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LETTERS

FROM

THE WEST INDIES:

RELATING ESPECIALLY TO THE DANISH ISLAND

ST. CROIX,

AND TO THE BRITISH ISLANDS

ANTIGUA, BARBADOES AND JAMAICA.

BY

SYLVESTER HOVEY,

Late Prof. of Math. and Nat. Phil. Amherst College.

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NEW YORK:

GOULD AND NEWMAN.

Corner of Fulton and Nassau Sts.

1838.



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## ADVERTISEMENT

BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN UNION.

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THE American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race was formed in Boston in January, 1835. A principal object in its formation was to collect and diffuse facts in respect to the condition of slavery and of the African race, whether existing on this Continent and its Islands, or in Africa. One small volume of letters on the more northern of the slaveholding States in this country, and also various documents, have been published by the Union. Other volumes have been partially prepared, but the pecuniary embarrassments of the times have prevented their completion and publication. The object appears to the Committee as important as ever. Nothing, except the blessing of the Almighty, can be more seasonable than well-authenticated reports of the condition of the children of Africa, especially such of them as are just emerging into the rank and privileges of freemen. If this Society can contribute something, even though it should be limited, towards the diffusion of important

information, or the correction of prejudice, its establishment will not have been altogether in vain.

The Committee commend the little volume on the state of the emancipated British colonies to the public with confidence that it will be a valuable auxiliary in the great work of African improvement. If they are not mistaken, the Letters exhibit an unusual degree of candor, industry, sound judgment and discriminating observation. The highly respected author, for several years a Tutor in Yale College, and more recently a Professor in Williams and Amherst Colleges, spent a considerable portion of the years 1835-6 and of 1836-7 in the West Indies, though only a part of the time, as agent of the Union. His facilities for obtaining correct information are detailed, with other circumstances, by himself in the introductory Letter.

*Boston, April 10, 1838.*

## LETTER I.

To the Executive Committee of the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race.

GENTLEMEN,

Having determined, in compliance with your request, to visit several of the West India islands, for the purpose of examining the progress of Negro emancipation, the question arose, in what form I could best present to you the results of my investigations. In some respects a preference seemed due to a journal or series of letters, written from day to day, which should record facts and statistics as they were obtained. But having only a short time to devote to the undertaking, and being sufficiently aware of the debilitating effects of a tropical climate, I concluded that I should best accomplish the wishes of the Committee by employing my time and strength, while on the ground, in collecting materials for a Report, which should be written after my return. This plan has also the additional recommendation, that it will allow the omission of many unimportant details, which would naturally find a place in a journal ; and will permit me to give a more succinct and general view of the whole subject. I regret that a combination of adverse circumstances, among which was a protracted and severe sickness, has so long prevented

the completion of my Report, but as the subject is one of permanent interest, and as light in relation to it is needed as much as ever, I hope that the information which I have to communicate, will not be entirely useless.

If I do not misapprehend the state of public sentiment and the wants of the community on this subject, the most acceptable offering which I can present, is a general development of the condition of slavery in the West Indies before emancipation took place ; a brief description of the two systems which have been adopted at different islands, viz. *immediate emancipation* and what is usually called the *apprenticeship system* ; together with the difficulties, and the degrees of success, which have severally attended them in practice. If the time should ever come, when slavery is to be abolished in this country, and a specific plan of emancipation should be required, the details of systems, which have already been tried with success, cannot be examined with too much care. But at present the public mind has not reached that point. As a community we are yet to be convinced that *any* system is practicable. To remove this skepticism and prepare the way for active measures, it will be useful to show, that a plan has been successfully adopted in circumstances similar to our own ; and, at the same time, to give such an outline of it, as will explain how it has met and obviated difficulties, which have generally been considered insurmountable.

It is not to be denied that the abolition of slavery in

a community is a work of no ordinary magnitude. Wherever slavery is established, it becomes so interwoven with the institutions of the country, as apparently to constitute an integral part ; and, at first view, it seems impossible to remove it without tearing down the very frame-work of society. Changes of such magnitude are not ordinarily effected, either in the material world, or in the body politic, without a convulsion ; and it is no wonder if those whose life, and property, and happiness, are so deeply involved, should pause and consider, before they venture their all, upon the success of an untried experiment. Slavery is beginning to be considered an evil too intolerable to be borne ; and, at the same time, one from which we cannot escape except by encountering others, little if any less appalling. In such circumstances a single ray of hope, from whatever source it may come, cannot but be welcome. And any plan for the removal of the evil, which has been found upon experiment in a good degree successful, must be hailed as the appearance of a new star in our firmament, designed by an overruling Providence to encourage hope, and to quicken and guide us in our efforts.

With such views of the present condition of our country, and of the importance of any information upon a subject which at present so much agitates it, I approach the labor of preparing a Report on the working of the new systems of freedom in the British West Indies only with satisfaction. For though it must be granted that much less has yet been achieved than philanthropy

could wish, yet it cannot be denied that the results of the experiment are, upon the whole, very encouraging to the cause of freedom. It may be said in general, that most of the evils so confidently predicted, and so long held up as objects of terror in the colonies, have scarcely been felt ; and that such as have actually come, are far less formidable than they appeared to be at a distance. I have no hesitation in saying, that the general sentiment in the West Indies, especially in the English islands, is decidedly in favor of emancipation. I am fully of the opinion, that a large majority of the planters, if the question were submitted to their decision, would oppose a restoration of the former order of things. Some of them, indeed, are not fully satisfied with the change ; but they are looking forward to a gradual improvement, and to the final result, with cheerful anticipations.

In the plan of my Report I shall follow the order in which I visited the different islands. The great features of slavery are the same throughout the West Indies. The similarity in the soil, climate, productions, in the modes of cultivating the estates, and in the political relations of the colonies, gives rise to a striking resemblance in their domestic manners and institutions. A description of slavery, therefore, on one island, may be applied, with slight modifications, to all the others. As I passed two winters in St. Croix, where I had a favorable opportunity for observation, I shall give a more particular account of the system as it exists there, and make this serve as a general delineation of it throughout the sugar colonies.

As I was unable to visit all the English islands, I selected such for particular examination as appeared to be of the greatest importance. These were Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica. They are among the largest which the English possess, and have long maintained a high rank in the West Indies. Two of them are seats of Episcopal sees, and each has a government of its own. Antigua is one of the two which proclaimed immediate emancipation, and is a favorable place for the trial of that form of abolition. At Barbadoes the apprenticeship system was adopted, where it is generally allowed to have succeeded better than anywhere else. The same system was also adopted at Jamaica, but it has met there with the greatest opposition and discouragement; so that at Barbadoes and Jamaica we find the two extremes in the working of this plan. It is universally admitted by those best acquainted with the subject, that these three islands afford, collectively, a fair representation of the two systems, both in theory and practice; and that conclusions justly drawn from these examples, may be considered of universal application in the West Indies. I make these remarks to show, that, though my particular investigations were confined to a few islands, the information which I obtained as to the working of the two systems, may be regarded as general. I may also add, that I touched at several others; and had intercourse with people from nearly every English island, from whom I obtained very satisfactory intelligence.

It gives me great pleasure to bear testimony to the

sincerity and frankness in communicating information, which I everywhere found in the English colonies. There is now no reserve or evasion in speaking on this subject. Every man feels at liberty fully to utter his sentiments either in praise or disapprobation of the existing order of things. It is, indeed, but a short time since the public mind was keenly excited; and all the vituperation and menace which self-interest, and prejudice, and over-heated passion could suggest, were poured out without restraint. But the tempest has passed by; and the public feeling has settled down into a state of comparative tranquillity. Still, however, the deepest concern is manifested in the new systems. Their difficulties, bearings, defects, and general operation, are the common topics of conversation; and though it may sometimes be perplexing to find what is the prevailing sentiment on a particular point, it is always easy to ascertain the opinions of individuals.

I was also happy to observe a noble disposition in those whom I met, to impart whatever knowledge they had acquired by experience, which might aid others in the same great work. They seemed fully conscious of the magnitude of their experiment, and knew full well the anxieties and fears of those who have in prospect a similar undertaking; and also the bearing which their example must have upon the existence of slavery in every part of the world.

My task was also greatly lightened by the kindness and hospitality which the West India planters are accustomed to tender to strangers; and the generosity



and noble spirit which I often witnessed among them, have left impressions on my mind, which will not soon be effaced. I could not indeed but regret, that these sentiments should ever be blended with others of a different character—the genuine fruits of the vicious system which they have so long upheld ; but which they have now happily thrown off. And if, in the course of my remarks, I may feel constrained, in some instances, to speak with severity of what I saw, I hope to be considered as entertaining no other sentiments than kindness and respect for those with whom I had personal intercourse.

It is well known that very different accounts have been given of the working of the new systems in the West Indies. Some have declared the experiment an entire failure ; and others have spoken of its success in terms fitted to leave the impression that the negroes have, all at once, emerged from the debasement of slavery into the condition of a civilized, and intelligent people. Both of these statements are at variance with the truth. A degree of success, most gratifying to the friends of humanity, has indeed crowned the experiment ; but much effort and many struggles will yet be required, before the emancipated people can rise to that place in society for which they are qualified by the moral and intellectual nature which God has given them.

These contradictory accounts may easily be explained. In some instances, what has been said and might be true in regard to a particular island, has been applied to all the others. As for example, at Antigua and Barba-

does the experiment has moved on with almost uninterrupted success ; while at Jamaica it was doubtful, for a long time, whether it would succeed at all. To this it must be added that the planters were, from the beginning, so strenuous in their opposition, and so confident that the scheme would fail, that for a long time they resisted the evidence of their own eyes ; and kept up the cry of ‘ defeat,’ till the victory was nearly won. I may also remark, that the reports brought to us by travellers from the West Indies, have been too much tinged by the state of things in the particular island where they were acquainted, or by the opinions of those individuals into whose society they happened to be thrown. I witnessed, in the course of my own travels, many examples of this kind ; and perhaps it would be vanity in me to suppose that I am myself free from the same fault. I can only say that I have been on my guard against it.

Nor could it be expected, that in the West Indies themselves, where, but a short time since, society was agitated almost to convulsions by conflicting interests and opinions, that a uniform sentiment would prevail. The strongest partiality for the old order of things is to be found among those who may be said to constitute the aristocracy of the islands—men somewhat advanced in life, who had become wedded to the former system by long custom, and who were not a little fond of the dignity and power which it conferred. This class made the most determined opposition to the change, and are the last to acknowledge its good effects. An-

other class, on the other hand, who were active in accomplishing it, are perhaps too much disposed to magnify its advantages, and to form unduly favorable anticipations of the final results. There is still another class, who are attempting to turn the change to their own account in various speculations, whose opinions are, no doubt, influenced by their own interest, and who express, perhaps, greater confidence of its permanent success than either of the other classes. I have made it a point to see leading individuals in each of these classes; and, by comparing their views and reconciling contradictions, to arrive at a knowledge of the real state of things.

It may not be improper for me to say that I am pledged to no party, not being a member even of the society which has honored me with its confidence. I am neither an abolitionist, a colonizationist, nor a unionist; but the cause of emancipation, conducted on just and sober principles, has the best wishes of my heart. In collecting information, I have endeavored, as far as possible, to shut out every party bias, and to open my mind freely to such convictions as the clear light of facts should impress upon it.

I must acknowledge that I have felt deeply the responsibility of the undertaking; for I have been more and more convinced at every step, that it is in the light of this great experiment, if in any way, that our own country is to be relieved from the enormous evil of slavery. I have therefore endeavored to inquire diligently into circumstances and events, and to look at

them with soberness; so that, on a subject of such magnitude I may neither deceive myself, nor mislead others, whose opinions and efforts I may be the means of influencing.

## LETTER II.

### DANISH ISLANDS.—ST. CROIX.

The Danish Possessions in the West Indies, consist of three islands; viz., St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John. They all lie near together, the distance between the two former being less than forty miles, and the third being separated from St. Thomas only by a narrow channel. They are under the control of a Governor General, who resides at St. Croix. This is much the largest and most beautiful of these islands, comprising an area of 85,000 acres; about one half of which is under cultivation. St. Thomas is estimated to contain about 12,000 acres, and St. John 8,000. St. Thomas is mountainous; and having comparatively little arable land, owes its importance principally to commerce. The entire population of the three islands was, in 1828, 46,290.

So far as slavery is concerned, there is no material difference in their condition. It is generally supposed to exist here in its mildest form; and, judging from my own observation, I believe that the slaves are exposed to less cruelty, and are better supplied with the necessaries of life, than they are in most slave countries.

As my opportunities for examination were confined principally to St. Croix, my remarks will relate espe-

cially to this island; and, as I have already observed, I shall be more particular in describing slavery here, as, in its great outlines, it will serve as a delineation of the system throughout the West Indies.

St. Croix is justly considered the most delightful of the West India islands. In its natural fertility, beauty of scenery, salubrity of climate, and in the facilities for travelling it yields to no other. The invalid, who goes there to escape the rigors of a northern winter, will find not only a balmy atmosphere and a profusion of the ordinary luxuries of tropical countries, but, what is more to "a stranger in a strange land," the sympathy of warm and generous hearts and a noble hospitality.

The population is 25,354; of which 19,753 are slaves. The land is devoted almost entirely to agriculture; and the only production of importance is sugar cane. In consequence, all the bread stuff and nearly all the other provisions, which the people consume, not excepting even salt-fish and salt-meat, are imported. The business of the island is thus very much simplified; the planter confining his attention principally to the manufacture of sugar and rum, and the merchant and sugar dealer, employing their capital in exporting these products, and, in return, supplying the plantations with provisions and other necessaries.

By a government regulation, the plantations were originally laid out in parallelograms, each consisting of 150 acres. In some cases, two or more are now united. For instance the estate called Lower Bethlehem, belonging to Mr. Deforest of New York, consists of six

or seven of these ; and is one of the most valuable properties in the West Indies. About two thirds of the land, on sugar estates, are usually under cultivation at the same time ; the remainder either lies fallow, or is devoted to grazing.

Each of these estates has attached to it from 150 to 200 slaves, and may be considered as constituting a distinct community. On some commanding situation upon it, will generally be found a large and elegant stone mansion, occupied by the proprietor, or some one acting in his place, together with convenient out-buildings. Near this, will be seen the sugar works, consisting of the wind mill, the boiling house, the curing house, and the distillery ; the two last being often united to the first so as to form two wings. Contiguous to the sugar works are the mechanics' shops and the hospital ; and then come the negro huts, or as they might often with propriety be called, the negro village. These are sometimes crowded promiscuously together ; and in their general appearance, indicate any thing but comfort. But they are often small neat buildings, regularly arranged in lines parallel to each other ; and when this is the case, and all the buildings in the group are neatly painted or white-washed, and the grounds are ornamented with the Cocoa-nut tree, the Mammee, the Thibet, and the Tamarind, the whole view presents an aspect not inferior to that of a pretty New England village. One thing more would render the scene delightful—the knowledge that the tenants of those little buildings were happy freemen, enjoying the blessings to which

their intellectual and moral natures entitle them. The negro houses are usually from twelve to twenty feet in length, eight or nine high, and from ten to fourteen wide. They are constructed of different materials. The walls are often made of stone, and the roof is covered with shingles or thatched with cane tops. Walls of mangrove wattle, plastered with clay, are not unfrequent. The windows are mere openings in the walls, closed at night by board blinds. Sometimes the building is divided into two apartments, especially if there is a family of children. Every man and woman is entitled to a separate hut. The houses are always furnished by the occupant, and in the most simple manner—the furniture consisting usually of a straw bed, a table, a bench, one or two chairs, and a few cooking utensils. There are extreme cases, in which more or less than I have mentioned may be found.

There are two modes of provisioning the slaves in the West Indies—one, by allowing them a piece of land and a half day or more in the week to cultivate it, where they raise vegetable provisions either to use themselves, or to exchange for others which they like better—and the other by an allowance in meal and salt-fish. The latter method is practised at Santa Cruz.

The legal allowance is six quarts of Indian meal and six herrings per week. An equivalent is sometimes given in yams or other vegetables, and in a different kind of salt-fish; but the most common allowances are those which I first named. In addition to this, the slaves have a little spot of ground, from twenty to



thirty feet square, where they raise more or less vegetables. They not unfrequently sell a part of their meal and fish and of the vegetables which they raise, or exchange them for meat and clothing, and other things which they prefer. They often keep a few pigs and some poultry, which they can convert into cash; and sometimes they enjoy the luxury of possessing a poney. Some masters allow them the privilege of cutting grass, and gathering wood, in small quantities, from the plantation, which they are able to turn to ready account in the market.

The slaves receive two partial suits of clothes in a year. For one of these, the men have four yards of osnaburg, a coarse kind of linen cloth, of which they make a shirt and a pair of trowsers—for the other they receive three and a half yards of woollen cloth, which they make into a coat or a pair of trowsers. The women are entitled to a little more osnaburg; in other respects, their allowance is the same. In the course of the year, and especially at the Christmas-holidays, it is customary for the masters to make small presents, either in food or clothing. It may be observed, that few of the slaves are contented with the allowance which they receive from their masters; but contrive by various extra efforts of their own, to add something to their little stock of comforts. They often appear on the Sabbath in a respectable dress; but ordinarily, they are dirty and ragged, and too frequently but partially covered.

Their regular hours of labor are six days in the

week, from sunrise to sunset, with the exception of an allowance of three quarters of an hour for breakfast, and an hour and a half or two hours for dinner. This gives an average in that latitude of about ten hours; labor a day. Sometimes they are called out earlier; and in crop time, those employed about the sugar works, are often obliged to work later; but the average may be placed at ten or eleven hours. Out of crop time, they are sometimes allowed Saturday as a holiday; and also two or three days at Christmas. The women are excused from field labor three months before and two months after confinement; and, even for a longer time, some abatement is made in their task. There is no difference between the men and women either in the kind or amount of work which they perform, except that women are not employed as mechanics or in trades. The children serve in subordinate capacities on the estates, in watching cattle, cutting grass, driving mules, clearing off cane trash, etc. Their allowance in food and clothing is the same as that of adults, only less in quantity. It is greatly to be regretted that machinery is not more generally employed. The plough is almost unknown; and the hoe and tray and bill-hook are nearly all the utensils which are used in agriculture.

A large proportion of the proprietors of estates in Santa Cruz are non-residents. In such cases, they usually appoint a person to act in their place, called an Attorney, whose duty it is to superintend the general concerns of the plantation, to sell the produce, pur-

chase provisions, make repairs, and transact all the pecuniary business. The attorney is immediately responsible to the proprietor for all monies received and expended ; and is the person with whom he corresponds in relation to all the affairs of the estate. The same individual is often attorney for several properties, and of course cannot reside upon them ; but it is his duty often to visit them, and see that they are properly conducted.

Subordinate to the attorney, are the managers, and the overseers. The manager has the immediate control of the plantation. He resides upon it—superintends the stock, the cultivation of the land, and the sugar works ; receives the supplies for the estate from the attorney and distributes them, and delivers to him the produce. He has the entire management of the slaves—attending to their wants, directing their labor, and administering punishment when it is necessary. It is obvious that he fills a responsible place ; and the good order and prosperity of the estate depend, in no small degree, upon his ability and faithfulness. The most difficult part of his duty is the government of the slaves. When there is a misunderstanding between them and the manager, however absolute his power may be, they often annoy him beyond measure, and greatly interrupt the regular business of the estate. Firmness and consistency, combined with conciliating manners, will however, generally secure their respect and obedience.

The principal employment of the overseer is to be

with the negroes at their labor, whether in the sugar works or in the field. They call them out in the morning; see that they perform their task during the day, and report negligences and misdemeanors to the managers.

Most of the managers and overseers in Santa Cruz, are foreigners; and many of them are Irishmen. Their situation exposes them to peculiar temptations, which, though some have sufficient firmness of principle to resist, yet not a few of them lead the most dissolute lives. The influence of their example is often among the greatest obstacles which the missionary has to encounter, in the moral improvement of the slaves.

The education and religious instruction of the slaves are, in a very great degree, neglected. The Moravians have three establishments, and nearly one half of the slaves of the island are nominally under their charge; but I fear their labors produce very little effect. The Moravians are highly respected by the planters, and no particular obstacles are thrown in the way of their efforts. But as most of them are unable to speak the language of the island, and as a great part of their time is occupied in providing for themselves the necessaries of life, they can have but little intercourse with the slaves, and consequently but little opportunity to instruct them. The number that attends their places of worship on the Sabbath is small; and at their evening meetings it is still less. There are also two Episcopal and two Lutheran churches, which are open to the slaves. I was assured, however, on

good authority, that not more than a thousand are usually present at public worship on the Sabbath, in all the churches of the different denominations. It must be confessed, that an apathy reigns on this subject at Santa Cruz, which is truly shocking. No means whatever are provided for the education of the slaves. If any of them are taught to read it is merely by accident. Some humane masters and mistresses do, indeed, make efforts in this way ; but they are limited to very few estates, and are, in all cases, exceedingly partial and inadequate. I never heard of but one individual being employed to instruct slaves on the estates ; and he was a very worthy free negro, who confined his instructions to religion. Still, however, it is understood, that the government of Denmark is in favor of the education and moral elevation of the slaves in their colonies. Indeed the Governor General has proposed plans, not only for their instruction, but their gradual emancipation ; and it is certain that he manifests a very praiseworthy disposition to redress their grievances and ameliorate their condition. He has already done much to lighten their heavy burdens.

But nothing of any importance can be accomplished, toward the religious improvement of the slaves in Santa Cruz, till the Sunday market is abolished—that foul disgrace upon a community which calls itself Christian. According to the present arrangement the slaves have no other time to cultivate their little patches of ground, and to bring their products to market, than the Sabbath. This is at once their day of business and of leisure—a

day which, set loose from all their ordinary restraints, they are at liberty to spend either in labor, or drunkenness, or idleness, or what, I fear is least common of all, the duties of religion. And I am sorry to add, that the highest authorities of the island, not only sanction by their own example, but defend in principle, this shocking profanation of the Lord's day. Attempts to abolish the Sunday market and secure a better observance of the Sabbath, have repeatedly been resisted; and not only so, but whole gangs of slaves are often hired to work on the Sabbath, the only day of rest which the law allows them—by men, who ought to be to them patterns of moral excellence.

Another great obstacle in the way of moral improvement is the general practice of concubinage among the slaves. There is no legal barrier to their regular marriage: indeed such marriage has often been recommended by the government; but the greatest aversion to it prevails on the part of the slaves. On many of the estates, not a single marriage has been solemnized according to law. They often live together by agreement, for a longer or shorter time, and call themselves man and wife. In some instances, such engagements are duly observed by both parties, and result in a devoted attachment for life. But in most cases they are soon broken, and end in a quarrel. The want of confidence in each other, is perhaps the principal cause of their great repugnance to assume the obligations of a legal marriage.

But it is vain to expect, in the present state of hu-

man nature, that the marriage vows, however solemnly made, will be fulfilled by slaves. To say nothing of their ignorance and want of moral principle, the husband and wife generally live on different plantations, often at a distance from each other of several miles; and consequently their intercourse is irregular and often interrupted. It is next to impossible, under such circumstances, to maintain mutual confidence. Besides this, there is in slavery comparatively no place for the family affections. The children belong, by law, to the owner of the mother. They are his property. He feeds and clothes them; and during their infancy, the mother is scarcely allowed time to give them the sustenance which their tender age requires. The father has no concern whatever in their maintenance, comfort, education, or future labor. He can neither bless them nor be blessed by them. This slavery forbids. It takes the child from the arms of its natural guardians, and consigns it to one who has no other concern in its welfare, than that its bones and sinews become strong for labor. Hence the sacred ties which bind families together in civilized society, are unknown in slavery; and with these ties is destroyed the stronghold of virtue in the human heart. The result is an unlimited licentiousness.

And happy would it be if this state of things were confined to the slaves. Here, as in other slave countries, the evil spreads, both in spirit and form, through the community. The least iniquitous and disgusting shape, in which it appears, is the practice of taking

colored or black women as housekeepers ; but who are, to all intents and purposes, wives, except in name and respect. This custom is very general among managers and overseers of estates ; and is by no means unknown in the highest places of influence and authority. To occupy these situations, is considered a great honor by that class of females, who are sought for such purposes ; and many of them are educated expressly for the object. In this way, men often find themselves surrounded by a family of children, which their own feelings will not allow them to disown, nor the sentiments of the community to acknowledge.

There has been a gradual diminution of the slave population in Santa Cruz, since the abolition of the slave trade. For example, the number of slaves in

1810 was 26,796

1827 „ 21,509

1836 „ 19,753.

In consequence of late amelioration in the system, the diminution for a few years past, has been less rapid. The last year there was an increase of twenty-five.

This decrease is to be ascribed, in part, to the licentiousness of which I have spoken ; in part, to excessive labor ; and, perhaps, more than all, to the irregular habits of the slaves, and their almost total disregard of the ordinary means of preserving health.

The legal condition of the slaves in the Danish colonies is nearly the same, that it was in the English islands before emancipation. They are not allowed to give evidence against white persons, except in cases



when they bring complaints before a police court, and then their testimony is not received upon oath. The nearest relatives may be separated from each other, either by sale or bequest ; but no slave can be removed from the island. Manumission cannot be compelled by law ; but in point of fact is rarely if ever denied, when the slave is able to pay his appraised value. Such manumissions are not unfrequent. The slaves are allowed to inherit property ; and, when they choose, to succeed to the house and grounds of their parents. They often accumulate a small amount of property. Some of the penal statutes are very severe ; but, at present, they are a dead letter. In this part of the system, as indeed in every other, there has been of late a great amelioration. The cart whip is now rarely seen as an emblem of authority in the fields, or used as an instrument of punishment upon private responsibility, except in extreme cases. Confinement in the stocks and solitary imprisonment are the ordinary punishments on the estates. The proprietor or the manager has the legal authority to inflict thirty lashes ; but the will of the governor, which is in point of fact, law, restricts the number to twelve. The more aggravated cases are brought before a police judge, who sentences the culprit to be whipped, to be imprisoned in the fort, or to be worked in the penal gang on the highways, according to the criminality of the offence.

The governor, in compliance with the wishes of the government at home, inclines decidedly to lenity. His influence is felt upon every plantation ; and has

already effected a great improvement in the physical condition of the slaves. He encourages them to come to him, or to go to the police judges with their complaints. If, upon examination, they are found to be just, they never fail to be redressed; if they are without foundation, the complainant generally receives a severe rebuke. If the proprietor or manager is found in fault, he is fined; and, in some instances, the managers and overseers have been dismissed from their places, and expelled from the island. But after all, it cannot be said, that even physical cruelties are entirely prevented.

The Christmas holidays are the annual season of negro festivities. They are spent in feasting, visiting, and dancing. It is customary at this time, for slaves on the different plantations, attired in their choicest dress, to go in a body to the house of their master, and to receive admission to his best apartments; where they set up the music of the banjo and commence dancing. The family make it a point to be present, and not unfrequently join in the dance. This is the occasion, when presents are distributed among them of provisions, clothing, or even of money. The feelings of the slaves towards their master, through the year, depend very much on the treatment they receive at these times.

