

A
D E F E N C E
OF THE
PLANTERS in the WEST-INDIES;
COMPRISED IN FOUR ARGUMENTS

- I. On Comparative Humanity,
II. On Comparative Slavery,
III. On the African Slave Trade,
AND
IV. On the Condition of Negroes in the West-Indies.

By JESSÉ FOOT, SURGEON.

HOMO SUM: HUMANI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.
Terent. Heut.

I AM A MAN AND FEEL FOR ALL MANKIND.
Coleman.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. DEBRETT, OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-
HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

1792.

XH
.710
F73Db

C

266.507

Oct 3/79

[Faint, illegible text]

I HAVE no apology to offer for having gone out of the line of my profession in addressing these arguments to the publick, no more than I should for having assisted in extinguishing a fire that was burning down a house or a temple of worship. When the passions are storming reason, it is the duty of every social man to endeavour at least to stop their ravages—*Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari debet.*

I aspire to the hope of convincing rational men only—I leave the palm of spiritualising idiotism to modern pioneers in humanity—to those who falsely begin at the bottom and dig up to the surface.

I should be happy to congratulate the planters that after the 2d of April they would be safely landed on shore, when future assistance would be only an incumbrance; but I do not flatter my opinion with a belief, that when this subject meets with a second overthrow on that day, Enthusiasm will then let it sleep in peace.—The brains may be out, but the man will not die.—The planters are still to be tossed about in the turbulent ocean of prejudice; their reputations are still to be exposed to waves after waves—mountain high—breaking their force upon them. Such will be the result as long as passion triumphs over truth.

The city of London have at length come to the point; and after five years deliberation, have decided, on the 21st of this month, against petitioning for the abolition

of the slave-trade. They have weighed the whole of the question, and have not been seduced into a decision by a partial and insidious representation. Let this be an example—let others remember that they cannot decide justly without being possessed of the whole of the truth in every cause that comes before them.

We appear astonished when we see the multitude led away by sounds; but we should remember that if sounds work miracles it is always upon ignorance. The influence of names is in exact proportion to the want of knowledge.

J. F.

DEAN-STREET, SOHO,
MARCH 25, 1792.

A

DEFENCE OF THE PLANTERS
IN THE
WEST-INDIES.

On Comparative Humanity.

IT may seem, that he, who now takes up the pen to convey his sentiments upon Negroe-Slavery, appears at a late hour and after the subject has been amply discussed; that he comes like a gleaner into the field, when the crop of grain is carried in, and can only add by handfuls to the common stock.

A spectator who has watched, with some attention, the combatants upon this subject, and who has seen the contest between them eagerly conducted with more of passion than reason, may be considered as ripening his judgment during their heat of altercation, and as correcting his own by their misapprehensions.

One is vexed to see declaimers upon humanity abusing and degrading that noble passion. Men ought first of all to shew to the world, that they know well how to define *what is humanity,*

before they begin to make a distribution of it, to convince the world—that their reason is awake to the purposes of it—that they possess the actual passion, and not its counterfeit—and that when they do bestow it, it is done under the discretion of reason.

I shall first of all define what humanity is, and then appropriate a distribution of it as it ought for comforting active industry and passive existence.

Humanity is a passion infused into our first nature: it is a native ingredient in the composition of man: it is *one of many more* social virtues: it is that passion which reason preserves with the strictest caution, and distributes with the exactest justice—that passion which should not be lavished indiscriminately, and which is least likely to be so when best understood.

How a man in a state of nature would dispose of his humanity, it is naturally to be conceived. He would apply this social passion in a direction to his own happiness—for obtaining additional comfort in his family, for enlarging his relative happiness with his neighbour, for procuring good will to the right and the left of his own threshold, and for making his own home a treasure of felicity, secured from annoyance, because it was protected by innocence.

This would be the full extent of humanity in a state of nature.

But

But in that state which is called civilisation, whether properly or not I will not now say, humanity is to be considered in many various ways.

Where some possess abundant wealth, and others are most miserably poor—where some must dig that ore which brightens in the purses of others—where some must cultivate that soil for others who take away the produce—where some must weave the cloth for others to wear upon their backs—where some must be common soldiers, and act under the direction of the passions of others—and where some must be sailors, and must submit to be torn from their families, to be dragged like criminals away from their homes, and perhaps never again to be restored—Whilst these are *necessary* gradations in a *civilised society*, and whilst it is found *necessary* that these various gradations in the conditions of men shall exist, so long will it be *necessary* for that society to consider how to apply its humanity—not with a *partial hand*, nor with an *unnatural impulse*, but with a general view to the conditions of the whole.

If I, therefore, spoke of a private man, he will, if he obeys the impulse of nature, commence his career of humanity with his relatives and his neighbours—if I spoke of the public, they ought, when they commence their career of humanity, to bestow it with an even hand, to pour it through every channel where the cries of it most *immediately, directly, and loudly* assail their ears and hearts.

Under the present circumstances of this country, no one will be so bold as to say that we can dispense with the industry of the miner, the collier, the ploughman, and the weaver, or with the post of the soldier or sailor. To have it in our power to meliorate their conditions, preserve their health, and by strict attention exemplarily habituate them to sobriety and industry, is one thing—to have for ever neglected it, is another.

All that humanity can do, for softening the hard conditions of those in active society, is to reward industry and correct licentiousness—to block up every avenue that leads to depravity—to put it out of the power of a labourer to consume his time when he is able to employ it—and to allow no temptation for a waste of the wages of industry in the sinks of intoxication.

The effects of intoxication, and more especially by spirituous liquors, tend to enervate the frame, starve the family, depreciate its children, lead on the taker to the perpetration of horrid crimes, and cast him at length into a *solitary* dungeon.

If I saw the publick career of humanity commencing with these considerations, I should be assured that as it refers to active society, the purpose was unquestionable, and that the passion which moved the judgment was not only sincere but just.

But

But when I see these conditions of men neglected—conditions which must be seen, but disregarded—which obtrude upon our senses at home and abroad—in all our paths, at our own doors, in the open streets, and in all the public roads—when I see a new dungeon erecting in every county, and the art of masonry strained for the inclusion of human wretchedness—when I see dram-shops increasing because the revenue is increased by it—when I see the very thief-takers applying *there* to seize their deluded victims—when I see the keepers of those shops distributing the poison without a pang, and greedily griping the misapplied fractions of industry to pay the revenue office—when I see that these practices pass uncorrected, and that the country is reduced to the necessity of raising a revenue for the support of its credit by these desperate means—I look with indignity on that false humanity which leads men in search after the condition of negroes, far beyond the reach of their eyes and the genuine impulses of their hearts, whilst such striking temptations for the practice of the positive passion obtrude upon their reason on every side they turn.

Is it not more humane to prevent crimes than to punish them? and is there a man who reflects, and who does not know that immorality, extreme poverty, and the most desperate acts, are promoted by, if not founded upon, an easy access

to spirituous liquors? Who does not know that the way is made easy in defiance of humanity, merely to increase the revenue? Who does not know that the very system is founded in inhumanity? that it rends the social bands into pieces? totally counteracts the operations of morality? and that the Christian religion loses all its influence over a mind deadened to every virtuous impresson, diseased beyond reformation;—that it is in the establishment of no effect, and that the occupation is a mere dead letter?

The mistake of the present age is, that men enquire into the effects of crimes, and neglect the causes.

There can be but two causes assigned for the miserable condition of the lowest class of people in this country; either there is not work enough for them, or they misapply the earnings of their labour. Most of their misery is derived from their licentiousness, and no attempts are made by the legislature for the prevention of it.

Nor has the attention of private characters, who have embarked in the noble cause of humanity, been engaged to the *prevention* of crimes:—*not* to point out the means whereby those devoted victims which are found in prisons *may be prevented from coming to that end*—*not* to turn them from the path that leads to the solitary cell—but *how* they are *to be accommodated on their arrival there*.

Had Mr. Howard confined his enquiry to that which is within the ability of one private man, and had his passion of humanity been regulated by the controul of reason, and not by enthusiasm amounting to Quixotism, he might have traced the progress of depravity from the bud, and have been enabled to point out those means of prevention which are more essential acts of humanity than the universal study of prisons.

What are the conditions of other societies to us, if that society we live in be so wretched and depraved, as to call loudly for our direct attention? Are we not compelled by the force of reason to correct the desperate conditions of those in our own *state*, and *before our own noses*, before we are authorized in conscience to examine farther off?—to clear our own prisons—to thin our own workhouses—to clothe our own beggars—to see that our own industrious shall not perish from want or licentiousness, and to watch with a steady eye their first attempts to depravity?—to check the growing evil—to lock up the doors of dram-shops—to distinguish the industrious from the idle—to follow up discarded servants and disbanded soldiers and sailors—to enquire into the cause of empty churches?

Ascertaining the characters of the suspicious—providing employ for those who will work—

com-

compelling those who otherwise would not—and punishing quickly those who have offended—is of more importance, in the scale of humanity, than all the plans of jails in England, and schemes against slavery in the W. Indies, that enthusiasm for one or the other ever suggested.

Humanity distributed by an enthusiast will ever be misapplied. Reason must have a controul over the passion of humanity. The mind must be firm and the constitution sound. There must be *mens sana in corpore sano*. He who disposes of his humanity under the influence of dotage or strong affection will pervert the passion, because it was not regulated by judgment. If it be thus disposed by will, to be distributed after death, as it very frequently is towards publick endowments, relatives then suffer by the misapplication. The case of the late Mr. Russell, who, under this diseased influence, left his all to endowments, and his kindred to starve, will exemplify what I mean. And if it be thus disposed in the lifetime of the giver, he will suffer by the misapplication. It is very immaterial to my argument, whether the story be real or fancied; but the immortal bard has brought the fate of King Lear, who gave his all, so home to our bosoms—has so realised the misapplication of humanity—that it would be dotage indeed not to feel how directly it is within the pale of nature.

An *Entusiast* becomes so heated in the pursuit of his object, as to exceed the limitation of common reason and plain understanding. *Humanity* stands in need of no such *hot-bed*. It is found to be of the most positive nature in a man with a cool head and common generosity—in his greatest vigour of mind—in the prime of his life—and when he holds an intercourse with society.

It is only a part of the character of a good man.—It is that part which he can still be bestowing and still retain enough—It is that fountain from the heart which can never be exhausted—It is that which, when diffused, creates a reverence for the giver, and *excites an example which others can follow*—It is a discharge of duty as a social being, in a discreet manner. Whereas by adopting this passion in exclusion of all others—by applying it to one object, and neglecting every other—by exceeding that which is beyond the reach or ability of the rest in society, the end cannot be obtained, because *one alone* is not adequate to it, and the chase is given up because *more cannot follow the Entusiast* in it.

It must be remembered that the enquiry of Mr. Howard into the state of prisons, and the inquiry of Mr. Wilberforce into the state of negroe slaves, were both of them topicks agitated at one and the same time. Whilst Mr. Howard was laying down the plan for immuring prisoners in *solitary dungeons* in order to reform
 C them,

them, Mr. Wilberforce was knocking off the imaginary chains from the negroes in the West Indies—counting the lashes of the cart-whip upon their backs—and taking them out of the stocks, which is their only place of confinement, in order to *reform their severe task-masters*.

I have watched these proceedings which have attracted popularity, and have smiled with contempt at the absurdity of them.

Why had not Mr. Wilberforce, whilst Mr. Howard was contriving new accommodations for prisoners—whilst every county was employing architects for new plans and new elevations of prison-houses—moved in the House of Commons for an enquiry into the causes which produced so dreadful a necessity? Why have not the obsequious chartered boroughs, and the manufacturing towns, charged their Members with petitions upon these causes as well as that upon the Slave Trade? Have they omitted to do so because they knew of those evils which existed in the *West Indies*, but were ignorant of any existing in *England*?

I do not mean to appeal to the passions, but to the common sense of my countrymen; and I do say, that neither the dungeon, Botany Bay, or the gallows, will avail any thing in reforming the corrupted morals of the age. The time (as some say) is now come when money is profusely plenty—when taxes are to be taken off—and when the publick funds are as high as they were ever known

known to have been. Is not this a fitting time then for providing individual comforts—for checking immorality—for inculcating sobriety and industry—and for making the lowest class of people virtuously happy ?

Human nature is a slave to habit. Reformation can only advance by convincing the understanding of the superior benefits which will be the result of it : and the understanding must be in a state of sobriety for receiving the impression with any intention of effect. Prevention of drunkenness is almost the first and the only necessary step. The fever excited upon the brain by inebriety must first subside, before reason will be listened to ; and yet (notwithstanding we are said to be in a flourishing state), we are to be told that the revenue would suffer, if the use of spirituous liquors were forbidden.

The morality of the lower class of people is their best security for order and decency. Whoever tempts them on that point, whether it be an individual or any collective body of men, either as legislators or any other, are as highly criminal as those they thus vitiate.

Methinks it would be a curious predicament to view the Commons of England in—if that—whilst the Minister is haranguing on the prosperous state of the finances, and whilst the Surplus of the Revenue is dwelt upon with more than ordinary triumph—they should be so hardy in the same

breath to say that the revenue drawn from the sale of spirits was now positively necessary for the support of the state—and that at least two thousand houses in the metropolis should be necessarily kept open for dealing out indiscriminately the poison to men, women, and children. Who can reflect upon this without horror, knowing at the same time, as we do, that the practice is encouraged because of the support it yields to the state? If this be not the prostitution of morality and humanity brought home to our hearts, I cannot see it in *Africa*, in *Asia*, or in *America*: there is no such temptation—it is all a vision—there is no necessity for a *reform any where*.

