



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 3433 07591357 8











# REMARKS

ON

*Sij*

## SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION.

*Francis Johnson*

---

“The Planters may be entitled to the praise of almost heroic virtue, when they conduct themselves with benevolence and justice towards the unhappy beings committed to their care. But they must not expect us to trust a great body of our fellow subjects to the safeguard of heroic virtue. We trust men to the protection of law; we trust them to the arm of Government; we trust them to a coincidence of interest; we trust them to a sympathy of feeling, and an identity of interest; we cannot trust them to that which is so rare; which is admirable, and consequently which is rare; and which can form no security at all for the well being of a multitude of men.”

SIR J. MACKINTOSH.

---

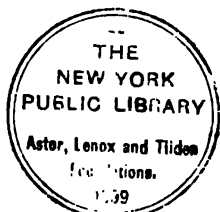
BOSTON:

HILLIARD, GRAY, AND COMPANY.

1834.


*2320*





**13254**

REMARKS  
ON  
SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION.



“The Planters may be entitled to the praise of almost heroic virtue, when they conduct themselves with benevolence and justice towards the unhappy beings committed to their care. But they must not expect us to trust a great body of our fellow subjects to the safeguard of heroic virtue. We trust men to the protection of law; we trust them to the arm of Government; we trust them to a coincidence of interest; we trust them to a sympathy of feeling, and an identity of interest; we cannot trust them to that which is so rare; which is admirable, and consequently which is rare; and which can form no security at all for the well being of a multitude of men.”

SIR J. MACKINTOSH.



## REMARKS.

---

THERE are those among us who seem to think the time ere long coming, when, by the gentle but irresistible influence of natural causes, slavery will cease to exist in any civilized land. Slavery, they say, is an institution containing within itself the elements of its own dissolution, and, do what we may, the time will soon come, when all men, whatsoever be their color, will rejoice in the light of liberty. There are many, also, who think it doubtful, whether any steps taken by the inhabitants of the non-slaveholding States of the Union, to promote this much desired result, will not rather retard, than accelerate it. To some of these propositions I give a free assent; to others, only a qualified one.

In the institution of slavery as established by law and custom in our Southern States, it is not easy to see any elements of dissolution, unless this be a violent one, produced by reaction on the part of the slave. If it is meant that there is a point, beyond which human nature will not endure restraint or coercion, and that slavery upon its present system will at some period or other reach it, and that then the slave will free himself by his own power to will and to do; of this the possibility is admitted. But the existence of elements of dissolution, such as these, presents no argument in favor of inaction or indifference; but, on the contrary, a very strong one for attention and timely provision. There is, indeed, nothing in the laws or the public sentiment of the slaveholding States of the Union, which betokens, either at a near or a distant period, the peaceful termination of slavery.\* On the contrary, nothing can be more certain or plainer than that, on this point, their laws are each

---

\* Kentucky may afford an exception.

year growing more rigorous and despotic, restricting the blacks more and more in their means of instruction, and in one State at least, depriving the whites of the power of adequate inquiry and remonstrance. It is true, that debate in the Virginia Legislature, two years ago, was by many thought a mighty sign of the times, and, without question, an event seriously affecting the continuance of slavery in the United States. It was the result of a strong and very general excitement caused by the insurrection and massacre at South Hampton, and called forth many warm and eloquent advocates of negro freedom. It seemed, indeed, an event pregnant with great things for Virginia, but it resulted in nothing. Yet had it ended as the most zealous friend of the blacks could have desired, had it made the soil of Virginia a home only for the free, slavery would still remain elsewhere, almost unchanged in its fortunes, at once the curse and the reproach of the white man, the grievous wrong and burthen of the black.

With regard to the proposition, that any part taken in behalf of abolition, by the inhabitants of the free States, will be as likely to do harm as good, there is more to be said.

The writer is fully aware of the danger of exciting anger or ill-will among the inhabitants of the South, by any attempt at interference, which may even appear to assume undue authority. He fully acknowledges, that the condition of the free and slave colored population, within its own limits, is a matter over which each State has the indisputable and undivided control. It is in relation to this subject a foreign State to the rest of the Union. On this point, at least, State sovereignty has never been and cannot be questioned. Still, has the North no interest in the question, and can there be no legitimate influence but through the ballot box? As fellow-citizens of this federal republic, have we no interest in the prosperity of the masters,—as fellow-men, have we no concern for the well-being of the slaves? Is the voice of humanity to be hushed, the voice of friendly warning and entreaty dumb, because we ourselves are not slave-holders, or because legislative inter-

