitting their cottages for the parish workhouse; the miseries of which are too generally known to require comment. The Negro has no fear of being compelled to resort to such an asylum in his old age, but retains all the advantages he enjoyed in his youth; and at his decease may leave his cottage to whom he pleases (belonging to the estate), and his money and moveables to *any one* without restriction.

The Negroes having been *born* in a state of

bondage, with no record that their ancestors were ever in a different situation; can have no natural wish for liberty: and if their minds be not disturbed at the instigation of meddling persons, there can exist no reason why they may not pass through life contentedly, in that situation wherein it has pleased God to place them.

Taking therefore what I have stated here, (and in page 8,) on the treatment &c. of the Negroes upon a plantation, I ask, whether comparing their situation with that of the peasantry in this country, is “such wretched sophistry as to insult the understandings of mankind?” Recollect it is the *respective situations*, not the *persons* which I compare, but Mr. W. artfully jumbles them together.

The quiet and contented behaviour of the Negroes for some time past, has drawn the attention of the Planters to consider their farther amelioration, and especially as to their moral and religious improvement, for this purpose the Planters have been for some time past (and still are) employed in collecting from individual proprietors, the various plans and arrangements which they have adopted of late years upon their respective properties, for the greater com-

fort and better management of their Negroes ; intending to collect from these and other sources, such information as may enable them to form a general and uniform system ; and when it has been arranged into a practicable plan of amelioration, and of religious instruction, to submit it to the legislative authorities in the West India Colonies for their approbation, and by whom it might receive such particular and minute arrangements, as may be judged, by them, most proper for final adoption in each particular colony.

When this plan of amelioration shall have been carried into execution, I am perfectly convinced that the Negroes will, in every point of view, be in a much better situation than they would be under emancipation, for in the latter state they could not obtain one half the comforts they possessed in the former : and therefore, it is a most false philanthropy to attempt changing their situation : and I have but little hesitation in declaring my opinion, that the better sort of Negroes (if they were not suddenly thrown into a state of ferment and temporary enthusiasm *by the name of liberty*) *would decidedly reject the boon of emancipation, if coupled with a life of labour.*

I sincerely wish his Majesty's ministers would make arrangements with the proper authorities for the appointment of several orthodox clergymen of the Church of England, or the Episcopal Church of Scotland, to proceed to the different Colonies, on sufficient stipends, to be paid from a fund established and maintained by government, which no doubt those gentlemen who seem so anxious for the religious instruction of the Negroes would most liberally assist by their donations; and to which I conceive most Planters would largely subscribe; but all deficiency to be made good by government. These clergymen might be sent out solely for the religious and moral instruction of the Negroes; and their duties so arranged as not to interfere, but to cooperate with the rectors of the different parishes in the Islands. I think much good might be effected by such a measure if judiciously conducted on sound Church principles, to the *absolute exclusion* of all persons who do not strictly maintain them.

I hope I have now proved the second head of my argument, *That slavery as existing in the West Indies, is not contrary to humanity.*

I will, therefore, proceed to the third division of my argument.

That Slavery cannot now be safely or advantageously abolished.—

The emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies, by a legislative enactment in this country, would be a breach of the colonial compact between the mother country and her colonies, by which it has always been held, that all exterior regulations as to trade and commerce generally, was the undisputed right of the former: while all interior laws and regulations, whether for the purpose of raising supplies, &c. &c. or for the regulation of the slaves, was the undoubted province of the legislature of each colony: and although I am aware that many gentlemen of the new school have (*when it suited their purpose*) insisted upon the *omnipotence of parliament*, yet I maintain, that *such is the colonial compact*, although might may certainly overwhelm right;—but still truth and justice are immutable.

The *agitation* even of such a measure would naturally tend to destroy the authority and influence which the Planters ought to possess over the Negroes: liberty and equality would be the order of the day; anarchy, confusion, and massacre would soon follow; as we had a dreadful

example in St. Domingo immediately on the promulgation of the decree by the National Assembly of revolutionary France, declaring the emancipation of the Negroes in that Island: awful indeed it was, and ought to make every conscientious man hesitate, and deeply consider the responsibility he takes upon himself, by advocating any measure likely to lead to such a catastrophe in the British West Indies; and when such a measure is in every point of view so dangerous, and so uncalled for. In fact the French decree only went the length of determining to send out commissioners to St. Domingo, *to examine in what manner liberty might safely be given to the slaves*; but they did not choose to await any such measure, but rushed at once into insurrection and massacre.