It cannot be said, that there is any uniform sentiment, at Santa Cruz, as to emancipation. I have already remarked, that the Danish government favor it; and the governor speaks of it, as a thing to be expected. He is also exerting his influence to break down

the prejudice, which exists against the colored class. He has invited some of them to his parties; and this year he directed the distinction, which has heretofore been made between the white and the free colored people, in the annual census, to be discontinued. All free people are now registered together, without regard to their complexion. These circumstances, together with the disposition which the governor manifests, to improve the condition of the slaves, sufficiently evince the intentions of the government. It is greatly to be regretted, that the axe should not at once be laid at the root of the tree; and such plans for the education and religious instruction of the slaves be immediately commenced, as have so happily prepared the way for emancipation in some of the British islands. The greatest objection, which I heard made to emancipation at Santa Cruz, was, that the Danish government would not be able to offer compensation for the slave. Could this be given, I have no doubt many of the planters would cheerfully accede to the measure. At present, they are watching, with great interest, the progress of the experiment in the English islands; and are rather holding themselves in a state of listless expectation, than making any effort to prepare for the change, which they see must come.

I could wish, that it had fallen to my lot to speak of Santa Cruz, in connection with some other subject, than slavery. The island is endeared to me by the recollection of its balmy climate and beautiful scenery — by many kindnesses, received when I was in a con-

dition most highly to appreciate them, and by the refined and generous hospitality, uniformly shown to my countrymen, who have gone there for health. Heartily could I rejoice, if the curse of slavery had never fallen upon it; for surely, in most other respects, it is one of the favored spots of earth. If in the preceding remarks, I have made any representations, which are not fully in accordance with truth, I hope they will be set to the account of misinformation, and not of design. If any thing could reconcile me to slavery, it is the partiality I feel for this island; but slavery, even as it exists here, which is perhaps its mildest form, I must pronounce a grievous wrong.

## LETTER III.

### BRITISH WEST INDIES.

THE number of English Colonies, in which the slaves have been emancipated, is nineteen; all of which, except British Guiana, the Cape of Good Hope, and the island of Mauritius, are in the West Indies. The largest English island in the West Indies is Jamaica. The others are comparatively small; and the most of them belong to the Leeward and Windward Islands. Though beautiful and fertile, they are inferior in the last particular, to Cuba, St. Domingo, and Porto Rico.

These colonies are attached to the English government in two ways. Those, called Crown Colonies, have no legislature of their own; but are governed by the king or men of his appointment. The others have a legislature, which is composed of a governor and council, appointed by the crown; and a representative body elected by the people. In all of them, Parliament maintains the right of interfering by legislative enactments—a right however which the colonial assemblies are often inclined to dispute.

A considerable naval and military force is supported here at the expense of the mother country. By means of two lines of packets from England to Barbadoes, and two lines of steamboats from thence to the other

islands, a communication twice a month is maintained between England and all her West India colonies.

I mention these circumstances to show, what means the British Government possesses for carrying its measures into effect in the West Indies. I may also add, that much the largest part of the estates, in the colonies, are owned by persons who reside in the mother country ; and who, though they had a deep interest in the abolition of slavery, must have been greatly influenced in their feelings, by the prevailing sentiments in England. This was an important circumstance, inasmuch as a large body of intelligent men, who were most deeply concerned in the question, were present to give information, and prefer their remonstrances on the one hand ; and on the other, to hear the replies of the government, and to be swayed by the tide of popular opinion.

The slave population of all the English colonies amounts, according to the report of the commissioners of compensation to 780,993 ; from which, if we subtract 107,000 for the Cape of Good Hope and Mauritius, we shall have about 670,000 for the British West Indies and English Guiana. The number of slaves in the colonies as I shall show in a subsequent part of my report, had been constantly decreasing, for many years previous to emancipation.

West India property of every kind had, also, greatly depreciated ; and at the time that slavery was abolished, had fallen into a most deplorable condition. As far back as 1792, long before the question of abolition

began to be agitated, Bryan Edwards represents "the great mass of planters, as men of oppressed fortunes, consigned by debt to unremitting drudgery in the colonies, with a hope, which eternally mocks their grasp, of happier days and a release from their embarrassments." In 1807, fifteen years after the period to which Edwards alludes, the Assembly of Jamaica made a communication to the House of Commons on the commercial state of the West Indies, in which they say, (I take the extract from a speech of Mr. Buxton in Parliament,) "From these facts, the House will be able to judge, to what an alarming extent the distresses of the sugar planters have already reached; and with what accelerated rapidity, they are now increasing; for the sugar estates lately brought to sale, and now in the Court of Chancery in this island and in England, amount to about one fourth of the whole number of the colony." In another communication, made by the Assembly of the same island to the House of Commons in 1812, it is said, "Estate after estate has passed into the hands of mortgagees and creditors absent from the island, until there are large districts, whole parishes, in which there is not a single proprietor of a sugar plantation resident." Again, in another address to Parliament in 1832, after a lapse of nearly twenty years, and but two years before the abolition of slavery, it was declared, "The alarming and unprecedented state of distress, in which the whole British West India interest is at this time involved, justified them in imploring Parliament to adopt prompt and effectual meas-

ures of relief, in order to preserve them from inevitable ruin."

These representations are fully sustained by facts, which came to my own knowledge. I was repeatedly told, that in Jamaica at least two thirds of the estates, at the time emancipation took place, were under mortgage; and no small part of the remainder were so deeply in debt, that the present proprietors could never redeem them. Nor was this state of things peculiar to Jamaica. At Antigua, for several years previous to 1834, the purchase of an estate by private sale was almost unknown; and to such a degree of depression had property reached, that the Court of Chancery was obliged to make a rule, in order to prevent the almost entire sacrifice of estates, that they should not be sold for less than two thirds of their appraised value. The reason also that so many properties in the West Indies are owned by non-residents, is, that they have passed from the original proprietors, into the hands of merchants at London and Liverpool in payment of debt. The causes of this depreciation are to be found in the system of slavery; but, as this part of the subject will come again under consideration, I will not enlarge upon it here. What I wish especially to be borne in mind, is, that, with one or two exceptions, the price of property, in all the English colonies in the West Indies, had greatly fallen; that there was a general stagnation of business; and that without an important change in the order of things no material relief could have been expected.



There are other circumstances to which we must advert, in order fully to understand the manner, in which the abolition of slavery has been accomplished in the English colonies. It is well known, that a material change had taken place, long before emancipation, not only in the condition of the slave population, but in the state of public sentiment in regard to the evils of slavery. The commencement of this change was coëval with the first efforts for the abolition of the slave trade. From that time, the day of freedom for the slave began to dawn; and the present abettors of slavery look back upon that period, as pregnant with all the mischief which has since come upon them. Although in the discussions, which took place in Parliament in relation to the suppression of the slave trade, nothing was said of the abolition of slavery, yet it was foreseen that one must inevitably follow the other. Burke, with his usual sagacity, distinctly predicted, (and with how much truth the event shows,) that the same principles, which required the extinction of the slave trade, must lead to the annihilation of slavery itself.

But, though the event was anticipated from the agency of causes then put in operation, yet the stages of its progress were not so clearly defined. The first effect of the discussions, to which I have alluded was to rouse the public mind to a sense of the wrongs, which traffic in human flesh inflicts on our common nature. The result is well known. It was one of those signal triumphs of reason and humanity, made at distant in-

tervals over prejudice and self interest, which mark the progress of our species, and afford the best presages of future advancement.

Another effect of the suppression of the slave trade, which was probably less expected, but has had scarcely less influence, was the increased value, which it gave to the lives of the negroes already in the Colonies. While large importations were made from Africa, the facilities for repairing the waste and loss of life among the slaves by new purchases, were so great, that even their physical comfort was but little regarded. The question was not, whether their present number could be preserved or increased by natural propagation in the Colonies, but which will afford the greatest profit, so far to abate their labour as to rear families, or to task them to the uttermost, and supply their places as they fall, from foreign sources; and it must be acknowledged that the latter policy too often prevailed. The consequence was the greatest possible debasement in the physical and moral condition of the slaves. They were imported barbarians; treated as brutes; and brought to untimely graves by inadequate sustenance and excessive labour.

But when the slave trade was abolished, and consequently foreign supplies were cut off, it became an object of the highest importance with the planters, to encourage the natural increase of his slaves, by a greater regard to their physical comfort.

With this relief, the slaves began to improve; their intellectual and moral powers found better opportunity

to expand ; and the little knowledge which one generation acquired was transmitted to the next. This led to a better state of feeling between the master and slaves, and opened the way for the efforts of benevolent individuals for their instruction and moral improvement. Thus a relaxation in the rigors of their condition commenced, which has been slowly but regularly advancing to the present time. The self interest of the master, rather than mercy, prompted, in the first instance, to a mitigation of the system : the better feelings of his nature then began to plead for the slave ; and led, by slow degrees, to the recognition of him as a human being. The missionary was now allowed to commence his labors ; and, under all these advantages, small indeed in reality, but great compared with what they had been, the slaves gradually rose in importance and strength till it became a question of overwhelming interest to the English nation, not so much whether they were fit for emancipation, as whether they were not unfit any longer to be slaves.

The abolition of the slave trade, from which we date the commencement of this improvement, was in 1808. In 1814, after the general peace in Europe, the subject was again brought before Parliament, with a view of securing the coöperation of the other powers, in the entire suppression of this inhuman traffic. If these efforts had no other effect, they aroused the attention of the English community to the sufferings of the enslaved negro in the colonies ; and excited more strongly than ever its sympathy in his behalf. From this period, the

advocates for the rights of the slave have never slumbered. Missionaries were sent among them in greater numbers ; the extent of their degradation and sufferings was ascertained ; and information in relation to the whole subject was spread before the community. The public mind was shocked at the atrocities which these investigations brought to light ; and Parliament, urged by petitions from all quarters, was forced, in 1823, into an examination of the slave code in the West Indies. The result was, that the following resolutions were proposed in the House of Commons and carried unanimously : —

“ That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the slave population in his majesty’s dominions.

“ That through a determined and persevering but at the same time judicious and temperate enforcement of such measures, the House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population ; such as may prepare them for a participation in the civil rights of his majesty’s subjects.

“ That the House is anxious for the accomplishment of that purpose at the earliest period which shall be compatible with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration for the interests of private property.”

These resolutions were not presented to the House of Lords till 1826, when they were unanimously adopted by that body.

In pursuance of these resolutions, an Order in Coun-

cil was sent out to the West Indies, embodying laws and regulations for mitigating the evils of slavery, with the understanding that it was to be enforced in the crown colonies, and urged upon the others for general acceptance. The objects principally aimed at in this order, were the better protection of the slaves; the abolition of the Sunday market and the prevention of labor on the Sabbath; the disuse of the whip in the field and in the punishment of females at all; the admission of slave evidence in courts of justice; a more humane regard to the family ties of slaves; and a more easy process by which they might obtain manumission.

The success of this measure was exceedingly various; and showed most clearly the general hostility, which prevailed at that time in the English islands, against any essential improvement in the condition of the slaves. Some of the Assemblies at first utterly rejected it; others adopted some parts; and others passed session after session in fruitless discussion, without either adopting or rejecting it. It led, however, in all the islands, sooner or later, to a mitigation of the slave system, which, though it was by no means satisfactory to Parliament, was still an important advance.

It should then be distinctly understood, that the object of the resolutions of 1823, which gave the first intimation of the final intentions of Parliament, was to prepare the slaves for emancipation. From that time till the Abolition Act was passed, the colonial secretaries were in constant correspondence with the proper authorities in the colonies, using argument, remon-

strance, and expostulation, in order to effect a compliance with the injunctions of the parent government. But the planters seeing, as they thought, in the proposed measures a tendency to the entire ruin of the colonies, never yielded more than a partial, tardy, and unwilling acquiescence; so that in 1833, though some alleviations had taken place, Parliament, despairing of being able to secure the degree of preparation in the slaves for freedom which was intended, began to contemplate a more decisive course of action. The British nation now rose in its strength; petitions were sent into Parliament from all parts of the kingdom; and I venture to say, that the annals of the world do not record a more sublime and magnanimous act of legislation, than that which decreed the entire extinction of slavery throughout the British colonies. This act, based in a deep sense of justice both to the master and the slave, and involving a pecuniary sacrifice which would be absolutely frightful to a less high-minded people, will be the glory of England and the admiration of the world, when her proudest military and naval achievements shall have been obliterated from the memory of mankind.

The opposition in the West Indies, to the measures proposed by Parliament for the melioration of slavery, arose no doubt from the incompatibility which the planters saw in them with the continuance of the system. Many of them, indeed, felt its evils, but still clung to it with a convulsive grasp. They looked to emancipation as a very doubtful remedy for the sufferings either

of themselves or the slaves. It was an experiment which had never been tried on so large a scale, it involved not only property but personal security and life; and depended for success on the fidelity and good dispositions of those whom they had been accustomed to regard only with jealousy and distrust. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that they came reluctantly to an issue in which they had so much at stake; though others might be perfectly confident of a successful result. Happily, however, the crisis is past: the dark cloud has discharged its contents, and has fertilized the ground it was expected to destroy. It now remains for the planters, as they are free from danger, to evince the sincerity of their former professions, by bending their efforts to the improvement of a people, whom their unfounded fears long kept in bondage; and who have hitherto proved themselves worthy of the new confidence which has been placed in them.

It is well known, that the Act of Abolition was accompanied by a grant of £20,000,000 as an indemnity to the planters for the slaves, and any losses which might ensue in consequence of their emancipation. To prepare for the distribution of this fund, a committee was appointed, designated a Committee of Compensation, to ascertain the number of the slaves in each colony, and their average price for a period of eight years immediately preceding 1830. With these data, it was easy to determine the aggregate value of all the slaves in the English possessions. It was found to be about twice the sum which had been voted by Parliament

so that the planters became entitled to about half the value of their slaves, as estimated by the Committee of Compensation. I was told in the West Indies, that only about £12,000,000 had at that time actually been paid; and that nearly the whole of this was retained in England for the payment of debts due from the planters. As to the adequacy of this compensation, or the propriety of giving any, I shall be better prepared to speak in a subsequent part of these Letters.



## LETTER IV.

### ANTIGUA.—SYSTEM OF IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION.

The emancipation act of the British Parliament did not confer on the slaves unqualified freedom; but placed them in an intermediate state, where they were to enjoy the protection of law, and make further preparation for the full possession of the privileges of British subjects. This scheme has received the name of the Apprenticeship System, from the analogy which exists between the condition in which it places the slave, and the situation of apprenticed minors under the English laws. I shall explain this system more fully when I come to Barbadoes, where it is in operation. At present, following the track of my investigations, I shall direct my attention to Antigua, where, as I have before remarked, complete emancipation was proclaimed by the colonial Assembly on the first of August, 1834.

As the example of this island is all important, it is desirable fully to understand, not only the present condition of the emancipated people, but also the peculiar circumstances which led to the adoption of the plan, and have contributed materially to its success.

Antigua is almost exclusively a sugar colony. It is about twenty miles in length and fifty in circumference. The estates are generally larger than those in St. Croix, but are in most respects conducted in the same way.

Nearly all the island is under cultivation ; and, except in seasons of drought, which are not uncommon, is productive. It has, as I have before intimated, a legislature of its own ; and is the residence of a governor, whose jurisdiction extends to several other islands in the vicinity. The only town of importance is St. John's, which is supposed to contain about 12,000 inhabitants.

In 1821, when the last census was taken, the population of the island was 37,226 ; of which 1980 were whites, 3,895 free colored and black people, 31,064 slaves, and 287 African apprentices and discharged soldiers. According to the Report of the Commissioners of Compensation, there were, at the time of emancipation, only 29,537 slaves. Of the £20,000,000 compensation money, the colony was entitled to £425,866 7s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. ; which afforded an allowance of about £14 for each slave.

The great Abolition Act of Parliament made provision that if any of the colonies should wish to make any alterations in the Bill, or to substitute other enactments, not inconsistent with its original object, but better adapted to their respective circumstances, such alterations or substitutions, after having received the sanction of the home government, might be adopted. The Assembly of Antigua took advantage of this provision ; and, after a protracted and thorough discussion, resolved on giving to the slaves immediate and entire emancipation. This measure was strenuously opposed, both in the Assembly and out of it, and was finally carried by a small majority,—I believe by the casting-vote

of the Speaker. Happily, however, its operation has been such as to remove all doubts, and to unite all parties in its support. Not a man of any influence can now be found on the island, who does not rejoice and even glory in its adoption; and it has secured for Antigua, among the other islands, the credit of great magnanimity and political sagacity.

The following are the principal reasons for the adoption of this measure, as set forth by the Report of a joint Committee of both Houses of the Assembly on the great question. Some of them relate to the provisions of the apprenticeship system, and will be better understood after that system has been considered.

1. A desire to have the subject settled at once, and thus prevent future agitation.

2. An apprehension that the apprenticeship system would take away the authority of the master over the slave, without supplying in its place adequate means of controlling him.

3. Dislike to the system of stipendiary magistrates, who were to be introduced from abroad, and must, from the nature of the case, be unacquainted with the state of things in the colonies.

4. Objection to the distinction made by the abolition act between the praedial and non-praedial classes, as being founded in injustice and bad policy.

5. The peculiar preparation on the part of both planters and the slaves for immediate emancipation.

6. The comparatively high degree of intelligence and moral principle which existed among the slaves

7. The circumstance that the lands on the island were nearly all cultivated and occupied; so that the negroes would be obliged to continue their present habits of labor, in order to procure a livelihood.

These reasons may all be comprised in two. In the first place, inherent objections to the apprenticeship system; and in the second, a belief, that the slaves at Antigua were, at that time, as well prepared for freedom, as those, on most of the other islands would be in 1840, when the act provided for their entire emancipation.

But, though immediate emancipation was proclaimed to the slaves in Antigua, let it not be supposed, that they were raised at once to the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of enlightened citizens. As soon as the assembly had resolved on immediate emancipation, it proceeded to pass enactments, designed expressly for the protection and government of the liberated people. The object was not indeed to curtail their substantial freedom, but rather to prevent the abuse of it—to hedge them about with such restraints and checks, as would not only preserve them from wanton outrages, but which should confine them to steady industry and economy, in those subordinate situations which they must for a long time occupy.

It was perfectly obvious, that they could not soon, if ever, reasonably aspire to be any thing more than the peasantry of the country; and it was therefore wise policy to encourage them to remain in their present places, rather than rush into employments for which

they were not qualified, and in which they must certainly fail. I do not mean to intimate, that they are excluded by law from the highest places in society. In this respect they stand on the same level as all the other members of the community. But they cannot rise to such places, without qualifications which they do not at present possess ; but which, in the course of time, they may acquire.

A judgment may be formed of the enactments, to which I have alluded, from the following abridged specimens.

In the first place, it was provided that the slaves should remain one year after their emancipation in the places which they then occupied—that the use of their houses and little patches of ground should be continued to them ; and that they should work for their masters as they had done ; but that instead of receiving food and clothing, they should be paid for their labor in money. They were also exempted from all coercion except that of law. At the end of this year, they were at liberty to seek other situations and go into other employments ; but it was provided, that when an engagement of service had been made, the laborer was not allowed to leave the place nor the employer to dismiss him, without having given a month's notice. The object of this regulation was to prevent such changes as might arise from momentary passion.

As it might be expected that the negroes, from their aversion to field labor, would prefer the employment of porters, huxters, pedlars, etc., it was provided that

all persons, who act in these capacities, should receive a regular license from the government. Of course it is in the power of government to exclude them from these situations, so far as it may be thought expedient.

Idleness and vagrancy are prohibited by an act punishing with confinement in the house of correction, and hard labor, all such as are found to live without regular employment and have no visible means of subsistence.

The new people are excluded from bearing arms by a regulation, which raises the military forces from those ranks and employments in society, from which their situation in life excludes them.

Laws were also made to meet all those complaints and differences, which might be expected to arise between the employer and the laborer; and also for the speedy punishment of those petty frauds, thefts, and misdemeanors, which it was supposed would be the consequence of at once setting so large a number of slaves free.

These laws, which might at first be thought minute and vexatious, are easily and promptly executed by means of a numerous and vigilant police. Justices of the peace, constables, and subordinate officers, were appointed in large numbers, and stationed in every part of the island. Indeed two or three of the most respectable negroes were appointed as constables on every estate. Most of the difficulties are settled without a formal trial before a court of justice, and with but very little trouble. The more serious complaints, however, all go before a higher tribunal. About thirty officers

of police have a regular salary from the government ; the others receive a small fee from the parties who require their services. This arrangement is found amply sufficient to preserve the peace and good order of the island. The following extract from a proclamation of the Governor, Sir E. J. Macgregor, of the first of July 1834, will throw further light on the subject of this letter, and show the spirit in which the new system was introduced.

“ It hath seemed good to his Excellency the Governor, by and with the advice of his Majesty’s Privy Council, to call the serious attention of those, who are so soon to become free, to the following most important points. First, that their condition will be no longer that of reliance on their masters for food, house-room and clothing ; their new position will remove them from this close connection with their former owners, and they will henceforth have to depend for the necessaries of life, on the honest and industrious labor of their own hands.

“ Secondly, that whilst the utmost benefit of the laws, and encouragement from the owners of plantations will be given to those who labor industriously and live soberly and honestly where they are permitted to reside, the magistrates will be by law empowered to order to be taken up and brought to deserved punishment, all such as shall wander about in idleness, or attempt to make a living by robbery, theft or any dishonest means ; and the masters, who are required by the act just passed not only to establish unrestricted freedom,

but to let their steady, orderly, and reputable dependents remain in undisturbed possession of their present habitations or houses, for twelve months to come, may nevertheless avail themselves of the right, which the same act gives them, namely, to expel from their estates such as shall be guilty of insubordinate, quarrelsome, disorderly, or riotous behavior, or drunkenness, theft, trespass, or other gross delinquency.

“ Thirdly, that the obligations of free subjects of his Majesty the King, bind them to due obedience and loyal support to all who are here put in authority under the king, and with quiet submission to observe the laws of the land, and also to be ready to assist in suppressing and bringing to justice any evil disposed persons who may threaten to disturb the public peace.

“ Fourthly, that the said first of August having been, by a proclamation from his Excellency the Governor, ordered to be kept as a day of public thanksgiving to God for his past mercies, and of humble intercession for the continuance of his gracious care and favor, it is confidently expected, that the demeanor of those made free on that memorable occasion will be distinguished, by the temperance, moderation, and decorum, that should mark the rejoicing of a christian people, whilst the fear of offending that Almighty Being, whose power over the stormy wind and tempest, we are taught at that season of the year especially to acknowledge, will deter them from every excess displeasing to him, and endangering their own peace and safety.

“ Lastly, as these individuals have heretofore enjoyed



full liberty of conscience in serving God, and attending the means of grace afforded by the several ministers of the Gospel, who have long labored among them for their good, and who have made the most favorable representations of their civilization and fitness to enjoy the boon of freedom (which gratifying testimony was dutifully transmitted by the Governor, to be laid before his Majesty the King), so are they now solemnly called upon to remember and to maintain the conduct thus clearly pointed out to them in the Holy Scriptures :

“ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake : whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men : As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”

## LETTER V.

### ANTIGUA.—OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM OF FREEDOM.

On the arrival of the first of August—that day so fraught with hope and bright anticipation on one hand, and fear and anxious foreboding on the other—the mighty transition from slavery to freedom was made, in a manner, most becoming so serious and important a transaction, and most auspicious to the future well-being of the island. When the shackles of slavery were to be unlocked, and the immense boon of freedom was to be received by one part of the population, and the hearts of the other were trembling with feverish anxiety at the result, nothing could be more fitting, than that the attention of all should be directed to that great Being, who rules the stormy tempest, and “still the tumult of the people, and turns all hearts as the rivers of water are turned.” Accordingly, as has been already intimated, the first of August was set apart by public authority, to be observed throughout the island, as a day of public thanksgiving to God, for the signal blessings which he had bestowed, and of devout supplication for his special protection and guidance in the great enterprise which then filled all minds and all hearts. When the day arrived, the churches of all the different denominations in the island were opened, and were thronged by immense crowds of all ranks and

colors, who came gratefully to acknowledge to God the blessings, which they had received, and humbly to implore his continued favor.

The day thus auspiciously commenced, terminated in a manner most gratifying to the friends of freedom. The emancipated people, instead of becoming frantic with joy, in the possession of their new rights and privileges, and rioting in the ebullitions of ungoverned passion, as might naturally have been expected, retired from the places of public devotion to their little tenements, without the commission of a single outrage or the least disorderly conduct. The day was characterized by the stillness and solemnity of the Sabbath, rather than by the noise, and tumult, and intoxication, which usually, on such occasions, disgrace more intelligent and civilized communities.

During the first year, no material alteration in the course of things, took place. The freed people, who were now called laborers, remained with their former masters except a few, who were ejected from their places for disorderly conduct. The only difference was, that instead of being under the irresponsible authority of the master, they were subject to law administered by a magistrate, and received the compensation for their labor in money instead of clothing and provisions.

At the close of this year there were some changes, but much fewer than were anticipated. Some sought labor on different estates; others went from the country to the town, and a few left the island. But in a short time, very many of them returned to their former sit-

uations and employments, thus evincing the force of early attachments and habits, which, I have many reasons to believe, are uncommonly strong in the uncultivated mind of the negro. With the exception of two or three estates, where the negroes refused for a day or two to work, on account of an alleged insufficiency of wages, the most perfect order and tranquillity had prevailed down to the time when I visited the island. I hazard nothing in saying, that the people of Antigua are as free from any apprehensions of riot or insurrection, as is the most peaceable village in New England. The militia, which was frequently on duty during slavery and especially on the Christmas holidays, has not been called out for the purpose of preserving the public peace, since the day of emancipation. This single fact would indicate to a West Indian, a feeling of security, which was little known in the time of slavery.

It was a point of considerable difficulty and of great importance, to establish, at first, a proper rate of wages. It was desirable to adopt one, which should be permanent, or one, at least, which it should not be found necessary to lower, as such a change would no doubt create discontent. As no estate had been cultivated by free labor, and as the expenses of such cultivation were not known; and as the incomes of the estates, in consequence of the difference in the seasons, vary in no small degree in successive years, it was not easy to determine what rate the average returns of the estates would allow. It was also important, in order to prevent the temptation to change from one place to another,

to which it was supposed the negroes would be greatly inclined, that the wages should be uniform on all the plantations. Accordingly a consultation was held by the planters, and a price of labor, which it was thought would be equitable to both parties, was established, not by law, but by general consent. The effect of this measure, in promoting the contentment and regular industry of the laboring classes, has been exceedingly happy. There was at first, as I before intimated, a little dissatisfaction on the part of the negroes with their compensation; but they soon perceived that their demands would be unavailing, and they went quietly to their work.