Is such the practice of humanity, which is to be diffused by example? To expect reforms from those provided for in office, I know is to look for a thing where it cannot be found. But I wonder how the nation at large can behold in silence, and without emotions that proclaim their astonishment, the erections of larger jails—the beggars in the streets—the open debaucheries—the loose language of drunkards assailing the ears of virtue—the swarms of wretches consigned to workhouses, or pining in want, secluded in garrets—and moreover than all this, the increase of parochial taxes year after year. Such things are: and yet we are to be told that we are conscientiously in a state for enquiring into the misery of those under the care and protection of *others*.

If Mr. Burke says that the *age of chivalry* is gone, I say that the *age of humanity* is gone. To relieve the wants of our fellow citizens is a duty of government; the constitution by which it is upheld has commanded it: to extend humanity beyond that which duty has prescribed is *optional*.

If the combined talents of eminent men had been employed in investigating the condition of human misery at home which prevails at this time, and had given vigour in checking the immoralities of the lowest class of people by the force of their examples, emanations of humanity would have then been justly excited and naturally diffused, because the impulse would have accorded with reason. The spirit of enquiry would have gone forth—vice would be checked before it be too far gone—and the industrious in distress would be familiarly distinguished from the idle and abandoned: but the workhouse, that common sink, receives all without distinction, except those who are imprisoned or consigned to a fate beyond redemption.

Instead of such investigations which pressed hard upon us as a duty, we have all along been diverted from them by remoter topics—by the abolition of the slave-trade—and the slavery of Frenchmen.

Our very publick hospitals, in this age of affected humanity, would have been bankrupted,
and

and the wards shut up, if the contributions had not been increased by musical meetings. It was not the voluntary tribute of charity, arising from the impulse of the heart *immediately*; it was not the hand of humanity that gave the boon *directly*; but it was charmed from the purse by the effect of musick on the ears, by that same passage that brains are extracted in preparing Egyptian mummies.

St. George's and the Middlesex hospitals were erected by voluntary contributions before the new buildings in Marybone were begun; and notwithstanding the wonderful increase there of the richest inhabitants, not a wing has been added to either—for the contributions have failed!

The city charities flourish. Honest industry, rewarded by opulence, invigorates the mind. Many *there* now in affluence, sprung from poor parents—they know where distress pinches, and nature points out the remedy. London has not pressed on the House of Commons for abolishing the slave trade—London looks to the pressing objects of humanity nearer home—it petitioned for the abolition of the shop-tax, and made its Members vote as they ought.

Taxes imposed beyond that point which can be borne, is the greatest slavery that can be inflicted. I appeal to every collector of taxes, whether he can imagine real distress existing in a greater degree, than that he sees

throughout this metropolis? Do not let us lay the flattering unction to the breast, and conclude that all are content who do not murmur. Despair has its fits, and when it can only rave in vain it will rather mope in silence.

If I heard, that, now we are at peace, a consideration of the present state of the subjects who are at a time of life for employments of active industry was to be directly gone into by Parliament—if I heard that it was their determination to abolish every tax which tended to encourage such practices as depraved the human mind—if I heard that the idle were obliged to work, and that their wages could not be spent in intoxication—if I heard that the conditions of the poor were seriously considered, and that immorality and profaneness no longer defiled our streets—if I found that we had more humanity than would effect these reforms at home—I would vote for bestowing the surplus without hesitation on any other subjects in the world that claimed it from their sufferings. But let us commence the duties belonging to citizens of the world *after* we have discharged the more relative duties exacted from us to the poor of our own country. This would be acting upon a warrantable system, and would leave no doubt upon the minds of men that the motive sprung from *positive humanity*.

The Minister, who says that by the abolition of spirituous liquors so much revenue would be
lost

lost to the state, has but little insight into the operation of that poison upon the constitution. It does not produce a similar intoxication to malt liquors; nor is the habit of drinking spirits confined to the season of social enjoyment: it excites the most furious passions—inflames the brain—leads men on to riot—and often to the perpetration of murder.

The act of *Captain Wilson* is as worthy of record as the continence of a *Scipio* or the virtue of a *Cato*; who, when his ship was lost on the *Pelew Islands*, induced his crew to stave the casks of spirituous liquors, lest they should change the state of pressing danger into irrevocable despair, and quarrel with the natives, when they knew not what they did.

The money which is consumed by this infamous practice of drinking spirits would be laid out in comfortable commodities that are already taxed; and although the revenue from spirituous liquors would be sunk, that from other commodities would be increased, more labour would be applied to the welfare of the state, and the poor rates would be sensibly reduced. This is the best argument that can be offered, and it is that which will find the readiest way to the heart of a Minister. Tell him that the revenue will not suffer, but be increased; and although he might not yield to a reform from the motive of humanity,

manity, yet he will more likely from that of interest.

I do assert that there is no condition, no gradation of men in this country, that may not be made comfortable and taken from the brink of despair, provided the attention of those whose duty it is, be engaged to it.

Every miserable object that presents itself should have at least an hearing, and every distress should be investigated; *then* it would be apparent whether those who fall—fall from inevitable misfortune or from vicious propensities. This is that humanity which we are most pressing called upon to discharge; and when we have done so much, we may with clean hands and light hearts enquire into remoter conditions.

Have the Members of the House of Commons, who listened with so much attention to the abolition of the slave-trade, and who have shewed such a promptitude at declaiming upon the doubtful evidence of miseries unseen, ripened their humanity for meliorating the positive sufferings of those objects evident to our senses? Have they reflected upon the comparative call for their humanity at home with that which Mr. Wilberforce exacts for Africans? or are they besotted by the *necromantick power of African magicians*, and cannot break the spell?

Besides the application of humanity to those in a condition for active industry at home, there

is an humanity due to those who are in a state *only* of passive existence—to those who have passed the age for labour, and to those who have not as yet arrived to the age for labour.

No state can flourish without population; and I will take it upon myself to prove that there is no state, in no part of the globe, where the care of population is more neglected than in this country. Medical assistance and medical influence with those in the habit of drinking spirits is all out of the question. I will appeal to medical men for an answer to these facts—whether thousands of children do not perish for want of care—whether the mothers who drink spirits do not destroy their children who suck them—whether those who survive be not pitiable objects—and whether many do not now fall a sacrifice to the small-pox which could be saved?

When Mr. Wilberforce again commences his inquiries into the state of negroes upon the coast of Africa, along the middle passage, and in the West-Indies—when he is again moved by the yearning of humanity—I invite him, as a relief to those scenes abroad, to turn his attention to the comparative state of wretchedness at home; let him call before a Committee of the House of Commons some of the miserable objects of this country—let these speak for themselves—let him be but half as inquisitive in the investigation of their conditions as he has been in that of the negroes,

groes, and then go to his supper with what appetite he may.

If Mr. Burke, who pleads with all the fire of Demosthenes for kingly rights, and who supports the crown with an uplifted arm—if Mr. Payne, who urges the rights of man with the nervous mind of Lycurgus, and tramples the crown under his feet—if they had employed their pens on the side of positive humanity, and had left kings to defend themselves, by their own arguments—by the *ultima ratio regum*—by the thunder of their cannon—they would have both been seen in a nobler cause.

If Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke had but employed half the force of their powers of oratory on this theme that they consumed on the state of Frenchmen, they would to this day have been mutual friends, and gone down to posterity with the same blessing from the wretched in England upon both.

As to Mr. Pitt—I have no hope in him. He who destroyed smuggling for the sake of the revenue alone, and radically encouraged spirituous liquors by granting more favourable licences—he who could foment a contest for Westminster, and support an unconstitutional scrutiny for more than twelve months—he who could thus decisively promote inordinate tumults and intoxication—it would be vain to search for, in any corner of his heart, a single seed

of humanity. But if the spirit of humanity be not dead, but only slumbering—if it can be roused at the clamorous appeal of necessity, its cries shall be heard : that Minister shall be told of the beggarly state of the wretched in a tone as intelligible as that he practised before he was Minister, and before he was Member for Cambridge, when he harangued at the Revolution Society for parliamentary reforms, which now, alas, are discussed by him no more !

A man in office and out of office is like a player in comedy and tragedy. In office he assumes a cheerful countenance, characterises pleasant comedy, promises, flatters, and caresses his suitors—out of office, he rants, threatens, and talks of vice and corruption, the ax; the block, and the Tower. Reformation will never come from a Minister—come when it will, it will be from the people.

I hope there is not one who thinks because money is plenty—the funds are high and the lottery wheel goes round—that the poor are the better for it, or their vices abated. If additional wealth operated in any manner upon the vicious, it would be by increasing their enormities—Gold reforms not the corrupted heart.

The labourer who has consumed his strength by active toil, and can no longer earn his bread, will not be benefited by the increased wealth of another—if he can compound with the iron heart

of

of an overseer, and preserve his cot and his blanket whilst he receives his pittance from the parish, the summit of his expectation is perfect.

The pauper that is passed from London to Cornwall or Northumberland, may finish his journey of life upon the road, without the shelter of any thing better than a barn—Will he be benefited by the riches that he sees in his journey, by the display of smooth lawns, grand mansions, and prosperous towns?

Will Mr. Wilberforce say that these considerations do not speak home to the human heart more than the condition of negroes?—If not, I will present him with a catalogue of human distresses positively existing in this land of freedom, and I will invite him to compare the state of thousands in this country with that of the negroes in the West-Indies.

What is a *soldier* but a slave? Does any one pretend to say that his state of slavery is not necessary? that in the chain of society he does not form a link? But yet he is a slave, because he is bound to certain duties, and cannot with any change of mind extricate himself from bondage. As long as he is content and does his duty, he feels not the galling of the yoke; but as soon as he is rebellious, he is whipped, placed upon spikes, chained, imprisoned, and sometimes shot. Perhaps he was enlisted under the influence of intoxication—perhaps under that of desperation—
perhaps

perhaps he is ordered abroad, away from his wife and family---will the four-pence a day serve him if he stay at home, or provide for his wife and children in his absence? And if under this pretence he asks for his freedom, is it granted?

If it be said that the *soldier's* punishment is not more severe than that of the *negroe*, I do contradict it: the soldier often lingers under repeated flagellations; and an instance has lately occurred of one who put an end to his misery by suicide who was to have undergone this correction the third time.

Will any man say that the West-India planter is not as much interested in humanity for his slave as the commander of a regiment for his? Let Mr. Wilberforce, by answering the question, fill up the blank.

Commerce and an insular situation invite sailors. They go their voyages with the songs by heart that chaunt the joys at their return. At Deal, or sometimes before they descry the white cliffs that proclaim the land of promised hope, they are tied and bound and consigned to the discipline of a man of war. It is vain that we are told they are *better off*; no one can believe it; it cannot be so, or they would go without compulsion; and it is that very compulsion which is another word for slavery: slaves they are as long as the war lasts, or their strength holds out. Greenwich Hospital receives not a thousandth
part

part of them. The endearments of life, which are love and affection, by that time are all become extinct: but this, in a land of freedom, forms a *necessary* link in the chain of society.

I say nothing of *kidnapping to the East-Indies*—*I have been only told that such a thing is.* But the flocks of mutilated beggars in sailor's habits that haunt the streets and public roads, prove what the humanity of government is towards them when their services are past. Ay, says Mr. Wilberforce, the laws protect the Englishman against the kidnapper; so say I; but he who was kidnapped must first be restored: the laws also in the West-Indies protect the negroes.

The business of an Administration seems to be nothing more than to lay on taxes and extract them from the people. If protection be asked, if poverty appeal, the tax-gatherer becomes the judge: the poor inhabitant who is not provided to pay his tax upon the third call, is threatened with a summary process; and the money which he scrapes together perhaps to his last shilling, is a part of that surplus which is made up for the *jubilee day of finance*. But this is also a *necessary* link in the chain of society. All cannot climb to the summit of the hill of fortune; some tire in the ascent, some dare not the attempt, some fall down in the pursuit, and are trampled to death.

The great burthen of taxes, and the wide distinction betwixt the rich and the poor, oblige
the

the latter to be slavish to the former. There are many objects in inclement seasons without an hovel and with scarcely any covering, that tempt humanity in the road from *York* to London—These might be seen and their miseries might be told from their own mouths, if Mr. Wilberforce bestowed the same portion of humanity towards them that he has to the tales of a discarded overseer from the West-Indies.

Will Mr. Wilberforce, and those who join issue with him in the cause of the abolition of the Slave-Trade, consent to examine as many witnesses who are competent to inform a Committee of the vices and the miseries of the lowest class of people at home—print the Reports—and make the comparison fairly with those of the slaves in the West-Indies—not only as to positive conditions of distress, but also to numbers—not only such conditions as are *necessary* for making the public wheel go round—but such as are the result of wanton inattention, cruelty, and inhumanity? Will *they* enquire into the number of dram-shops, and ascertain the class of people who frequent them? will they do the same with the publick-houses? will they search out the haunts of thieves that are not taken? will they ascertain the cause and the haunts of beggars? will they enquire into the cause of increase of the parochial taxes, and revise the poor laws? will they obtain reports from the manufacturing towns of the

6

present

present state of the weavers, and from *Cornwall* and *Durham* of that of the miners and colliers? will they examine into the cases of prisoners confined for debt, and distinguish guilt from misfortune? will they relieve the miserable state of thousands that *cannot dig, but are ashamed to beg*? will they fully convince the world that some do not sink from positive want—that some do not die of the small pox who might have been preserved? will they examine into the cause of the present rage for new prisons, and will they prove to us that these new walls are unnecessary? will they stop the hands of the mason, turn the forged irons into ploughshares, and pay off a part of the national debt by savings in the expences of *Botany Bay*?