I will give one more very curious instance of emancipation, that at Cayenne. On this occasion orders were sent out from revolutionary France to Victor Hugues, to free the Slaves in that Colony; this was done *in a single day*; part of the Negro population agreed to work on the estates; but the greater part refused to perform any labour, and committed the most horrid excesses, which Victor Hugues at last repressed *by force*; and declared to France, that it was im-

possible the Colony could exist in its present state. An order was then sent to him *to reduce the Negroes again to slavery*, which he effected by force of arms. When the remaining slaves were sent back to their several estates, a census was taken of their numbers, and it appeared that out of 12,000, which was the number before their emancipation, about 3,500 had perished by massacre amongst themselves, and slaughter in their conflicts with the troops, in less than two years. About this period also the Island of Grenada presented a horrid scene of insurrection and murder.

These are instances which ought to impress every person with the imminent danger of agitating a question so likely to inflame the minds of the Negroes, as that of their emancipation;— and I ask Mr. W. if this state of things would afford any facilities towards the moral and religious improvement of the Negroes? On the contrary, I do maintain that any emancipation, that was not produced by the slow progress of time, would greatly tend to destroy whatever good principles the Negroes had imbibed; for even if general anarchy and murder did not take place, at least idleness, drunkenness, and every species of debauchery would prevail, to the de-

struction of religion, morality, and human life ; indeed, it seems to me an almost self-evident case, that *all* these bad consequences would too fatally ensue, should any schemes of emancipation be agitated in Parliament ; for misrepresentations and exaggerations would inflame the minds of the Negroes, before they could know the final decision on the subject.

Can any thing be more wild or more contrary to all sound argument, than Mr. W's. declaration " that the present is a golden opportunity of emancipation, and which might prevent the dreadful explosion* that may otherwise be expected; when it is recollected that there is a community of near 800,000 free blacks, many of them accustomed to the use of arms, within sight of the greatest of our West India Islands ; and when Cuba and Porto Rico present a slave population highly dangerous."

* I know not what explosion he can anticipate, except what may be produced among the Negroes by his rash and unadvised scheme of emancipation.—In 1816, when Mr. W. and his party made their last assault upon the Planters relative to the registry bill, an explosion (as he calls it) did indeed take place in Barbadoes, where many estates were partly destroyed, and a vast number of lives were sacrificed.

I should not have copied this long extract, if *it had not contained the very best statement I could have produced against Mr. W. himself* ; for it shews the extreme hazard of agitating, in England, the question of emancipation, with such a dangerous neighbourhood, ready to pour itself into Jamaica the moment any disturbance took place among the Negroes. Indeed, to expose that Island even to the risk of such a calamity, would evince great want of charitable feeling.

Not one thought has Mr. W. deemed it *reasonable* to give to the interests of the Planters, or pointed out by what means their estates are to be cultivated, *in case the Negroes should not take to a life of labour*, for even the neglect of a few months would be fatal to many properties : the ruin of them and their families, I suppose, he considers as beneath his notice ; or probably he and his friends purpose dividing their English properties with the Planters. But even if the attempt to emancipate the Negroes were not attended with all the danger and iniquity which I have pointed out, there exists no reasonable proof, that the Negroes would be better off in such a state, either as regards their eternal or their temporal happiness, than they are at present ; more

especially when it is considered that slaves cannot have the same idea of liberty which those who have always been free, entertain. It has however always been the artful policy of our various opponents so to represent the case of the West India Negroes, as to lead the imaginations of those who have not the means (or leisure) for ascertaining the fact, to the conclusion, that slavery has been imposed upon a class of persons who were previously in the enjoyment of liberty, and leading a pastoral life in Africa, than which nothing can be more contrary to truth, as may be proved by the different accounts of eye-witnesses,—one of whom I have already quoted; (Mr. Park) who says, “seven-eighths of the Negro population are in hopeless and irredeemable slavery.”