The adult laborers on the estates receive in the currency of the island 10d. per day, which is, in our currency, about 11 cents—the weeding laborers, comprising the youth from 10 to 18 years of age, have 9d. or about 10 cents. The children, when they work, obtain a little compensation in provisions or something of the kind. The first rate domestics receive four dollars a month; and good mechanics a little more. The employer stimulates the laborers to punctuality and faithfulness, by deducting a small sum from their regular wages when they are absent or idle; but such deductions are always subject to the revision of a magistrate. But the most effectual stimulus to industry is job-work, a method by which the laborers often more than double their wages. This plan is also for the interest of the planter; inasmuch as he gets his work done in a shorter time and with less expense. I was told that the

negroes, when they labor in this way, often evince an energy of character and a power of effort, of which it had been supposed they were utterly incapable.

This is indeed almost the only case under the present arrangement, in which wages, considered as a stimulus to industry, have their full effect. As the negroes remain on the estates where they have worked all their lives under a different system, and as they all receive the same wages with little or no regard to their skill or strength, they naturally fall into the same rate of labor, to which they have always been accustomed. At any rate, they have no inducement to increase their efforts. It is only when their compensation depends on the amount of labor which they perform that they fully tax their energies; and then they are found to be quite different beings from what they were in slavery. Such unexpected developments of energy and skill surprize the planters; but the only inference which many of them make, is, that the negroes were not overworked in the time of slavery.

As one of the greatest evils apprehended from emancipation, was, that the negroes would not work, I deem it of the utmost importance to say, that, on those estates, which have conciliating and judicious managers, who give job-work in due proportion, there has been no falling off in labor. Such estates were never under better cultivation, and, in many cases, even with a diminished number of laborers. On some estates, where a different policy has been pursued, there has been a slight diminution. The truth is, all the planters have

endeavored to retain their gangs unbroken ; and the negroes, feeling secure of their situations, have had no motive to increased effort. But this state of things will not long continue. The planters, finding no difficulty in obtaining laborers, will cease to employ any but the more industrious ; and the others must quicken their pace or starve. This is the condition to which things are even now obviously tending. Skill and industry are beginning to be appreciated, and will soon receive their appropriate reward.

The two past years, in consequence of severe droughts, the crop of cane, and of course the demand for labor, was small, but I was repeatedly assured, that if the crops should be ever so great, they might be taken off without inconvenience ; and that no person would hesitate to commence any enterprise however arduous, from an apprehension that sufficient labor could not be obtained.

The hours of labor are from the rising to the setting of the sun, with an allowance of about two hours and a half for meals. The negroes, in a state of slavery, were accustomed to have either a part or the whole of Saturday, as a market day—this practice continues, but a corresponding deduction is made from their wages. The number of overseers and superintendents is the same, as it was formerly ; but fewer will be required, when the negroes become better acquainted with the present system.

The employment of machinery, such as the plough and the cart, is becoming more common. It has not

hitherto been used to any great extent, on account of the superabundance of laborers, who must be employed. By substituting animal strength for human, and by improving agricultural utensils, an immense amount of labor may be saved. At present, cane is transported from the fields to the mill on the backs of donkeys, dirt and manure are removed in trays or baskets on the heads of the negroes, and the ground is dug up and prepared for planting with an instrument, which very much resembles our stub-hoe. It is calculated that a pair of horses and a plough will do the work, in planting cane, of thirty-five men. The farmer may form some idea of the waste of labor in the West Indies, by supposing his lands to be all cultivated with Indian corn, and no agricultural implements allowed him, except a mule and pack-saddle, a wooden tray, and a stub-hoe. There is, indeed, much prejudice among the negroes against the introduction of new utensils. I was told of a singular instance of this kind in Antigua. A gentleman purchased a lot of wheel barrows, with the intention of having the negroes use them instead of trays in carrying out the manure ; but they not taking a fancy to the rolling part, loaded them, and mounted the whole on their heads. It is, however, scarcely necessary to say, how rapidly this prejudice will vanish with the progress of intelligence and enterprise.

It is quite obvious that, with the little pittance for wages which the negroes receive, they cannot participate very largely in the luxuries of life. It may appear to some incredible, that on so small a sum they



should be able to support themselves at all—the wages of an adult laborer on the estate being only about fifty five cents per week. It should, however, be recollected that, in addition to this sum, they have their medical attendance at the expense of the estate ; and also the use of their houses and a spot of ground, where they grow vegetables. Some privileges, which they enjoyed in slavery, such as cutting wood and grass, and keeping poultry and stock, they are now denied. But it is computed that their present wages, small as they are, amount to nearly twice the cost of their former allowance in food and clothing. It may also, be observed, that the expense of providing the absolute necessaries of life in that climate, is small. Fuel is not wanted except for cooking ; suitable clothing is light and cheap, and fruit and vegetables constitute no small part of the ordinary food.

Though a severe drought has greatly curtailed the resources of the negroes the two past years, yet an advancement is already perceptible in their dress, furniture, style of living, and in the general comforts of life. I was also informed that they generally manifest a desire to improve their condition—that they are endeavoring to get better houses and furniture, better clothing and food, and in every respect to imitate their superiors. If this improvement is not so great as the friends of freedom could wish ; yet it is such as fully to satisfy their reasonable expectations.

Nor need any fear be entertained, that the artificial desires and wants which prevail so much in more ad-

vanced communities, will not find their way among the new laboring class. Many supposed that the negro, averse to labor and contented with the coarsest fare, would sink down, as soon as he was allowed to follow his own inclinations, into idleness and beggary.

But it is found, that he not only wants the comforts and luxuries of life, but that he is willing to work for them; and that he shows no little shrewdness in turning his small resources to account in providing them. The danger at present is, not so much that he will aim too low, as that his desires will outstrip his means.

There has also been a perceptible improvement in the domestic habits of the emancipated people. The Moravian missionaries early attempted to extirpate the degrading custom of concubinage. They admitted none to their communion who upheld it by their example. As they had not themselves the legal right to solemnize marriages, such as wished to be united in matrimony appeared before them, and after declaring themselves man and wife, they were so registered in the records of the church, to which they are afterwards held amenable for their conduct in that relation. This ceremony served a long time as a substitute for a regular marriage; but about the year 1800, the Moravians, becoming dissatisfied with it and taking advantage of the favor which they had obtained in the island, assumed the responsibility of solemnizing the rite themselves.\* In 1811 or 1812, the Methodist Con-

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\* I regret that since emancipation, the missionaries have not been allowed to marry even the people of their own

ference in England passed an order directing their missionaries to exclude from their communion all persons, who were living in a state of concubinage. The Episcopal clergy seconded these efforts; and the result was a great improvement in the state of society.

Since slavery was abolished and they are at liberty so to do, it is more common for man and wife to live together; though I fear, that on account of old prejudices and habits, this practice will not soon become universal. The family ties also are growing stronger—a deeper interest is felt by parents in their children—better provision is made for their support and education, and domestic comfort and happiness are more highly appreciated. In all these respects, however, it must be acknowledged that the people are much nearer their former condition, than they are the one in which we could wish to see them; but still, the tendency is in the right direction, and a good degree of improvement is already manifest.

The efforts of the missionaries were by no means confined, in their effects, to the slaves. There is in all the West India islands, a large class of colored females, who are considered as having no character to gain or to lose; and who, consequently, became the ready instruments of vice. As soon as the practice of concubinage became disreputable, they were obliged to

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congregations. One of them informed me, that he had been obliged to aid, from his own narrow pittance, poor members of his church, in paying their marriage fee to one of the clergymen of the establishment. Such intolerance, it is to be hoped, will not long be continued,

abandon their former habits and seek more respectable connexions. Through them, the white population felt the change ; and the sentiments of the whole community have been greatly purified and elevated, at least compared with what they were, and with what they still are on most of the islands.

It would not appear from the criminal calendar, that the amount of crime in the island has diminished since emancipation, but rather increased. I was assured however that this increase was only apparent—that it was owing to the fact, that many of the crimes, which were formerly punished by the masters, now come before courts of justice and increase the criminal rolls. It was the general opinion that crime had diminished.

I visited the House of Correction at St. John's, which is the only place of punishment on the island ; and, through the politeness of the superintendent, was allowed, not only to see every part of the prison, but to inspect the books, in which the crimes and punishments were recorded. The offences were all of a trivial nature, such as vagrancy, idleness, stealing cane and grass—violating engagements of service, and ill treatment of employers. The punishment here was hard work in breaking up stone in the yard, to Macadamize the streets, or labor on some public work in the vicinity. The tread mill was sometimes used in cases of obstinacy. I saw no one sentenced to remain here more than three months. The following is the number that was confined here on the first of April in each of the three years since 1834.

First of April 1835	.	.	.	46
“ “ 1836	.	.	.	52
“ “ 1837	.	.	.	82

In addition to these, there were ten criminals in jail awaiting their trial.

It will appear from the above statements, that the amount of crime on the island, considering the population and the circumstances of the case, is trivial, and that the punishments are not severe.

Another topic of importance is the condition of the poor. By the act of emancipation, the slaves who were unable to labor, became entitled to a support from the estates where they belonged, till some other provision should be made by law. Those, who have since become poor, have no such claim. It is now expected, that parents will support their children while young, and that children will aid their aged and infirm parents. To this no objection is made on the part of the freed people; but still all the poor cannot find in this way an adequate maintenance. To supply this deficiency, various institutions have been established. Of this character is the Daily Meal's Society at St. John's; the principal object of which is to furnish food to the poor; though, in some cases, they are also lodged and clothed. The day that I visited the asylum, eighty two persons received their dinner gratuitously; and the cost of the whole was but 12s. sterling.

But the most effectual and useful institutions for aiding the poor are the Friendly Societies. They at once accomplish the purpose of a Savings Bank, and pro-

mote morality and industry. Each member deposits a small sum every month ; by which he becomes entitled to assistance in sickness and in old age. Many societies of this kind have been formed in different parts of the island ; and are under the control of the various religious denominations. They are designed especially for the negroes ; and as immoral persons are denied the privilege of joining them, they operate as a strong inducement to sobriety and good conduct. In certain cases, individuals who are not members, receive relief from them. I give the number of subscribers and the receipts for three years of one of these societies, which belongs to the Moravian church at St. John's.

Number of Subscribers,	1834	.	.	987
“	“	1835	.	1868
“	“	1836	.	2020
Amount of Receipts,	1834	£520.	17s.	10½d.
do.	1835	839.	14s.	6½d.
do.	1836	1021.	11s.	3d.

It appears from this statement, that there has been a gradual increase in the number of subscribers, and in the amount of subscriptions each year since emancipation took place. The same is true of most of the others. By these and other means, the poor of the island are pretty well provided for ; though there was more or less suffering during the severe drought of last season.

It now remains to illustrate, by a few details, the effects of emancipation upon the cultivation and prosperity of the island. It was supposed, that the culti-

vation of sugar would decline, in consequence of a diminution of labor; but this has not been the case.

The planters grow fewer potatoes, yams, etc., for the negroes, than they did under the old system; but it is because they find sugar cane more profitable.

The testimony was most ample, that on the whole, the present system is not more expensive than the former. The answer which I generally received to my inquiries on this point, was, the expense of cultivating estates under the present system, is about the same that it was under the former; possibly a little less; certainly not greater. The truth of this statement was confirmed by an inspection of the records of several estates, in which an account of the expenses under the two systems was given.

When emancipation took place, the planters intended to give a rate of wages which would make the expense of the two systems nearly equal. It was found upon calculation, that the average cost of feeding and clothing the negroes, was about thirty-three cents per week. But, as under the present system, none receive wages except such as labor, it was supposed that the rate established which I have already given, would afford the negroes an allowance fully equal to what they received in slavery. And they were not mistaken; but it is the opinion of the planters that they shall soon be able to give more; and it is certainly very desirable. For, though the negroes add a little to their resources by job-work and in other ways, still their means of living are exceedingly scanty, and altogether insuffi-

cient to support them in a state of civilization. It was, perhaps, better for them to receive at first low wages, as they would feel the necessity of labor, and would more naturally form industrious and economical habits. But with the progress of things, they will acquire skill, as well as industry ; and their labor will eventually be worth more to the planter. With a corresponding increase in their wages, they may gradually improve their condition ; otherwise they must remain what they still are, a degraded and half civilized people.

It is allowed that more tact and greater knowledge of human nature, are required to manage an estate under the present system, than were necessary under the former. Indeed, the income on different estates, depends in no small degree on the character of the proprietor or manager. On four or five estates, where the negroes were treated with uncommon severity, and had become strongly prejudiced against the managers, they abandoned their situations as soon as the law would allow, and sought employment on other plantations. These estates have suffered, from not being able to obtain a sufficient number of laborers, even though the former managers had been dismissed. But in all cases, it requires not a little address to humor the ignorance and caprices of the negroes, so as to secure their confidence and a steady and cheerful industry.

This kind of tact is a lesson, which slavery has no tendency to teach ; and it is not surprising that some of the masters have been found deficient. Indeed one of the greatest difficulties in emancipation, is the pre-



vailing disposition of the planters to severity and coercion, and their inability to address and treat a slave as a human being. These circumstances have no doubt checked the progress of the new system; yet even under these disadvantages, we have experimental proof that in a pecuniary point of view, it is superior to the former.

We have another striking illustration of the successful operation of the new system, in the advanced price of real estate, and in the increasing enterprise and prosperity of the island. Some have said, that the estates alone are worth as much now, as both the estates and the slaves were ten years ago. This is true, if we estimate their value by their returns, and the annual expense of cultivation; and this may eventually be the price which they will command; but at present they are not sold for so much. Before emancipation, it was almost impossible to sell real estate at any rate; but it is now easily disposed of at an advanced price of fifteen or twenty per cent. Some poor estates, which had been abandoned under the old system because the incomes did not meet the expenses, have been again brought into cultivation under the new. Commerce and enterprise have also greatly revived; permanent investments are more common; public improvements are projected, and an impulse is given to business of every kind. To these sure indications of increasing confidence in the stability of things, I may add the cheerful animation which pervades all classes of society. The joy and quickened sensibility of a people,

who have escaped some great calamity, or achieved some mighty conquest, are everywhere visible.

This improvement, in the financial concerns of the island, is not to be ascribed exclusively to the successful operation of the new system ; though this is without doubt the principal cause. Two others have had an influence. The first is, a final adjustment of the great question of abolition. The agitation, which this subject created, had increased to a perfect fever. The planters saw that a revolution was before them ; but of its nature or extent they could form no definite opinion. In this state of things, the value of property sunk ; but has since risen even above its former level. Any decision of the great question would doubtless have had the same effect, though in a less degree. The second cause is, the compensation fund received from the imperial treasury. This went to liquidate the immense debts, which pressed as an incubus on the industry and enterprise of the island. With the new order of things, many of the estates, relieved from their embarrassments, may be said to have commenced a new existence. The dispositions of most of the planters towards the emancipated people are friendly. Still, however, the admirable policy which the assembly pursued, in conferring immediate freedom on the slaves, was probably much more the result of self interest, than of humane feeling. But it is gratifying to observe its happy effect, in conciliating the confidence and good will of both parties ; and, although there is much degradation, and I fear considerable oppression which yet

call for relief, the way is obviously prepared for a new and more happy formation of society.

The prejudice which exists in the West Indies against color is much less than it is in the United States. One great barrier, therefore, which prevents the negro here from rising in society, the emancipated people will not very sensibly feel. As I have already intimated, the free colored and black population of Antigua, have, for several years, enjoyed the same municipal rights and immunities as the white. In civil affairs and in the transactions of business there is no distinction. By the act of emancipation, the freed people are admitted to the same standing; and may now fill any office from a seat in the assembly down to that of a rural constable on the estates.

There is indeed a prejudice in Antigua, which excludes people of color, and of course Africans, from social intercourse with the higher classes of society. Nor is pure white and mixed blood often united in matrimony. Public sentiment will not allow this, or, at least, regards it with jealousy. One of the Methodist ministers, however, a few months since, married a colored lady; but the measure did not meet with approbation, especially in the higher ranks of society. It was obvious that a change was taking place in the feelings of the community on this subject; but what the result will be, it is impossible to predict.

## LETTER VI.

### ANTIGUA.—RELIGION AND EDUCATION.

THE two remaining topics, which relate to Antigua are religion and education. They are both important, but religion is particularly so; as it has been by far the most efficient means in preparing the way for emancipation. On this point, it may be desirable to adduce more formal testimony. In reply to the question, which I put to Dr. Nugent, the speaker of the house: 'Have any evil consequences arisen directly or indirectly from giving religious instruction,' he said: "None at all; but on the contrary the greatest possible benefits. It has been the great instrument of preparing the slaves for freedom. Some prejudice was at one time entertained against the Methodists, but it has subsided." I will also give an extract from a communication prepared by a joint committee of the two houses of the assembly, on the question of immediate emancipation, to the government at home. "Moreover, it has been the policy of our island, placing no impediment at any time in the way of the most perfect religious toleration and security, to civilize, instruct, and improve the negro race. Whatever may have been the case in this respect in any other of the West India colonies, as pointedly adverted to in Mr. Secretary Stanley's despatch, happily we and our forefathers at

least, to use the language of the great apostle, have not closed 'the door of utterance' to any who might seek to unfold the mystery of Christ. The number of teachers of religion, places of divine worship, and schools in operation, can scarcely, we apprehend, be surpassed in any rural district of like extent in the king's dominions." As a further testimony to the importance in which the assembly held religious instruction, I may add, it has recently made a very handsome grant to the Wesleyans towards the erection of a new house of worship at St. John's. But, in order to form an opinion of what has been accomplished by religion and education, it is necessary to present the two subjects in greater detail.

There are three religious denominations at Antigua, Episcopalians, Moravians, and Wesleyan Methodists. Episcopacy, as in England, is the established religion; and comprises the greater part of the wealth and intelligence of the island. The Moravians devote their attention exclusively to the instruction of the black population; and are supported by funds received from England and Germany. They have had establishments in the island about eighty years; and have been the efficient and unwavering friends of the slaves. The Wesleyans are sent out at the expense of a Methodist missionary society in England; but their congregations are collected from all classes in society.

The island is divided into six parishes. In each of them, the Episcopalians have a church and a rector. They have also two chapels of ease and two curates;

so that, including an archdeacon and one other ordained minister, who has no pastoral charge, there are ten clergymen belonging to the establishment.

For the last ten years, the slaves have had free access to their places of worship. They occupy the aisles, the galleries, and the part of the church most distant from the desk. The Rev. Mr. H.— of St. John's, has 1200 emancipated people belonging to his society; 200 of whom are communicants in his church. It is his practice every Sabbath after the morning service, to meet this part of his congregation by themselves; to call over the roll in order to know who are absent; to recapitulate the sermon in the simplest language; and to make a special application of it to them. I was present on one of these occasions. He commenced the exercise with an appropriate, extemporaneous prayer, and impressed the truths of the Gospel on the minds of his unlettered hearers in a very forcible manner. The appearance of this part of the congregation in the house of God, was becoming. Their dress, as might be expected, exhibited the characteristic marks of a people just emerging from ignorance into a state of civilization; but, though not particularly pleasing to a cultivated taste, it was not offensive to decency or propriety. There were two Sabbath schools connected with this church designed especially for the colored and black children; and nearly two hundred were present. Mr. H. is a most worthy pastor; and his unwearied efforts for the good of all classes of his people deserve the highest praise. The

other clergy of the established church possess, I was informed, a kindred spirit ; and if so, their labors must have a most happy influence in the present state of things.

The United Brethren commenced their labors in Antigua in 1756 ; and have been gradually increasing, in numbers and influence, till the present time. They have five establishments in different parts of the island, and twenty-two missionaries ; of whom eleven are ordained to preach the Gospel. More than one third of the emancipated people belong to their denomination, and regularly attend public worship. Their number of communicants is 5,113, giving an average to each church of more than a thousand members. They have Sabbath schools, in which about 900 children receive instruction. The Moravian congregations are divided for the purpose of receiving instruction into three classes—candidates for baptism—candidates for communion—and communicants. Each class is put on a prescribed course of instruction, and is met by the pastor once a week to receive explanations of the lesson, and to be examined. On the Sabbath the whole congregation meet together. The entire course of instruction is simple ; and is exceedingly well adapted to the capacities and circumstances of the people. I attended one Sabbath their public worship at St. John's. The audience, on that occasion, was composed principally of persons who had been admitted to the communion the past year. The address to them from their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Harvey, who is

distinguished no less by the endowments of his mind than by his unaffected piety, was admirable. The attire and appearance of the assembly were truly such, as became the house of God. For simplicity and neatness of dress, and for general propriety of manners, I have rarely seen a more unexceptionable congregation; and it was composed almost entirely of emancipated slaves. This was no doubt the result of great effort on the part of the missionaries; for only a few of the people could either read or write; but they had been taught to respect the house and worship of God, and not to appear there in an unsuitable garb. All classes in Antigua bear testimony to the unblemished excellence of the Moravians, to their meek and consistent piety—to their simplicity of purpose—their self denial and patience in doing good—and their great usefulness in the island.

I am unable to say precisely when the Wesleyan Methodists established their mission in Antigua. It was, however, more than forty years ago. They have five ordained ministers besides several local preachers, and seven regular places of public worship. More than 8,000 people are under their charge. Their Sabbath Schools are full and flourishing. They divide their congregation and instruct them in classes, in nearly the same way as the Moravians. Over each class is appointed a leader, whose duty it is to meet the class every week, and inquire into the spiritual condition of the members. It is very manifest that their system, as well as that of the Moravians, while it requires great effort on their part, is extremely efficacious in its results,



Thus it appears, that for the accommodation and religious instruction of about 37,000 souls, there are twenty-six ordained ministers, and eighteen regular houses for public worship, besides several other places where occasional preaching is enjoyed. This is as good a supply as is generally found even in the northern parts of the United States. I am happy to say that the most perfect harmony and good feeling prevail among the three denominations; and that the clergy are encouraged in the faithful discharge of their duties by witnessing gratifying results of their labors.

It is generally thought that the minds of the negroes are peculiarly susceptible to religious impressions. However this may be, it is certain that they have a high regard for their spiritual teachers. Many of them would rather incur the censure of their master, than that of their minister. They also consider it disreputable not to belong to some religious society. The Sabbath is ostensibly well observed at St. John's; I believe better than in any other town of equal population with which I am acquainted. Still, however, the religious teachers in Antigua are not without peculiar trials and discouragements. A few of them are suggested in the following extract from a Report, prepared by the clergy of the Established Church, and published in April, 1836, with which I close this subject.

“The attendance of the newly freed people at the several churches and chapels in the island has been throughout the year tolerably satisfactory. It cannot

be denied that it might have been more numerous and more regular. Beyond doubt, the people require, as much as ever, if not more than ever, the faithful pastor's vigilant eye to look diligently after them, to keep an account of their attendance at the house of God, and to follow them to their own cottages in the week with the everlasting Gospel in his hands.

Three hundred and twenty-nine marriages have been solemnized in the several parishes during the past year. There is great room for improvement in the domestic peace and economy, the mutual society, help, and comfort, to which the parties contracting the solemn engagements of matrimony have pledged themselves."

The government of Antigua has made no provision, as yet, for the support and extension of schools. They all belong to the different religious denominations, and are under the superintendence of their respective clergy. They are maintained, principally, by funds received from England through various channels of benevolence, which are, however, in some degree augmented by contributions from the island. The clergy are the main support of these schools; they collect the funds, establish the schools, procure teachers, and encourage, by every means in their power, the children to attend. They, however, have the sanction and general approval of the planters, and in many cases their assistance.

The following is a summary of the schools in 1836, under the superintendance of the clergy of the Es-

tablished church for the instruction of the poor without distinction of color or condition.

4 National Schools, . . .	437 Scholars.
21 Infant do. . . .	917 “
8 Noon and Evening, do. . .	141 “
9 Sunday do. . . .	500 “
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Total 42	1995*

Those members only of the Sabbath Schools are included in the 500 who do not attend others. The whole number in the Sabbath Schools is much greater than 500.

It will be observed that a majority of the Schools are of the Infant class. They are so called, not because they are designed exclusively for small children, but because only the first rudiments of education are taught in them; writing and arithmetic being confined principally to the National Schools. The infant schools receive children of all ages, but rarely give instruction in any thing except orthography and reading. The noon and evening schools are found on the estates, and are designed for those who labor during the day. These schools generally under the instruction of colored and black females, many of whom are by no means equal to the task. It is at present difficult to obtain competent teachers; but as education advances, such will no doubt be furnished in sufficient numbers.

I visited several of the schools, and among them an Infant School on the Glebe near St. John's Rectory,

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\* The number in 1833, was 2017.

comprising about 80 children. It was under the charge of a negress, and appeared as well as I have been accustomed to see similar ones in this country. The scholars, also, in the National boys' school at St. John's had made very respectable progress in the elements of education, but in most of the schools there is a great want of systematic and thorough instruction.

Connected with each of the Moravian establishments, there is a school ; in all of which instruction is given to 483 scholars. Besides these, they have Infant and Adult schools on different estates throughout the island.

The Wesleyans have 7 Sunday Schools, 16 Infant Schools, and 20 night schools. They all comprise 2,690 scholars.\* Thus it appears that all the schools, belonging to the different religious denominations, give instruction to 5,168 scholars. In addition to these, there are many private schools on the estates, which are supported either by the proprietor, or by the parents of the children.

I was informed that the schools are so distributed as to be accessible to every family ; and that there is not a child on the island, who may not, if he chooses, enjoy their advantages. In point of fact, though no compulsion is used, most of those who are of a suitable age attend. I was happy to learn that there was an increasing desire on the part of parents to educate their children ; and that they often make commendable sacrifices to accomplish the object. And what, perhaps, affords still more encouragement, is that the

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\* The number in 1833, was 1882.

adults themselves frequently manifest a strong desire for knowledge. In such cases, they improve their leisure moments during the day, in learning to read, and are often seen in the highway and fields with a book in their hands. I must, however, add, that in many instances, there is a want of interest on the subject; and that numbers of children, through the prejudice or neglect of their parents, live in idleness, who should be compelled to attend school.

In concluding the part of my report, which relates to Antigua, I wish to advert, for a few moments, to the nature and amount of preparation, which existed there, for immediate and entire emancipation. I have already stated the reasons which led to the adoption of this plan, in preference to the Apprenticeship system; and from the details given in this letter and the two preceding, an opinion may be formed in what degree both the masters and slaves were prepared for it. I allude distinctly though briefly to this point, on account of the bearing, which the example of this island may have upon the adoption of a similar plan in other places.

In the first place, a great relaxation of sentiment in regard to slavery had taken place in the minds of the planters. This is in truth the first step towards any form of emancipation; and is quite as necessary a preparation for the master, as are instruction and moral principle for the slave. When the slave becomes free, he is elevated to higher ground and acts on higher principles. He is no longer to be governed like the brute, entirely by fear; other principles of his nature

now begin to operate. To meet this change in his character and condition, a corresponding change is necessary in the treatment of him. He cannot be controlled by coercion as he once was; but must be approached and addressed as a man, possessing all the instincts, and passions, and endowments of our common nature. This power is not at once acquired by a person, who has known no other method of enforcing his commands, than the whip. Such an one cannot instantly change the deportment of an absolute and tyrannical master, into that of a kind and conciliating employer. He cannot, at once, dismiss the feeling of his superiority and treat his slave, I will not say as an equal, but as a laborer, whose service he cannot compel, but must conciliate with kindness, and purchase at a stipulated price. This is a capacity in which he has not been accustomed to act; and if the change from slavery to freedom should be instantaneous, he would in all probability, be found as little prepared for it as the slave.