When these reforms are proved to be necessary, and when they are carried into effect, the eye of humanity may penetrate and discover defects in remoter regions, and pour forth the healing balm of comfort to relieve them. The rising sun, which we all adore because of its universal benignity—*first* gladdens the hills nearest to the horizon—it is *afterwards* that its rays are extended to remoter parts. We may descend to the rank of the wretched in *England*, but cannot to that in *Africa*.

In the comparative operations upon the human mind, tragedies which represent domestic distress engage the attention more than those of the fates

of tyrants or destruction of empires—scenes are more moving, as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or to suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflexion which strikes home to the heart is that they are conditions to which *ourselves* may be exposed—we lament the possibility as a mother weeps over the babe when she remembers that death may take it from her.

On Comparative Slavery.

HAVING somewhat enlarged my sentiments upon humanity, and expanded the purposes of it that it may be seen more clearly and distinguished more readily from that which is resembling to humanity—but is only the counterfeit ; I shall proceed upon the same system in imparting my sentiments upon Comparative Slavery.

There are many more positive conditions of *slavery* than that of one man being the property of another, and being subject to his will and dominion : and if such positive conditions be *necessary* in every association of men, both under a civilised government as states but little removed from that of nature—if various ranks and orders of men be *necessary*, that the political wheel may go round, that the purposes of social life be more completely fulfilled—if it be positively according with the natural order of things—why then there cannot be a doubt remaining but that, *the only duty is to make all occupations and all conditions of men as comfortable as the nature of their stations will admit.*

This position ought either to be received as a general maxim, or not at all—either as an incumbent duty which the dependant in every state may claim at the hands of their superiors, or not

at all. For if it be not a right, but only an optional caprice, the impression of it would be so light that the tint could not be traced, and it would be better for the dependant class to be left to struggle against their own sufferings than to depend upon any such precarious bounty; and in the language of the Poet at once to be told—

Why let the stricken deer go weep
 The hart ungalled play—
 For some must watch, whilst some must sleep :—
 So runs the world away !

The positive wants of life in some climates are very few indeed; and when these are gratified with the mind at ease, it is very immaterial towards human happiness into whose hands the surplus may fall.

Whether a negro *slave* or a Russian *slave*—a Prussian soldier or an Anspacher—an English soldier or a sailor—a peasant or a collier—provided their positive wants be supplied and they cheerfully pursue their occupations, it would be vain in reformation to grant them more.

For if men thus conditioned could not look up with cheerful faces to the stations of their superiors, and if it were not certain that true happiness was not confined to redundant wealth and power, the proportion of human wretchedness would be greatly extended indeed;—it would be a disease of the mind which no reform

could cure, because all cannot possess wealth and dominion: and where we now find willing obedience, we should then see nothing but envy, rancour, and revenge.

If he be only happy who is most free, the peasant in England is the happiest. But why then does he become a soldier and a *slave*?—because he valued not that freedom, and was not content. Why, when he is a soldier, does he wish to become a peasant—to have restored to him again his former condition and his surrendered privilege?—Not at the time perhaps that he was enlisted—not as long as the passion for the parade, the drum and the fife, charms him—but when he sickens at these—it is *then*, and *not till then*, that he finds himself a positive *slave*.

A peasant has the lightest burthen of cares, and stands firm upon that level in life which will not admit of sudden and violent shocks from fortune.

If the peasant becomes miserable—if he at any time of life approaches to that state which is as bad as positive *slavery*—there cannot be any difficulty in assigning the cause for it, because all the possible ones are but few. Either his scene of content was disturbed by war or immorality when in the prime of his life, or his daily hard toil is ever hardly rewarded.

If

If he marry, (and most of the peasants do), he finds that his wages will not support himself and his increasing family. It is then that he feels himself a *slave* in another sense—a *slave* in a comparative degree worse than a negro possessed of the same will, the same industry, and the same number of children.

The peasant must divide and subdivide his shilling. His very farthings will admit of fractions. His cot is rented—his firing must be purchased—his sickness must be supported at his own expence—his cloathing for himself and family must be bought by himself. But if he cannot by œconomy procure these positive necessaries, he perhaps then will apply to his parish. The new coat that he purchased for the wedding day, will be the last that he can ever buy! Just as much will be apportioned out to him from his parish as will keep his body and soul together.—If he cannot do the work of an able labourer, his pay is diminished, and the parish considers that in their bounty.

It is necessary, for the sake of my comparison, to take notice—that the peasant is also amenable to the criminal laws of his country—that if he steals a turnip*, gets a bastard, breaks down a fence,

* I myself saw a man who received the contents of a gun charged with small shot in his breast. The affair happened at twelve o'clock at noon: the man died the same night, and there

fence, poaches a hare, or commits any other felonious act or fraud—there are stocks, whips, and heavy fetters, *in England for him*, as there are *in the West Indies for the negro*.

He that visits the villages in England, and contemplates the condition of the peasantry in general, if he take Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* in his hand, he will be enabled to ascertain whether poetry be all a fiction, and for once he will be so unfortunate as to vouch that in this instance it is faithfully realised.

I have passed three years of my life in the West-Indies, and practised physick there during that time. I had the care of two thousand negroes annually. Before I proceed to speak of the condition of negroes, as I found it, I will obtrude upon my reader one observation, which is, that ever since my return from the West-Indies, and before the subject of *slavery* had been agitated, I have been ever heard to say—that so widely different were the conditions of a good field negro and a good peasant, that if it were my lot to be reduced to the choice of being the one or the other, I should without hesitation prefer the state of the negro to that of the peasant.

I have

there was an end of the matter. It was done by a watchman in a turnip field near London, and the man who was shot was drawing a few. He was brought to the Middlesex Hospital in the year 1765.

I have stated the general condition of the peasant, and now I will state the general condition of the negro. If I swerve from the truth, I do not look for my punishment from men.

A good field negro has his hut and his planting ground—his hogs and his poultry—which he may either eat or sell. These are on the same estate where his labour is employed. For the hut and the ground he pays no rent—he has the necessary cloathing found him. But he is not content with that—he is able to purchase good linen for shirts and trowsers and jackets—He lives in a climate where, in the language of a poet, *the sun always shines*—that climate is perfectly congenial to his nature. His wife or his children do not draw from him their necessities of life—neither food or raiment—When any of them are sick, they are carefully attended without any expence, and they are provided with every comfort which their condition requires. His toil is so light that he feels it not—his freedom is so indifferent to him that he will not buy it—but it is in the power of every good negro to be rich enough for procuring it, if he chose to exchange his condition. He has no other concern upon his mind but that of preserving the good-will of his master. In descending into the vale of life, no reflections of poverty strike home to his heart; and when his days of labour are counted, he still receives his
allow-

allowance, cultivates his planting ground, raises his tobacco, and enjoys the rest of his days under the shade of his own *Banana* tree. If his master's fortune should turn out adverse, and his estate be sold, the property of the negroe, both in money and stock, remains untouched by the master's creditors.

It is impossible for a good peasant to have the positive comforts of a good field negroe: the severest labour that he undergoes, and which is only for a few months in the year, is that of digging cane holes—the labour of a gardener is to the full as excessive.

The rest of his labour is a mere play game.

He is not exposed to be dragged away by a press gang, nor inveigled by a recruiting serjeant: it is a million to one but he falls, like a tree, on the same spot where he first grew into life, and that he dies in that hut which he himself erected.

But what if he be turned over to another master---what if he be removed from one estate to another?---Is there any thing so formidable in that?---If there be, how is it that peasants in England change their masters every *quarter* of a year?

The good field negroe carries with him his own character: every body will know him wherever he goes or whomsoever he serves under. Strokes of the cart whip raise the

skin—fethers gall it : if he has neither whelks or galls—and none he will have, becaufe he has not deferved them.....he is known every where to be a good negroe.

I fmile at the nonfence of thofe who can imagine that the Weft-Indian would treat his negroe with inhumanity, that he would be fo loft to that intereft which the reft of fociety fteadily adheres to. The *cart whip*, the *chains*, and the *stocks*, are to a good negroe what engines of punifhment are to a good man in every fociety—*for his protection*.

The queftion, I truft, will no longer be, whether the negroe be the only *slave*, but whether his ftate of *flavery* be the beft or the worft of all thofe whom fortune has placed and whom *necelfity* continues in a ftate of dependance. The queftion, I truft alfo, will no longer be, whether thefe fubordinate conditions be pofitively neceffary in all ftates or not, for *they moft affuredly are*, and are proved to be fo, fince they are found in every ftate, and no one could go on without them ; the principal link in the chain of fociety would be otherwife broken.

As no ftate can difpenfe with the foldier, the vaffal, the peafant, or the *slave*, which are all *fyonymous*, which are only fo many words expreffing the fame meaning, fo every ftate is bound to protect them, to treat them with the kindeft humanity, and in return for their labour

to supply their wants *from the moment they draw their first breath to their final expiration.*

In northern climates the positive wants are greater than in southern. In that situation where nature has distributed most lavishly her bounties, less is left to be supplied by the hands of power. The negro, in this view of the question, enjoys many preferable advantages.

If I make an enlarged survey of Europe, all of which might be considered to be in a state of civilisation, I shall find that, besides peasants, vassals, and sailors on board men of war, Europe contains more than two million of soldiers. The whole of the lower class of people in Russia are in a state of vassalage. Fanaticks who rave for the freedom of a negro, possibly do not know this, for fanaticism and ignorance generally go together : but if they should not have known it *historically*, they might perhaps have read in an English *newspaper* that the Empress of Russia now and then bestows a large tract of land *with a competent number of vassals* in rewarding the meritorious deeds of her statesmen and officers*.

Are these conditions, in such a climate as from the southern continent of Germany to the

* When I was in Russia I saw forty criminals chained together, and thus crawling through the streets of St. Peterburgh. But if any one doubts of the cruelties existing in Europe, I refer him to Mr. Howard's state of their prisons.

frozen regions of Kampskatka, preferable to that of negroes in the West-Indies protected by masters versed in the practice of *humanity*? The Prince of Hesse and Margrave of Anspach hired out their soldiers to Britain during its war with America: they were sent across the Atlantick to fight those battles in which their provocations had no concern—they there added to, and mixed in that deluge of carnage, without an atom of the impulse of nature and freedom—they were bound to fight there for Britain, as they would have been, if their rulers commanded it, any where else against her—If their rulers were *paid*, it is immaterial as to any other *cause*—they would make for *that* an alliance with the Russian—with the Turk—or with the *Devil* himself, if his dominion were upon earth.

I am perfectly convinced, and therefore do not hesitate to declare the fact, that the peasantry of this country were *throughout* their lives a happier class of men—that they began and ended their days with less positive distress—and that they experienced fewer wants—when they were under the protection of the *Barons* than since that protection has been withdrawn—that their toil was not so great, and their comforts greater; They have now no other relation in society but only as long as they are able to work; when that power is consumed, *all is now over with them*.

In

In the days of the *Barons* they paid nothing for their cots nor for their fuel. A common was allotted to every village ; they reared their own stock ; and with these supports *old age*, grown too feeble for labour, could advance without the companion of *despair* or *the dread of an overseer*.

I know the history of my country too well to be told that the peasantry, of their own accord, shook off their state of vassalage to the *Barons*. They did not—it was by seduction that they were brought to it—it was in the struggle betwixt the *King* and the *Barons* that they exchanged their conditions, and God forbid that I should say they were now mended.

If the vassal went to the war, it was that sort of warfare which can only be justified : he fought in his own cause, as well as that of his master : he fought *pro aris et focis*, and equally partook of the insult and revenge. Some *foul seducer* then stirred up discontent among them, as another would now among the negroes, with this wide difference, that in the last instance there is neither political cause or natural connection to justify the seduction.

If I were to extend my enquiry throughout the known habitable globe, my argument on the predominant comparative misery of others with that of the negroes in the West-Indies would be yet more strongly enforced ; but as I might be told that the *mines of Peru* belong not to us,
and

and therefore those who dig in them come not *within our pale of humanity*, I shall leave their conditions to be discovered through the same telescope and by the same philosophers who have explored the coasts of Africa, traversed the middle passage, and realised visionary monsters for cruelty in the West-India islands.

But I recommend them to turn their attention, by way of relief, to the miners in *Cornwall* and colliers in *Durham*. On the day of their report, I hope to hear from them that the accommodations of those *necessary* members in society are comfortably fitting for all seasons of the year—that because they are working on English ground, and partaking of English freedom, they enjoy good English food—and that when they are past their labour they find a most hospitable retreat—that these damps from the caves of the earth which have *blasted hundreds at once*, blast now no more—and that the conditions of those need no commiseration who never revisit the *glimpses of the sun or moon*.

At any rate I do not suppose that the miners in *England* are worse off than the miners in *Sweden* or those in *Russia*, and that is some consolation to your modern philanthropist.

Now that I have given a sketch of the comparative state of those in active industry in Europe, and who in their relation to society form the same link or stand on the same level with the negroe of the West-Indies, I shall not beg leave,

but

but will take the liberty of calling the attention of my reader to another class of *slavery* which is below all comparison, and which is more poignantly felt because the objects have fallen from a greater height and experienced the severer shock from their great reverse of fortune.

This enquiry can be more strictly pursued in England, by pointing out the conditions of thousands *there imprisoned*, than by extending that enquiry beyond those white cliffs which bound *the island of liberty*.