This measure of emancipation, brought forward as it is, by persons wholly unconnected with our colonies, does not display any great effort of philanthropy, as they could not themselves be called upon for any sacrifice whatever, and the whole expense would fall entirely upon others; but I do maintain that, whenever it may be in contemplation to adopt any great measure (whether of justice, policy, or humanity, or of all united) in which the public has a common inter-

est and concern, it would be highly unjust that it should be carried into effect at the expense of one class of the community only. This will be sufficiently obvious, and will come home to the understanding of every one, if for the word *slaves* be substituted *landed property*, and for the West Indies, Yorkshire, Devonshire, or any other county, and the proprietors of such landed property be called upon to sacrifice it entirely, to defray the expense of carrying into execution some plan for the benefit of the public at large ; the monstrous absurdity and injustice of such a proposition, would then strike every person with astonishment, and yet preposterously absurd and iniquitous as it would be thought, it would not be in the smallest degree more so, than a proposal for confiscating the property of the West Indians, whether it consist of land or slaves, for they hold their property by just as good a title as that of any landed proprietor in England. It is, in fact, the term *slavery* which inflames the passions of men, and prevents their forming a calm or deliberate judgment. Let it, however, be recollected that the question is not whether slavery shall now be *established*, but whether the West India system, which has existed for nearly two centuries, shall now be *abolished* ; which the British Nation itself, through its representatives,

established ; and gave every encouragement to British subjects to invest their capital in the colonies, and at their recommendation, and in perfect reliance on its good faith, they embarked their property in the West Indies. It cannot, therefore be believed, that the British Parliament will ever be induced to sacrifice its high character for honor and good faith at the shrine of fanaticism, and set an example to the world of unparalleled injustice and perfidy, (I mean if done without ample remuneration to the Planters,) but it is quite impossible that it should ever consent thus to invade the rights of private property, and thereby establish a precedent of the most alarming tendency which would unsettle and render insecure every description of property, and sooner or later, shake the Constitution to its foundation !

No plea of religious motives can justify an attempt to procure even positive good, by the means of injustice, robbery, individual ruin, and probable murder ; for nothing can be more abhorrent to religion than the principle, that good ends may be obtained by bad means, “ Thou shalt not do evil, that good may come.” Such cases as these should be left to the disposal of Providence, who, it cannot be doubted, will, in

its own good time, produce whatever is for the best, without the premature and mischievous interference of meddling and dangerous persons.

One great difficulty with which the Planters have to contend is this: that persons, unacquainted with West India affairs, but with the best intentions, are led away by an ardent love of liberty, to view slavery merely as an abstract question, without considering its bearing and effect upon the class of people now under discussion: for they put the question to themselves thus:—How should I like to be a slave?—the answer being in the negative; the conclusion is—I wish all slaves free. I will, however, request the same question to be put as to any of the labouring classes in this country, as colliers, miners, &c., and the same result must ensue; but yet they would not feel it incumbent upon them to endeavour to raise those classes above the situation in which God has placed them

I, therefore, hope it will not be asking those persons too much to request they will view slavery as it may really be supposed to affect the Negroes.

For this purpose it may be well to refer to

page 8, and read the short statement of the present situation of the Negroes in the West Indies, and this done to consider what would probably be their situation in a state of emancipation, if it were possible to effect it in the most quiet manner; and that they took to a life of labor for hire in the same manner as the English peasantry: for I suppose no one can contemplate any other situation for them; indeed it is not possible to imagine so unjust a wish to enter any mind, as the division of the estates and effects of the Planters *as plunder*, amongst the freed Negroes; (*though such an event may be well dreaded*); but to resume, let us see what their situation would probably be if emancipated. They would be free, and could refuse to work for their present masters. They would not be liable to personal punishment, or confinement, upon a plantation; but they must be punished by order of the magistrates for all minor misdemeanors, and by the laws, as at present, for all greater; by which change I feel assured their punishments would be much more severe than at present. As to their means and opportunities for religious and moral improvement, I do not think they would be increased. These are the most prominent changes that occur to my mind, as likely to be considered *improvements*.