But in Antigua, the way has been preparing many years for the transition. A person, who had long resided there, informed me, that the efforts of Wilberforce and his coadjutors perceptibly modified the views, which were entertained of slavery in that island. From that time, the slaves have been treated with greater lenity and kindness—their character and comfort have been more regarded—and their wants better supplied. Long before emancipation, solitary confinement had been substituted, to a very great extent, for corporeal

punishment ; and when this was inflicted, it was not common to give more than six or eight lashes. Masters were in the habit of referring cases to magistrates, which they had power to decide and punish themselves, and such as were guilty of undue severity were presented at the Court of Sessions. A gentleman told me, that on the estate where he resides, and which has 274 negroes, no driver had been allowed to carry a whip for 15 years, and such was the general practice on the island. This relaxation of sentiment and conduct on the part of the masters, had produced a corresponding change in the feelings of the slaves ; so that instead of the fear and jealousy which usually exist between them, and forever keeps them at variance, mutual acts of kindness had produced a mutual confidence and good will ; and when the bands of slavery were destroyed, there were other and better ties to hold them together. This circumstance, in some measure, accounts for the fact, that when slavery was abolished, so few left their former masters ; as it will be recollected that on four or five plantations, where a different policy had been pursued, the slaves at once abandoned their places and sought better employers. This may be considered a specimen of what would have been general, if a similar state of feeling had existed all over the island.

In the second place, much had been done to prepare the slaves for freedom by the inculcation of moral and religious principles, and by the establishment of schools. As I have already remarked, the Moravians commenced their mission in the island about eighty years ago, and

have persevered, with their characteristic energy and benevolence, "through good report and evil report." The Wesleyans have long been efficient fellow-laborers in the same enterprise; and for the last twelve or fifteen years the established church has espoused the cause with a very commendable zeal. From these dates, it appears that the efforts for the religious instruction of the slaves commenced long anterior to emancipation; and, in point of fact, they have not been very materially increased since that event.

As to their agency in accomplishing it, I need say nothing in addition to the remarks already made. It was the uniform testimony of people in Antigua, that religion had been the most efficient cause in preparing the way for freedom—that it had taught the slaves a respect for the laws both of God and man; and had thrown over them restraints, which are of vital importance in their present condition. So that emancipation, instead of introducing religious instruction, has itself entered upon the highway, which religion had prepared.

For a long time the missionaries met with great opposition. If they were not persecuted, they were treated with neglect and often with contempt. At last, however, they gained over public sentiment to their favor, and, for many years, have not only been allowed to pursue their labors without molestation, but have had the sanction and encouragement of the planters.

According to the best information I could obtain, the credit of introducing Sabbath schools into Antigua be-



longs to the Methodists. They were commenced in 1813, and soon led the way to the establishment of other schools. From that time, the Methodists have labored in the cause of education with indefatigable industry and increasing success. As we have already seen, the other denominations have lent their aid, and are now but little if any less distinguished for their zeal. Thus religion found in education a powerful auxiliary; and they labored hand in hand for many years, in preparing the slaves for the immense blessing which they have since received. My object in these remarks is not to make the impression, that the entire work of education and religious instruction was finished previous to emancipation; but that it was begun and in successful operation, long before that event; not that an equal amount of improvement elsewhere is indispensable to immediate emancipation. On this last point I intend at present to express no opinion; but it is desirable that the facts in the case of Antigua should be perfectly understood.

In the third place, the manner in which the slaves received their allowances and disposed of them, had taught them how to manage their own concerns, and to provide for their wants in a state of freedom. They rarely consumed all the provisions which their masters allowed them; but carried a part to market and bartered them for others. They did the same with their cloth. Many of the vegetables also which they raised, they sold; and with the little sums of money procured in this way and in others, they purchased a variety of

things for their comfort and enjoyment. Thus they became acquainted with the prices of different articles of food and clothing, and acquired no little skill in disposing of their commodities. This knowledge is now of the utmost importance to them, as they receive their wages in money, with which they go to town and purchase their clothing and the necessaries of life. It is said, that no people better understand the value of what they have to sell or wish to buy, or manifest more shrewdness in making a bargain, than the negroes. This characteristic, however, is not peculiar to the negroes of Antigua. It exists perhaps in an equal degree throughout all the West India islands.

In the last place, the success of immediate emancipation in Antigua, is to be ascribed, in no small degree, to the fact, that it was a voluntary measure on the part of the planters. It was not a thing which was forced upon them ; but a plan of their own. They, therefore, felt a concern in its success, not only as it involved their interests, but as being a scheme of their own devising. They had ventured to decline the system recommended by Parliament, and to propose another, which they thought preferable. With them, therefore, solely rested the responsibility of its success. This secured an unanimity of feeling and a coöperation in action, which could scarcely have been expected under other circumstances ; and which contributed greatly to the success of the experiment. In addition to this, the slaves saw their indebtedness to the planters for even a greater boon than Parliament had proposed.

This awakened their gratitude and inspired them with confidence in the kind intentions of the planters, and prepared both parties for reciprocal good will and fidelity, when the shackles of slavery were unloosed.

I may add, in conclusion, that the enterprise has been under the guidance of wise and humane counsellors. Among these, I am bound to mention in particular Dr. Thomas Nugent, a gentleman, to whom I have several times alluded, and who was Speaker of the House at the time the Emancipation Bill passed. He is equally distinguished as a philosopher, a philanthropist, and a statesman. I am greatly indebted to him not only for ample and matured information which he gave me, but for his personal kindness and hospitality. He is universally respected in the island; and is the man to whom I was referred by all parties, as not only having had the greatest influence in accomplishing safely the work of emancipation, but as being most able to furnish accurate and satisfactory information on the subject. It gives me the greatest pleasure to bear this testimony, because he has conferred the same favor on others, who have visited the island upon a similar errand.

## LETTER VII.

### BARBADOES.—APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

HAVING considered the plan of immediate and entire emancipation, and its practical operation in Antigua, we now proceed to Barbadoes, where the apprenticeship system was adopted, and is now in force.

Barbadoes is one of the most interesting colonies in the West Indies ; comprising an extent of 166 square miles, and giving support and employment to a population of 101,298. Like Antigua, it has a government of its own ; and in soil, modes of cultivation, and staple productions, it also bears a striking resemblance to that island. The slave population in 1834, as given by the Commissioners of Compensation, was 82,807 ; and the proportion of the £20,000,000 which the colony received, was £1,721,345, 19s. 7d., affording an average compensation for each slave of about £25.

I am happy to say, that I found here among all classes, from the governor and bishop down to the humblest laborer, the greatest degree of civility and frankness in giving information relative to the present state of things—a pleasing indication of the prosperity of the island, which was abundantly corroborated by subsequent inquiries.

The striking analogy, in the most important circumstances, between this island and Antigua, affords a fa-

avorable opportunity for drawing a comparison, between the two methods of emancipation adopted in these colonies. With the exception of religious instruction, the slaves here appear to have been nearly as well prepared for freedom, as those in Antigua ; and many circumstances, as well here as there, combined to give success to the experiment. But before we proceed any further, it is necessary to give a general description of the apprenticeship system.

This system is founded on the great Act of Abolition passed by the British Parliament. It has, however, received different modifications in the several islands, adapted to local circumstances and to the peculiar opinions of the people. But these modifications are slight ; and the system in the case of every island, has been submitted to the examination and approval of the government at home. The following may serve as a general outline of the plan.

1. After a registration was made of the slaves in the respective islands, with their employments and their owners, they were divided into three great classes. The first consists of such apprenticed laborers as are attached to the soil, and are employed in agriculture upon the estates of their owners ; the second of such as are not attached to the soil and are employed in agriculture upon lands not belonging to their owners ; and the third of all such as are not included in the two preceding classes. The third class is composed principally of domestics and of mechanics, who labor in the towns. The two former classes are called *prae-*

*dial apprenticed laborers*, and the latter *non-praedral apprenticed laborers*.

2. The apprenticeship of non-praedral laborers will terminate on the first of August 1838 ; and that of praedral laborers on the first of August 1840.

3. The praedral laborers are obliged to render forty-five hours' labor each week.

This may be distributed equally through the six days or may be rendered in less time according to the regulations of the island, or the agreement of the parties. At Barbadoes, and, I believe, at most of the other islands, the apprentices work nine hours during five days of the week, and have the whole of Saturday at their own disposal. They work from sunrise to sunset, with such intermissions for their meals, as will reduce the hours of labor to nine. All the week, except these forty-five hours, they have to themselves, either to cultivate their own grounds, to market their provisions, or to perform job-work, according to their inclinations and interests. The labor of the non-praedral class, being such as not to admit of curtailment without great inconvenience to their employers, the term of their apprenticeship, as an equivalent for their more unremitted service, will expire two years sooner than that of the praedral class. Both of these classes, the one in 1838 and the other in 1840, are declared to be absolutely and forever free.

4. The apprenticed laborers are entitled to the same clothing, provisions, and medical attendance, and to the same privileges and immunities as belonged to them

in a state of slavery. They dwell in the same houses, and cultivate the same lands, which they had previously occupied; but in many cases they are not allowed to keep stock at the expense of the estates.

5. Those, who are entitled to the services of the apprentices, have a right by law to discharge them before the period of their apprenticeship expires; but, in such cases, they become liable for their maintenance during that time, if they are not able to support themselves.

6. On the other hand, the apprentices even without the consent, or against the will of their masters, become free upon the payment of such a sum, as appraisers appointed by the government for the purpose, shall order.

7. No apprenticed laborer can be taken from the island; and no praedial apprentice can be removed from the estate to which he is attached, without the consent of one or more of the special justices; which consent can in no case be given, if the change would be the means of breaking up any of the nearer family ties, or would be injurious to the health or welfare of the laborers.

8. All children under six years of age on the first of August 1834, and all which should afterwards be born of apprenticed laborers, were declared free; and are to be exclusively under the control of their parents and dependent on them for support. If the parents are unable, or neglect to provide for them, they are liable to be apprenticed to the persons entitled to the services of their mothers. In point of fact, very few are

thus apprenticed, on account of the strong repugnance, felt by the parents, to placing their children under the authority of their former masters. Such apprenticeship, however, when it is entered into, will expire when the child is twenty-one years of age.

9. The master has no power whatever to coerce or punish an apprentice, under a penalty, for the first offence of £5 currency, or about sixteen dollars, and imprisonment if the offence is aggravated; and if it is repeated, the apprentice may be discharged from his service.

10. The authority, which formerly belonged to the master, of coercion and punishment, is now vested in a class of magistrates, called special justices. This is a very important part of the system; as its success depends in no small degree upon the ability and influence of those who hold this office. They are appointed by the king or by the governor, under his sanction, and are not allowed to have any pecuniary interests in the island. The most of them are gentlemen from England, many of whom have held offices either in the army or navy, and are persons of intelligence and respectability. They at first received a salary of £300, which has since been raised to £450. The great object, in the appointment of special justices, was to have a class of magistrates entirely disconnected from the prejudices and interests of the master on the one hand, and of the apprentice on the other, who might adjust their difficulties on the principles of law and equity, and see that the intentions of parliament, in regard to the general plan, should be fully carried into execution.



11. It is the duty of the special justices to examine all complaints, which arise between the masters and the apprentices ; and their authority is intended to be a full and complete substitute for that of the master. If the master is, in any respect, dissatisfied with the conduct of his apprentice, instead of inflicting punishment himself, it is incumbent on him to report the offence with the evidence to a special justice, who summons the person accused, and after hearing both parties, passes sentence according to the merits of the case. On the other hand, the apprentice has an equal right to complain of any grievance from his master, and the magistrate is obliged to examine and decide the difficulty in the same manner. It is also the duty of the special justice, to examine and enforce all contracts, either in respect to labor or to any thing else, which are made by the master and the apprentice ; and to punish a violation of them on either side. The jurisdiction of the special magistrates embraces only such questions, as arise from the peculiar relation which exists between masters and their apprentices ; and does not extend to causes which are cognizable at the courts of justice. The special justices either visit the estates at regular periods, for the purpose of examining and adjusting all difficulties, or they meet the parties on certain days, at their own offices, or some other appointed place.

The several islands are divided into a greater or less number of districts according to their extent and population, and each district is assigned to a special magis-

trate. Here his jurisdiction, so far as the apprentices and their employers are concerned, is complete ; but he is subject to impeachment for any violation of duty. He is also obliged to make out periodical returns to be deposited in the archives of the colony, of all punishments inflicted by his authority, in which must be specified the offences, the names of the parties, and the evidence on which the sentence was passed.

12. The greater part of the offences committed by the apprentices are of a trivial nature, such as petty thefts, indolence, tardiness at work, carelessness, and insolent language to their employers. As a punishment for such offences, the special magistrate compels them to work for their employer a certain number of extra hours in the week—in Barbadoes never more than nine, and in Jamaica not more than fifteen. If these offences are often repeated or otherwise aggravated, the apprentices are sentenced to the House of Correction, where they are whipped, put in solitary confinement, worked on the tread wheel, or in the penal gang on the highways, according to the nature and aggravation of the crime. Females, however, are exempted from punishment with the whip. They are put in solitary confinement, and are worked on the tread mill, and in the penal gang with the men. In looking over the apprentice code of Barbadoes, I saw no punishment within the jurisdiction of a special magistrate, which exceeded thirty-nine lashes or a year's imprisonment. In Jamaica he may sentence to six month's imprisonment and fifty lashes.

13. If the apprentices make frivolous complaints, they are liable to a slight punishment. They are not allowed to bear arms or to hold any civil office of any importance. Constables, however, are appointed from their number on the several estates, whose duty it is to arrest and bring before the special justices, all culprits. It may be remarked that the apprentice in addition to suffering the sentences inflicted by the magistrate, is obliged to make up to his employer the loss of time, during his confinement in prison ; and if, on any account, he should absent himself from work for any great length of time, the special magistrate has power to prolong his term of service, for the same period, after the legal expiration of his apprenticeship.

## LETTER VIII.

### BARBADOES.—OPERATION OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

IN the remarks, which I have to make upon the state of things in Barbadoes, I must be more concise and general ; otherwise I should be obliged to repeat much that I have said in relation to Antigua.

It is generally acknowledged, as I have already suggested, that the Apprenticeship System has succeeded better in Barbadoes, than in any other island. This is not owing so much to any peculiar adaptation, which it might be supposed to have to this island, as to the improved state of society, and to the general preparation for the change, which existed here when it went into operation.

There is a greater number of resident proprietors here, than in any other West India colony. These, usually, possess much more weight of character, and incomparably more humane feeling, than the hirelings, whom they usually employ in their absence ; and when they are disposed, they can do much to mitigate and improve the condition of their dependents. The beautiful country-seats, and the high cultivation in the vicinity of Bridgetown, remind one continually of the suburbs of the large towns in England, presenting a very striking contrast in taste and comfort to most

other towns in the West Indies. - This state of general improvement has an immense influence, not only on the comfort, but on the character of the slaves. For even when uneducated, they participate very perceptibly in the refinement and civilization, which prevail around them ; and the difference in the intelligence and manners of slaves, who live in refined and cultivated families, and of those who occupy less favorable situations, is as apparent, as that between a city gentleman and a country rustic.

Barbadoes was also fortunate in having, at the time of emancipation, a governor of great decision and energy of character, who gave, at first, a happy direction to things ; and used his influence to allay prejudice, and to secure an acquiescence in the new system. The gentleman, to whom I allude, is Sir Lionel Smith, who is now successfully filling the same office in Jamaica. The present governor, also, possessing great firmness and good sense, combined with kindness of feeling and urbanity of manners, is exceedingly well qualified to remove remaining difficulties, and to complete the enterprise.

There is another circumstance, which has had great influence, not only at Barbadoes, but on the moral and religious condition of the whole British West Indies. I allude to the establishment of two Episcopal sees in 1825 ; the one comprising Jamaica, and the other Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands. The present bishop of Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, the Right Rev. William H. Coleridge, D. D. is a man of great

strength and energy of character ; and, by his untiring efforts and zeal, has done much to build up the waste places and to elevate the tone of religious sentiment in his diocese. He has secured for religion at least an external respect and observance, which it was far from enjoying, when he entered upon his office. He has enlarged the number of the inferior clergy, and given respectability and efficiency to their labors ; so that both their numbers and their usefulness have greatly increased. He is also the zealous patron of schools for all classes, and has procured from England large contributions for their support. As he resides at Barbadoes, his influence is felt there in an eminent degree, and to him and the clergy who labor with him, is the island not a little indebted for its present quiet and prosperous condition. The archdeacon of Barbadoes was one of the first, in the island, to raise his voice openly against slavery. In a public course of lectures from the desk he portrayed its injustice and evils with a fearless hand. With the Episcopal clergy, the Wesleyans and the Moravians coöperated with their accustomed zeal and success ; but as their numbers are comparatively small in this island, the effect of their labors has not been so perceptible.

There are other circumstances, which have contributed to the success of the new system in Barbadoes ; but I can more conveniently speak of them in another place.

The planters here, as in all the other islands, were at first much opposed to emancipation. They con-

sidered it fraught with the greatest danger, and destructive of their best interests. They saw that slavery involved evils of great magnitude—they felt that their lives and property were constantly insecure; but if they did not even cherish the monster, they had not courage to grapple with him. The Assembly resisted the Abolition Act of Parliament, until imminent danger of losing the proposed compensation for their slaves, opened their eyes and forced them into a compliance.

But a complete change has since taken place in public opinion on this subject. The planters are now almost unanimously in favor of the new system. So far from having realized the evils, which they anticipated from the change, they find their condition, in most respects, greatly improved. They are now free from the apprehension of insurrection, which, before emancipation, constantly destroyed their peace. Their property has advanced in value from 20 to 25 per cent, and commerce and business of every kind have improved. As in Antigua, lands which would not pay for cultivation under the old system, are now, to a considerable extent planted with cane, and are yielding a profitable crop. The island, which is more highly cultivated and supports a more dense population than any other in the West Indies, is universally acknowledged never to have been in a more prosperous condition. The crop this year was uncommonly large. On an average, it is about 25,000 hhds.; but this year, it was expected to exceed 32,000. And notwithstanding this great increase, no unusual difficulty was ex-

perienced in taking it off. Many of the planters declare, that they now find much less trouble and vexation in obtaining labor from the negroes, than they did formerly, and would on no account return to the old system. And these, it must be recollected, are the sentiments of men, who most strenuously opposed emancipation.

It is generally admitted by the planters, that the apprentices perform as much work now in 45 hours, as they did formerly during the whole week; so that there is to them no loss of labor. Indeed, the cultivation of the island furnishes abundant proof, that there has been no falling off in this respect. Some say, however, that though there has been no diminution of labor, a part of it has been paid for, as extra work. It is supposed, that, for such work, the island expended about \$12,000 the past year.

Whenever extra labor is needed, which does not often happen except in crop time, the apprentices are ready to appropriate their own time to the planters for hire. This they do by working each day two or three hours longer than usual, or by working Saturday, which by the arrangement in Barbadoes always belongs to them. They also do job-work when required. The customary wages of a common laborer are 25 cts. per day; and those of a mechanic 40 cents. It is admitted, on all sides, that, as a general thing, the apprentices are willing and even desirous to work for pay. In this respect no difference can be perceived between them and white people,



The use of agricultural machinery has become more common ; and, perhaps, the present high state of cultivation in the island, is to be ascribed, in some measure, to this circumstance ; but it must be in a small degree.

I heard complaints of increasing impertinence among the domestics ; but in general, the conduct of the apprentices is more satisfactory to the planters, than it was in the time of slavery. The amount of crime is less ; and the petty complaints, which come before the special magistrates, are constantly decreasing.

As a general thing, the special magistrates give satisfaction to both parties. The apprentices sometimes accuse them of partiality to their masters—but in most cases, they readily acquiesce in their decisions.

This is more and more the case, as the apprentices become better acquainted with the principles of law and justice. The special magistrates have, indeed, a very difficult office to fill ; as they encounter, on the one hand, the ignorance and stupidity of the apprentices, and, on the other, the self-interest and deep-rooted prejudice of the planters. No great complaint, however, is made of them in Barbadoes ; and in proportion as the principles, on which their decisions rest, become known, the causes which come before them diminish. On some estates, they already have little or nothing to do. There is one estate in the parish of St. Thomas, where all difficulties are decided by a sort of court, composed of the most intelligent apprentices.

As the new system is in general highly satisfactory to the planters, so it is, in a great degree, to the ap-

prentices. They do not, indeed, feel as if full justice had yet been done them ; but still, they are greatly delighted with the improvement in their condition, and look forward, with cheerful and happy anticipations, to entire freedom.

The change has already had a very perceptible influence in elevating their standard of conduct and of enjoyment. With the spirit of freedom, which begins to animate them, the spirit of improvement also manifests itself. The style and equipage of their superiors, which they had long observed only with stupid amazement or to envy and hate, now awakens in them a desire to increase their own comfort, and elevate their own character. Artificial wants are coming in apace, even faster than the means to gratify them. The family relations are becoming more sacred ; the state of concubinage is considered disreputable ; mothers are more fond of their children ; and it is believed, that the number of births is greater, and the number of deaths among children considerably less, than it was during slavery. In regard to dress, manners, and general appearance, I think the negroes in Barbadoes, not inferior to any, whom I saw in the West Indies. Education is by no means so common among them, as it is in the same class in Antigua ; and I have reason to think, that they have much less moral principle ; but in the use of language and in general intelligence, they are fully their equals.

Women continue to labor in the field ; and no great disposition is manifested, either on the part of the plant-

er, or that of the stronger sex of their own color, to lighten their burdens.

Many apprentices have purchased their freedom, and the practice is constantly increasing. The common laborers give from thirty dollars to forty dollars a year, for the remaining part of their apprenticeship. A mechanic gives about twice that sum.

It is believed, that the apprentices will find great difficulty in becoming landed proprietors in Barbadoes. Every part of the island is in cultivation, and the planters are exceedingly averse to breaking up their estates.

The manner, in which the apprentices are furnished with provisions in Barbadoes, has, in my opinion, done much to improve their character and prepare them for freedom. Instead of receiving an allowance in food, as is common in St. Croix and Antigua, they have a half acre of land, in addition to their little garden, which they cultivate according to their own inclination and judgment. They often plant it with cane, and make from one half to a whole hogshead of sugar a year, which is worth from seventy dollars to a hundred and twenty dollars. The master allows them twenty-six days in the course of the year, in addition to the time afforded them by law, to cultivate their ground; and, also, the use of the mill and works to make the sugar. The apprentice thus has an object to labor for, adapted to his nature, and, at the same time, an opportunity to exercise his judgment in cultivating his grounds and in disposing of his produce. Thus, by forming

habits of industry and forethought, he will be prepared, when he becomes free, to provide for himself.

The success of the new system has been greatly promoted by establishing a scale of labor. A committee was appointed to make inquiries and ascertain, how much daily labor is performed, on an average, by the apprentices, in their different employments on the estates. As the result of their inquiries, they recommended a scale of labor, which, though not enforced by law, was adopted by general consent, and made the rate of requirement on the part of the planters. He now knows what amount of labor to expect, and the apprentice the amount he must render. This measure has, also, been of great service to the special magistrate, in adjusting disputes between the master and the apprentices, in relation to the quantity of work to be performed. It has operated peculiarly well in Barbadoes, because the soil and modes of cultivation are exceedingly uniform.

As the Codrington estates in Barbadoes have been so managed, as most happily to advance the cause of improvement and freedom among the slaves, I cannot omit the mention of them in this place. They are two in number, and comprise nearly 800 acres of land, and have at present 330 apprenticed laborers. About the year 1710, they fell by the will of General Codrington, into the hands of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. They were given for the object of "maintaining professors and scholars, with the ultimate view of doing good to men's souls." I need

not say, that a college has been erected, and is supported at their expense ; the object of which is, to educate young men who shall become school masters and preachers in the West India colonies. It has, for a long time, been in successful operation, and has been the instrument of much good. But the estates have, likewise, been made to subserve the cause of freedom and humanity in another way. They have been pioneers in the great work of emancipation.

The spirit, in which the estates have been conducted, may be judged of, by the following extract from one of the Society's Reports.

“The College and Society estates, having been left in trust to a religious body, whose sole object is the propagation of the gospel among mankind, it seems as if Providence had intended, that the great work of reformation in the negro character, should commence among the laborers on these plantations. And although the annual returns of West India property form a consideration secondary to moral culture and comfort among those from whose industry an abundant revenue is derived, yet it is desirable that a system should be adopted, in every way coincident with colonial interest ;—a system, which, while it effectually secures progressive amelioration in the dispositions, understandings, and habits of the slaves, may afford a model for other proprietors to follow.”

In accordance with the leading sentiment of this extract, a chapel was erected on the estates, designed exclusively for the accommodation of the slaves ; and a

chaplain was appointed, whose duty it was to preach to them every Sabbath, and to attend to their spiritual concerns. A school was also established on each estate, which received all the children, "from the period of distinct articulation to the age of ten;" and, likewise, a Sunday school in connection with the chapel. These were among the earliest efforts for the education and religious instruction of the slaves.

A plan was commenced on these estates a little before emancipation, called the allotment system, which promises much good. The object of which is to stimulate and reward good behavior. It consists in giving a neat well-built cottage and two acres of land to the "more industrious and well behaved families on the estates." Here they provide themselves with all the necessaries of life; and work "four days in a week on the estates as labor rent for the land." The grounds selected for the experiment are fertile, and situated at some distance from the other settlements. The village now comprises twenty families; and "so fully conscious are the negroes," says the chaplain in a recent report, "of the benefit attending this system of allotments, that not only are they, who have pursued this plan, quite satisfied and happy with the arrangement, but many others are desirous of being placed on the same footing. Nor is the system, which was first commenced on so large a scale on the Society's estates, now confined to this one property; many of the proprietors of the island have adopted the same plan and with equal prospects of success." He also adds, that within the pe-

riod of three years commencing July 1833, he had "baptised 776 infants and adults and married 135 couples." There are now on the Society's estate about seventy married couples; and when it is known, that in 1822, there was but one instance of marriage legally performed, the change in the disposition of the apprentices will appear sufficiently obvious. The chaplain observes "the married people on the estate conduct themselves soberly and chastely, and rare indeed is the instance of a couple going to live with each other without being lawfully married."

In concluding this letter, I may remark that a mutual change is taking place in the feelings of the planters and of the apprentices. One gentleman informed me, that when the first of August 1834 arrived, he assembled the negroes on his plantation, shook hands with them, told them they were a new people, and gave them such friendly advice and encouragement as their peculiar circumstances required. The next day, the people all turned out to their work, and have ever since labored with cheerfulness, and behaved with more than usual propriety. The planters are improving the houses of the negroes; and conciliating their favor and confidence in other ways, with the hope of retaining them on their estates after they become free.