Why at this moment of time these thousands are thus immured within the confines of a prison for *debts* is not difficult to be accounted for, but it is difficult to assign a just reason why they ought.

The physical cause of their getting there is certainly owing to the commercial enterprise of the people—not to their *liberality* in giving credit, but to their *avarice* after profit.

There never was a country known in history where the fortune of man—where his *ups* and his *downs*, ran round upon the wheel in more rapid revolutions—Then why should a single Englishman be shut out of his chance in this privileged lottery in life, and why should he that is *down*, be prevented from *rising again*? What mental improvement, what corporeal strength, what active industry, does he acquire who is shut up within the walls of a prison? What intellectual satisfaction or virtuous reform

can be derived from incarcerating the body, and making it a dead weight upon a state? It is more likeing to a *viper biting the file* than to any thing like reason. It is very rare indeed that another such as *Sir Walter Raleigh* mingles in that scene, and who *in his prison hours like him can enrich the world*.

When Mr. Wilberforce again revives the subject of *slavery*, I will endeavour to prevail upon some friends in the House of Commons to ask him if this be not *slavery* with a vengeance—*slavery* in the very practice. I think it was Lord Rawdon who said within this week in the House of Lords, that a woman had been confined for twenty-five years for a debt of twenty pounds.

———— Turn thy complexion there————

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin!

There is a wide distinction betwixt *slavery* put into practice and the power of doing it—betwixt the condition which exacts *active obedience* and that which is consigned to *passive suffering*.

He who is subjected to the will of a master might pass the whole of his life without feeling the least of that power; and if he abide within the pale of duty might not smart from the tugs of authority; the cord about his neck might hang loosely and the habit of wearing it become
familiar,

familiar, but the poor wretch immured in a prison is in a state of *positive slavery*; and whether he be young or old, active or lazy, he is yet in a state of *passive existence*.

The penal laws of this country are too shocking to be read. Every multiplication of them is an additional circle more contracted than a former trespassing upon the rights of man in civil society.

The Roman Catholicks are restricted in so many ways, that they can only be defined to be *slaves* permitted to walk at large—they can neither purchase land, carry a gun, act as jurymen, vote at an election, serve in parliament, or preside in any office—the law hangs over them, like a suspended sword by a thread:—but under all these restraints as long as they keep within that pale which the law has marked out for them, they pass through life without a sense of pain.

That must be said to be a reform in religion which conveys *no traits* of *him* who founded it: it was not prescribed by him that the various sects of christianity should be subject to the tyranny of an established one—that because one sect cannot in conscience sit down in the pew of another, but is willing to be free in sitting in a pew of its own—it is to be marked, persecuted, and become the victim of tumult.

The last pamphlet on *negroe slavery* was written by a divine* of the Church of England, by one who has seen lately in silence, *Englishmen galley slaves at Morocco*, where he dwelt for some time and witnessed the miseries inflicted. This pamphlet was written in consequence of the tumults at *St. Domingo*, the news of which reached *England* at the immediate time of the riots at *Birmingham*; but the sufferers here have found no such pen in the hands of a clergyman to commiserate their ruin—no tongue to plead it where protection is a duty. *Dr. Priestley*, ever active, both suffers and acts; he is the commentator of his own and the misfortunes of his fellow sufferers—like another *Zenophon*, by recording his losses and his successful retreat from the hands of his savage spoilers, he has approved his philosophy and elevation of mind.

As a fellow citizen I am more anxious to know what passed at *Birmingham* than I can be supposed to be at *St. Domingo*. But Mr. Wilberforce has not as yet sharpened his humanity for our *civil* broils: upon that point he is as cold as a Stoick.

I have not forgotten the following anecdote of him: during the long contest in the Westminster election—when Sir Cecil Wray opposed Mr. Fox—every day produced riots—
many

* Percival Stockdale.

many were wounded—but one was *murdered*. In consequence of this Mr. Fox, on the first day of the meeting of the new parliament, complained to the House of the foulness of that opposition which was made against him and gave a detail of the transactions that had passed. Mr. Wilberforce replied to him; and ended his speech with the following piece of stoicism—“That he (Mr. Fox) had better prove to the House that he had a fair majority of votes, and produce some substantial arguments why the scrutiny should not be continued, instead of entertaining the House with *horrid tales of blood and massacre*.”

This was Mr. Wilberforce in the year 1784!

What is become of Mr. Gilbert's bill for a Reform in the *poor laws of England*? Does it lie upon the same table with the papers on the *African Slave Trade*—or is it thrown aside to give room for the latter?—or are they both to be bound up in one volume, and preserved in order to point out the contrast?

What is to be the fate of Sir William Dolben's Motion in favour of the *prostitutes* who apply in the streets from Whitechapel to Hyde Park Corner? Could there not be found a sufficient number in the House to stand up in support of those miserable outcasts? Did such a theme excite neither curiosity or humanity? Was it not something to have known how such

as are young in the practice of lust were conducted to these haunts, and how the supply of youth, beauty, and decoration was furnished in such successions? how they were seduced—how they were lodged—and what became of them when they were diseased? If these girls were examined and the bawds detected, there would be proved a traffick *worthy* the investigation of *humanity*.

It is incumbent upon the House of Commons to take up this cause, seeing that the *Police* of Westminster is so loose and so prostituted. It is the highest insult upon common sense to be told that *Government* cares for the morals of the people or for the promotion of their industry—It is in the abuse of either that all their present *freedom* consists, and it is *Government* who supplies their very temptations.

There can be but one reason assigned why an inquiry into the miseries and vices of the lowest class of people in *England* is thus neglected, and why in the *West-Indies* it is so industriously pursued—and this is the Reason—

The atrocious facts in the very Bosom of this country are *not seen* because they are the most *obvious*, and are not investigated because the government is *directly* responsible for them—whereas the grievances supposed to be existing in the *West-Indies*, either on the part of the master or the *slave*, are remote from sight, and for
the

the redress of which the Government of this country is not *directly* responsible.

England possesses the *West-Indies* as a sovereignty, and might have an ultimate power there: But be it remembered that there is a code of laws and a legislative power on every island in the *West-Indies*. For whatever abuses that have passed uncorrected the *legislature there* are *directly* responsible. Let this country proceed therefore in its *plan of consistency*; and since it appears more rational in *Government* to follow up the inquiry in the *West-Indies* and neglect it *at home*,—let it persist as it has began, in passing the censure *before* it has attached the criminality, and in *keeping the beam* in its own eye the *better to discern a mote* in another's.

On the African Slave Trade.

IT is necessary to remark that the *Slave Trade* first was began and has been ever since continued by the subjects of this country—that it never was, from its first commencement, either a smuggling or a kidnapping trade—but that it always has been a trade positively under the sanction of the *laws of this country*, and in which the *West-India planters* never had any other concern than that of purchasing those negroes which the English acts of parliament sent to their islands.

It is necessary also to remark, that the West-India islands were taken by English fleets and that the adventurers on West-India property on those islands were chiefly *ab origines* of England.

It would be idle to say that these adventurers would have renounced their native homes without a prospect of enlarging their property by industry, and it would be as idle to say that they ever could have obtained that end without their having been, *at least till now*, encouraged in the means.

Instead of the *West-India planters* having suggested the mode of traffick after they first settled in the islands, it was the traffick that suggested their settlement there. From h e
reign

reign of *Elizabeth* to that of *George the Third*, the laws of *African Traffick* have been in force. Ships have embarked from England to the coasts of Africa and exchanged English produce for what was offered by the Africans. Besides gold dust, ivory, &c. there were offered *prisoners taken in war—criminals*—such negroes as the mode of African government had judged *to be sacrificed to their laws.*

Whether their laws were human or inhuman I will not now take upon me to say. If they were inhuman and such as we in a more civilised state ought to have been shocked at—or ought to have renounced—we then have taken a very long space of time for ripening our humanity. Our humanity was either long in planting or long in growing.—From the reign of Elizabeth to that of George the Third there has been one continued blight on its blossoms—some noxious pestilence has all along destroyed the delicious fruit—the tree has never yet borne that which was meet to be poured into the bitter cup of the African as a balm to his adversity and a sweet remembrancer to his future hope of happier days!

If during a space of 150 years our ancestors had recoiled at the *traffick of human flesh*, (be the motive founded in humanity or not)—how happened it that in the various wars in which this country has been since engaged, the policy
of

of it has been to extend our possessions in the *West-Indies*, knowing as it always did—that the more these possessions were extended, the greater would be the demand for those who *can alone cultivate them*.

During the *arbitrary reigns* of the *Stuarts*, shoals of emigrants left this land of discontent; and if *European labourers* had chosen to cultivate in the sugar islands—to take the hoe out of the hands of the negroes—they would some of them have settled *on them* when the whole went for *America*.

Or if the idea had been practicable and choice for preferable labour had been out of the question, *Government* might have consigned those transports to the *West-Indies* it sent to *America*:—those transports which have added to the population of a country—which have since successfully rebelled and triumphantly shook off subjection to the posterity of their *judges* who sent them into exile.

In our wars that proclaimed our conquests—and not such as our last—in the war that was concluded just after the accession of *George the Third*—when we possessed the vast continent of *America*—when we were nearly one hundred millions less in debt—when *necessity* was not *choice* and the world was all before us where to chuse—how happened it that even then no suggestion of the *Slave Trade* being founded

in

in inhumanity occupied a corner in the hearts of *Englishmen*?

Goree and *Senegal* became ours in that war. Proofs could have then found their way to the Commons of England without an appeal to a *Liverpool Captain*, a *Swedish Botanist*, or an *African Governor*. The whole of a British fleet with a *Keppel* their commander, rode *there* triumphant. For so valuable a conquest, the streamers were spread to the winds—and the voice of misery—the cries of murder—or the tale of kidnapping, would never have assailed his *ears* without a ready reparation from his *heart*.

Was there any word like inhumanity to be read in that *Gazette* which announced the glory of taking *Goree*? If there were, the operation of it upon the minds of *Englishmen* *then* was most strangely reverse to what it would be *now*—For the *canons* from the *Tower*—*bonfires* and *illuminations* proved it to be a conquest of great importance—glorious as a victory—advantageous as a settlement—and reflecting additional wealth to *Great Britain* by extending the cultivation of sugar in the *West-Indies*.

Liverpool nor *Bristol* has any thing to answer for by having carried on an *African* commerce. The situation of both was the most favourable for the commerce. The merchants there find their justification in having obeyed acts of parliament.

liament. If the *African Slave Trade* be criminal, it is notwithstanding an *act* of Government—and Government is now *judge, criminal,* and *accuser*. The crimes, if any have been perpetrated in procuring *slaves* from the coast of *Africa*, are all the result of acts of parliament.

There was a time when a reformation; for the sake of *humanity*, would have come before the publick with a better grace—when that which cannot be now an act of necessity, was once an act of choice—when England was less taxed and the national debt not swollen to such an enormity—when the consequences of the abolition would not have excited another concern lest for the decrease of two million of annual revenue arising from the *West-Indies*, an increase could not be devised by any means upon the property of *this country* to supply the deficiency.

Burthened as this country now is—hemmed in by taxes on every way we turn—reminded in every intercourse of the national load by imposts of every sort—incapable of reading, looking, tasting, riding, paying, or receiving, without taxation—is this a time for listening to the conditions of *others*, or even to be harrassed afresh with reflexions on our *own*?

Are individuals the richer because enough can be barely extracted from them for keeping a clear annual score with the national debt?

Are

Are they in a temper for having their passions disturbed from a peaceful attention towards industry by twopenny pamphlets circulated from house to house—dressed up with a partial intention of stirring up the feelings by passages selected for the purpose?

If the traffick be inhuman and if the publick at large are to be appealed to—let the whole of the truth be seen by them and let them not *be tricked out of their humanity by inflammatory extracts.*

Let the four numbers which are entitled “*Abridgements on the Minutes of the Evidence*” taken before a Committee of the whole House of Commons, to whom it was referred to consider of the *Slave Trade* in the years 1789, 1790, and 1791,” be circulated with that *same* industry that the most inflammable passages selected out of them have been—let the appeal be made to the *reason* of Englishmen and not to the *passion*.

And let them then, in addition to what they will find in the *Abridgements of Evidence*, be told of the cause which *first* established the *trade in Africa*—that such negroes which were received on board English vessels would have been *sacrificed* to the laws of their country if not thus redeemed and rescued by commerce—and let them be told that it was that conside-

ration which first inspired that principle of commerce there.

If from the beginning abuses have crept in—if the first principle be somewhat changed—if the *African chiefs* do now contrive means for increasing the *African captives*, through the temptation of barter—if that which was the effect of humanity be now the cause in some measure of *slavery*—if the baneful influence of *intoxicating spirits* has perverted the natural course of *African justice*, by which more negroes are driven into captivity than have forfeited otherwise their freedom and their lives—*If this be the case*, does it follow from hence that there are no other negroes put on board than what are procured by the *criminality* of *their chiefs*—that the original cause has totally ceased—and that if the influence of *intoxication* were withdrawn, there would now be found *no* negroes who had forfeited their lives to the *justice* of their country and who would be put to death if not *rescued* and *preserved* by European commerce?

I could be brought to believe that the case may be so in an *Arcadian paradise*, if that was realised which fancy has only suggested, but I know not that country in the four quarters of the globe which does not punish criminals without assigning the cause to the *intoxication* of *judges*.