On the opposite side of the question, the Negroes, to put themselves into the same situation of comfort which they enjoy at present, must procure, out of their daily wages, say 1s. 6d. per day, sterling, cottages for themselves and their families, with gardens attached to them, and provision grounds detached, and conveniences for raising pigs and poultry; and they must feed and clothe themselves, and pay for medical assistance and medicines; and they must, out of their wages, lay by a sufficiency to procure all these comforts and enjoyments, when, from accident or old age, they can no longer work, or they must quit them all, and retire to a poor-house, which, by the bye, would be entailing a severe and hitherto unknown expense upon the Planters, if they are expected to bear the charges of poor-house establishments; a system pregnant with so many evils *in this country*, as to be an object of unceasing anxiety and discussion in parliament. I have now endeavoured to lay the case fairly before my reader; and I ask him for a conscientious answer, whether he thinks that the condition of the negroes would be benefited or deteriorated by the exchange.

If the answer be, that he thinks they would be *benefited*: then I ask again; does he con-

sider the expected improvement to be so great as to warrant, and justify the attempt to obtain it, at the imminent risk of insurrection, anarchy, murder, ruin, and all the miseries hitherto invariably attendant upon the dislocation, or disorganization of any civil society, wherever placed, or however, situated

The Planters themselves, (of course I cannot include such merchants, or other persons, as hold mortgages upon properties, and upon the negroes,) would, I doubt, not be willing to grant emancipation to their negroes, (even at the sacrifice of their intrinsic value, if they conceived it could be effected, *by a sort of magic*, without the imminent and obvious dangers so much to be dreaded, and the certain result of having their estates left for a time, and, perhaps, *irremediably*, without any cultivation, as it would relieve them from the forethought and anxiety necessarily attendant upon providing for, and managing the negroes; and from the greater expence to which they are now put, than would be required by paying daily labourers; and this is an obvious reason why the negroes would be worse off if freed; because they would have to procure the same advantages, with much smaller means. Emancipation, however, may reason-

ably be expected to arrive in the West Indies, in the same slow and imperceptible manner that *this* it took place in the country, by the feudal system falling gradually into disuse ; but all impatient and imprudent attempts, to hasten such an event, and more especially by any legislative act in this country, would, in human probability, be attended with all or some of those dangerous consequences which I have pointed out, and thereby prevent, or greatly retard its accomplishment. I hope I have said sufficient upon the subject of the third and last head, to prove, “ That slavery cannot now be safely or advantageously abolished in the West Indies.”

Having closed my argument under the three divisions, as arranged at the commencement of my Reply ; I must proceed in a desultory manner to answer several passages contained in “ The Appeal :” though I am quite weary of finding so many statements brought forward which have again and again been disproved ; it is indeed like combating *a man of straw* ; for though pierced through, at various times, by a thousand *pointed facts, and unerring truths*, he still remains

“ To fight again another day.”

The assertions respecting the West India system, are all made with such consummate confidence, that it is difficult to believe the fact, that Mr. Wilberforce has no local knowledge whatever *, and that *all he states comes at second hand*, like a Grub-street author, describing men and manners in countries, that he had never approached beyond the confines of his garret; for this good gentleman's philanthropy, however intense, has never carried him to the West Indies, where he might see things as they really exist: but he appears satisfied; to *sit* quietly at home, to *brood over* the West India system, and to *hatch* schemes of mischief with the African Committee, in a sort of Joint-stock Incubation Company, which, *when brought to maturity*, perhaps "Mr. Stephen will have the honor to submit to the public, in a report drawn up for the express purpose, *by himself.*"

* Really the versatility of this gentleman's genius and his thorough information upon every subject, reminds me of two lines of La Fontaine, when describing the character of Grippeminaud:

" C'était,
Un ~~saint~~ homme de chat
Arbitre expert sur tous les cas."

Font. *Fab. Le Chat, La Belette, et
Le Petit Lapin.*

In page 21. Mr. W. indulges in a long rhapsody, "addressed to the feelings of his readers," which may certainly be an artful substitute for argument, but savours more of the serpent than the dove. He then falls into a complimentary strain towards himself and friends, for having formerly entertained *too favourable an opinion of the West India system*—"Risum teneatis?"