## LETTER IX.

### BARBADOES.—RELIGION AND EDUCATION.

As I intimated in a preceding letter, the means of religious instruction in Barbadoes, have been much increased since the arrival of the present bishop. For example, in 1825 there were, in connection with the established church, but fourteen churches and chapels in the island, and but fifteen ordained clergymen. In 1834 the number of churches and chapels had increased to twenty-one, and that of ordained clergymen to twenty-nine. The chapel on the Codrington estates is the only one, which is appropriated exclusively to the apprentices; though the others are all open to them, when they are disposed to attend worship. As in Antigua, they generally occupy the aisles, the galleries, and the lower seats in the body of the house. There is one Episcopal church in Bridgetown, where people of all ranks and color sit promiscuously. It is the church under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Cummins—a man of a truly christian spirit, who is disposed, according to the apostolic injunction, to “do good unto all men,” as he has opportunity, without distinction of rank or complexion. I had the pleasure of attending service here one afternoon, and of hearing the bishop preach to an audience, embracing all varieties of color, seated indiscriminately in the different parts of



the house. It was to me a novel and most interesting spectacle. The church is a stone edifice, recently erected, and is one of the most beautiful upon the island. There is a Sabbath School in a flourishing condition connected with it, consisting of about 300 children, under the immediate superintendance of the worthy pastor. The school is under admirable regulations, Nearly all the children were colored and black, and appeared exceedingly well. Different opinions may be entertained of such policy ; but certainly the whole scene was a most striking exhibition of the power of christian charity, which, forgetful of the minor distinctions that exist among men, would unite and cover with one broad mantle of love, all the members of the human family.

The Wesleyan congregations are, likewise, composed of all classes, which are seated indiscriminately in the houses of public worship. They have upon the island seven chapels, and three ordained missionaries. The number that belongs to the several societies, is 1,920 ; of which 1,370 are apprenticed laborers. The Methodists were, for a long time, bitterly persecuted ; but for the last ten years, no obstacles have intentionally been thrown in the way of their labors.

The Moravians have three establishments ; with each of which is connected a church, and one school or more. The people under their charge are generally apprenticed laborers. They amount to 5,200. The establishments are conducted on the same principles as those in Antigua.

I am unable to give precisely the number of apprentices, who receive religious instruction in connection with the Episcopal church. I think, however, I am safe in saying that it cannot exceed 6,000. If this number be taken as near the truth, and added to the number in connection with the Wesleyans and the Moravians, we shall have an aggregate of a little more than 12,000, leaving about 70,000 without the means of religious knowledge.

In 1825 there was but one public school in the island for the instruction of slaves; and that was upon the Codrington estates. The number connected with the church in 1834, for the instruction of the poor including the apprentices, was 155; embracing 7,447 scholars. It has been considerably increased since that time, but as no returns had recently been made, I could not ascertain precisely how much. I visited several of the schools and was pleased with the proficiency, which the children had made in the elements of education. With two at Bridgetown, the boy's school, and the girl's school, under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Harte, I was particularly gratified. The former consisted of 180 boys black and colored, from three to fourteen years of age; of which about seventy are the children of apprentices. I examined some of the oldest classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and they appeared in no respect inferior to children of the same age in the schools in our country. The school was taught upon the Lancasterian plan, by an African of pure blood, who filled his place apparently

with as much ability, as any gentleman I ever saw in the same situation. And though the children took their places at the recitations, according to their answers, I did not perceive that their rank in the class corresponded at all with the shades of their skin.

The appearance of the girl's school was respectable, though inferior to that of the boys. Mr. Harte informed me, that there were 14 such schools in that parish.

The Wesleyans have one day school and six Sabbath Schools, in which 1,188 persons receive instruction.

The Moravians have three schools in which about 700 children are taught.

In addition to these, a school has recently been opened, on what is called the Mico charity foundation, which is designed to be a model of many others, soon to be established in Barbadoes and the other English islands. About 200 years ago, Lady Mico appropriated a certain sum to "redeem poor captives from the Barbary States," which in the hands of trustees, has increased to the sum of about \$500,000. This fund will now be devoted to the instruction of the negroes in the colonies. A neat brick building, 30 feet by 60, had been erected at Bridgetown; and as soon as the school was opened, the children flocked to it in great numbers. The superintendent informed me, that the apprentices manifest the strongest desire to receive instruction. A Sabbath School is taught here, on the Lord's day, consisting of 265 scholars; and, in the evenings of the week, a school for adults, who are employed in labor during the day.

Great numbers of private schools have been established in different parts of the island ; in some of which instruction is given gratuitously, and in others a small compensation is required.

I was uniformly told that a desire for education is rapidly extending among the apprentices. When I was in Barbadoes, nothing had been done by the Assembly for the encouragement of education among this class ; though it was believed that the subject would be taken up the next session. The planters would be willing to establish schools for the children of apprentices, if some plan of labor could be combined with them. At present, they fear the children will not be taught to work ; and as the parents, in consequence of their jealousies, feel a strong repugnance to any interference of the master in the management of their children, the subject may be attended with difficulty.

Though I cannot give the precise number of children, who are under instruction at Barbadoes, yet I am certain, that it is much less in proportion to the population, than it is at Antigua. But when it is recollected, that only about ten years ago, the idea of a school for the instruction of slaves, was treated with the utmost derision, the change will appear truly surprising. As a practical illustration of the progress of education in Barbadoes, I may add that in a single parish, about two thousand Testaments were distributed in 1835 to as many persons, “ who were heard to read before the books were given to them, and all of whom had been slaves until the first of August 1834.”

The diocese of Barbadoes includes nearly twenty islands ; and while I was there and at Antigua, I saw gentlemen, who resided at several of them. From these, I learned, that the success of the new system in their respective islands, had far exceeded their expectations. With two or three exceptions, no serious difficulty had been realized from the change ; and in those cases, they were of a nature soon to be obviated. The sentiments, which they expressed as to the future, were those of cheerfulness and bright anticipation. The bishop had, also just returned from a parochial visitation of many of the islands in the diocese, and informed me, that wherever he had been, he found the state of things quiet and prosperous. On five estates at Montserrat, the apprentices had been set free ; and were receiving wages from their former masters. The governor, also, favored me, with an opportunity to examine the monthly returns of the special magistrates in several islands, from which it appeared, that the cases which are brought before them were constantly diminishing.

The Wesleyans and Moravians have missionaries, on most of these islands. I am unable, however, to give their numbers. The bishop very kindly furnished me with a statistical table of the clergy and schools in his diocese, connected with the established church, which, as it shows the progress of religion and education from 1812 to 1834, I shall give entire ; I regret that it does not bring down the subjects to the present time. I may add, however, that the number both of

the schools and of the clergy has been gradually increasing since 1834.

	<i>Clergy.</i>			<i>Schools.</i>		
	1812	1825	1834	1812	1825	1834
Barbadoes	14	15	29	2	8	155
Trinidad	0	2	2	0	2	4
Tobago	1	1	1	0	0	13
St. Lucia	0	1	1	0	0	3
St. Vincent's	1	2	3	0	1	14
Bequia	0	0	1	0	0	2
Grenada	2	2	4	0	1	18
Carriacou	1	1	1	0	0	9
Guiana	1	7	10	0	2	37
Antigua	6	8	12	0	8	32
Montserrat	1(?)	1	2	0	0	19
Barbuda	0	0	0	0	0	4
St. Christopher's	5	5	7	0	6	64
Nevis	3	3	3	0	6	19
Anguilla	0	0	1	0	0	2
Virgin Isles.	1(?)	1	2	0	0	6
Dominica	1	1	2	0	0	4
Total,	37	50	81	2	34	405*

\* Besides catechetical and other desultory instruction on estates. It may be remarked, that most of these schools are now open to the apprentices.

## LETTER X.

### JAMAICA.—STATE OF THE ISLAND PREVIOUS TO EMAN- CIPATION.

THE island of Jamaica is about 165 miles in length, and on an average, forty in breadth; giving an area of 4,030,000 acres, nearly one half of which is under cultivation. The greater part of the remainder, though possessing a good soil, is mountainous; and can never be redeemed from a state of nature. The staple productions are sugar and coffee. Indigo, cotton, and rice are also cultivated, but not to a great extent.

In 1823 Humboldt estimated the population of the island to be 402,000; of which 342,000 were slaves. The Commissioners of Compensation placed the number of slaves at 311,692. Of these about 30,000 were children under six years of age; and of the remainder a little more than one fifth were non-*praedial*s.\* The proportion of the general compensation assigned to this colony was £6,161,927 5s. 10d., which gave an average allowance for the slaves of a little more than £20.

It appears from these statistics, that about one half of the slave population in the British West Indies, be-

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\* The free colored and black people are estimated at 40,000.

longed to Jamaica; and that nearly one third of the whole compensation fund was appropriated to that island. These facts show the great comparative importance of this colony. The British government had it principally in view, during their whole course of inquiry and legislation in regard to the abolition of slavery.

Probably nine tenths of the facts, published in England to show its character and rouse the people to active efforts for its removal, were collected here. And from 1823, the period when Mr. Canning's resolution passed the House of Commons for ameliorating the condition of the slaves in the colonies, down to the time of emancipation, nowhere else did the British ministry meet with so steady and determined opposition in carrying those resolutions into effect. Jamaica certainly deserves the credit of having been foremost in the defence of slavery—its strong fortress—the first to fight and the last to yield.

I have already remarked, that here the apprenticeship system is passing its severest ordeal. And lest it should be supposed, that its want of success is to be ascribed entirely to defects in the system, it is important, before I proceed to give a detailed account of its operation, to specify some of the circumstances, which have from the beginning greatly impeded its progress, and which for a time threatened its entire failure. As I showed that its success in Barbadoes is not to be attributed so much to its intrinsic merits, as to certain causes, which favored its introduction and operation; so in Jamaica, the obstacles, which it has encountered,



are in a great degree independent of the system itself. I intend by these remarks to express no opinion as to the merits or defects of the system; but barely to intimate that, in order to form a correct judgment of it, we must consider the circumstances under which it has gone into operation.

One, which is indeed not the most important, but which still has had a material influence, is the physical character of the island. It is such, when compared with Barbadoes and Antigua, as to have essentially retarded the civilization of the slaves. The island is so exceedingly mountainous, as to prevent all intercourse between many parts and the towns, except by mule paths. Now, when it is known, that on an estate, which will give 250 hogsheads of sugar, there are usually but four white persons, the overseer, two book-keepers, and a carpenter, all of whom are too often deeply degraded both in principle and practice; and that the estates, situated in the mountains, are insulated from each other as well as from the towns, it will be seen, that the negroes are not in a condition to make very rapid improvement in the knowledge and refinements of civilization.\* On the other islands which I visited, they were so situated, as I have already remarked, as to be often in the towns, where they saw the manners and habits of cultivated people; and, by thus coming in contact with civilization, caught something of it themselves. But on the

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\* Matrimony was considered, till quite recently, a disqualification for the office of an overseer or a book-keeper in Jamaica.

estates to which I now refer, the negroes not enjoying such advantages, have fallen far behind their contemporaries elsewhere in the career of improvement ; and, though these estates do by no means comprehend the whole island, yet they are so numerous, as materially to affect the general progress of the slave population. At least, such was the testimony of all persons, who spoke to me on the subject from personal knowledge. It is generally understood that the negroes of Jamaica, with a few exceptions, are, in point of intelligence and moral cultivation, much behind those of other islands.\*

Again, in Barbadoes there is an unusually large number of resident proprietors, but in Jamaica, there are fewer than in any other island. Of the effect of this circumstance on the prosperity of an estate and especially upon the condition and character of slaves, I have already spoken. It cannot be fully appreciated except by those, who know from observation how entirely the law places the slaves in the hands of the master or overseer, and how much their happiness depends on the kindness or severity of his disposition. Though, under the present system, the authority of the master is much curtailed, yet we shall soon see, that

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\* "No man has had such opportunity of enlarged observation amongst this class (the negroes) as I have had, either in the immediate government of, or eventual control over, seven colonies, and I am sorry to proclaim that they are in this island in a more deplorably backward state than in any other." Extract from a speech of Sir Lionel Smith, the present governor to the House of Assembly in 1836.

not a small part of the difficulties on the estates in Jamaica have arisen from a misunderstanding between the apprentices and those entitled to their services.

The next circumstance, which I have to mention, has probably had more influence, when considered in its various connections and bearings, than all the others. I refer to the spirit of hostility manifested by the planters of Jamaica to every proposal for ameliorating the condition of the slaves. I do not intend now to speak of it in terms of censure, but only as an historical fact. I know that there was much in their situation to excite alarm. They saw that the tendency of the measures recommended by Parliament, was to sap the very foundations of slavery—that the proposed retrenchments and modifications, and ameliorations, would leave but the shadow of the thing which they considered of vital importance. They felt, moreover, as they were the largest colony and had the greatest interests at stake, that it was incumbent on them to stand forward in the foremost ranks, and contend with an ardor for their supposed rights and privileges corresponding with their colonial weight and influence. In addition to this, I have no doubt that the spirit of the system, and by that I mean the spirit of domination, and coercion, and servile oppression, had struck its roots very deep in the soil of Jamaica.

These circumstances will perhaps account for the attitude of resistance, taken at first by the assembly to colonial reform, and the firmness with which they maintained it. The determination for many years was to

defend slavery at all hazards; but when it was perceived that the force arrayed against it at home, was such, that the system must fall, they erected their next bulwark on the ground of compensation; and contended that, if the people of England were resolved on making the experiment of abolishing slavery in the colonies, that theirs should be both the responsibility and the sacrifice.

As an illustration of the prevailing sentiment in the assembly and of the general progress of things, I may mention, that not long after the despatch of Earl Bathurst, founded on Mr. Canning's resolutions of 1823, was received, a bill was introduced into the House, the object of which was, "to enable slaves to give evidence in certain cases of crime committed against slaves, and of criminal attempts to excite rebellion and insurrection, and of uttering seditious language." This bill, weak and deficient as it was, bearing scarcely the semblance of what the British government had recommended, "was rejected by a majority of thirty-four to one." In 1826, a new consolidated slave law passed the house, which for several years became the battle ground between the Assembly and Parliament. It professed to secure certain advantages to the slaves; but, at the same time, contained such objectionable provisions especially in regard to the missionaries, as compelled the British government to disallow it. The same bill, however, was re-enacted session after session by the house and as often rejected by the ministry, till 1831, when the objection-

able parts being suppressed it was suffered to pass into a law. These facts show that from 1823, till nearly the time that measures were actually commenced in Parliament for abolishing slavery, the assembly of Jamaica, the representative body of the island, and the imperial government, were at utter variance.\* The discussions, on the part of the planters, were carried on both in the assembly and in private in the most intemperate and menacing language. Public meetings were held in different parts of the island—the British ministry were denounced and the authority of Parliament was set at defiance. In short, the unparalleled aggressions of the mother country, remonstrance, and revolt, were the common topics of the day.

Nor can it be supposed that the irritation was much allayed by the unequivocal symptoms, which Parliament began to manifest in 1832, of a determination to put an entire extinction to slavery. On the contrary, they provoked the planters almost to madness. Perceiving, however, that emancipation must come, the assembly had the self-possession and wisdom to forestall the event; and passed a vote, that, upon receiving a just compensation for the slaves and indemnity for all losses which might arise from giving them freedom, they were prepared to adopt an act for entire emancipation. Delegates were sent from Jamaica and

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\* The reader is referred, for further evidence on this point, to Bridges' Annals of Jamaica, and especially to his account of the Slave Registry Bill, the Compulsory Manumission Bill, and the Slave Evidence Bill.

some other colonies, bearing such instructions to the home government, which were duly considered in the discussions before Parliament.

It is due to the assembly of Jamaica to say, that when the imperial abolition bill, accompanied by a grant of £20,000,000, was proposed for their acceptance, they were the first, though not without much angry discussion, to adopt it in such a form, as to secure the approval of Parliament, and an acknowledged title to an equitable share in the compensation fund. This was done by a unanimous vote; and happy would it have been for the island had the vote been a sincere expression of any thing like satisfaction with the imperial act. The sore irritation, which had so long existed between the colony and the home government, as well as the party jealousy and contention which convulsed the island, might then have ceased, and the new order of things commenced under more flattering auspices.

The real sentiments of the house were in reserve, however, to be expressed on another occasion, after the compensation had been secured, at least, by as good a title as was possible, till the money was actually paid. In June 1835, not two months before the Emancipation Act went into operation, the assembly addressed a long memorial to the king in council, containing, among other things, the following paragraph, which I copy on the authority of Dr. Madden, who was a special magistrate in Kingston. "The act declared the slaves to be free on a day therein named.

It contained numerous details, showing equal ignorance of our institutions, and disregard of our public and private rights; and the compensation it gave was very far below the value of the property it took away. Nevertheless, no time was afforded us for remonstrance, but it was arbitrarily decreed that, if the legislature of Jamaica did not adopt the act, with all its errors, hardships, and manifest injustice, the claim of their constituents to a portion of the indemnity should be entirely and forever forfeited. It was enacted by a British Parliament that, unless we yielded our property by a certain day, and for an inadequate, and as it proved, uncertain compensation, that property should be confiscated, our constitution overturned, our laws—laws established by the royal assent—violently abrogated, and our people subjected to the military and hateful government of a conquered country.

“One path only was left open to us to avoid these mischiefs, and, perhaps a desolating civil war, and we subscribed to the letter of the terms of the British Parliament.

“But had we anticipated that the miserable reward of our submission would be, in the chief part, withheld from us, to enrich the foreign settlements conquered from the enemy, we would have rejected with indignation the unworthy compromise, and incurred all the evils which the authority and anger of the mother country might have inflicted, protesting against her tyranny before the world, and reserving our rights to be vindicated and resumed at some happier moment.”

It will appear from this extract, that the planters of Jamaica were none too well satisfied with their remuneration, or the new system, nor yet too well disposed toward Parliament. Nor can it be supposed that, with such views and feelings, they would give a very hearty coöperation in introducing and maintaining a system, which, to use their own language, they were "pressed to adopt against their better judgment and to avert the still greater danger of opposing it."

Nor was this the worst difficulty. Early in the year 1832, in consequence of the general irritation which prevailed among all classes in Jamaica, and more especially of the knowledge which the slaves possessed that the planters were opposing their freedom, accompanied, moreover, with the belief, that they were withholding privileges which Parliament had already granted them, a rebellion broke out among the negroes, more serious and extensive than had ever before taken place in the island. Martial law was immediately proclaimed, and the bloody work of execution commenced. According to Madden, 200 negroes were killed in the field; and about 500 more were executed by the sentence of a court martial. I have seen the former number stated to be greater, and the latter much less by other authors; but the exact truth is unknown. The expenses of this rebellion, including the destruction of property, were estimated at more than \$4,000,000. The highly exasperated state of feeling, which this event produced between the planters and the slaves, is not easily imagined. It will, however, readily be ad-



mitted, that it could not be a very good preparation for the great experiment in freedom which was about to be tried.

There was also another circumstance, which greatly aggravated these difficulties. Soon after the passing of the resolution of 1823, to which I have so often referred, the planters began to manifest a great repugnance to the labors of the missionaries, who had been sent out in considerable numbers by different societies in England. They had, indeed, come with special instructions from their respective societies, in no case to interfere with the political affairs of the island. As their particular object, however, was to instruct the negroes and elevate their character, they were at once suspected of favoring the abolition movements at home; and even of advancing them by giving information of the state of things in the colony. At any rate, the planters were strongly impressed with the belief, that their efforts were promoting the cause of emancipation; and, on that account, the majority opposed them. The most obnoxious part of the new consolidated slave law, to which I have already alluded, and, on account of which, it was disallowed, had reference to the missionaries. When the rebellion commenced, they were immediately charged with having instigated it; and at once became the victims of one of the most unrelenting persecutions of modern times. Their houses were demolished—they were torn from their families either by night or by day—cast into prison—exposed to the insults of the mob—arraigned before courts martial—

stoned, tarred and feathered ; and all this, without the least shadow of evidence against them, except that some of the members of their congregations were concerned in the rebellion, though others were actively engaged in opposing it. I was informed by a gentleman, who sat as a magistrate on the trials, and could not be suspected of partiality to the missionaries, that notwithstanding every effort was made, not a single accusation could be substantiated against one of them.\*

But they suffered, not only in their own persons and property, but many of their chapels were demolished. The Baptists lost six in this way, and the Methodists four. The former estimated their whole damages in the destruction of property at £23,000 currency, or about \$70,000. As a partial indemnity for their losses, the British government made a grant of £20,000 to the missionaries of the different denominations in the

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\* For a more particular account of these transactions see a "Narrative" published by the Baptists of Jamaica, and the evidence given by several missionaries before the Commons' Committee. As I shall have frequent occasion to refer to this last source of evidence, I may remark, that two Committees were appointed by Parliament in 1832, one by the House of Commons and the other by the House of Lords, "to consider and report upon the measures which it may be expedient to adopt for the purpose of effecting the extinction of slavery throughout the British Dominions." The Committees examined many witnesses from the colonies and other parts of the world, from whom they obtained a most valuable body of information in relation to slavery.

island. This work of destruction is to be ascribed mainly to the celebrated "Colonial Church Union" consisting of planters and others, formed in the beginning of 1832 for the avowed purpose of expelling the sectarians from the island, and abolished a few months after by royal authority.

The opposition, however, was not confined to missionaries of the dissenting denominations. I am not aware that any others shared directly in the persecutions; but clergymen of the church of England, who engaged heartily and strenuously in instructing the slaves, received their full share of obloquy; but enjoying higher patronage, they were better protected from violence.

Now, when it is considered that the missionaries had for years lived among the slaves—that they had proved themselves faithful friends, and were greatly endeared to them "by works of faith and labors of love"—that they had been the means of procuring for them houses of public worship, and had formed them into churches, and become their spiritual teachers,—when all this is considered, it will not appear surprising that this portion of the population were deeply incensed at the sufferings and wrongs of their persecuted pastors. They were aware that all these trials were endured for their sakes; and the churches, which were demolished before their eyes, were built in part from their own small but hard earnings.

These proceedings also tended greatly to irritate the free black and colored people, which are much more numerous than the white, and many of whom are per-

sons of property and respectability. They had all along sympathized with the slaves, in opposition to the planters ; and had been the principal friends and most efficient supporters of the missionaries. Indeed the churches and congregations of the missionaries were composed almost entirely of free black and colored people, and slaves. In the opposition and persecution of the missionaries, therefore, we see another cause of irritation between the different classes of Jamaica.

I might greatly extend this catalogue of evils, but I forbear. My object is not to awaken passion, but to prepare the way for understanding the truth. I should most certainly have avoided these details, had I not been conscious, that the present state of things in Jamaica cannot be comprehended without them. A moment's reflection will show, that no system of freedom, however wise in itself, could have been introduced under such circumstances, without encountering the most serious difficulties. If the institution of slavery had remained unmolested and the island had been kept quiet by military force, the way was prepared for years of trouble and calamity. The seeds of bitterness and disorder were sown ; and it was not in the power of man, to prevent them from springing up and bearing and spreading their pestilential fruits. In considering, therefore, the apprenticeship system in Jamaica, these painful circumstances must be kept constantly in view ; otherwise the system itself may be charged with difficulties, which in reality are due to the almost insurmountable obstacles which it had to encounter ; or

what is more unjust, emancipation, in any form, may be pronounced a chimerical project, when, in point of fact it was the only remedy, which could have at all relieved the embarrassments, on the ground of which its condemnation is urged.

**NOTE.** The number of slaves in Jamaica, for several different years, is thus given by Bridges :

1800	.	.	300,939
1808	.	.	323,827
1817	.	.	345,252
1825	.	.	341,305

## LETTER XI.

### JAMAICA—DIFFICULTIES AND PROSPECTS OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

From June 1832 to March 1834, during the time the abolition act was brought forward and passed in Parliament, and was proposed and adopted in the Assembly of Jamaica, Lord Mulgrave, a man of great acknowledged talent and integrity, was governor of the island. Under other circumstances, he might have enjoyed a high degree of popularity; but having an obnoxious system to defend, he fell under the severe censures of the planters; and partly on that account, and partly in consequence of ill health, he resigned his office, about the time the sanction of the home government was obtained to the colonial act. He was succeeded by Lord Sligo, who entered upon his duties a few months before the new system went into operation, but was even less fortunate than his predecessor in obtaining the coöperation and favor of the Assembly and planters. The obnoxious system, which his predecessor had carried through the Assembly, it now devolved on him to execute. Though he was without doubt, a man of great learning and of unwearied assiduity, it may be questioned, whether he was, in every respect, fitted for so critical and arduous a task. Still, however, it is undeniable, that his unpopularity

and want of success arose, in a great measure, from peculiar difficulties, which would have baffled in no small degree the wisdom and firmness of any man. But whatever might have been his deficiencies in other respects, he was untiring in his efforts to collect information, and to keep government at home duly apprized of the state of the colony. And, perhaps I cannot better describe the commencement of the new system, than in the words of his despatch to the colonial secretary, the Hon. T. S. Rice, dated Jamaica, Aug. 13, 1834.

“I have the happiness to inform you, that the reports which I have received from all quarters, of the state of the island have been most satisfactory.

“You will have ere this reaches you, I trust, received my short note, sent via New York, communicating to you the tranquil state of this immediate neighborhood. It was written on the fourth and sent by the schooner *Renown*. I am happy to be able to confirm that report, and to add, that in all parts of the island, with the exception alone of St. Ann’s parish, the transition from slavery to apprenticeship has been effected in the most satisfactory manner. It is a remarkable feature in the progress of transition, that the first of August was devoted in most parts of the island to devotional exercises. In the Moravian chapels the service was performed several times in the course of the day, in fact, as long as a fresh succession of auditors presented themselves. It has been generally remarked, that hardly a drunken man was seen in the

streets on that day ; the Saturday was divided between business and pleasure ; they were fully aware that the next day's market would be abolished, and in consequence of this, being an holiday besides, the markets on that day have been remarked every where to have been unusually large. Towards evening the streets were crowded with parties of John Cause Men and their usual noisy accompaniments. At night in some of the towns there were fancy balls, in which the authorities of the island, past and present, were represented. Several individuals in the towns had given dinners to their new apprentices on the previous day, and on very many of the estates, steers were killed by the proprietors and given to the negroes, besides their usual holiday allowances of sugars, rum and salt fish ; so that within the country and the towns the apprentices had their due share of amusements. On Sunday the places of worship were again unusually crowded, and the day passed over in the most orderly and quiet manner. My reports from all parts of the island, with the exception of St. Ann's alone, state that on Monday the apprentices turned out to their work with even more than usual readiness, in some places with alacrity, and all with good humor."

The disturbances in St. Ann's parish, to which his Lordship refers, were of a transient nature. On several estates the apprentices refused to work without wages, and manifested symptoms of insubordination. But by the presence of a military force, they were soon reduced to order, and persuaded to resume their



labor. With this exception, I am not aware that any refusal to work, or any serious difficulty, on the part of the negroes, has followed the great act of emancipation.