If

If the truth of the case could possibly be, that the temptation of *spirituous liquors* supported solely the *African Slave Trade*—if this were positively the fact, and the whole of the African question turns upon it—if negroes cannot be received on board British ships without inhuman temptation on the part of *Britons*, and if that were the sole cause of their being *driven* into captivity and *sold* into bondage—*then ought such a traffick no longer to exist*. If this were positively the case, any future establishment of a subsequent fact—that the negroes on their arrival in the *West-Indies* are much better provided with every means of human happiness, than they could have found in their *native* soil, in my opinion would be unworthily contended for; their being *kidnapped* away and *robbed* of their freedom—as the *English soldiers* are also said to be to the *East-Indies*—and not having *forfeited* their freedom, will admit of no palliation—not even that of state *necessity*.

But this has not been proved to be the principal cause of the African slavery—*Witchcraft, Gaming, Thieving, Adultery, and War*, were the original causes, and by the uniform evidence of English witnesses who best understand the laws and customs of *Africans*, proofs are brought home to our conviction that these same causes do exist at the *present* time. This fact the following extracts will confirm beyond a doubt.

“ If

“ *If prisoners cannot ransom themselves—
 “ must be sold—they have a power over pri-
 “ soners of war in the act of capture—that but
 “ for slavery the laws would be more fan-
 “ guinary—that during war slaves were cheapest.

“ Trials for witchcraft generally in the night :
 “ but from generally seeing all satisfied, except
 “ the culprits, concludes the trials fair—Princi-
 “ pals in witchcraft are sacrificed—the rest sold
 “ to slavery. Commonly the whole family
 “ suffer slavery, but with some exceptions.”

“ † Convicts are generally confined till sold.
 “ He who receives a slave, in exchange for a
 “ convict, may use him as he pleases : he may
 “ sell him to the Europeans. Convicts for
 “ witchcraft are generally put to death as vic-
 “ tims, immediately after the sentence. Trials
 “ for witchcraft being secret in the night, their
 “ situation can be known only from the sellers
 “ or the convicts, who not considering it dis-
 “ graceful, make no secret of what they were
 “ sold for.

“ There was a serious war between the *Fan-*
 “ *tees* and *Assantees*, the two most powerful
 “ nations we know of, shortly after his arrival,
 “ for a year or more. It was an inland war,
 “ caused by the *Assantees* wishing for part of
 “ the coast—thinks he can confidently say it
 “ was

* Barnes, N^o I. Abridgment of Evidence, &c. from page 1
 to page 9.

† Miles, N^o I. from page 9 to page 18.

“ was not caused or prolonged for making
 “ slaves—conceives that many were sold for
 “ theft—fewer for adultery—and the fewest for
 “ debt.

“ *Slavery is universal, the slaves very nume-
 “ rous sometimes. Bought by Europeans from
 “ the native keepers between those who bring
 “ them from inland and the ships—he appre-
 “ hends nine tenths of the slaves come from
 “ inland, the other one tenth from the small
 “ district on the beach—that they were made
 “ slaves for adultery, witchcraft, theft, and
 “ sometimes debt and prisoners of war. Trials
 “ are fair and open except those for witchcraft,
 “ which are secret. Other crimes are generally
 “ punished by slavery: but the principals in
 “ witchcraft are generally strangled and then
 “ burnt. The rest of the family are made
 “ slaves—never knew nor heard of kidnapping.

“ †When in the king's sloop, he often went
 “ into the country several days at a time and
 “ once crossed from *Senegal* to *Goree* by cross-
 “ ing in a ferry; always heard that on the coast
 “ of *Senegal* particularly slaves were made for
 “ crimes; but most of them came down the
 “ river from inland. Never heard of villages
 “ of that country being pillaged to procure
 “ slaves—certainly never heard of their being
 “ kid-

* Knox, N^o I. from page 19 to page 28.

† Mackintosh, N^o I. from page 28 to page 35.

“ kidnapped by the natives—has heard of their
 “ being kidnapped by the Europeans; but no
 “ man ever told him he saw it—never saw it
 “ happen. In 1778 he was there, a single ship,
 “ when the war had stopped the slave-trade and
 “ he wished to reduce the price: he reasoned
 “ with them about the folly of keeping it up,
 “ when there was likely to be no buyer; asked
 “ a chief what he would do with his slaves then?
 “ observing that he must let them go again
 “ (meaning prisoners of war), the chief re-
 “ plied—‘ *What them go again to come to kill me*
 “ *again?*’—in short he gave me to understand
 “ that they would put them to death.”

The evidences of the *whole* of the *first number*
 run in parallel with those which I have quoted,
 and the first number comprises more than *two*
thirds of the whole of the examinations of the
 Committee of the House of Commons upon *that*
part of the subject which refers to the *coasts* of
Africa.

To counteract these evidences, *Captain Wil-*
son, *Captain Hills*, *Mr. Wadstrom*, *Mr. How*, and
General Rooke, have given their evidence. Ex-
 tracts from their evidence upon this business
Mr. Wilberforce has quoted, and which in his
 speech have been circulated in *two penny pam-*
phlets, but none of those which I have *here*
 quoted.

As to the whole of the evidence of *Mr. Clark-*
son—his is all hearsay—all at second hand—the
 result

result of a misunderstanding betwixt *himself* and *Mr. Norris*, who (as he says) gave him the information, and which is denied by *Mr. Norris*. His evidence, therefore, upon the subject can, in the fairness of justice, be only considered as that opinion which any other person might have formed who has never been there; provided also his enthusiasm, like *Mr. Clarkson's*, had subjugated his reason.

But neither *Captain Wilson*, *Captain Hills*, *Mr. Wadstrom*, *Mr. How*, or *General Rooke*, go so far as to contradict the general and principal causes of the Africans being sold to slavery, and as they are stated by the evidences which I have quoted. These causes, which existed in the beginning, exist now and perhaps ever will—whether the English interfere or not.

These witnesses only assert that the *African slavery* is increased by the temptation of barter, and I am not disposed to disbelieve them, for I wish to follow the truth as far as I can trace it—that kidnapping is dreaded and detested, and even punished when detected. Now if that be the case—the very circumstance proves the practice not to be general, and that it is not associated with the common and principal causes of *slavery* there. It appears that a single negroe can by arming himself guard against the practice. I will put this question to those who have read the whole of the evidence upon

the *African slavery*—Whether in their consciences they do not know that if the European ships from every power trading there were withdrawn—the prisoners taken in war—the adulterers—the thieves and the debtors, would not be put to death? I am of opinion that they would—and the House of Commons, by their last vote upon the question, confirms to me that a large majority of rational men will always think so, and know so too.

The testimonies which I have quoted and the remaining evidences of others similar to them are not the *inventions* of the *present day*, but are corresponding with and confirming that original motive of *humanity* which first encouraged Englishmen to embark in the trade—to save the lives of those wretches who would be otherwise devoted victims to the barbarous laws of their native country—to rescue such by barter from certain death, and to place them where their lives thus forfeited may be yet preserved and made useful under the protection of masters practised by education and natural propensity in acts of *humanity*.

The *captains* of *trading vessels* are much more competent witnesses for clearing up that point which is only necessary to be ascertained because it will alone decide—*whether the trade be an act of humanity or the very contrary*.

For

For if the *Africans* would be put to death if not taken away, it is an act of humanity to receive them. But if they are made slaves purely because of the temptation which is offered of selling them to the *European traders*, it is then an act of inhumanity which ought not ever to be repeated.

The *trading captains* have without hesitation or one single contradiction proved the former and the opposite evidence does not go so far as to deny it. The *trading captains* visit and re-visit the coast; the opposite witnesses have once touched upon it and never returned. The *trading captains* are not the merchants who receive the profits of the voyage: they conduct those ships as they would ships to other destinations and are no more to be discredited in their relations upon this point than others would be upon what passed in the *East* or *West-Indies*—in *New Zealand* or in *Greenland*.

The opposite witnesses in their evidence do not contradict the fact that the African slaves would be put to death if not taken away; but they assert that some are made slaves because there is a market for the sale of them—that some have been kidnapped from a predilection for their persons—and moreover, that the baneful effects of intoxicating spirits, experienced long by the *English*, have found their way to *Africans* and increased their savage barbarities beyond that

degree they would otherwise have extended. Their evidences do not contradict the present existence of the first natural cause, but they furnish an undoubted proof of the pernicious *effects of spirituous liquors*:—that whether the practice be indulged by a *barbarian* or a *christian* it extinguishes every spark of humanity in the heart.

Having stated thus much, I shall proceed to the examination of Mr. Wilberforce's *speech*, which is founded, as all our knowledge upon this question must be, upon *the evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons*, but it does not explain to any extent the *original nature of the Slave Trade*, nor prove from the evidence before him that which was most devoutly wished to be investigated.

There was an obvious reason for this, and I trust I shall be able clearly to demonstrate it.

Had the whole of the truth been laid open and made known, men would have been no longer doubtful upon the question; and if the *first cause* of our trading there had been proved to be *still existing*, Mr. Wilberforce was not so weak in understanding as not to be convinced in his own mind that it *positively has humanity for its basis*.

Mr. W. sets out with the following promise of future sincerity—“ that he wished to discuss
 “ the subject frankly indeed but with fairness
 “ and moderation. He trusted that the debate,
 “ instead

“ instead of exciting asperity and confirming
 “ prejudice, would tend to produce a general
 “ conviction of the truth of what in fact was
 “ incontrovertible—That the abolition of the
 “ Slave Trade was indispensably required of
 “ them, not only by religion and morality, but
 “ by every principle of sound policy.”

It might have been presumed that Mr. Wilberforce from this declaration had been disposed to have evinced in his *speech* that open integrity which he first avowed, and to have commanded a decisive tribute to *truth* and *justice* by the concurrence of the House of Commons with his *plain* and *open* opinion of the *African Slave Trade* in its present state.

But that part of his speech was so narrowed and contracted—so little calculated to illustrate the truth—that it only tended to conceal and obscure it. The truth and the whole of the truth would not have answered his purpose. He most certainly cannot be supposed to be ignorant of the question—whether without these temptations which he has stated being put into practice there were besides *a great majority of slaves* whom it would be *humanity* to receive on board. I think he has clearly proved that he was aware of the consequences of it upon the minds of the house, and therefore with all his professed candour purposely avoided the investigation.

An upright judge cloathed in the ermine of
 justice

justice would have dwelt upon the relative importance of every evidence and scrupulously weighed the whole of the examinations. He would have attached the greatest confidence on those that appeared to be the most uniform and explicit in their evidence—to those who were the most competent to give it in the most ample manner for the purpose of a thorough information. But all such Mr. Wilberforce has cast into the back ground—he has artfully turned *exceptions* into general rules and *general rules* into exceptions: he has degraded the evidence of those who were uniform in giving a full information upon the desired question and whose information tended to prove—*that what had, when formerly done, been humanity, was, so done, now humanity.*

He has brought forward detached passages selected from the evidence of visitors upon the coast, who knew nothing of the general cause of their being *slaves* and being *sold*, and whose information at the most could extend no farther than every *traveller* will superficially acquire in every country he goes to.

If in England a serjeant wants to decoy a young man, he will first make him drunk—if in England a ship's crew be wanted, the captain will be armed with the power of press warrants. If a *foreigner* saw these practices, he might upon an examination prove them, but does it follow
from

from hence that every foldier and failor are thus kidnapped?

Without being reduced to the neceffity of urging fuch weak argument—without affigning fuch *remote* caufes for the production of *flaves*—caufes more *proximate* and natural will readily occur to thofe who *aim* to inform themfelves of the truth. And if caufes fimilar prevail in *christian* countries, where the paffions are difciplined by *religion* as well as *law*, there will be lefs difficulty in fupposing more natural caufes for the forfeiture of freedom and life amongst a *savage race of barbarians*.

If *Britain* configns *her felons* to *flavery* whom fhe fpare from the gallows—if prifoners taken in war be *retained* for *ransom*, *support*, or *reciprocal exchange*—if *adulterers* would be imprifoned for ever if they could *not* pay the fine—if fuch abide the punifhment of *our laws*—the *Africans* only do the fame in a *runder form*. They have no *flipping* to entertain their outcafts, and no power to command a *fltlement* far beyond the confines of their coafts:—they therefore *would* deftroy them if not tempted to mercy by the alternative of *barter*.

Do the evidences recited by Mr. Wilberforce contradict thefe facts, or does Mr. Wilberforce ftate them?—certainly neither. He knew too well that fuch were not calculated to catch the *greedy ears of thofe who devour up his difcourfe*—

not calculated for the *methodist preachers*—for the false ideas of humanity in a *Sharpe* or a *Clarkson*—nor for rousing the attention of sleeping philosophy in its elbow chair at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*.

I shall conclude this part of the subject very different from the manner of Mr. Wilberforce, who, after he has selected the inflammatory scraps—expatiated upon them—and turned the only substantial evidence into insignificance—assumes a tone of horror to cover the unfairness of his own arrangement.

I entreat *fellow citizens* to consider the whole of the evidence upon the *African Slave Trade*—then to examine their own hearts after they have acquired the necessary information—whether it would not be an *act of humanity* to receive on board our ships those devoted to death instead of abandoning them to their fate—and to be persuaded before they yield, that as this was the indisputable principle which *first* prompted the Legislature to adopt the trade, so should it not be discontinued without a thorough conviction that when it ceases *the cause of humanity is served*.

No one will be so hardy as to say that we should renounce that which *humanity* charges us to continue, because unfounded suspicion has stirred up an alarm:—it is a very strong reason why we should aim to make a more nice distinction

distinction by thoroughly informing the understanding.