In pages 36—41. Mr. W. complains, "that he and the African Institution are not satisfied as to the efficacy of the bills for the registry of slaves, and the prevention of clandestine importation, passed by the different colonial legislatures."

I answer.—To such importation felony is attached; its accomplishment is nearly, if not absolutely, impossible; and lastly, I defy him to adduce one instance of such a fact.

In page 51, the opinions of Mr. Burke on slavery are quoted, but in common justice it should have been added, that his opinions changed, after he had witnessed the horrors of the French Revolution, for Mr. Stephen (whose authority Mr. W. will not deny,) says, "It produced in the mind of that great man (Mr. Burke) a coldness towards the cause of the abolition, and a morbid sensibility to the dangers of reformation."

Mr. Pitt (whom Mr. Wilberforce also brings forward) said (during the abolition struggle) "to think of emancipating the slaves in the West Indies, would indeed be little short of insanity." *To these I will add the weighty opposition to emancipation of Mr. W. for no one declared himself more decidedly against such a measure, and said he would actually oppose it if brought forward*.*

In page 66 we are favoured with some encomiums upon the Sierra Leone establishment.

I certainly know nothing of its *present* state, but many years after it had been under the direction of the African Institution, it was represented by Dr. Thorpe (an eye-witness) as being most shamefully and vilely *conducted*; and a gallant admiral, who was sent out expressly to examine the real situation of that establishment, entertained (if I am not much mistaken) a similar opinion.

In page 69 Mr. W. says, "No system of civil polity was ever maintained at a greater price, or was less truly profitable either to individuals, or to the community, than that of our West India settlements." This idea, *however*

* Vide Parliamentary Debates.

absurd, has certainly the merit of *novelty*. The Custom-house returns of imports and exports will however shew the vast income which the Colonies pour into our revenue; viz. 5,270,478*l.* annually, from a capital valued at one hundred millions sterling, independent of the undeniable assistance they give to the agricultural, mercantile, manufacturing, and shipping interests of the British empire; and last, though not least, the the unrivalled support they afford to our navy, by furnishing it with seamen in time of war*.

* A short statement from the official returns made to the House of Commons this year, will shew the value and importance of the West India Colonies.

The average is for five years ending 1st January, 1823—

Imports from the West Indies £8,000,000

Exports to Do. of British Manufacture, &c. 4,209,518

£12,209,518

The Nett Income paid to the Revenue of

Great Britain, by Customs and Excise,

from West India Products £5,270,478

Ships employed in the West India Trade 800

Tonnage Ditto 230,000

Seamen Ditto 12,000

The income of the Planters has been estimated at 3,000,000*l.* a great portion of which is expended in England. Is all this wealth to be sacrificed to the absurd schemes instilled into the minds of persons who are wholly unacquainted with the real situation of the negroes by a set of designing and mischievous men?

I hope I may not express myself too warmly, or say any thing which can be deemed *personally offensive* ; for I disclaim all such intention : but Mr. W. and his partizans seem so mixed up with their schemes and measures, that, in argument, they can hardly be separated.

Much allowance should therefore be made, more especially as *they* are the assailing party ; for it is they who have lighted the torch of discord, it is they who have opened Pandora's box, teeming with every ill, and entering the public arena, have thrown down the gauntlet of defiance ; they cannot therefore justly complain, if they should receive some wounds in the conflict, which they have themselves provoked : for is it not time that the Planters should grasp their bows, and select their arrows for defence ? especially when the weapons of their opponents bear that deadly poison, which would destroy the vital principle that sustains themselves and their families, and probably their personal existence, and which they hurl against the Planters in perfect security, as to their own temporal interests, and *as they profess* under the shield of religion *,

* Vide this profession in their various pamphlets. The good understanding which appears to subsist between

but in fact “*they speak not peace, but devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land*” (Psalms.)