But troubles, more lasting and vexatious in their character, soon began to appear. From the dispositions of the Assembly and planters previously manifested, no favor was to be expected for the new system. If it had weak parts, they were sure to be assaulted; if there were dark corners, where the spirit of slavery could erect a fortress, they were very likely to be occupied.

Unhappily, the abolition act, as modified and adopted by the Assembly, was not free from defects. It was far less guarded and explicit on many points, than the circumstances demanded. It left too much to the adjustment of custom and usage, and to discretionary power. The authority of the special magistrates was not properly defined and limited; nor had they sufficient protection in the faithful discharge of their duties. Numerous difficulties arose from these sources, which were for a long time severely felt. Without detailing them at length, I will specify a few, from which an opinion may be formed both of their origin and character.

For example, it was customary for the slaves in Jamaica to grow their own provisions on grounds appropriated to them by their masters. When emancipation took place, this practice was continued. But in order to cultivate the grounds and market their surplus provisions, it was necessary that they should have a day and a half in the week continuously to

themselves. But as the distribution of the 45 hours' labor in the week was not fixed by law, some of the overseers so arranged them, as to prevent the apprentices from cultivating their grounds and improving Saturday, which was their only market day.

In addition to the use of these grounds, immemorial usage had given the slaves a right to various allowances; which, though of small consequence to the estate, were of great importance to them. They consisted in a small quantity of salt fish, flour, sugar, holidays and sundry articles at Christmas—the privilege of keeping poultry and stock, and cutting wood and grass on the estates, etc. After the introduction of the new system, these, on many estates, were all withheld, on the ground, that they were *indulgences* and not *legal allowances*. This opinion was controverted by the Attorney General; but as it was consonant with the sentiments and interests of the planters, and perhaps too with law, it was never set aside.

On some large estates, these allowances were continued gratuitously; but on others the apprentices were required to pay for them in extra work; so that to enjoy the comforts to which they had been accustomed in slavery, they were obliged to render as much service as ever. On a few estates this practice continues to the present time.

The apprentices were also subjected to many other petty annoyances, from which they are not yet entirely relieved. Justice, however, requires me to state, that these were by no means universal—that they prevailed

principally on the smaller estates, and especially where overseers, and subordinate agents had the control. There are planters, who have pursued a generous and high minded policy towards their apprentices; and who have reaped their reward, not only in their gratitude and good behavior, but in the prosperity of their plantations.

Another great source of difficulty was the special magistrates. This is at once the most weak and obnoxious part of the apprenticeship system. It was at first strenuously opposed on all the islands. The Assembly of Barbadoes resisted it, till they came near losing their share in the compensation fund; and it was also one of the principal causes, which prevented Antigua from adopting the system. The idea of being under the control of magistrates introduced from abroad, who have no interest in the colony and but little sympathy with the people, is sufficiently odious in any shape; but when these magistrates come to enforce a system, which is detested on its own account and is at utter variance with the spirit and habits of the people, their office is far from being easy or enviable. Long experience, however, had convinced Parliament, that no ameliorating system could be carried into execution, in the West Indies, by mere colonial agency. Canning boldly declared, when he was at the head of government, "that the masters of slaves are not to be trusted in what concerns legislation for slavery; that, however specious their laws may appear, they must be ineffectual in their operation, because there is some-

thing in the nature of absolute authority, in the relation between master and slave, which makes despotism in *all* cases and under *all* circumstances an incompetent and unsure executor, even of its own provisions in favor of the objects of its power.”

It was, therefore, under the conviction of its absolute necessity, that the stipendiary magistracy was incorporated into the apprenticeship system. But in Jamaica, it has encountered peculiar obstacles. The local magistrates opposed it, because it interfered in some degree with their jurisdiction. The overseers and mercenary agents of proprietors opposed it, because it transferred from them to others authority, which they dearly loved. They were now placed under the same civil jurisdiction as the negroes, over whom they had so long been the absolute masters ; and both were hereafter to seek redress and protection from the same source. Nor was this all. Considering the hostility of the new system to the spirit of slavery, and the many difficult questions to be adjusted by the special magistrates between the planter and the apprentices without precedent and frequently in violation of established usages, it was easy to foresee that their decisions would often prove unsatisfactory. It was impossible that those, whose principles and views were so diverse, should think and decide alike. The consequence was, that the overseers, on many plantations, endeavored to destroy the confidence of the negroes in the magistrate, and to withdraw them from his control. To accomplish this object, they substituted for his au

thority, persuasion, and flattery, and trifling rewards, and formed courts of apprentices to act under their advice and superintendence. The magistrates visited such estates as usual ; but there was an understanding between the overseer and apprentices, that no cases should be reported to them.

To perform faithfully the duties of a special magistrate in such circumstances, great strength and independence of character were obviously requisite ; and, no doubt, some of the men, who were at first appointed to this office, failed in these qualifications. They were gentlemen of respectability, but wanted that legal knowledge and weight of character, which were essential to sustain them in so difficult situations. In many cases, therefore, they either fell under the influence of the planters and failed to protect the apprentices ; or by attempting an impartial discharge of their duties, they met a torrent of obloquy and abuse, which they were scarcely able to withstand. Several of the earliest died under the pressure of their duties ; and others resigned their office in disgust. Had a higher order of men at first been appointed and received a salary, which should have placed them above colonial dependence, much trouble would have been prevented. The class of people, who have most annoyed them, would then have been awed by their character, and both they and the apprentices would more readily have acquiesced in their decisions. Law and justice would have been placed upon a more stable foundation ; and public sentiment would have sooner been purified from the contaminations of slavery.

But important improvements have been made in the appointment and condition of the stipendiary magistrates. They are selected with more care, their salary has been increased; and beginning to have acknowledged precedents to guide them, their decisions give better satisfaction. I was assured upon the best authority, that on a large proportion of the estates, their power and influence are sufficient to maintain the necessary order and industry. The irritation, also, which has existed between them and the planters is subsiding; and, though there is still wanting in many cases that even handed justice and mutual good feeling and coöperation which are desirable, yet it was generally admitted, that in these respects there had been a very gratifying improvement.

It should be remarked, that when the apprentices are not adequately protected by the special magistrate, their situation is peculiarly trying; for though they have the legal right to appeal to the higher tribunals, yet they rarely have the influence or the means to prosecute their claims. Such has been the state of public opinion in Jamaica, that it was difficult for them to find an advocate, who would embark in their defence; nor were the courts so constituted, that they were sure, even if they approached under the banner of justice, of obtaining redress.

But notwithstanding these difficulties, crime has not increased since emancipation. There are more formal trials; but testimony and facts show a diminution rather than an increase of crime. At the House of

Correction for the parish of Kingston, I was permitted to see the inmates at their regular employments, and to examine the books, in which were recorded their names with their crimes and punishments. I was much pleased with the neatness and good order of the establishment; though, in the principles on which it is conducted, it is far behind similar institutions in this country. For example, the prisoners lodged together in large rooms; and, instead of being employed during the day in productive labor, they were worked on the tread-wheel. A few however were in solitary confinement; and some others labored in the penal gang on the highways. The population of the parish, which supports the institution, is about 30,000. When I was there the number of prisoners was 98, of whom 50 were apprentices. I will give the entire numbers for four successive years commencing with 1834.

	Slaves and Apprentices.	Convicts for life.	Free Negroes.	Soldiers.	Sailors.
May 10, 1834,	73	30	0	0	4
“ 1835,	54	12	12	6	0
“ 1836,	28	10	9	4	1
“ 1837,	50	8	12	22	6

At least eleven twelfths of the apprentices were committed for theft—absconding from labor, and insubordinate conduct. They were sentenced to remain here from 5 to 30 days; or to receive from 5 to 36 lashes. In looking over the records for several months, these were the severest punishments which I observed. The same offences, in a milder form, were usually punished by fines or extra labor. It was at one time

complained, that females were whipped in the House of Correction, in violation of the abolition act. This was probably true. It was not done, however, by order of a magistrate, but upon the responsibility of the superintendent for obstinacy and turbulent conduct in the person. This practice is now abolished.\*

The apprentices as a general thing work under the present system, during the legal hours of labor, as well as they did in slavery. On some estates, there has been but little or no diminution in their amount of work, but this is not true of the island at large. In consequence of the curtailment in the hours of labor, the aggregate of service has been diminished, but not very materially. It has not thus far been the custom of the planters to employ much extra labor; but it is a fact, in regard to which I never heard a dissenting voice, that when such labor is wanted, the apprentices are glad to render it for pay. In some cases of misunderstanding between them and their masters, they will not work for them when they will, cheerfully, for others.

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\* As an evidence that severe punishments are not confined to the apprentices, I may state, that I saw a white soldier, in solitary confinement, in a cell about four feet wide, and seven feet long, without any air or light except what was admitted through a small orifice in the top, who was sentenced to remain there six weeks for the crime of having been intoxicated four times in twelve months. The consistency of such a punishment may be judged of, when it is known that a gill of rum is the daily allowance of soldiers in the English service!



As to their industry, during their own time, I received pretty favorable accounts. Such time they usually employ, either in job-work for hire, or in cultivating their ground, or in marketing provisions. As might be expected, many among them are lazy and worthless; but the majority give satisfactory evidence of industry and economy. On those plantations, where mutual confidence and good will prevail between the proprietors and the apprentices, there is a decided improvement in their domestic habits and comforts. In such cases, the same tendency in all respects to a higher state of civilization is apparent, as I observed at Barbadoes and Antigua.\*

It does not appear that the quantity of sugar made on the island has materially diminished since emancipation; nor is there now a sober man there who supposes that sugar cultivation must cease with the expiration of the apprenticeship, as was once so confidently predicted. The crop of sugar last year was about one fourth less than usual in consequence of a severe drought.†

Since 1834, great numbers of apprentices have purchased their freedom, for which it was estimated they had paid \$200,000. Much complaint has been made of their excessive valuation; and probably not without

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\* Scales of labor, similar to that which I mentioned in Barbadoes, have recently been adopted for the different parishes, from which much benefit is expected.

† Droughts, hurricanes, and malignant fevers are the three natural scourges of the West Indies.

reason, as some were giving, when I was at Jamaica, for the three remaining years of their apprenticeship, the price of a good slave before emancipation. But I should remark, that the value of labor in the island has considerably advanced since that time.

After the long train of evils which I have enumerated, it may be supposed that the state of things in Jamaica is desperate ; but this is far from being the case. The apprenticeship system, even here, has now a fair prospect of success. A material change has taken place in the opinions and feelings of the planters in regard to it. This many of them acknowledge. As the evils which they predicted have not come ; as the negroes when kindly treated behave as well and work as well as they ever did ; and as in reality their greatest troubles obviously arise from their own want of coöperation, they perceive that in keeping up the war they are fighting a phantom and opposing their own interests.\* This change is, in many cases, the result of

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\* The following extract from a despatch of the Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg, dated the 21st of June 1835, exactly a year after the new system commenced has a bearing on this point.

“The first prophecy was blood and destruction on the 1st of August ; in this they (the attorneys and managers) were wrong. The second that this scene would take place at Christmas, as it had not taken place in August ; in this they were wrong. The third that the apprentices would not work for wages ; in this they were wrong, as I know of no instance where the usual wages were offered and where they were refused. The fourth was, that this crop could not be taken

policy rather than of conviction; but it indicates a predominance of reason over passion, which may be regarded as the commencement of a better state of things. The success of the system at the other islands also has an influence, for they see no good reason why it should prosper there and not at Jamaica.

It is now admitted that two alterations would render the system perfectly satisfactory to the planters—a longer apprenticeship, and a substitution of colonial for special magistrates. These changes would materially affect the character of the system; but the concession is important. Indeed I was assured by several planters of the highest respectability, that a majority of them would prefer the present system to a renewal of the former. The truth seems to be, that while a certain class, composed principally of those advanced in life, adhere to their former sentiments, the younger and more enterprising, though they do not readily avow a change, do in fact secretly cherish different views and are gradually acquiescing in the new system.

Of the truth of this view there are several proofs. The present governor, Sir Lionel Smith, enjoys the confidence of all parties in a degree, which no previous governor for several years had attained. This may be in part owing to his peculiar qualifications; but it is off; in this they were wrong, as it has been taken off in many places much earlier than usual: and if protracted in others, it has been as much from the weather, and the refusal to give wages in many instances, as from any other cause affecting the success of the new system.”

more to be ascribed to greater unanimity of sentiment and feeling in the community. Property has also advanced in value. Several estates had recently been sold at an advance of more than forty per cent on their value ten years ago ; and this, I was told, was no uncommon occurrence.\* Real estate was in great demand, and the rent of houses in Kingston had considerably risen. As a further evidence of increasing prosperity, I may mention the establishment of two banks in the island ; and the construction of a railroad from Angels to Kingston ; and also a project to run a line of steamboats around the island. These are the first improvements of the kind which have been attempted in the West Indies.

But there are other reasons to expect the ultimate success of the experiment. As I have before intimated, the impediments which have hitherto retarded its progress, are of a nature gradually to yield, and have already much diminished. Whenever they disappear the way is prepared for an onward movement. I refer now particularly to the means of education and religious instruction provided for the apprentices, and the dispositions manifested by them for improvement. The absolute amount

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\* This extraordinary advance in the price of real estate is no doubt principally owing to the fact, that the value of the slaves becomes attached to the land. This is a natural consequence of emancipation ; for if the estates, cultivated by free labor, will yield as large profits as they did under the old system, they are worth as much to the owner as both the estates and slaves were before slavery was abolished.

of missionary effort has been greater here than in any other colony. This will appear from the following catalogue of the missionaries laboring under the patronage of different societies in 1836.

Church Missionary Society	.	.	6
London do.	.	.	7
Wesleyan do.	.	.	29
Baptist do.	.	.	16
Moravian do.	.	.	19

With the exception of some of the Moravians, these are all ordained ministers; and have stations in different parts of the island, where they are actively and successfully prosecuting their work. There is also a missionary presbytery, which is composed of nine ordained clergymen. In addition to these, the churches of the island are accessible to the apprentices, where many of them attend public worship. The number of rectors and curates supported by the colony is about 70.

The Moravians commenced their operations in the island in 1754, and the Wesleyans about forty years later. When the other missions were established I am unable to state.

Since emancipation, many of the barriers to missionary labors have been removed. The apprentices are at liberty to attend meetings regularly on the Sabbath, and to receive instruction at all times in the week, when they are not employed for their masters. The planters also, having no longer any thing to fear from the improvement of the apprentices or the agency of missionaries in promoting abolition, regard their labors

with less jealousy. Prejudice is not yet indeed extinct ; but it is obviously giving way, at least in many cases, to better sentiments and feelings. Justice, also, requires me to say, that the missionaries have always had friends among the planters ; and those too, who did not forsake them in the most trying emergencies. With these encouragements, the missionaries are pursuing their objects with increased alacrity and zeal, and with animating prospects of success.

Schools, in connection with the different missions, have for some time been in operation. Like those in the other islands, of which I have spoken, they are not of the most efficient character, but are gradually improving. I was unable myself to visit any of them ; but was informed by gentlemen, who could make the comparison from personal observation, that they were not inferior to those of Barbadoes. I had an opportunity to learn more of the Mico charity schools. They are on a noble scale. Twelve are already in operation, giving instruction to 4,581 pupils. They are established in different parts of the island ; and, as I was informed by the superintendent, are fully attended by the children of the apprentices. I was also told, that the schools of the missionaries were crowded ; but that those connected with the established church were languishing. The difference is to be ascribed to the fact that the Episcopal clergymen have not secured the confidence of the apprentices. Some of them were among the most active opposers of emancipation ; others were neutral ; and those, who favored it, manifested

too little zeal to win deeply the gratitude of the negroes ; who, as a natural consequence, now give a preference, in selecting their schools and places of worship, to their old and tried friends.

In concluding the part of my report which relates to Jamaica, I may remark, that I have often found difficulty in reconciling contradictory statements in regard to this island. Strong party feelings still exist here, which give diverse colorings to the opinions and views of different portions of the community. I should say, though I have studiously avoided giving names, that I saw leading men of all parties ; from whose united evidence, together with published official documents, my own opinions have been formed. The gentlemen, whom I consulted, spoke with frankness of the state of things in the island ; and though they did not agree in their sentiments, I could not doubt that they were honest in their expression of them.

## LETTER XII.

### GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF THE TWO FORMS OF EMANCIPATION IN THE WEST INDIES.

IN the preceding letters, I have attempted to sketch the outlines and operation of the two systems of emancipation adopted in the British West Indies. From what has been said, the state of things in these colonies may be pretty distinctly inferred; but still there are a few topics of a more general nature, which could not conveniently be introduced into the body of the report, that may be worthy of a little more consideration. In my remarks upon them, I hope not to become entangled with any of the political and highly exciting questions of the day. I am not prepared or disposed to embark in party discussions. It would be vain, however, to affect an ignorance of the direct and important bearing of the views, which I may offer, upon some questions of vital interest now before the public. But whatever this bearing may be, I disclaim all intention to promote the cause of any particular society or party. If the information which I have communicated, or have to communicate, shall throw any light upon a subject confessedly difficult, or, in any way, tend to advance the great principles of truth, justice, and humanity, my object will be accomplished.

The first topic, which I wish more particularly to



notice, is the apprenticeship system, considered as one of the forms of emancipation. So far as my knowledge extends, this is the first experiment of the kind which has been tried. Examples of setting large bodies of slaves free, are not numerous; such as we have, proceeded on a different plan. Emancipation in Hayti for instance was in consequence of a civil war. The South American Republics, either liberated their slaves by degrees, or fixed a distant time, when all should become free at once. In Mexico, freedom was granted to the slaves by the government; but they became obligated to pay for it from their subsequent earnings. A similar plan was once proposed by the governor of St. Croix; but the planters did not encourage it.

The apprenticeship system may be considered, as a measure of general policy applicable to other communities, or as one particularly adapted to the British colonies. It was in the latter light only, that it was contemplated by Parliament. It was not thought, that there was, at least in all the colonies, that mutual confidence and good understanding between the proprietors and the slaves, which would secure lasting peace and good order, if the legal ties, which connected them, should be at once and entirely severed.

Strong prejudices and apprehended dangers, in view of emancipation, had so fully possessed the minds of the planters, that they were unprepared for so great and sudden a change; and it was considered advisable, on the ground of prudence and safety, to place the slaves for a time in an intermediate state, in which they

should enjoy the protection of law, and the substantial blessings of freedom, till the fears of the planters should subside, and both parties, by mutual dependence and obligation, might grow into better favor with each other. It was, also, considered, that so extensive an experiment in immediate abolition had never been made—that the dispositions of the negroes to industry, economy, and steady improvement, had not been fully tested—and that the state contemplated would afford them both an opportunity and a motive for increased effort in making preparation for unconditional freedom. It may be added to this, that the friends of the cause both in the West Indies and at home, were divided in their opinion on the subject—some preferring immediate emancipation, and others thinking that an intermediate state would be safer and more advantageous to each party. Under such circumstances, I cannot but think, that the course which Parliament adopted, was characterized by the sound sense and practical wisdom, which have generally distinguished the measures of that body.\* Nor have the results been such as

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\* The following extracts will show the sentiments of two leading members of Parliament on this subject.

“ I confess I could not contemplate, without some degree of apprehension, the possibility of danger arising from setting the slaves free at once, and therefore it was considered by his majesty’s government that a progressive change combining a preparatory state of restricted labor, with a certain degree of free labor, to end in ultimate manumission, was the safest course to be pursued.”—*Earl Grey.*

to militate against such an opinion. My belief is, that all the benefits have been realized from the apprenticeship system, which under the circumstances could reasonably have been expected. This opinion may be illustrated in a few particulars.

In the first place, the system was adopted and put in operation in all the colonies, except where immediate emancipation was preferred, without force. Considering the exasperated feelings of the colonists, this was no small point to be attained; and that a more vigorous system would have met a harder fate, is obvious from the opposition which was made to the present. To have forced such a system into operation, might have cost much blood and sown the seeds of lasting discord.

The system has also been established without materially interrupting the ordinary cultivation or business of a single island. This is an all important fact. A

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“I am aware that there are persons of extensive information who doubt whether all the slave population, if at once manumitted, would feel sufficiently the mere stimulus of want on the one hand, or be so excited with the hope of wages on the other, as to make them labor; and, feeling for myself in a matter of this importance, the necessity of carrying along with us those who are not prepared to assent to immediate emancipation on this ground, and being aware of the vital importance of effecting this object, I am quite ready to admit that it is more fit and prudent to establish some sort of intermediate and probationary state, by which these persons, previously to enjoying a state of perfect freedom, may be under some qualified restriction for a certain time.”—*Earl of Ripon.*

result, so entirely at variance with the predictions of the planters, was scarcely to be hoped, and certainly not expected. The transition in most places was absolutely imperceptible ; and, where there were misunderstandings between the parties, they were short and adjusted without violence. I doubt whether the history of the world records the accomplishment of so important a revolution in the constitution of society, with so little derangement of its regular functions. I am not aware that industry or capital has in consequence of emancipation been diverted in a single instance from their ordinary channels. They have only been made to move with a broader and deeper current.

Again, as an expedient for gradually softening down the asperities of feeling and manner between the master and slave, the system has not been unproductive of effect. That such has been its operation at Barbadoes, is undeniable ; and even at Jamaica, this tendency is apparent. But it will no doubt become more visible as the expiration of the system approaches, when both parties will perceive more clearly how closely their interests are connected, and feel the necessity of mutual confidence and coöperation.

Again, in protecting the negroes from abuse and in securing to them such privileges as were intended to be conferred, it has been tolerably effectual. I know indeed that there are exceptions, and that they are too numerous ; but still, as a general thing, it has accomplished in this respect all that Parliament contemplated. More or less failures were to be expected ; and, in

most cases, they have resulted from causes, which would equally have impeded any system. If the plan has not effected every thing which was desirable, it would be difficult to show that any other could have done more.

I add again, that as the apprenticeship system secures to the apprentices a good degree of protection, so it affords them an opportunity for confirming habits of industry and learning to provide for their own wants. They have, by the present arrangement, a portion of each week at their own disposal ; a part of which, at least, it was expected they would employ in voluntary labor for wages. It was, also, expected, that while they were thus learning the value of money by earning it, they would acquire a higher taste for the comforts and advantages of civilization. At Barbadoes, as the amount of labor rendered is but little if any diminished under the present system, the planters do not require much extra work except for a few months in crop time ; and at Jamaica, most of the estates being owned by absentees, who do not understand the necessity of agricultural improvements, extra labor is in but little demand. But here the allowances in land are ample ; and the apprentices can profitably employ their time in its cultivation, so that they still have a motive for industry.

There is also one other respect, in which the apprentices are advantageously training for freedom. They are learning the nature and sanctions of law.

Having been long taught unlimited obedience in the school of individual and irresponsible power, it will not appear surprising, that they readily submit to the milder and more reasonable requisitions of civil authority. They manifest no incapacity to understand the nature of law, so far as it applies to them; and, as was universally admitted, are peculiarly awed by its forms. I heard of no instances, in which they had resisted the civil arm or refused to acquiesce in the decisions of a legal tribunal.

In regard to school education and religious instruction, though they now have time and unrestricted liberty to attend to such subjects—and though perfect toleration is secured by law to religious teachers of all denominations, yet the means of knowledge have been very inadequately provided, and the encouragement given to improve them is far less general and hearty, than the urgency of the case demands. This I consider the greatest deficiency in the abolition act. If any thing is to elevate the character of the negro population in the West Indies, it is the inculcation of moral and religious principles, and the imbuing of their minds with knowledge. In no other way, can they be taught self respect, and be effectually guarded against the deteriorating tendencies of their situation. Yet this is a point, to the importance of which long prejudice blinds the understandings of the planters, and which Parliament seems not fully to have considered, or at least not to have adopted adequate means to attain. I shall advert to this topic, however, in another place.

It is well known, that some of the advocates of freedom in England have expressed less favorable views of the apprenticeship system, than those embodied in the preceding remarks. Considering the enormous sacrifice, which they have made for accomplishing their object, it is certainly just that the stipulations of government and of the colonies should be strictly performed. Twenty millions of pounds sterling should not be paid for a bauble. After what I have said, particularly in regard to Jamaica, it is scarcely necessary to add, that they had real cause for alarm. But still, they were certainly premature in pronouncing the system, upon so short a trial, an entire failure. It is true, there were mistakes in the original construction of the system—and there have been abuses—great abuses in the execution of it. But all this was to be expected, from the ordinary imperfections of human wisdom, in legislating upon a subject so new and difficult; and from the violent passions and jarring interests which were to be encountered. Many of the difficulties, of which complaint was made, have, by the exertions of Parliament, been entirely surmounted, and others greatly mitigated. Still, it was thought advisable, that the whole subject should be formally investigated; and accordingly Mr. Buxton, in a very luminous and able speech, moved Parliament, in March 1836, for the appointment of a select committee for this purpose. A committee was appointed; but for want of time, they were obliged to confine their inquiries to Jamaica. In August, five months after their appointment, they pre-

sented their report. It touches on the principal sources of difficulty, and gives, in my opinion, a fair view of the subject. As the conclusion is an important illustration and confirmation of the views, which I have expressed, I shall copy it. I may add, however, that I was in the West Indies nearly a year after the evidence, upon which the report is founded, was obtained; and that during that interval, affairs particularly at Jamaica, had moved on in a more satisfactory and prosperous course.

“Your committee have thus commented upon the principal points which have been brought before their notice; and upon a general review of the evidence which they have received, they conceive that they are warranted in expressing a belief that the system of apprenticeship in Jamaica is working in a manner not unfavorable to the momentous change from slavery to freedom which is now going on there. They perceive, undoubtedly, many traces of those evils which are scarcely separable from a state of society confessedly defective and anomalous, and which can only be defended as one of preparation and transition. But on the other hand, they see much reason to look forward with a confident hope to the result of this great experiment. In the evidence which they have received, they find abundant proof of the general good conduct of the apprentices, and of their willingness to work for wages whenever they are fairly and considerately treated by their employers. It is, indeed, fully proved that the labor, thus voluntarily performed by the negro,



is more effective than that which was obtained from him while in a state of slavery, or which is now given to his employer during the period for which he is compelled to work as an apprentice. The mutual suspicion and irritation of the different classes of the community appear to be gradually subsiding; and on the part of the negro population, industrious habits, and the desire of moral and physical improvement, seem to be gaining ground. Under these circumstances your committee feel bound to express their conviction, that nothing could be more unfortunate than any occurrence which would have a tendency to unsettle the minds of either class with regard to the fixed determination of the imperial Parliament to preserve inviolate both parts of the solemn engagement by which the services of the apprenticed laborer were secured to his employer for a definite period, and under specified restrictions; at the expiration of which he is to be raised to a state of unqualified freedom and to be governed by laws framed in all respects on the same principle as those to which his white fellow subjects are amenable."