We are not responsible for the passions and the vices of Africans—we are only responsible for *our own* conduct. If we anchor on their coasts and offer no direct or indirect temptations—*if slaves* are brought for us to receive on board, which would otherwise be *put to death*—we are acting yet *in the cause of humanity*.

I have not availed myself of that argument which I have often heard from the tongues of others—that if we abandon the *African trade* it will still be continued by the *French*, the *Dutch*, the *Spaniards*, and the *Danes*. It is not that sort of argument which will operate in my breast for the cause of humanity.

If I thought this cause a bad one, I should not wait for an example from others to teach me to desert it—and when I did desert it—it should be alone from the *conviction of reason*.

From the moment of time that the *African slaves* are received on board an English vessel and which *slaves* have not been decoyed by any act of the English on board—from that moment of time, I look upon it, that the responsibility of this country in behalf of the captives commences; and at the moment of time that these captives are *delivered over* to the *planters* in the *West-India islands*, then and not till then, *their* responsibility commences.

I consider the cause of the trade as directly originating with this country—it being carried on by the merchants—the shipping—the sailors of England—and under the sanction of English laws. It is our part therefore to regulate what is termed the *Middle Passage*. It is for our House of Commons to judge of their own acts—to provide ships that are fitting, and captains that are humane. In all transactions confidence must have a necessary share; and I see no reason why the humanity of an English Captain, because he commands a ship bound to the *African coast*, should be suspected or marked with particular obloquy.

I therefore shall not pursue Mr. Wilberforce's speech through the Middle Passage—but on his *arrival* at the *West-Indies* I shall meet him *there*; where I presume I shall be capable of judging upon the subject at least as well as he—of speaking upon it not as an *ear witness* but an *eye witness*.

At any rate I will not conceal the truth to promote a weak cause—I will not be suspected of *hypocrisy* by selecting only such evidence as tends to serve the purpose of *enthusiasm*, but not the cause of *reason* and *truth*—my comments shall be formed by their standard alone. If I promise much, be it remembered that Mr. Wilberforce promised more.

*On the Condition of Slaves in the West-India
Islands.*

AS the principal topick which urged the Debates in the House of Commons for *two* successive days in April 1791 was on a motion for the *abolition of the Slave Trade*, he who for information adverted to it would have been led to suppose that such an important question would have been debated in a manner *so open*—that the true nature of the origin and continuance of that trade would have been plainly ascertained—that the light of truth let in upon it would have been as broad as that from the shining sun at noon day.

But I appeal to any man who has read these Debates, and who has not read the *Examinations* upon which they ought to have been founded, whether he can from them alone, draw this plain inference—*that the Slave Trade ought upon principle in humanity to be abolished.*

I will answer for it that *every part* of Mr. Wilberforce's *speech* was printed with the most anxious sedulity, and that what his art did not instruct him to conceal, the pens of *enthusiasts* did not hesitate to set down—and I am certain

that conviction upon principle is not to be found there.

No speaker on that side of the question—and that side by far embraced the most powerful—dwelt with any energy or with any pretence of convincing the understanding, on the *necessity* in *humanity* for the *abolition of the Slave Trade*: and this was the reason—*because from the whole of the argument upon the whole of the evidence, the trade would have been proved to be founded in humanity.*

The House of Commons in order to have come to a right understanding ought to have made the *African Question* a *distinct* one from that of the Middle Passage, and the conditions of negroes in the West-India islands; and then it would have appeared evident to reason that in their proceedings they were carrying along with them truth for their justification: for in my opinion the ascertaining beyond a doubt whether it be an *act of humanity or not* to continue on the *African Slave Trade*, forms the keystone of the whole of the question.

For if the House of Commons were ever to resolve that English vessels shall no longer import into English colonies *slaves* of other nations—and if that resolution be founded, upon the abstract principle, that the *hearts of British Senators revolt at the idea of slavery*, it will be exacted from them that their conduct be uniform—

form—and then it will be apparent that they cannot resolve upon such a principle in *Africa* and negative it in the *West-India islands*.

If freedom be the universal theme—if that be the object—if they will not receive the *Africans* into *slavery* whom they *have not* in their power—they must, to be uniform, restore to freedom the *slaves* that they *have* in their power.

But this sort of argument is not suited to the *trimming* or *accommodating* humanity of Mr. Wilberforce, nor is it found congenial to those who have addressed upon the subject or preached upon it at *methodist meetings*. They do not come prepared in their arguments to pay the price for universal freedom—*first* to purchase the liberty of the negroes in the West-Indies, and *then* to find a resource among themselves for supplying two millions of annual deficiency in the revenue. No, say they—*abolish* the importation of *slaves*, and *regulate those* imported. Let the latter still be *slaves*—There is a thing called “*State necessity*” that controuls the liberal suffusions of their hearts, and that tells them, that so far they shall go and no farther.

Even *he* who has been long accustomed to lead and not to follow, because *he* possesses the soundest understanding and the warmest heart—even *Mr. Fox* has been obliged to limit his natural outlines of freedom in order to entertain
that

that *accommodating* humanity of Mr. Wilberforce. The *eagle* has descended to the haunt of the *humming bird*.

For when Mr. Wilberforce, five years ago, first spoke of the *abolition of the Slave Trade*, it was then that *Mr. Fox* spoke out like a man who views every subject with an enlarged sight. “Let,” says he, “not only the *Slave Trade* be *abolished*, but let the *negroes in the West-Indies* be *free*.”—But these were only the sentiments of a great philanthropist in the abstract.—*Mr. Fox* at that moment had not annexed to them a country entangled by a national debt, and driven to the lowest means for raising a revenue. As soon as he did, *State necessity* moderated his ardor, and that natural idea of unbounded freedom has never since been reverberated within the walls of the *Senate*—not once during the *two* long days debate.

When I compare these high-sounding declarations for freedom in theory with that which from *State necessity* can only be in practice—when I reflect on the little power we have left for the exertion of humanity whilst thus oppressed by the present load of taxes—when I am told of the prosperity of this country, whilst the taxes which contribute to pay off the annual score are drawn in a great measure from the *promotion of vice*—I can then take upon me to say,

say, that whatever might be the *inclinations* of the hearts of Englishmen, they at this moment of time have no more freedom, humanity, or wealth than they themselves have a pressing occasion for.—The *Lilliputs* of *Gulliver* can do as much.

It is high time for us to be told that these generous sacrifices to freedom are now *beyond* our power—that there is an ample scope for more wealth and humanity than we possess in the contemplation of reform *at home*—that a melioration of the conditions of the lower class of people and a correction of their *vices* are expected from our nature, justice and humanity.

I will be bound for it that the *West-India planters* will discharge *their duty* towards *their poor* without being *insulted* into it by us. But if they stood in need of the inquisitorial eye of this country—it would be directed towards them upon an honest principle and with better effect, when we proved to them *by example*, what we now only exact *by precept*.

Is it not of some consideration for the *West-India planters* to know whether the *Slave Trade* is to be *abolished or not*? and do not the regulations of those under their protection depend in a great measure upon it? For more than five years they have been kept in suspense—have been unable to embark in new undertakings—to clear away fresh lands, or, from the *shock of credit,*

credit, to purchase such as have lately been offered for sale.

Ought not the question to have been dropped before now? or is it that question which is purposely designed for ever to attract the attention of the people of this country? left, whenever it be withdrawn—they will find themselves at leisure, and their minds will be abruptly occupied (as if they had never seen the *sight* before) with the hard conditions of their *own poor*.

After the witnesses were all examined—after the House of Commons was furnished with all the information that was deemed to be satisfactory—and after the long debate of *two* successive days, why was not the consequent Division the final agitation of the subject?

Were not four years an ample space of time for the investigation?—or did not the opponents of the *African Slave Trade* make the most of that long opportunity, and are now repairing that neglect by invigorating their system *afresh*?—by alarming the minds of the *credulous*—by circulating with *fresh* industry partial *inflammatory extracts* in *twopenny* pamphlets through all parts of the kingdom?

Is the imaginary cruelty of the *West-India planters* to be the theme of every *drinking club* and *psalm singing meeting*? and are *they* to submit to have their names branded with acts of barbarity for ever? But I trust that, in the
event,

event, men will not be thus cheated of their reason.—I trust that as the subject is to come again into the House of Commons, the *African Question* will be *more homely* investigated, and the intention which induced Mr. Wilberforce to keep back the truth will be *fully detected*—I trust that those who voted in support of the *African Trade* will take care that the publick shall fully understand it; and when they do, I have not much to fear from their justice.

Before I proceed to remark upon Mr. Wilberforce's speech, I wish to impress some facts upon the minds of my readers.—

That the *Abridgement* of the Minutes of the *Evidence* taken before a *Committee* of the whole House of Commons to whom it was referred to consider of the *Slave Trade* was printed in four numbers for the use of the Members *only*, and that they contain in the whole 650 pages in octavo.

These four numbers are filled up with the whole of that evidence upon which the Debate of *two* days, in *April 1791*, was supported; and when Mr. Wilberforce in his *speech* gave, *Extracts of Evidence*, he selected them out of one or other of these *four numbers*.

In that part of his *speech* which relates to the evidence on the conditions of negroes in the *West-India Islands*, he has studiously betrayed the same partiality by his choice of inflammatory

and passionate passages, that he did in his *brief* narrative of the transactions on the *African coast*— and he has throughout the whole of it evidently evinced, that if he was adequate to the task of treating the subject with reason and candour, he was neither disposed by temper or inclination to fulfil it.

But there is one point that I must not omit because it strongly confirms the truth of my argument and also the notoriety of Mr. Wilberforce's partiality.—It shews what a man will do—what lengths he will go—and what little credit ought to be given to that *reason* which is subjugated by the overbearing dominion of *prejudice*.

When Mr. Wilberforce was debating the Question of *African Slavery*, he quoted passages from the evidence of *visitors* to that coast, and affirmed that they ought to be credited in preference to the captains of the trading vessels. I, in answer to that, have said—that those who were the most conversant in the subject, are ever the most capable of passing a right opinion. If the *captains* had given the most favourable evidences for his purpose, he would have found it convenient to have reversed his argument, for he has done so in the subsequent part of his speech upon the condition of the *negroes in the West-India Islands*, and which I shall shortly prove.

I, for my part, do not lay any stress upon the evidence

evidence of *visitors* neither on the coasts of *Africa* nor in the *West-Indies*; I only make the remark as a comment upon Mr. Wilberforce's professions of justice, candour and humanity. *Visitors* are not competent evidence for the whole truth at either place, and they never meant to take upon them that ability. It is Mr. Wilberforce who has taken that liberty with their names for serving his own purpose in argument.

But the observations which I have already made will furnish my readers with a reason, why Mr. Wilberforce quoted the names of *visitors* as the *best* evidence on the *African coast* because it made for his cause, and why he omitted the evidence of *visitors* to the *West-Indies* because it made against his cause. Admirals *Skuldham*, *Barrington*, *Arbutnot*, *Edwards*, *Hotbam*, Captain *Lambert*, Commodore *Gardner*, Lord *Macartney*, Sir *John Dalling*, and Lord *Rodney*, all have given an unequivocal evidence of the humanity of the *West-India planters* towards their negroes. Of all these names Mr. Wilberforce has not dropped a *single tittle*. This was necessary to be known, because his *speech* is circulated every where, and the cruelties recorded in it are become as familiar to *children* as the story of *Blue Beard* or *Jack the Giant killer*.

I will take upon me to say, that I have, no more than the gentlemen above quoted, seen during three years practice of physick in the

West-

West-India islands any other treatment than that which humanity dictates. I will go further—that during my practice I never was called to give *surgical relief* to any negroe who had suffered from the severity of chastisement.

If I were disposed to feast with a rancorous rapture on the sordid catalogue of cruelties perpetrated in *England*, I would be bound to collect a blacker list in seven days, than could be found in all the *West-India islands* in as many years. The whole of their miseries may be detected almost at one view—one is not obliged to search for them in *jails*, and in *garrats*, in *houses of correction*, and upon *dunghills*. When the list is read over, after the gang is drawn out, those that are absent are readily to be resorted to. This is that Mr. Wilberforce who first sets out with bespeaking the disposition of the House of Commons to *candour*!

I will now select some passages from the most competent evidences on the *conditions* of *negroes* in the *West-India Islands*; but I do not select them for the purpose of exacting that my readers shall depend upon these alone for furnishing their reason with the true nature of the question—that can only be obtained by reading the *whole* of the evidence. *These quotations* will shew what the nature of that evidence is which Mr. Wilberforce has chosen to reject—they are given as *samples* of what are remaining behind.

My

My only motive is to assure my countrymen that whatever prejudices they have formed are owing to their having been grossly imposed upon—and that those who doubt will have their doubts removed, by examining the *four numbers* to which I have referred them—and it must not be forgotten, that it was by that reference alone, the House of Commons, in spite of Mr. Wilberforce's pitiable pleadings, saw the question in the light that they did, and voted *accordingly*.

Gilbert Franklyn, Esq. a native of England, resided in the West-Indies 21 years. He has deposed, “ That managers kind behaviour to his
 “ negroes, so as to gain their affections while he
 “ makes them do their business, is to him, and
 “ he believes to most people, a higher recom-
 “ mendation than his skill as a planter. One
 “ of the first things enquired into, is his cha-
 “ racter in that respect; no person would em-
 “ ploy a manager of a cruel character, believing
 “ him to be such. Such treatment is scarcely
 “ possible to be practised in secrecy.