Mr. Wilberforce and the Quakers is quite surprising, as there is an old saying, “Tell me your *friend* and I will tell you what you *are*.” Now, as the Quaker denies the two great sacraments instituted by our Lord himself, viz. Baptism and the Eucharist, in which the very essence of Christianity consists, what is the Quaker? and here I cannot but observe that every *true son of the Church* should practise the Apostolic precept, “*Mark them that cause divisions contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them*” (Romans.)

John Bull has undauntedly given his powerful aid in opposition to the sin of schism, and to the dangerous and ambitious claims of the Romanists; and I join heartily with him in honouring our King and supporting our constitution in Church and State. Unfortunately two severe wounds have been inflicted upon the National Church; the first, by permitting (or rather compelling) magistrates, to grant preaching licenses, at the cost of a few shillings, to any ignorant person who can procure a *congregation*. The second, by conceding the elective franchise to the Papists. By the first the door has been thrown wide open to the *New Light, Vital Religion*, and the various other *shades and grades of sectarianism*, which I cannot even name, much less comprehend; but all of which John Bull comprises under the general denomination of *Humbug* or *Humfism!*

One mark and sign of the present times is, *a spurious liberality of sentiment*; by one party it is bestowed exclusively upon felons, and the refuse of mankind, and *I do not despair of seeing bodily labour abolished, as quite inconsistent with genuine liberty!* All old institutions too, are to be reformed at the instigation of those who generally need the most radical reform of their own bad principles and conduct. Another party is clamorous to manage the concerns of their neighbours, and for that purpose, to seize upon their properties, and traduce their characters, which in cases apparently parallel, would generally be considered a conspiracy. What it may be deemed in another place, I have yet to learn.

The Edinburgh Review* has made a violent attack upon the planters, and maintains "*that the slaves, if they cannot otherwise obtain emancipation, would be justified in rising up against their oppressors, and if needful, utterly destroying them.*" This is plain language, and worthy the worst times of the French Revolution, but as far as argument, or sound sense, it is not

* I have heard that a pamphlet has been issued against the Planters, by a Mr. Cooper, but I have not seen it.

to be found in the article. Praise is only valuable when it proceeds from a pure source. Abuse from the Edinburgh Review is honourable, and even advantageous, for “*woe unto you when all men speak well of you.*”

However, I trust we are not to be immolated at the altar of infidelity on the one hand ; nor sacrificed to the wild schemes of speculative theorists on the other *.

The attack meditated against the West India Interests by the East India merchants and traders, endeavouring to remove the protecting duty, *always given* as a security to those interests ; has been ably exposed by Mr. Marryatt, and other gentlemen ; but I cannot refrain from observing, that it is a most illiberal attempt ; and shews an avidity to monopolize the only staple production of a suffering neighbour, that is truly uncharitable : and very unlike the high and generous feeling of honour, and the liberality of character, hitherto attributed, most justly, to the British merchant.

* I sincerely thank John Bull for his friendly aid on Monday last, 29th April, in behalf of the Planters. And also his military correspondent, whose able and feeling letter deserves the most grateful thanks of the Planters.

There seems, in fact, to be a general combination of men wholly ignorant of the real state of the Negroes, (but led away with the name of slavery,) and of circumstances, acting against the Planters at the present moment ; and I must say it is not in unison with the general good feeling of the British nation, to trample even upon a fallen *enemy*, much less upon a fallen *brother*, for the situation of the Planters has been so distressing for the last few years, that if I may be allowed the expression, they have been living in a continual state of grasping at straws, to save themselves from sinking into utter ruin. I have now, as a last resource, to implore the friendly aid of the gentlemen of England, (our Legislators) and beg them to extend the hand of friendship, by giving us their powerful assistance during the ensuing struggle in the House of Commons ; and I request them also as conservators of the National purse, to consider the enormous expence that would be thrown upon Great Britain by remunerating the West India Planters for the loss of their property, for without indemnity it is impossible to seize upon private property for any public purpose, without a breach of the most solemn and sacred rights. Remuneration for the *whole property* of the West India proprietors would amount to one hundred millions, and for the

slaves only, above thirty five millions : whether the country is prepared to come forward with that sum, I must leave to the decision of others ! But the right of protection, *or remuneration cannot be doubted.*