The consideration of the apprenticeship system naturally leads to the other form of emancipation adopted in Antigua and the Bermudas. But after the minute details, which I have given of the system and its operation, and of the circumstances which led to it and have contributed so signally to its success, there is but little necessity for further remark. The system appears to me, both in theory and practice, to be admirably adapted to the condition of those colonies. Of the two

forms of emancipation, it is by far the most simple and unexceptionable ; and as the way was obviously prepared for it, both justice to the slaves, and policy on the part of the planters required and sanctioned its adoption. The friends of freedom and humanity may now rejoice, that the foul stain of slavery is entirely and forever wiped away from the civil code of another community.

Two or three changes, however, must be accomplished, before the plan can attain its end, as a perfect system of freedom ; and which it is to be hoped time will effect. The first is a more ample remuneration for labor, by which the emancipated people will be able to procure for themselves a larger supply of the comforts of life, to adopt a higher and more independent style of living, and to make better provision for the education of their families. In this way, females may be withdrawn from field labor, and family and social order and happiness be greatly promoted. The next thing is such a distribution of labor and compensation, as to discriminate and reward industry and skill ; and of course to discountenance negligence and stupidity. The practice of attempting to retain the gangs entire and of paying to all the same wages, though it has advantages and is perhaps at present necessary, must certainly retard the progress of industry and enterprise. A reciprocal dependence between the planters and the laborers must of necessity exist ; but it should not be allowed, in any way, to encourage idleness or depress merit.

Another necessary improvement is a more ample

provision for the advancement of education. On this topic however I need not dwell. As the planters have had the magnanimity to bestow unconditional freedom, and as they find their own interests promoted by the measure, it would be gratifying to see them follow out their plan of improvement, by laying broad and deep the foundations on which their continued peace and prosperity must rest.

I have already remarked, that Antigua and the Bermudas are the only two colonies, which conferred immediate freedom,—and perhaps I ought to add, that, as in the former, so in the latter, the condition of the islands was peculiarly favorable for the adoption of this plan. This was a small colony, containing a population of about 5,000 whites, and 4,000 slaves, and occupying a soil unfit for sugar cultivation. The principal employment of the people is ship building and navigation. The slaves were distributed, in small numbers, among the white inhabitants, with whom they live on comparatively familiar terms. They received religious instruction from the Wesleyans and also enjoyed other means of education.

As to their character and condition, however, I will adduce the evidence of Admiral Fleming before the committee of the House of Commons, who having been many years a commander on the West India station, was intimately acquainted with nearly all the islands, and being a man of acknowledged intelligence and integrity, is abundantly competent to bear testimony.\*

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\* Lord Brougham in a speech before the House of Lords

In reply to the question put to him by the committee, "Have you been led by your observation to perceive a difference in the moral condition of the slave population in the West Indies where sugar is cultivated, as compared with the condition of the slaves where sugar is not cultivated?" He said: "Yes; in Bermuda and the Bahamas there is no sugar cultivated, and there the slaves and the black population are much more moral than in any other of the islands I visited." And again:

"To what do you ascribe this difference in favor of the morals of the slave population, where sugar is not cultivated?" He replied: "There has been more pains taken in cultivating the negroes in those islands; they are almost all Christians; they go regularly to church; they are married, and they are much better treated; the proprietors there are smaller proprietors, who live almost with the slaves; they are very kind to them; they are quite a different race; the people in the Bahamas speak better English, and they are more intelligent there and in the Bermudas, than in any other islands I have visited."

I am able also to say, from official published documents, that the system of freedom is giving great satisfaction in Bermuda, as well as Antigua. How far its

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alludes to this testimony in the following manner:—"the evidence of a very distinguished officer—I mean Admiral Fleming—than whom no man is better acquainted with the interior of the West India colonies, where he passed a great portion of his valuable and honorable and useful life,"

success, in these two cases, should be ascribed to the peculiar condition of the colonies, I do not undertake to decide; but I consider myself bound in honesty to state the conditions of the experiment, as well as the results. Nor am I called upon, in this place, to express an opinion as to the comparative merits of the two systems, as applicable to other communities. I may, however, observe, that the apprenticeship system, in its present form, is adapted only to colonies dependent on the mother country—but with the exception of a foreign magistracy, which is in this case at once the most defective and essential part of the system, I do not see why it might not be adopted in other situations. If it were voluntarily assumed it is obvious no foreign agency would be necessary in carrying it into execution. It would then not differ materially from the system adopted at Antigua, except in conferring less immediate freedom.

With regard to the preparation necessary for emancipation, the experiments in the West Indies show, that it is at least as essential on the part of the master as on that of the slaves; for, in no case, has the success of the experiment been endangered by the conduct of the negroes, which can by no means be said of the planters, especially at Jamaica.

It remains that I should make a few remarks on the indemnification secured to the planters by Parliament, for such it is more properly called, than compensation. It does not appear, that the British government ever entertained the idea of abolishing slavery, without prop-

erly indemnifying the planters for their loss of property. Nor does it appear, that they considered the twenty millions as the market value of the slaves. Indeed, they knew that they were but about half of that value.\* But after mature examination, they were satisfied, that the abolition of slavery would eventually benefit, rather than injure the colonies. As the colonists however, were greatly alarmed, as the result of the experiment was not absolutely certain, and as there were contingencies which might not be foreseen, it was considered wise and just, that the British nation should advance the sum of twenty millions as a reasonable security to the planters against loss, on the condition that they should voluntarily adopt the abolition act.†

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\* The value of the slaves in all the British colonies was according to the estimate of the Commissioners of Compensation, £45,281,738 15s. 10d.

† “For although the Legislature clearly has the abstract right of altering the relative situation between slave and master in any part of his majesty’s dominions, yet I do not think that in justice this can be done, without giving to the masters what appears to be an adequate equivalent for the property taken away.”—*Earl of Ripon.*

“I admit that the sum proposed is a large one, but I certainly think with my noble friend near me, that if the British Parliament think it right to abolish slavery, the interests of those persons who have become possessors of slaves in consequence of the security given, and the encouragement held out, by the laws of the country in past years, to that species of investment, ought to be fairly considered; and if your Lordships choose to enact this great measure of benevolence,

They were justified in estimating the probable loss, as they would the damages in the case of some great public improvement, which required the sacrifice of private property. The individual has not of necessity a claim to the full value of his property, but simply to an indemnity from real loss. This was the high ground on which compensation was granted. The measure was generous, and worthy of honorable men; or I might rather say, it was just, and due in good faith

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you ought not to do so entirely at the expense of the planters. I therefore did think that it was right and requisite that the West India proprietors should have something in the shape of compensation. Whether the sum proposed is too large or too small, I will not pretend to decide; but this I will say—if it should succeed in doing away with that hateful condition—(for it must be hateful indeed to every Englishman to contemplate slavery)—it will be money well laid out; and which by the British public, burdened though they are, will not be grudged.”—Speeches before the House of Lords on colonial slavery.—*Earl Grey.*

We may insert here a prophecy of the West India body, that is, of West India proprietors, who reside in England.

“We possess, with our property in the West India colonies, the means of *correctly* ascertaining the actual state of the negro population. We *know*, and we are ready to prove what we assert in the face of our country, our well grounded conviction, that the speedy annihilation of slavery would be attended with the devastation of the West India colonies, with loss of lives and property to the white inhabitants, with inevitable distress and misery to the black population; and with a fatal shock to the commercial credit of this empire.”

to the subjects of the government. The plea that property in slaves is unlawful, and, therefore, properly considered, impossible, was regarded in this case as a vain subterfuge. This may be true in natural justice; but not in legislation. It is one question, whether a man has a natural right to hold property in slaves; and quite another, whether a government can properly take away a right which it has conferred, without becoming responsible for the consequent losses. At any rate, if such policy could be defended, it would require such refinements of justice—if justice it can be called, as few eyes have sufficient keenness of vision to see, and as would be entirely unworthy of the councils of a generous nation. Such policy would be peculiarly unbecoming the English government, because it was itself deeply involved in the guilt of slavery. When the suppression of the slave trade was proposed in Parliament, one of the strong and oft repeated objections to the measure was, the blow it would give to the revenue. Such being the case, it was certainly fit, that Parliament should not only order to be removed, but should itself help remove, the burden it had been the means of imposing. Expediency required the same course. For the success of the scheme depended much upon conciliating the favor and coöperation of the planters; or, at least, upon disarming them, as much as possible, of their opposition. Considered simply in this light, the compensation was demanded. That it was abundantly adequate, the result proved—and that a less one, with the light on the



subject, which the government now has, would not be considered sufficient, is not improbable.

In addition to the compensation, the home government supports all the special magistrates, and, in the original plan of emancipation, proposed to defray the increased expenses of education and religious instruction. Several grants have been made for the former object, but I am not aware that any thing has been given directly for the latter. I am not able to state the number or the amount of these grants. I can only say, the one in 1835, was £20,000.

I am aware that some writers have asserted that, as the twenty millions were designed but as a partial remuneration for the slaves, the apprenticeship system was introduced as an equivalent for the remainder. I believe this representation to have no foundation in truth, at least, so far as the British government are concerned. It was, indeed, supposed that the services of the negroes, during their apprenticeship, would be of some value to the planters; and this might be a reason for not placing the compensation higher; but it was a collateral advantage, and not the main design of the system. The great objects of the system, as I understand them, I have already explained. If it has ever been regarded as a mercenary measure, it is by those on whom its execution devolves, and not by its framers. Views like those, to which I have alluded, are entertained to some extent in the colonies; but they are a part of that selfish and ungenerous policy, which slavery engenders, and which we could wish,

but can hardly expect, to see die with it. Indeed, so deeply rooted are the prejudices and the habits of slavery, that much vigilance and watchful jealousy, on the part of the parent government, will long be necessary to guard the infant liberties of the new people. It is true, the spirit of slavery has met a severe repulse; but it is by no means subdued. Nor will the rising energies of the new people, for a long time, be able without aid to cope with it. They have, however, all reasonable assurance, that if they remain patient and faithful to their trust, the same arm which has undertaken their relief, will work out for them complete deliverance.

## LETTER XIII.

### ECONOMICAL ADVANTAGES OF EMANCIPATION. — DECREASE OF THE SLAVE POPULATION IN THE WEST INDIES.

FROM the details in the preceding pages, some general principles of great importance may be derived, which it will be useful formally to state and confirm by a few additional facts. Whenever great truths in any science are fairly settled, either by demonstration or by experiment, they should be so recorded; as they then become legitimate principles of reasoning in subsequent investigations of the same subject. The three following I consider entitled to this rank.

1. Emancipation, instead of promoting a spirit of insurrection, is the surest means of eradicating it. It has generally been thought, that the abolition of slavery must of necessity endanger the safety of a community, because it sets loose a class of people, who are supposed to be incensed by aggravated wrongs, and, at the same time, to be without the restraints of moral principle. What, it is asked, will prevent such a people from sating their revenge in the blood and plunder of their former oppressors. The experiment, however, in the West Indies proves this opinion to be a mistake. From the introduction of slavery down to the time of emancipation, every island was subject to in-

surrection. Dr. Madden enumerates not less than twenty-two open rebellions—six conspiracies to assassinate the white inhabitants detected on the eve of execution, and one mutiny which took place in Jamaica during this period. The common language of the West Indians was, that they lived on a volcano, and knew not when they were safe—or rather knew that they were always in danger. But since emancipation, such apprehensions have all vanished—the new people manifest the most quiet and peaceful tendencies, and are more disposed to sustain, than to violate, public order. Many of the troops in the colonies are already disbanded, and it is supposed that a small force, composed of negroes, to man the garrisons, will eventually be sufficient for their defence. I might adduce many other examples from that quarter of the world of a similar character. Indeed, I know of no instance where emancipation has had an opposite effect. Even in Hayti the effect of the abolition of slavery was to soothe the minds of the slaves, and the destruction of lives and property was occasioned by an attempt of the French, under Le Clerc, several years afterwards to reëstablish it.

But this is precisely the effect, which a just knowledge of human nature should teach us to expect from emancipation. The slaves are relieved from a heavy burden. In this they rejoice. They are admitted to new privileges. For these they are grateful. They have new objects and happy prospects placed before them. With these they are at once occupied and de-

lighted. Though their relation to their masters is changed, they still feel dependent ; and are disposed, with the possession of their new boon, to forget what was unpleasant in the past and to conciliate by kindness future favors. Indeed the attachment of the negro to his master, and the scenes of his boyhood and labors, and it may be too of his sufferings, is amazingly strong ; and, under ordinary circumstances, constitutes a lasting bond of union. In addition to this, though the slave is scarcely considered a part of the civil community, he is accustomed to see and respect public order ; and when he becomes a member, his pride is rather to protect than to undervalue his newly acquired privileges. He has long enough eaten the bitter fruits of slavery to abhor them ; and has seen too much of the honors and advantages of freedom not to covet and value them.

2. The second general principle, confirmed by the experiment of emancipation in the West Indies, is that there is no difficulty in obtaining labor from liberated slaves for wages. The cases of Antigua and Bermuda are direct and incontrovertible proof of this proposition, and need no further illustration. The same thing is also demonstrated by the fact, that the apprentices are everywhere ready and desirous, when they can find employment, to work in their own time for pay.

In further proof of the above principle I adduce the evidence of Admiral Fleming before the Commons' committee in regard to Cuba, Colombia, and Hayti. Though slavery is not abolished in Cuba, it is well known that this island contains a large proportion of

free colored and black people ; and that many sugar estates are cultivated by their labor. The following are the questions and answers.

What is the condition of the lower class of free people?" "All the free people are in very good condition in the island of Cuba." "Have you ever heard or seen any thing in Cuba which would lead you to believe that the free people of color were not industrious?" "No, I never heard in Cuba any complaints of their want of industry ; I think they are generally as industrious as the Spaniards."

"Do you suppose there would be any greater difficulty in adopting the system of free labor upon the sugar estates in the English islands than in the Spanish islands." "Yes, a great deal."

"Will you explain why." "Because all the English inhabitants that ever I was acquainted with are against free labor, and consequently they would resist it." "Independently of the opinion that may be entertained by planters in the British West India colonies, is there in the thing itself any greater difficulty in the English West India islands than in Cuba?" "I think none. I am of opinion that the West Indies could be cultivated by free labor ; and I ground that opinion upon my experience of what I have seen in Hayti, in the Carraccas, particularly where all are free, and in the islands of Trinidad and Cuba, and upon the industry of the free negroes in the islands of the Bahamas." Again in relation to Hayti,

"Did you see much begging in the streets?" "I never saw a beggar in Hayti." "Do they import any

sugar in Hayti?" "Not that I know of; I believe they may import. The cultivation of canes is not encouraged in Hayti; they have no means of making it into sugar, nor any capital to set up the works."

"Have you ever heard the reason assigned for the decrease of the growth of sugar in Hayti, by any person upon whose judgment you could rely there?" "Yes."

"What were the causes stated to you?" "The destruction of the works, and the want of capital to establish them again; and the necessity of attending to other more urgent concerns, feeding themselves and making clothes; besides, the government do not encourage making sugar to avoid giving offence to the sugar colonies." "Did you ever hear the unwillingness of the free black population to work at the cultivation of sugar assigned as a reason?" "Never; on the contrary, I was told that they were very ready to work, if they were paid."

"Did they appear to you to be living comfortably?" "Yes, the most happy, the richest, the best fed, and the most comfortable negroes that I saw in the West Indies, were in Hayti, even better than in the Carraccas."

I will also give an extract from the evidence of Robert Sutherland before the same committee in relation to Hayti, who visited the island several times between 1814 and 1827.

"Are there many persons who work for hire in Hayti?" "Yes, the whole cultivation is carried on by free labor."

"Do those persons work with industry and vigor?"

“I have no reason to think that they do not. The proof that free labor in Hayti answers, is this ; that after the French were expelled, there was absolutely no sugar-work, there was no mill ; there was nothing of that kind which could be put in use, it was so destroyed ; and since that period, various plantations have grown up in Hayti ; men have gone to the expense of laying out twenty, thirty, and forty thousand dollars to build up those sugar-works, and there are a vast number of plantations in the island ; and it stands to reason, that unless those men were repaid for their capital, they would not continue that sort of work. And there is another thing to be observed, that sugar is not the staple commodity of Hayti ; they only make sufficient for consumption ; coffee is the staple commodity of the island.”

3. I state as a third general principle, deduced from the history of emancipation in the West Indies, that free labor is as cheap as slave labor. This principle has long been considered as settled in theory ; it is now so by experiment. I appeal again for proof to Antigua and Bermuda ; and also to the task work performed by the apprentices. This evidence would, I think, have justified me in stating the proposition in stronger terms. But if in the beginning of the experiment and under many disadvantages, free labor is as cheap as slave labor, what may be expected in a more advanced state of the system ?

I might adduce much additional proof of the three preceding propositions from the West Indies and the



adjoining States, but I forbear. The evidence on which they rest is such, in my opinion, as would entitle principles, in moral or natural science, to the rank of incontrovertible truths. This view of the superiority of the present systems would be greatly confirmed by contrasting them with the old régime.

The geological formations of the West Indies, consisting principally of limestone, marl, and volcanic rocks, are among the most productive of the earth. The staple commodities of the climate, also, are of the most rare and valuable kind. Such a soil and climate with good husbandry, would be an inexhaustible source of wealth. Yet with all these natural advantages, and a teeming population, and high protecting duties, Parliament has heard from these colonies for years, nothing but one incessant cry of bankruptcy, impoverishment, and ruin. It is only by discriminating duties in their favor, that they can compete in the market with the sugar districts of the East Indies, which are cultivated by free labor. What is the cause of all this? It is not heavy taxation; for they pay no taxes except to support their own institutions.\* It is not

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\* I am aware that colonial produce is subject to a duty in the mother country; and that the colonists have considered it unreasonably high. But in 1827 it was 10s. a cwt. less on West India sugar, than on East India; and in 1833 Lord Brougham spoke of it in a speech before the House of Lords, as being 7 or 8s.—It is estimated, that the English nation pays for this protection to West India sugar alone, from £1,200,000 to £1,600,000 annually. West India coffee

their government ; for, in this respect, no colonies are more highly favored. There is but one answer. It is the wasteful system of slavery—a system, which has cut the sinews of industry—paralyzed enterprise—poisoned the streams of wealth—and entailed blight and poverty on the land.\*

In illustration of this point, I must present a few features of the system, as they fell under my own observation.

In the first place, the principle of secondary and subordinate agency which runs through it, involves great expense and secures but a very imperfect management of the affairs of an estate. The proprietor, residing abroad, and never perhaps having seen a sugar plantation, is certainly not qualified to direct its concerns. He commits this responsibility to an attorney, who has perhaps several other estates in charge. He cannot therefore often see either of them, much less be intimately acquainted with their affairs. All that he attempts, is a general superintendence in furnishing provisions, and other supplies for the estate, and in

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enjoys a similar protection. I may remark, that indigo, cultivated in the East Indies by free labor, has entirely supplanted in the European markets that from the West Indies.

\* Lord Belmore, formerly governor of Jamaica, just before his departure from the colony, made use of the following language to the House of Assembly : “The cause of your present distress results from that policy by which slavery was originally established ; and this fine island can never develop the abundance of its resources while slavery continues.”

disposing of the produce. His main dependence is upon the manager ; who, again, looks to the overseer or bookkeeper to execute his orders. Thus the moving power is transmitted through a long line of inferior agents, and is nearly or quite exhausted before it reaches the point of application. Suppose the agents to possess an ordinary portion of intelligence, and to feel a due interest in the concerns of the estate, they are checked, if not baffled, in plans of improvement, by their dependence upon a distant proprietor. They become discouraged ; and soon look with indifference on evils which they cannot remedy. This, however, is the fairest side of the subject. A little reflection will show, that human nature cannot be safely depended upon for the proper discharge of a trust in such circumstances. There may be individuals who will be faithful ; but theirs are the virtues of the few, and not of the many ; and, perhaps, I may add, such as cannot be expected to abound in that class of adventurers, who forego the enjoyments and advantages of European society, to encounter the diseases and privations of the West Indies, and become the taskmasters of slaves.

Nor is the extensive employment of subordinate agency the only fault in the management of West India estates. There is a great want of enterprise and practical skill, both in the resident proprietors and in the agents of absentees. This may result in part from the influence of the climate ; but it is more owing to personal inactivity and defective habits of observation.

The condition of the proprietors and of the overseers places them above labor; they, therefore, do not acquire the practical knowledge which labor only can give. Nor do they become sufficiently acquainted with the operations which they superintend, either to see defects or suggest improvements. The consequence is a general aversion to changes and improvements; and a great want of energy and self confidence, whenever they are required to depart from the beaten paths. They much prefer the endurance of evils, to incurring the effort and responsibility of attempting to remove them. This, and a similar want of tact in the operatives—that is the slaves—is the reason, that so few improvements have been made in agricultural implements and processes. There is not sufficient science and practical skill either to contrive or execute such changes. The same thing is manifest in the low state of the arts; and in the want of schools, and the higher institutions of learning. A similar remark is applicable to the press. I do not recollect ever to have seen a periodical or book, which was published in the West Indies. This indisposition to change and the feeling of incapacity to meet and direct such an event, was obviously one of the great barriers to emancipation.

There are defects in the system, which affect particularly the management of estates. It is even more faulty in its application to the slaves. It does not supply a motive to effort adapted to their nature. Fear is indeed an important principle in our constitution;

but its original design was obviously rather to restrain from, than incite to action. It is, in its nature, a depressing passion; and when it acquires the ascendancy over the other principles of action, it makes a weak, irresolute, and inefficient man. Now this is the principle, which is mainly addressed and called into exercise in slavery. No wonder therefore that slaves are proverbially weak and ineffective. Their moral nature demands a stimulus, which their condition does not supply, and which is as necessary for effort as the nourishment administered by food. The system, therefore, considered merely as an expedient for obtaining labor, is fundamentally wrong. It rests on a principle of action which was not placed in the constitution of man for that purpose; and excludes the operation of other principles from which alone energy of action can proceed. It does not more shock our moral sense by its injustice, than it does our understandings, by its miserable adaptation to human nature.

This proposition might be illustrated in many particulars. No person can long be familiar with slaves without perceiving its truth. He will see it in the vacancy of their countenances, their downcast looks, their sullen obstinacy—their slow, and languid, and imbecile motions—in their want of dignity and self respect, and in their servile and sycophantic airs. Their character is as distinguishable from that, formed under the influences adapted to our nature, as is the plant which grows in a cellar, from that which has been nourished by the light, and warmth, and moisture, of its appropriate element. A slave is allowed to per-

form about half of the work of a freeman; and considering his food, and the nature and amount of moral stimulus applied to him, I believe that his physical strength is as severely tasked, as is that of the freeman. In other words, with suitable food and a motive to labor adapted to his nature, he would be physically able to perform twice the work which he is now.

Nor is this all. Labor is not a thing which can be accurately measured, and therefore exacted with precision. It is impossible to control the motions of a slave. In spite of his master, they will be quick or slow according to his pleasure. If a given amount of labor is required of him, it is in his power to make great retrenchments by performing it superficially or imperfectly, without falling within the strict limits of censure. This is one of the most striking features of slave labor. It is seen in a slovenly agriculture, in the neglect of stock, in the cruel treatment of beasts of burden—in carelessness and inattention to the interests of the master, in every thing, in short, where there is room for the operation of selfishness and indolence, without incurring certain punishment. These remarks will of course be understood to apply only to the great body of slaves. There are individuals, who, from the principles of uncommon generosity or fidelity are exceptions; but they are comparatively few.

But the habits of negligence thus formed, are often carried into their own concerns. They are inattentive to health and to the means of self preservation; and become the victims of accident and incurable

ble diseases. Parents neglect their children ; and likewise their houses and provision grounds, and squander the little stores allowed them by their masters.

There is another important source of loss in the employment of slave labor. It consists in the want of a suitable occupation for those, who are in any way disqualified for the regular business of an estate. It is the policy of the system to keep the slaves in ignorance ; so that they are rarely instructed in a variety of arts. Their minds are developed neither by theoretical education, nor by the application of their natural powers to a diversity of pursuits. The same short, dull, beaten path, is to be trodden from the beginning of life to the end. The consequence is, that they acquire no versatility of talent. They can do but one thing and that in but one way. Now mark the effect. Whenever accident, or disease, or age, unfits them for their particular calling, they become nearly useless to the estate. And when it is considered, that males and females, old and young, the robust and the infirm, are destined to the same unvarying round of labor, it will not appear surprizing, that large numbers fall into this class. It is generally estimated, that not more than one third of a gang are fit for field labor ; the others are of course nearly a dead weight upon the property. In this respect, how immense the advantages of a free community, where some profitable employment may be found, suited to the strength, and capacity, and condition, of every individual. Those,

whom age, or constitutional infirmity, has disqualified for toil in the field, may find occupation and the means of support in a less laborious situation. And how large an amount of labor, in every such community is performed by those who, were there no such callings for them, must be in a great measure useless to themselves and to society. No small part of this labor is lost in slave communities—a fact which is fully attested by the numbers of disabled and idle persons, who are seen about every slave plantation.

A similar disadvantage arises from the employment of slaves in agriculture. Suppose the actual amount of labor to be the same, it cannot be applied to so good advantage as free labor. It leads almost of necessity to an unvaried and injurious course of cultivation. The same crop is repeated year after year, till in the course of time the soil is exhausted and ruined. There is, in this respect, a striking analogy between the condition of the older islands in the West Indies and the northern slave States in this country. The land has become so much exhausted by an injudicious and unvaried succession of crops, as, in many cases, scarcely to defray the expenses of cultivation. For example, at St. Croix the only production of any importance is sugar cane. Nearly every thing, which is consumed upon the island, except fresh meat and vegetables, is imported. There is, therefore, no opportunity for an alternation of different crops or for keeping stock—the two principal methods by which the fertility of land is revived and



preserved.\* The effect is, a gradual depreciation and an eventual exhaustion of the soil. Nothing but the constant decomposition of the marl and limestone formations, of which the island is mainly composed, has saved it so long from utter sterility. I know of no other exception to these remarks than Barbadoes, where improved modes of cultivation have recently been introduced.†

The effect of this process of depreciation in the soil upon the price of slaves, is worthy of remark. In the newly settled islands, where the soil is yet rich, and sugar cultivation is highly profitable, the slaves are of more than triple the value that they are on others. The following is their average value in four islands from

\* In the West Indies, very few cattle are reared; for meat and leather are no part of the slave's allowance, and the labor of cattle they perform themselves.

† By repeated cropping, the soil had become, less than half a century since, so much worn as to be almost unproductive in the sugar cane; but, by the substitution of other crops, particularly the Guinea corn, a system of soiling and tethering cattle was introduced, which, increasing largely the store of dung, has not only been the means of retrieving the lands, but has, perhaps, made them more productive than ever; adding, at the same time, to those numberless conveniences and resources which never fail to proceed from a due attention to the brute animals. . . . Fortunately, the cane is not perhaps so rapid an exhauster of the soil, as are the culmiferous plants, the staple crops of Europe."—*Dr. Nugent's report to the Agricultural Society of Antigua.*

1822 to 1830, as given by the Commissioners of Compensation, and will illustrate my remark.