“ He does not believe the poor in any country
 “ live happier than the negroes on plantations
 “ in the West-India Islands; in many cases
 “ they have an evident superiority: their la-
 “ bour is slight, good care is taken of them
 “ in sickness and in health, and they have no
 “ occasion to fear the distresses of their chil-
 “ dren from inability to labour. He thinks
 “ their

“ their lot in general is to be envied by the
 “ poor of all countries he has seen.

“ Negroes generally conceal their money,
 “ and do not chuse to be thought rich. He
 “ had himself a negroe who bought out the
 “ freedom of his wife at the price of 80l. and
 “ possessed two houses. He believes he was
 “ worth 6 or 700l.—he asked for his freedom,
 “ and obtained it from the witness, who en-
 “ deavoured to dissuade him from the request.
 “ There is reason to believe he has since lost
 “ one third of what he was worth. Many of
 “ the negroes possess a great deal of property.”

His evidence extends from page 28 to page 41
 in No. II. of the Abridgment of Evidence, &c.

Sir Ashton Warner Byam, his Majesty's At-
 torney General for Grenada, lived on various
 islands from 1765 to 1789—owns no land, but
 an uncleared tract, and never intends to settle;
 he has deposed, “ That in Grenada a slave is tria-
 “ ble before one magistrate for small offences;
 “ for capital crimes before two or more, one
 “ being of the quorum. Since he left the island
 “ he understands a law has passed, taken from
 “ the Antigua practice, by which three or more
 “ freeholders are to be called in by the magis-
 “ trates as jurors or assessors. Compared with
 “ the punishments in England on the same
 “ offences, he thinks the criminal laws far from
 “ severe—whipping and confinement are the
 “ only

“ only punishments by the master or manager,
“ which are considered as legal. The quantity
“ of punishment will undoubtedly vary with
“ the master’s disposition; but any abuse of the
“ master’s power was always considered pu-
“ nishable by indictment or information. If
“ such abuse was frequent, he never knew it;
“ and considering the nature of the master’s
“ power, and the variety of the persons who
“ may acquire it, he has always thought abuses
“ of it not more frequent than similar abuses of
“ power in England. In general thinks the
“ West-India laws sufficient to protect slaves in
“ life and limb.

“ When he was Solicitor General in 1775 or
“ 1776, a white man was executed for the
“ murder of his slave. A slave’s comfort de-
“ pends as much on his master’s temper, as
“ that of the English apprentice does on his
“ master’s; believes no one has doubted that a
“ criminal would suffer for the murder of a
“ slave exactly as for that of a free person.

“ On all estates slaves were at the field work
“ by day break, but nursing women had always
“ an hour or an hour and half beyond that time,
“ with half an hour at breakfast, and two hours
“ rest in their houses at noon; they wrought
“ till the close of the day; they then threw
“ grass to the stock, and went home for the
“ night. In crop they work later, and on some
“ estates

“ estates the work there goes on all night and
 “ day, by spells, both of white servants and
 “ slaves. It is universally remarked, that the
 “ negroes in crop are the most healthy and
 “ cheerful.

“ By the late Grenada act, planters are
 “ obliged to allot land to their slaves, and
 “ *guardians* are appointed to inspect each
 “ estate’s provision ground.

“ Saturday afternoon out of crop, and all
 “ Sunday the whole year, were very generally
 “ allowed for working such grounds; and he
 “ thinks the said act has fixed it from twelve
 “ o’clock on Saturday. This time is sufficient
 “ not only for raising the necessary food, but
 “ also for the slave’s carrying to market his sur-
 “ plus provisions and his poultry, &c.

“ Negroes have usually surplus produce, ex-
 “ cept perhaps a very few idle ones, probably
 “ in all gangs. He has known many slaves buy
 “ their freedom. Believes the king’s ships,
 “ and merchantmen, are chiefly supplied with
 “ vegetables, poultry, &c. by negroes on their
 “ own account.

“ Every estate has an hospital. A surgeon
 “ visits the slaves twice a week, or oftener if
 “ required. One or more nurses attend the
 “ sick. The owner provides wine and other
 “ comforts recommended by the surgeon.”

As far as my memory is impressed with transactions in the West-Indies so remote as 20 years ago, I can take upon me to say, that every extract out of the evidence of the above witness, is an interruption of that general purity and accordance, which pervade every part of it. It conveys in the most concise manner every circumstance that tends to shew the general state of the negroes, and of the laws in the West-India islands. It is delivered with candour and moderation, and moreover with the strictest regard to the cause of truth and humanity. His evidence follows that of Mr. *Franklyn's* and extends from page 41 to 54 in No. II.

Alexander Campbell, Esq. resided in the West-Indies from 1754 to 1788. He gives an accurate evidence of the whole of the duties of a planter, of the business of planters, of the conditions of the negroes, and of the nature of the climate and the produce. His evidence extends from page 55 to page 74 in No. II.

“ The Grenada Legislature passed a law for
 “ inspecting negroe grounds, in 1766, and
 “ another in 1788. Negroes may raise poul-
 “ try and hogs, and sell them for the best price
 “ they can get—they are forced to labour at
 “ their own ground.

“ They raise, for their own use, or for sale in
 “ Grenada and the ceded islands, plantanes and

“ fig-bananas, cassada, yams, &c. and also
 “ cabbages, shallots, &c. likewise pine apples,
 “ water melons, &c. Every one of these the
 “ negroes have in their grounds at some time
 “ or other of the year.

“ New negroes are cloathed and placed with
 “ the chief negroes, and regularly fed thrice a
 “ day, for a year or more, till they have enough
 “ food on their grounds. They generally are
 “ allowed to sell the first provision they raise to
 “ attach them to the estate and encourage them.
 “ Property they can call their own makes them
 “ happy, and gives them a better idea of their
 “ state. Masters very often give them poul-
 “ try, and encourage them to rear them.

“ In general, the negroes sell provisions,
 “ poultry, and hogs. A slave who makes pro-
 “ per use of his time may sell produce to the
 “ value of from 7l. to 15l. sterling yearly.
 “ Some industrious negroes, who have good
 “ land, often sell from 30l. to 40l. sterling.
 “ Slaves with children have a greater propor-
 “ tion of land than single slaves, and he believes
 “ in the ceded islands half the current specie is
 “ the property of the negroes.

“ Knows no where a greater proportion of
 “ able experienced medical men than in the
 “ West-Indies. There are about forty in Gre-
 “ nada, where they are allowed 7s 6d currency
 “ for each slave young and old, and paid be-
 “ fides

“ sides for fractures and operations, and 20s
“ currency per head for inoculation.

“ Plantation punishment is not so severe as
“ fifty lashes given to a soldier, and is soon
“ cured. Great crimes are often forgiven to
“ negroes who have not been punished before,
“ because, after several floggings, they consider
“ it as little punishment. Good negroes feel
“ the disgrace more than the whipping. In ten
“ years, ending 1788, he saw no beggars or mi-
“ serable objects except at Barbadoes, where he
“ saw many whites of that description, some
“ serving free negroes and slaves, who pay a
“ weekly sum to their masters.

“ All the new negroes he bought seemed to
“ be in a savage state. Those of the gold coast
“ appeared more tractable and industrious. They
“ generally shewed themselves off to be bought,
“ and when examined seemed disappointed if
“ refused. On seeing their countrymen on the
“ estates, cloathed and comfortable, they seemed
“ very happy. He knows not that he ever saw
“ one otherwise. He has often asked some of
“ his slaves, if they wished to return to Africa,
“ and their universal answer was, ‘ no master,
“ me know better.’ They wish not to be thought
“ Africans, and with them ‘ salt water negree’
“ and ‘ savage’ have the same meaning.

“ Thinks, if the sexes were equalised by buy-
“ ing

“ ing more women, it would still be impossible
 “ for the slaves to be kept up by breeding.

“ He never knew but one man in Grenada,
 “ who was said to use his slaves more severe
 “ than common, but what his property was
 “ ruined. Thinks slaves are treated much bet-
 “ ter than when he first knew the West-Indies.

“ Domeftick and field slaves are generally
 “ healthy; if any thing the former die faster
 “ than the latter, owing probably to their ram-
 “ bling more at nights, especially the young
 “ men.

“ In all the English and French islands, he
 “ knows free negroes and Mulattoes are confi-
 “ dered as a nuisance, as they never cultivate
 “ lands themselves, and the women huxter pro-
 “ visions, sell rum, and receive stolen goods,
 “ corrupting the slaves morals.

“ In Grenada, all the Creoles and most new
 “ negroes are Christians, being generally chris-
 “ tened two or three years after their arrival.
 “ They often read the service over the dead.
 “ They often attend the churches, English and
 “ Catholick. The clergy by law must christen
 “ them gratis, and certain times yearly visit and
 “ instruct them. Believes the negroes in the
 “ other ceded islands are equally religious,
 “ though there is no such law.

“ Negroes are naturally fond of gay dress, and
 “ though allowed sufficient working day cloaths
 “ they

“ they buy fine cloaths for Sundays. It is
“ very common in Grenada and the ceded
“ islands to see field negroes in white dimity
“ jackets and breeches and fine Holland shirts;
“ and the women in muslins, and four or five India
“ muslin handkerchiefs on their heads at eight
“ or ten shillings each. He has often seen
“ slaves give feasts to 100 or 200 other slaves,
“ with every rarity of the island and wines,
“ which he could not have given for 60l. ster-
“ ling, and they very often borrow their master’s
“ plate and linen to entertain their friends.
“ These feasts are very frequent amongst the
“ slaves. When large hogs are killed by the
“ plantation negroes, they are commonly sold
“ to the rest in small quantities.

“ In Grenada the negroes go to their ground
“ at 9 o’clock on Sunday morning and return
“ about 12. They then dress, and dance or
“ walk till about 7 o’clock, when they assemble
“ to prayers which they never neglect. After
“ prayers they pass the rest of the evening in
“ their houses.”

James Baillie Esq. resident in the West-Indies
about 16 years. His evidence extends from
page 74 to page 80 in No. II.

“ Would not have purchased had he concei-
“ ved Great Britain would have prohibited the
“ importation of African negroes.

“ Punish-

“ Punishments not severe when compared
 “ with the discipline of the army and navy.

“ Greatest attention is used to prevent the
 “ separation of slaves connected either by rela-
 “ tionship or friendship. Never knew slaves
 “ express a desire to return home. Slaves in
 “ Grenada are generally Christians in a state of
 “ comfort and happiness.

“ Recollects negroe freemen marrying slaves,
 “ though they know the children of such mar-
 “ riages will be born slaves.

“ Introduction of new slaves cannot be pre-
 “ vented by any regulation of this country.

“ Plough cannot be used.

“ Lands cannot be cultivated by Europeans.

“ Never was in Africa and therefore cannot
 “ say whether the negroes imported from Africa
 “ are taken from a more happy state to be
 “ placed in a worse; but believes, from infor-
 “ mation, that they are more comfortable in the
 “ West-Indies than in their own country.

“ Provisions in the island are of quick growth.”

Mr. Robert Thomas resided about 9 years in
 St. Kitts and Nevis, as a Surgeon, and atten-
 ded between 4000 and 5000 negroes annually
 His evidence extends from page 85 to page 91
 in No. II.

“ Had every opportunity of observing how
 “ negroes were treated, worked, fed, lodged,
 “ and clothed.

“ Has

“ Has positive evidencethat the slaves in the
“ West-Indies, have a decided superiority, as
“ to every comfort of life, over the common
“ labourers and poor people of Ireland and
“ Scotland; by being regularly supplied with
“ every necessary of life, cloathing, food, com-
“ fortable house, protection in health, the best
“ advice in sickness, and on their decease, hav-
“ ing a father and protector for their children.”

James Tobin, Esq. has lived ten or twelve years in the West-Indies at different times, chiefly in Nevis. Has often been at St. Kitts. His evidence extends from page 92 to page 104 in No. II.

“ On all estates there are regular sick nurses,
“ and generally a surgeon employed by the
“ year.

“ Sick slaves have sago, portable soup, wine,
“ fresh meat, &c. Poultry and mutton are
“ often killed to make them broth. He knew
“ a convalescent negroe slave have 16 lambs,
“ each worth two dollars, killed for his use.

“ Lame, incurably diseased, and aged ne-
“ groes, have the same food, cloathing, and
“ accommodation, as if perfectly serviceable.
“ He is warranted to say, that the punishments
“ of slaves are mild, compared to those of Bri-
“ tish sailors and soldiers.

“ Has great reason to think that the agitation
“ of the question for abolishing the Slave Trade

“ has

“ has had effects on the West-India credit very
 “ baneful and extensive.

“ Has found it easy to persuade some negroes
 “ to adopt such alterations in managing their
 “ affairs as might tend to their advantage; but
 “ in general, they are obstinately wedded to
 “ their own customs.

“ A sum sufficient to buy a field negro’s
 “ freedom, would not be a considerable pro-
 “ perty in Nevis, if he chose to save the money
 “ he could earn instead of spending it in fineries
 “ for himself and his wives, and other super-
 “ fluities.

“ His property depends chiefly on the quan-
 “ tity *and stock of poultry he may raise.*”

It might be observed, by a reference to the pages, that I have selected the quotations from every succeeding witnesses—that I have not turned to the right or the left from one number to another for them, but have gone on in the strait line—in such a one as he who is *desirous* to explain the *truth* will ever pursue.

Almost the *whole* of the evidence in the *four numbers* are tending to confirm this fact—that in no country *the poor* are so comfortable as the *negroes* in the *West-India islands*. This is the general tenor of the evidence; and whatever deviation is found, must be considered by rational men in its true sense, as an *exception* to a *general rule*.