The petitions to Parliament from various parts of the country, coming from persons who cannot have any sufficient knowledge of the situation of those for whom they petition, are really curious ; in fact, they must be led away merely by an abstract view of the subject, and by *the hue and cry of slavery* raised throughout the kingdom, by the *Pseudo-Philanthropists*. Under these circumstances I shall recommend the Planters also to petition the House of Commons as follows :

“ That your petitioners have long viewed with great anxiety the suffering and oppressed state of various classes of his Majesty’s subjects. The first which they shall bring under the notice of your Honourable House is, the stone masons employed in sawing and working up the Derbyshire spar, for the minute particles of dust insinuate themselves into the lungs of these poor people and cause a lingering and premature death. The next they take leave to point out, is the pin-makers of Gloucester and other places ; the ruinous

effects of which occupation are most apparent in the countenances of these suffering persons, owing to the filings of brass, &c. getting into the lungs, and causing the untimely death of hundreds. The next class to which they shall call the attention of your Honourable House is a very numerous body of distressed beings, who are condemned if not by force, yet by irresistible necessity, to spend their lives in the very bowels of the earth, in districts extending from the county of Durham, to Cornwall. These poor people are seldom blessed even with a sight of the cheering and healthful rays of the sun, but are condemned day after day, and year after year, to toil and linger out a wretched existence amidst filthy coals, and rugged ores !

“ The chimney-sweepers they will pass over, as being immediately under the eye, of the members of your Honourable House : and they will close the miserable catalogue, by naming the last, though not least, class, the agricultural and daily labourers of all kinds. Really their case is almost too shocking to bring before your Honourable House, conceiving it might torture the tender feelings of some of the more sensitive members of your Honourable House, which is well known to exist among them, *however their*

great modesty and humility may endeavour to conceal it : but not to keep your Honourable House in farther suspense as to the amount of misery to which this poor suffering class is reduced, its situation may well be compared to that of *the negroes in the British West Indies* ! this indeed is not to be borne, more especially when these latter are in many respects much better off ; for it does not require six or eight millions sterling of poor rates, raised upon the towns, villages, and houses, throughout the kingdom, to make the negroes comfortable and happy.

“ Finally—Your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House will appoint a Committee to inquire into the various miseries set forth in their petition, with a view to the *speedy emancipation* of these much injured and suffering classes. And with the farther view of convincing the whole world, that unlimited happiness may be obtained on earth : and that it is a mere prejudice, founded in error and misrepresentation, (as has now been *clearly proved* by the philosophers and philanthropists of the present day,) to suppose that, the whole race of mankind lay under the following condemnation from the Almighty.—“ Cursed be the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy

life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground !!"

" And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c."

For the particulars of the present situation of West India affairs, I refer my reader to the Appendix.

I fear I have already trespassed too long upon the patience of my reader, and will make but one more reference to " the Appeal" (page 76), where Mr. Wilberforce says, " he can but too surely anticipate from experience, that the grossest and most unfounded calumnies will be profusely poured out against him." I hope he will not consider any part of this Counter Appeal to be of that description, which I should much regret, because he has been induced to come forward "*from a conviction of its being his positive duty.*" But yet I must beg leave to repeat that good motives cannot justify any attempt to obtain a good end, through bad means ; whether the objects of controversy between the Appeal, and the Counter Appeal *be, or be not,* of this description, their readers must decide : but I will give this warning of St. Peter to our adversaries, "*Let none of you suffer as a busy body in other men's matters.*"

Finally, I must solemnly implore our legislators, individually and collectively, before they are called upon to vote away the property of their fellow-subjects, the Planters, to consider deeply ere they adopt the dangerous principle of *setting might against right*: for the British legislature can with no more justice emancipate the Negroes against the consent of the Planters, (without giving them the most ample compensation,) than they can seize their property in the public funds, or their estates in England. It cannot do either without committing a most flagrant breach of national honour, and destroying that fundamental principle of the British constitution, *which secures to every man his property*.