Antigua	.	.	£32, 12s. 10½d.
Barbadoes	.	.	47, 1s. 3½d.
Trinidad	.	.	105, 4s. 5¼d.
Demerara	.	.	114, 11s. 5½d.

Since emancipation, many laborers have gone from Antigua to the two last named colonies, where they obtain comparatively high wages. As soon as the old system is thoroughly broken up, labor will naturally flow from the older to the newer islands, till the demand is supplied and the proper equilibrium is established. These facts need no comment. In connection with the other considerations which I have presented on this point, they show the system of slavery to be as hostile to the pecuniary interests of a community, as it is to justice and humanity.

From this view of what may be called the economical features of slavery, I pass to a brief notice of another topic. The system in the British colonies has been vastly more appalling in the waste of human life, than of property. It appears from a table, drawn up by Mr. Buxton, from official returns, and presented to a committee of the House of Lords, that the decrease of the slaves in the West India colonies, was in eleven years 52,887. The period selected was, when the returns would allow, that between the thirty-first of December 1817, and the thirty-first of December 1828. It appears, then, that on an average, through the colonies more than one sixteenth part of the slave

population was sunk in the course of eleven years. At Demerara and Trinidad, where as I have already remarked, the price of slaves and the profits of sugar cultivation, were a maximum, the decrease in this period was, in the former, one sixth, and in the latter, one fourth of the slave population. And let it not be supposed that this decrease was the result of emigration ; for the law prohibited the transportation of slaves from one colony to another. It was the work of disease and death, commenced and kept in progress by the system itself.

An attempt was indeed made, to explain the alarming deficiency on the ground, that nearly all of the Africans, who were imported into the colonies before the suppression of the slave trade, had reached maturity, and many had advanced beyond the age of natural propagation before their arrival ; and of course, the usual increase could not be expected. But if this were the cause, being general in its nature, it would affect equally all the colonies ; whereas a great disparity is observed in the decrease, which happens to be in pretty exact accordance with the operation of other causes, that can be specified. For example, as I have just stated, where labor was most profitable, and where consequently, there was the strongest temptation to overwork the negroes, the diminution was the greatest. But on the smaller and older islands, where less sugar is made, it was least ; and on one or two, there was a little increase.\* Connect this fact with two others,

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\* I extract the following paragraph from a speech of Mr. Buxton, who gives it on the authority of Lord Stanley.

which I have to mention, and I think it will be difficult to escape from the conclusion, that bondage, the whip, inadequate sustenance, and hard labor are responsible for the destruction of life in question. The first is, that the population of Hayti, within the last 20 years, has at least doubled. This is the lowest estimate which I have seen. Admiral Fleming places it higher. The second is, an experiment made by the Hon. Joshua Steel, in Barbadoes, who, having become convinced of the impolicy of arbitrary punishment, was induced to try a milder method; from which he obtained the following result.

“ On a plantation of 288 slaves, in June, 1780, viz. 90 men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, there were only fifteen births, and no less than fifty-seven deaths, in three years and three months. An alteration was made in the mode of governing the slaves, the whips were taken from all the white servants, all arbitrary punishments were abolished, and all offences were tried, and sentence passed by a negro court. In four years and three months, under this change of government,

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“ In the year 1829, the recorded number of separate punishments in Demerara, when the praedial slave population amounted to 60,500, was 17,359. In 1830, the number of slaves had decreased to 59,547, while the production of sugar had increased, and the number of separate punishments had also increased to 18,324. The number of lashes inflicted in that year, being no less than 194,744. In 1831, the praedial population had still further decreased to 58,404; but the punishments had increased to 21,656, and the number of lashes amounted to 199,507.”

there were forty-four births, and forty-one deaths, of which ten deaths were of superannuated men and women, and past labor; some above eighty years old. But, in the same interval, the annual net clearance of the estate was above three times more than it had been for ten years before."

## LETTER XIV.

### NATURE AND EFFECT OF MISSIONARY LABORS—PROSPECTS OF THE EMANCIPATED PEOPLE.

I have spoken, in several places, of the means of religious instruction, enjoyed by the apprentices and free colored and black population in the British West Indies; and perhaps nothing more is required on the subject. Still I should be glad to collect these scattered notices, and make some additional remarks, which, together, will show, in what way religious instruction was introduced into the colonies, its gradual progress, and present amount. We shall then be prepared for a brief consideration of the future prospects of the lower classes of the population, with which I shall close the Report.

The original slave codes of all the colonies were exceedingly severe, not to say barbarous. In regard to the education of slaves, they were particularly pointed. They prohibited their marriage, and instruction of every kind, as well in religion as the rudiments of education. These severe features of the system however, gradually softened down with the progress of civilization; and, in the course of the last century, several missions were commenced in the colonies by the Moravians. Their first establishments were in the Danish islands in 1732. They began their operations

in the English islands in the following order. Jamaica 1754.—Antigua 1756.—Barbadoes 1765.—St. Kitt's 1775.—Tobago 1790. In these islands they now have 21 stations ; in connection with which, about 30,000 negroes and colored persons enjoy regular religious instruction.\*

The Wesleyans commenced their missionary labors in the West Indies about 40 years ago—and have now establishments in nearly all the English islands. The number of slaves, under their charge at the time of emancipation, was 24,000.

The Baptist missionaries are not so numerous ; still they have stations at several islands, and are prosecuting their work with great energy. Their mission was commenced in 1816. In addition to these, the London and Church Missionary Societies have many able and efficient missionaries in this wide field of labor.

In order to comprehend the means of religious instruction afforded by the Established Church, it must be understood, that all the islands are divided into a certain number of parishes, according to their extent and population ; and that these parishes are generally supplied with a church and rector. In some, there are several churches ; and in others, additional chapels and curates ; all of which are supported by the islands. The two Bishops and the Archdeacons receive their salaries from the mother country. It is not more than ten or twelve years, since the clergy of the Establish-

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\* Including the Danish islands, the Moravians have under their charge about 45,000.

ed church began to turn their attention to the instruction of the slaves. Their churches are now, I believe, all open to them; and in many, they receive particular attention.

I have no returns, from which I can state with accuracy the whole number of slaves, that were under religious instruction in the different colonies at the time of emancipation. According, however, to the best means of information which I possess, it could not have much exceeded 120,000. Since that event, additional churches and chapels have been built, at the expense and under the direction of the colonial governments; and the number of missionaries of different denominations has been greatly increased. Still, I should probably come short of the truth in saying, that two thirds of the apprentices are yet without adequate means of religious knowledge.

This is indeed a great deficiency; but, when we consider what has already been done, and the pledges given both by Parliament and the British community, we need not despair of seeing the work fully accomplished. The time also is probably not far distant, when the colonies will coöperate more cheerfully and efficiently in the great work.

There is a similar deficiency in the schools. Sabbath school instruction has been considered by the missionaries an object of primary importance for the last twenty years; but neither their time nor funds, nor indeed the prejudices of the planters would allow the establishment of schools, to any great extent, for



giving instruction in letters. Some such, however, have been supported, both by the missionaries and the established church on all the islands. Many proprietors, also, within the last ten years, have commenced or encouraged missionaries to commence schools on their estates. Such individuals have much facilitated the labors of missionaries in the colonies, as they could have accomplished comparatively little without their countenance and coöperation.

The principles, on which missionaries conducted their efforts, are worthy of consideration. They were surrounded by difficulties, and needed great circumspection. They were instructed, by their respective societies, that the great object of their mission was to impart a knowledge of religion. They were directed, therefore, as I have before remarked, to have no concern with the political affairs of the colonies, or the civil condition of the slaves. However they might compassionate their sufferings, the only relief for them to apply, was the consolations of the gospel. They were never to intrude upon estates without invitation or permission from the proprietors. They were to inculcate upon the slaves implicit obedience to their masters, as a duty imposed by Christianity; and encourage them to bear with patience their supposed wrongs, and never to seek redress by force. They were not allowed to receive any thing from the slaves, except voluntary contributions for the erection and support of the churches and schools, and the general purposes of the mission. Their own salaries were

paid from home. They, also, scrupulously avoided all correspondence with Anti Slavery Societies, and any agency in measures, whose object was the abolition of slavery.

The principal obstacles to their efforts I have already suggested in different parts of my report. They consisted in the direct opposition of the planters ; and their unwillingness to have the slaves attend their instructions. This opposition however had been gradually subsiding for many years ; and, on some of the islands, had nearly ceased before emancipation. On others, it was confined in a great measure, to the smaller and less respectable planters, the attorneys, and overseers. Another difficulty was, that some of the precepts of Christianity, which they were obliged to inculcate upon the slaves, were openly and grossly violated by the masters. The general disregard of the Sabbath, and the practice of concubinage, are examples. It was difficult to enforce upon the slave, duties which their masters not only failed to observe themselves, but often required them to violate. In such cases, the missionaries explained the precepts of the Scriptures, and taught the slaves, that it was their duty to comply with them so far as the circumstances, in which Providence had placed them, would allow. If they were positively required to do that which their consciences could not approve, on their masters must rest the responsibility. Some may doubt the correctness of this principle ; but considering the ignorance of the slaves and the danger of allowing them, in any case, to resist the legal au-

thority of their masters, I think it was the only course, which could be recommended. In addition to these embarrassments, it was often difficult for the missionaries to obtain access to the negroes. On many estates where they were permitted to teach, their instructions were merely oral, and given at uncertain and distant intervals. The negroes were also frequently prevented from attending meetings, either on the Sabbath or in the evenings of the week, by the imperious necessity of laboring on their grounds or of going to market. It was found that a knowledge of religion, based on so much ignorance, must of necessity be superficial; and that the former vicious habits of the negroes often led to irregularities, after the principles of religion had gained access to their hearts.

As to the moral effects of religious instruction and its happy tendency to prepare the slaves for freedom, I have already adduced sufficient evidence. There is, however, another point which needs a little more consideration. I refer to the question of its compatibility with the perpetuity of slavery. I have no doubt, that the missionaries assumed scriptural ground, in inculcating upon the slaves the duty of implicit obedience to their masters. Nor have I any doubt, that the principles of religion, when they take possession of the heart of the slaves greatly strengthen their fidelity; and do, at the same time, teach them patience and forbearance under their accumulated wrongs. But the inculcation of truth does not always reach the heart; and, with such instruction, other knowledge will of necessity gain ad-

mittance to the mind. If there is any danger in giving religious instruction, it must arise from this source. The understanding may be enlightened, without bringing the heart under the restraints of religion. It requires also, not a little discretion to teach a system, whose spirit and tendency are, in many respects, so obviously at variance with slavery, without inadvertently undermining its foundations. The only way in which it can be done, is by omitting certain topics, and guarding others, which might be misapplied, with the utmost care. This was the course adopted by the missionaries in the West Indies.\*

Thus restricted by the prejudices and fears of the planters on the one hand, and the ignorance and limited opportunities of the slaves on the other, the missionaries prosecuted their labors under great disadvantages. But the knowledge which they imparted, when cordially received, was an infinite blessing to the slave; and resulted, in thousands of instances, in an exemplary discharge of the obligations of religion. I know, in-

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\* That the labors of missionaries tend indirectly to the abolition of slavery, there can be no doubt. They do so in three ways. In the first place, they elevate the character of the negro and prepare him for freedom; in the second, they have an influence on the master in softening down his prejudices and in gradually interesting him in the improvement and happiness of his slaves; and in the third, they create a public sentiment in favor of emancipation; for when it is seen, that the slaves are capable of being instructed and of enjoying all the blessings of freedom, and are in a measure prepared for it, the voice of human sympathy will demand it.

deed, that charges were brought against them of directly or indirectly exciting the spirit of insurrection, but not one of them could be sustained. And after having made many inquiries, and examined the published evidence, given before the two committees of Lords and Commons, I fully believe, that the charges had no foundation except in prejudice and misrepresentation. I know of no well authenticated instance, in the West Indies, where religious instruction has been productive of evil; and the ground of the planter's alarm, was not so much, that, guarded as it was by the missionaries, it would injure the slaves, as that it would pave the way for their freedom.\*

Having thus considered the means of education and religious instruction in the colonies, and their effects, I proceed to notice other causes, which will have an influence on the future character and destiny of the

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\* The following extract, from a speech of Sir Lionel Smith to the Assembly at Jamaica, will show his sentiments, as to the safety and importance of missionary efforts.

“Gentlemen, we have hardly four years more to watch over the experiment of apprenticeship—give every facility you can to the missionaries' labors. Banish from your minds the idea that they are your enemies. I will answer with my head for their loyalty and fidelity. Encourage their peaceable settlement amongst your people—let every four or five contiguous estates combine for the erection of chapel schools; and knowing, as you well do, the attachment of the negro to the place of his birth, and the burial place of his parents, you may, I sincerely believe, by these means, finally locate on your estates a contented peasantry.”

new people. These may be resolved into two—their capacity for improvement, and the political and economical advantages, afforded them by the colonial governments and their connections with the respective islands.

The intellectual inferiority of the negroes is a common topic of remark; and is admitted by many intelligent persons. Some would indeed deny them the rank of men. But the experience of all ages shows, how easy it is to vilify a people, whom we wish to keep in subjection. Our European brethren once gravely asserted, “that animals as well as men degenerate in America; that even dogs ceased to bark, after having breathed awhile in our atmosphere.” I need not say that current maxims, adopted in such circumstances, are greatly to be suspected; for being countenanced by a general prejudice, it is no one’s interest to contradict them. And such may be the opinion in regard to the unfortunate portion of our species, of which I am now speaking. For centuries they have been the victims of a grinding oppression; and thousands have fed their lusts and avarice on their degradation and wrongs. That under such circumstances, their natural inferiority should be asserted, is a matter of course; and that those, who have no interest to examine the subject or think to the contrary, should believe the assertion, equally accords with our experience.

It may, however, appear, when the wrongs of this deeply injured nation come to be redressed, that the people, who, in the opinion of Herodotus, “surpassed

all the men of his time, in longevity, stature, and personal beauty"; who gave arts to Greece and instructed her philosophers in wisdom, who have left behind them, in the temples, pyramids, and mausoleums of Egypt, monuments of skill and power which have scarcely been surpassed in the improvements of succeeding ages; and who, in modern times, can boast of of such men as Peyanga\* and Touissaint, are not the very pigmies in intellect and moral endowments, which their oppressors seem to believe.† It may be, when their shackles are broken off and their minds have opportunity to expand, a deep and searching intelligence will break forth from this ill-fated people, as unexpected to their calumniators, as the physical energy, which some of them in the West Indies now evince, under the impulse of their newly acquired freedom.

As for myself, I have never identified the cause of emancipation with the absolute equality of the negro race with the rest of our species. The simple fact, that a disparity cannot be proved, shows that the difference, if any exists, is scarcely perceptible. Suppose,

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\* "General Peyanga was a perfectly black man, a complete negro; he was a very well informed man, a very well educated person, and well read in Spanish literature; he was a very extraordinary man."—*Admiral Fleming*. Peyanga was a distinguished general in the Caraccas, and many English officers served under him.

† I am aware that the identity of the negroes and the ancient Egyptians has been disputed; but I have seen no valid arguments against the commonly received opinion,

then, we admit so trifling an inequality, it is still undeniable, that the negroes are capable of performing the duties and enjoying the privileges of a civilized and christian people. To deny them such benefits, therefore, is to deprive them of their birth-right.

But I saw much, in the West Indies, to induce a belief, that there is no such inferiority in the negro race. That they have a temperament peculiar to themselves, is unquestionable. Their cheerful and easy disposition and good natured humor are proverbial. Their natural kindness and attachment to offspring and friends, when not counteracted by adverse influences, are equally well known. But these peculiarities, by no means imply low intellectual or moral qualities. How striking the differences between the English, the Scotch, and the Irish; and yet who will undertake to say, which has the advantage in point of natural endowments? And how does it appear, that the easy good humor of the negro is more inconsistent with a superior intellect, than the volatility of the French? That there is a natural connection between the temperament and the mental constitution, I am not disposed to deny—but that any general temperament is invariably associated with imbecility of understanding, and especially that it points out a whole race as under an intellectual blight, is a proposition which admits of no proof.

What I saw in the West Indies in favor of the natural equality of the negroes, did not consist in any remarkable coruscations of genius; but in their rising to



the level of character and attainment, when obstacles were removed, which I should expect other people, in similar circumstances, to attain ; and in occasional exhibitions of native strength and force of mind, altogether superior to that of their fellows. These remarks may be illustrated, both in regard to the slaves or newly emancipated people, and the free colored and black population.

The great body of the slaves are deeply degraded ; and some indeed seem to possess but little in common with their species except their form. These are, generally speaking, the remnants of the stock imported from Africa. They were taken, as is well known, from a state of the deepest barbarism ; and were placed in a situation, which almost forbade the possibility of intellectual and moral expansion. Their descendants are quite a different order of beings ; exhibiting a readiness of perception and of adaptation, which is rarely seen in their progenitors. I refer now to the common field negroes. In the next rank above these, are the domestic servants. They enjoy freer intercourse with white people ; and, observe enough of their habits and sentiments to acquire the ideas and modes of thinking which are peculiar to civilized society. There is also another class, consisting of tradesmen and mechanics, who often possess, in a high degree, the confidence of their masters, and acquire no small influence in conducting the affairs of estates. Many of these two classes, exhibit a strength of moral principle and a native force and manliness of character,

which not only give them an advantage over their fellows, but indicate their affinity with the best types of our species.

If from these, we turn to the free colored and black population, we shall find still stronger evidence of a natural equality. It consists in an advancement in knowledge and mental development, corresponding with the advancement in privileges. As a class, they are by no means so respectable as the whites. Some of them are more degraded even than the slaves; but they can number many highly esteemed and valuable citizens. It speaks much in their favor, considering the prejudices of the planters, that, in nearly every colony, they were admitted before emancipation to all the civil rights and privileges of the highest classes. They are found in the stations of mechanics, merchants, and magistrates—also as members of the Assemblies and in all the professions.\* Some of them are men of wealth; though they are generally employed in the lower occupations of life, where they obtain a mere competency. There are, however, fewer poor people, who depend on charity, among them, than among the whites, by three to one. They are able to carry on a profitable trade, in the various departments of industry,

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\* A large proportion of the magistrates of the city of Kingston are colored and black men. Four members of the Assembly are colored gentlemen; to one of whom, a well educated and highly respectable merchant of Kingston, I am indebted for many attentions.

and successfully to compete, either in price or skill, with white people who are engaged in the same business. Some of the most respectable mechanics in Bridgetown and Kingston are negroes, who own large establishments and employ only workmen of their own color.\*

In addition to these facts, I may remark, that in the schools, where children of all complexions met on equal terms, no difference of capacity can be perceived. I was constantly in the habit of asking the teachers whether the negro children manifested as much aptitude for learning as the others, and they invariably replied that they saw no difference. Nor do I recollect

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\* The following paragraph is from a book to which I have already referred—Christianity and Slavery—by Archdeacon Eliot, of Barbadoes.

“The free blacks have by their superior industry, driven the lower order of whites from almost every trade requiring skill and continued exertion. I believe that not one in twenty of the working shoemakers in Barbadoes is a white man. The working carpenters, masons, tailors, smiths, etc., are for the most part men of color; and this at a time when a large white population are in the lowest state of poverty and wretchedness. In the application for casual charity the number of white persons soliciting relief is far greater than that of the free colored. The free black and colored inhabitants have always contributed in their full proportion to the parochial taxes, for the support of the poor whites; while their own poor receive no parochial relief, but are supported by private contributions among the more wealthy of their own color.”

to have conversed with an intelligent man in the West Indies, who maintained that the negroes are naturally inferior to the whites ; though I do not doubt that such might be found.

From the consideration of the capacities of the negroes, I pass to the second topic, which I suggested as having a bearing on their future prospects, namely, their position in a civil and economical point of view. The free colored and black people in the British islands, have not labored to any great extent on the estates. Indeed they manifested the greatest aversion to such employment ; and it was feared, that, when the slaves were set free, they would imbibe the same prejudices against field labor. But this aversion arose from the fact that such labor was considered a badge of slavery, and when that was abolished, the disgrace attached to the employment of course ceased. The liberated people at Antigua manifested no reluctance to work on the estates ; nor is there the least probability that it will continue at the other islands after the acquisition of entire freedom.

But whatever may be their preferences, the necessities of their condition for a long time to come will compel the most of them to till the soil. Nearly all the lands on the smaller islands, which can be cultivated, are under improvement, and the planters are decidedly opposed to breaking up their estates. These circumstances will prevent them from becoming landed proprietors ; and their only alternative for gaining a livelihood, is to continue in their present situation and labor

on hire. This was the course adopted at Antigua, and must prevail throughout all the islands.

It has been suggested that at Jamaica, where there are more uncultivated lands, the apprentices may, in 1840, abandon labor, and, retiring into the unoccupied parts of the island, relapse into idleness and barbarism. The fact, however, that neither the free negroes in any of the islands, nor those who have been recently liberated, manifest any such tendencies, shows the fear to be without foundation. But when we consider their strength of attachment to their houses and the grounds, which they have so long occupied, and even viewed as their own; and also their partiality for the comforts and distinctions of civilized life, we shall find, in my opinion, a complete safeguard against the anticipated evil.

The circumstances of the colonies seem to render it plain, that the negroes must constitute the laboring class—the peasantry of the country. To them only can the planters look for domestics, artists, mechanics, manufacturers, soldiers, and agricultural laborers. These are the situations, in which they must for the present earn their daily bread. To their advancement in them, prejudice opposes no barriers; but on the contrary, the interests of the planters conspire with their own to urge them forward in a gradual course of improvement. They will not be obliged to compete with persons, to whom a preference is given, on account of their fairer complexion; nor to feel that they are depressed in consequence of the darker covering which

nature gave them. As to civil and social privileges, they will no doubt be placed on a level with the present free black and colored people, and like them may aspire to any employment or office in the community.

It is obvious from these remarks, that the negroes in the West Indies will stand on entirely different ground from those of the free States in this country. Instead of being a redundant, despised and outcast portion of the community—they fill a place of the utmost importance. They will in fact constitute the bone and sinew of society; and nothing but the want of intelligence can prevent them from assuming the rank of the laboring classes in this country. They commence, therefore, their political existence, with prospects far more favorable, than those which the free negroes in the United States enjoy; inasmuch as they not only *may*, but *must* occupy a much more important station in society.

Their situation for improvement is also far more favorable than was that of the people of St. Domingo. When the French planters abandoned the island, the negroes were left without education, without capital, without government, or any of the essential institutions of society. Nothing remained which fire or sword could destroy. Under these circumstances, the negroes without the direction of disciplined minds, commenced repairing the waste, and founding for themselves a new empire. Slow indeed was their progress. Every advancement, whether physical, political, or moral, was achieved by repeated and continued effort. But the emancipated people in the West India colonies will at

once participate in the privileges of an intelligent and well regulated community, and be under the guidance of superior minds. What their position in society will eventually be, it is impossible to predict ; but should the fostering care of the colonial governments be secured to them, and should the means of education and religious knowledge be adequately supplied, I see no obstacle in the way of their steady advancement.

I have now completed the task, which I undertook at the request of the Committee. A longer time for examination upon the islands would no doubt have enabled me to accomplish it more perfectly. Though some mistakes may have crept in, I feel an entire confidence in the general accuracy of the views and statements which the Report contains. I should exceedingly regret to know, that I have injured any man or class of men, or that I have omitted or misstated any facts, which have an important bearing on the subject. The Report has been written in retirement, where I have endeavored to keep my mind as free as possible from excitement and party biases. This will account for the circumstance, that so few references are made to this country. It has been my object rather to present facts in their true connections, as they are found in the West Indies, than to show how they may be usefully applied to other communities. That such an application may be made, I do not doubt ; and it is my sincere hope, that this effort, feeble as it is, may contribute something towards the adjustment of one of

the most agitating questions in our country. The great object of the Committee will then be accomplished, and I shall have, next to an approving conscience, the best possible recompense of the faithful discharge of a trust—the conviction that I have not labored in vain.

I am, Gentlemen, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

SYLVESTER HOVEY.

*Conway, Mass. Feb. 13, 1838.*



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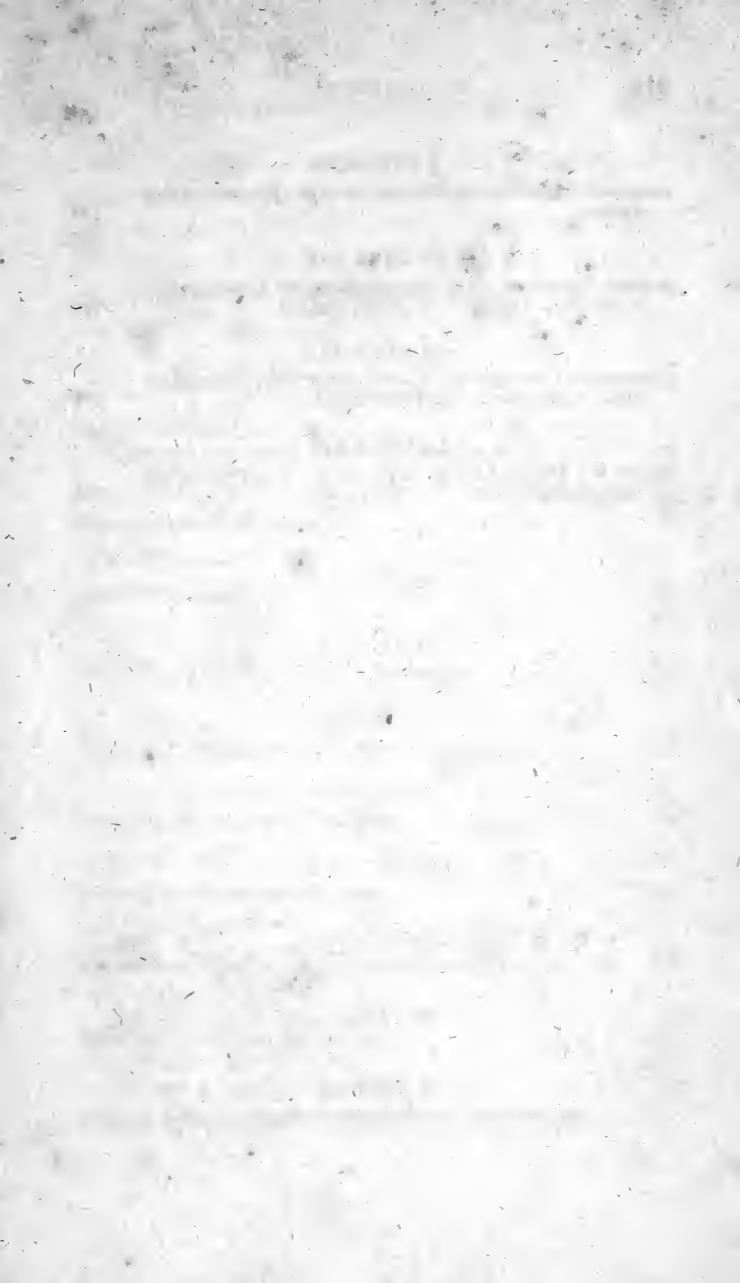
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