If I were to assert in evidence, because the streets in *London* swarm with *beggars* and the *tongues* of the intoxicated vulgar utter *blasphemy*—because *thousands* are imprisoned and *thousands* starve—because refractory workmen who combine are dragged away to a *prison*, handcuffed, and guarded by the military, and their families left to shift for themselves—ought it to be inferred from these facts, that there is no provision for the *poor*—no virtue—no religion—no freedom in *England*?

I am proud to say, for the cause of humanity and justice, that the truth of the treatment of *negroes* and *their children* is uniform with such evidence as I have quoted, and not with that which is selected from the *speech* of Mr. Wilberforce—and I am as much convinced as I ever was of any one event yet in the womb of time, that the more this question be investigated the sooner the design of Mr Wilberforce will be detected and reviled.

He has attempted to impose in his *speech* upon human understanding, and to mislead the humanity of the country. Of every virtuous act of the *West-Indian* his tongue is palsied in the praise.

The time will come, and I trust it will not be long first, when the *West-India planter* will be seen in that amiable view which he merits for his humanity—*that humanity* which he has

the amplest field for displaying—and when the *condition* of the families under his protection will be the envy and not the pity of the miserably poor, and fettered prisoners of this country.

The West-Indian has the power of humanity in the fullest extent; and it flows from him in that channel which our *first nature* ordained. It blesses him who bestows it—for the kinder he is to his negroes, the more he is enriched. It is to him like an inexhaustable fountain upon the summit of a hill supplied by the dews from heaven to water the vallies below—it is the oil in the widow's cruise that never will be dry—whereas the humanity of those in this country who feel for the misrepresented *condition* of negroes can never be true—it can never extend to more than *false pity*. The *enthusiasts* have no more to give to the comfort of negroes than their *enthusiasm*—than their *pity*—which they mistake for *humanity*.

I will present the enthusiast with a distinction betwixt his *pity* and the *humanity* of the *West-Indian*—by the statement of a fair allusion: if I saw a person dying, and who was agonised by pain, and the nature of whose case was such that my art could not remedy, all that I had to bestow upon him would be the sigh of *pity*: if I saw another person agonised by pain, and the nature of whose case was by my art curable, my *humanity* would be called upon, and by the judicious administration of it, I should prove that I had
not

not the less remaining by having bestowed all that was necessary. Where the power of *humanity* ceases, *pity* commences. *Humanity* implies the power of doing good, *pity* implies the desire without the power. If a man of *humanity* sees a beggar that he thinks is an object for *humanity*, he bestows him the boon. If one beggar meets another they can only exchange their *pity*. It is time for *Enthusiasts* to be told *what is their power*.

The active perseverance of Mr Wilberforce, in his pursuit of this subject, and in his keeping the investigation alive in order to procure new information, and thereby to infuse additional conviction into the minds of the House of Commons, is all an *idle pretence*.

He has ransacked already the country for characters suited to his cause, and who might truly say, like *Roderigo* in the *Play of Othello*—"I do follow in the chace, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. I think that the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so with no money and a little more wit, return again (*not to the West-Indies*) to Venice."

No one will hereafter say that this subject had not as solemn and deliberate an adjudication when it was brought to a decision in the House of Commons in *April 1791* as any subject that ever came before the *British Senate*; but Mr. Wilberforce

Wilberforce aims to persuade his followers in the chace that the motion was negatived—but the cause of humanity *not defeated*: he takes a *fresh* date from that day, which in fairness of things, and for the sake of peace, ought to have been the *final* day: and from *that* date he invigorates *anew*, and revives with fresh asperity the *dying* cause.

The minds of the credulous are to be fresh and fresh poisoned by printing his inflammatory quotations and by suppressing the evidence which is opposed to them. His *speech* has found its way every where—has brought forward *fresh associations, fresh petitions, fresh pamphlets*—has so operated upon the actions of weak men, that it is almost insanity to hope at 'converting them—whilst, in the mean while, the truth of the question, which led the House of Commons to *their* decision, is left out of these pamphlets—is sunk and become unprofitable.

Mr. Wilberforce, like *Fame* described in *Virgil*

Parva primo metu mox sese attollit in auras
Ingrediturque solo—

grown every day bolder and bolder, from a pigmie to a giant—and attended by an host, marches in *front* with a *drawn sabre* in one hand and his *flaming speech* in the other, determined to cry havock and let loose the dogs of war amongst the *negroes* against their *masters*, for deeds
of

of inhumanity falsely asserted and foully persisted in. But as he brings this subject forward again, he has judged right in being so speedy, lest the fountain be drained dry from whence he draws his support—lest those who have hitherto pinned their credulity on his sleeve, should have seen the light of reason, and discovered *that truth*, he has aimed to conceal and wilfully pervert. The more this cause be thoroughly searched, the less *support* he will meet in the House of Commons. A *second victory* there will be that of *truth* over *hypocrisy*.

Nevertheless, as *the Slave Trade to Africa* was originally an act of the *British* Senate, and as now the power of abolishing or continuing it is totally with *them*—as suspense has so long waited or a threatened appeal *again* to their justice—as Mr. Wilberforce is not to be rated in his conduct by the *ordinary standard* of reason—it becomes a defensive duty in the *West-India planters* to be alert in adopting the most effectual means of *increasing* the population of *negroes* in the *West-India islands*.

For without an additional supply, or increase of population, I am confident that all future fresh cultivations must be deferred. It will be as much as the *planters can* hope, and more perhaps than they ever *can* do, to cultivate what they have already undertaken.

That

That they have fallen upon many methods of *increasing* the population of negroes I am well aware; and I am also persuaded that no country abounds with men who possess more amply the means—who have more enlarged ideas of right and wrong—who have had more liberal educations—who have acquired more valuable knowledge—and who have warmer hearts, and more abounding with those generous qualities endowed to men in their *first nature*—than the *West-India planters*. There are also with them many *medical* men, who are ornaments to their profession. With such a combination of power and *inclination*, it would be almost a *solecism* to suppose, that every means *have* not and *will* not be attempted for promoting that increase of population among the negroes, so devoutly to be wished.

My opinion of the *state* of the *negroes* in the *West-Indies* exactly accords with those delivered by *Mr. Thomas*, whom I have quoted, and *Dr. Samuel Atbill*; they have refreshed my recollection with the truth of those *original* impressions left upon my mind when I left *the country* in 1769. I therefore shall spare a repetition of that which has been so *fairly* given in their testimonies. But as there are some points which I have reasoned with myself upon, and which have met with some *approbation* when I have communicated them to others—I shall beg to be indulged

dulged with making an offer of them to the attention of the *planters*.

It is now nearly 23 years since I was in the *West-Indies*. Long before that time, down to the present, there has not been the least disposition in the *negroes* to *resistance* and much less to *rebellion*. Whilst I was there, so *docile* were their tempers, so *pastoral* were their habits, that the *outer* doors of their *master's house* were never fastened during the *whole* of the *night*—and it must not be untold, that neither the *overseer* or any other *white* servant slept under the same roof with the master. What the practice might now be, *since* Mr. Wilberforce is beating the *drum* of *sedition* in their ears, I will not take upon me to say; but this I know, that if the effect *operates* naturally, it will act as it has at *St. Domingo*.

Whether this *fact* which I have stated will be believed in this land of *freedom*, where *iron plated doors*, *locks*, *bolts*, and *chains*, are sometimes *ineffectual* securities against the *iron crow* of the *freebooter*, I will not take upon me to say—but yet it is a *fact*, and urged by me to prove the *docility* of the *negroes*, and the *happy* state of all their minds.

So far from their not having the power of entering their masters houses, if it were their disposition—they are free enough, at least in their persons, for the exercise of their wills, provided their

their cruel treatment ever *suggested* the *motive* to their hearts:—but instead of the perpetration of horrid deeds, suited by the dead of night to minds revengeful for cruelties committed, I scarcely ever visited a plantation in the night time, but I heard on one estate or other, *negroes engaged in dancing to vocal and instrumental chorusses.*

Whatever alterations I have to offer, are so *many subtractions* from the *promiscuous connections* of negroes in their amours. These are acts of *licentiousness* incurred by their *doing what they please*, and not a consequence of the restraining hand of power.

In the present state, *a young negroe man* will have as *many wives* as his *will* prescribes, or his *fancy in succession* suggests; and these *wives*, as they are called, are scattered about on *other estates* often *very remote* from that he belongs to.

So light to a young negroe man is the labour of the day, that he will walk after it for miles to his intended place of rest. The children which he *may* get belong to the *master* of the negroe woman. So that a fine negroe man is wasting the prime of his life in nocturnal perambulations, increasing the family he *cannot* live with, forming attachments he *cannot* support, and lessening *his own* consequence with his master, by not adding to *his value* a family of children.

If a master be ever so attentive to the *propagation* of his *negroes*, and if he aims to be as successful in the exercise of his assiduity for obtaining *this point* as in establishing other regulations on his own plantation—yet he *cannot* succeed, because the *practice* of his negroes is a *bar* against it; for by his negro men cohabiting with the women of *others*, and by his negro women cohabiting with the men of *others*, the master cannot in that case pursue the system his reason approves, by not having his own *Imperium in Imperio*.

But this is only a preface to my argument.

The negro woman residing *far* from the man, whom she *sometimes* sees, and is *always* jealous of, in process of time is *sure* to be *deserted*; and then she becomes, as most of them afterwards do, *common* to all. This is the natural effect of inconstancy in every climate and on all constitutions.

Considering that there is on all the islands a *paucity* of women in comparison to men (and that is allowed in every calculation) the *chastity* of the *women* becomes a consideration of increased importance. The women who entertain *promiscuous* connections are never *fruitful*.

The cause of barrenness in women of pleasure in this metropolis is truly attributed to *this*. And if the chastity of negro women be *necessary* to propagation—if it be *necessary* for that end, that a woman should be *constant* to *one* man—that cannot be so well obtained by the negro man re-

fiding on another plantation, and who most commonly has not only *one* wife to satisfy by his constancy, but *many* more.

In every country—to promote propagation, where there is a *paucity* of women, the connection and constancy of *one* man to *one* woman are the most essential means. It has been argued by some that the *Turks* have *many* wives, and that they populate in abundance—the fact is *true*, but the inference, as applicable to the West-Indies, is *wrong*.

In *Turkey* the wars and the plague consume the *men* more than the *women*, and there is a redundancy of women remaining. Instead of a *paucity* of *women* there is a *paucity* of *men*, and the *Turk* takes care that his wives shall have *no* connection with *other* men. This system of propagation is certainly suited to a paucity of *men*, and therefore the very reverse to a paucity of *women*. But *promiscuous* connections are destructive of every system.

The comforts of negroes must be increased by the man cohabiting with the woman; and in point of increasing *population*, it is most certainly the *sine qua non* of it.

The *negroe wife* should be left to the care of her family and employed in domestick pursuits; for if *population* goes on increasing by this mode, in process of time—the planter will be enabled to
make

make that *allowance* which he now allots for the *purchase of negroes*.

When a *negro youth* is arrived at the age for *marriage* and has made another master's *negro girl* the object of his choice—and when he has gained the affections of the *girl*—and when they have announced their mutual attachment—the *negro girl* should be made over to the master of the *youth*, and sent home to him. Such a *marriage* would operate equal to all, as on every plantation there are both men and women.

It is not my part to go minutely into the subject—to follow it up by the adjustments of reciprocal *valuations*. I do not intend to be so dogmatick. I only mean to submit a system, and to be understood as saying, that a *marriage* thus conducted, and, when once performed solemnly adhered to, will promote *propagation*.

Laws against *adultery* should be rigorously enforced. Mr. Wilberforce will not complain if they do press harder there, than in England, where a poor man who gets a bastard child may only be confined till *doomsday*, unless he can purchase out his time, and do away the crime of the flesh by the gold of his pocket.

As this system must have time before it can be put into practice—as there are many prejudices of habit to be weaned—and as those who have already arrived to years of puberty and have formed their connections, cannot be comprised

prised in it—but as it is only adapted to *boys* and *girls growing to puberty*, so must it have time to be carried into effect, and time afterwards for the operation of the effect.

During the pursuit of it—the planters must be at liberty to *purchase* what negroes they please; for I am confident it will take at least fifteen years before they can be able to say that the system will answer the end intended: and during that time—it must not be forgotten, that the labour of *young women* is lost in the field.

With respect to the *children*, as long as the mothers take care of them—they can never be in better hands: but if any neglect them, or if a mother dies, there should be a publick seminary for training them in health and inclining their minds to morality and chastity.

Raw rum should be never sold in common. Such as know how to use it with moderation; and who require it as a medicine, should only have it. When distributed to the negroes in general, it should be first mixed with water; and they should, if they took it away with them in their *calebashes*, be punished for selling it to any other negroe.

It would be very conducive to this plan, if the negroe *young girls* were particularly attended to, and if they were trained before they arrived to maturity for *marriage*, (whilst the system is
new,)

new,) to discharge the duties they are appointed hereafter to fulfil.

The fact is, that it is the *libidinous practices* of negroes which want *reform*. They are so amply provided for, and their toil is so light—they have so little concern for the provision of the day—are so free from the incumbrance of providing for a family—they contribute of themselves so little to the wants which create the cares of the *poor* in *other* countries—that their burthen of life is ever light, and their anxiety for their *children* is as short as that of a bird whilst its young are fledging.

An easy access to *spirituous liquors*, and an *unbounded promiscuous connection* of the sexes, are ample causes for checking population in every climate of the known world.

FINIS.