The legislature has the power, and has constitutionally exerted it, of preventing the future introduction of slaves into the colonies, by the abolition of that trade with Africa, *but it cannot take away, or (which is the same thing) emancipate those Negroes which the planters do possess*, without satisfactory remuneration; for both the slaves and the estates have been purchased by the planters, or their ancestors, under the continued encouragement and sacred protection (for 150 years) of the British parliament and nation.

Once more, I pray our legislators *not to allow the agitation of a question so dangerous as that of emancipation*, but to recollect the horrors which took place, under parallel circumstances, in Grenada, St. Domingo, Cayenne, and Barbadoes, and to crush the attempt in the bud: for quadruple the military force that is now in the West India Islands, would not secure them against the dangerous consequences of an insurrection amongst the Negroes. In the name of justice, therefore, let a large force be immediately sent out before any such dangerous question agitates the minds of the Negroes; or, still better, *let the measure be quashed by an overwhelming majority*, and let emancipation in the West Indies be allowed to work its own course, (as took place in England,) *by the slow but sure hand of time* *.

* I will conclude with this quotation from the Pursuits of Literature:

“ I speak to all who can rescue us from the cold unfeeling tyranny of modern metaphysics, as exhibited by the new philosophers, and from *nonsense* which must at last be found impracticable, when every estate and condition of man has been overthrown *for their pleasure and experiment*.”

UPPER HARLEY STREET,
28th April, 1823.

APPENDIX.

BEFORE I conclude, I must take this occasion to point out to those unacquainted with West India affairs, the difficulties under which the planters labour at present.

When Mr. Pitt raised the duty upon sugar from 17s. 6d. to 20s. per Cwt. he said, "that he considered this addition as the utmost bounds to which it could be carried, and that the Planter would suffer but little while he had the command of the foreign market." The duty has since been raised at different times, till it has reached 27s. with a power vested in government, to add 1s. when the average price of sugar (exclusive of the duty) reached 48s.; 2s. when it got to 49s. and 3s. when it arrived at 50s.; and so it stands at the present moment; although the average price of sugar was last year frequently below 28s.; and this when the planter had no controul whatever over the foreign market.

Under these circumstances, a Planter having property in one of the old Leeward Islands, has to pay four and a half per cent on shipping his sugar, (which duty was voluntarily voted to the British Government in the seventeenth century

by the Island of Barbadoes, Antigua, St. Kitt's, Montserrat, Nevis, and Tortola, as a return of gratitude for the protection afforded by the mother country, and for the maintenance and repairs of the fortifications) he has to pay in addition 27s. per Cwt. on landing his sugar in England, (both of which sums go directly into the National purse) and out of the small portion left, the Planter must pay the freight, insurance, merchant's charges, and the nett income for the Planter may well be supposed small, when *Government alone takes more than one half*. Many instances have come to my knowledge where the Planter instead of receiving, *paid* large sums, from other resources, last year, to support his Negroes, and to supply his estates.

The price of Leeward Island rum last year was so low as 1s. 2d. per gallon, exclusive of the duty, which is 11s. 3d. per gallon, or nearly as ten to one more than the value of the article to the owner, an example of taxation, I believe not to be equalled.

The depreciation of rum is severely felt in the West Indies, as it may be called the current coin of the Islands, and, as such, is received by the resident merchants; but from the extraordinary fall in value, and the enormous duty, the

merchants will *now* seldom take it on any terms: especially as the United States of America have laid so heavy a duty on the importation of British rum (I suppose in imitation of the example here) that it amounts nearly to a prohibition; and consequently the hopes which had been entertained of getting better prices, and a ready market for the rum, by the measure of opening the port to the Americans, have been utterly disappointed, by its being conceded too late: for the Americans have got into other connections, and found out other sources for supplying themselves with colonial produce. I hope the Government will act with a liberal policy toward the South American Colonists, by giving every support and encouragement, to a free and reciprocal trade between them and our Islands. But without a considerable reduction in the duties upon sugar and rum, or some tantamount advantage, I do not foresee how the prosperity of the West Indies can be preserved: and I need not add after what I have stated, as to the assistance it furnishes *directly* to the Revenue, and to the country at large, (independent of a thousand indirect, and collateral aids) that Great Britain must largely partake in all the misfortunes of the West India Colonies.