ference is out of the question? Must appeals to conscience and reason be fruitless and worse than fruitless, because we are bound by peculiar ties, and yet not wholly one? Is public opinion nothing? Will the unanimous sentiment of the civilized world be of no avail? To what else, than these, do we owe the great and advancing triumph of the cause of Temperance? What other is the influence now regenerating, as we trust, the bodies politic of Western Europe, than that of public opinion without, on public opinion within each independent community? And by what magic circle are the slave States of this Union surrounded, that they alone shall escape this influence? Finally, we would ask, "where in the literature of the whole world, where in the public opinion of the whole world, where in the religion of the whole world," does the slaveholder find an ally or an advocate, if not in the non-slaveholding States of the Union. It has been said, indeed, that men have never emancipated their slaves, but when it was their interest to do so. But have they always done so then, and is it not their interest now? Was it the enlightened self-interest of the West India planters, or the public opinion of Great Britain, which procured the passage of the Abolition Act? Every one knows it was the latter, and yet slavery has long been profitless to the British colonies.

There is, to be sure, a very peculiar jealousy of Northern influence on this question, and with some at the South, any arguments, though addressed, as all ought to be, solely to the masters, may create only a spirit of opposition. It is difficult to believe, however, that this will be the case with all, or even a greater part of our Southern brethren. If, then, we think that slavery is morally wrong; that it is the duty of every slaveholder to emancipate his slaves, and of every legislature at once to remove the sanction of the law, from the principle that man can hold property in man, it is both our right and duty to say so, and no fair or honorable men ought to object to it.

There is one circumstance, however, which, viewed in its proper light, gives to the citizen of every State in the

Union an equal right to think and speak, and a similar power to act upon this question. Slavery exists in the several States, at the will of their respective legislatures. It exists in the District of Columbia and the different Territories of the United States at the pleasure of Congress. The same right, therefore, which allows the citizens of Virginia to canvass the question of slavery and emancipation in that State, and of course to go over and lay open the whole ground, may be fairly claimed by every citizen of the United States, with respect to the same question in the territories subject to the jurisdiction of Congress alone. It is, then, not only the right but the duty of every citizen to take the subject into consideration, and, if he think proper, to express his opinion. One would think this fact had been forgotten, from the tone often taken on this subject, both at the North and South. It seems often somewhat studiously to have been kept out of sight. When speaking of what New England could do towards the abolition of slavery, were she disposed, an orator has said, "it (the counsel to abolish slavery by legislation) presents to us in New England no visible aim, no tangible point, nothing which we have the physical power to execute." One would imagine that twenty-six thousand slaves, held under the laws of Congress, presented a mark large enough for Yankee vision, if not for Yankee benevolence. No! we are wrong, and our orators are wrong, to "lay the flattering unction to our souls," that we have no concern in the question of slavery. We have no right to expect that any of the slaveholding States should take any steps towards the abolition of a system, which is sanctioned without hesitation or inquiry, by a body, to which States professing to condemn it send a numerous and powerful delegation. No farther apology is deemed necessary, then, for speaking of slavery, as it is, and, while the spirit of justice and candor is preserved, as openly, as may seem fitting and useful. It will be seen by the sequel, that it would comport as little with what the writer thinks sound policy, as with his inclination and sense of duty, to do or say any thing to excite dissatisfaction or disobedience among the slaves.

Domestic slavery having existed in some parts of the United States from the commencement of our national existence, the citizens of all parts have become, by long familiarity, reconciled to the fact. As with other acknowledged evils that are thought unavoidable, they have learned to look upon the best side of it, so that in spite of the constant jealousy of the Southern masters, it is true, that the majority of the citizens of the Middle and Northern States think very little about the matter. At least this was true a year or two ago. It had been so often repeated, also, that the *onus* of slavery pressed harder upon the whites than upon the blacks, that their sympathies were mostly with the former. Their supposed interest, too, has led them to view slavery in as favorable a light as possible. The same feeling, which induced their fathers to accept a constitution, in which the perpetuation of slavery, though not provided for, was not forbidden; and the belief that there was no choice, but between union and slavery, and disunion and slavery, have lulled the children into acquiescence, and almost made it treason to utter a sentence of disapprobation.

The common representations of the comfortable condition of the slaves in the Southern States, have done much to reconcile the North to the continuance of this system. The slaves are well off, it is said; one finds them cheerful and light-hearted. They are, indeed, of a fortunate disposition; fortunate for themselves, for they can forget their chains; fortunate for their masters, for they can forgive their injuries. Let not that be set down to apathy, which is the result of a gentle and forbearing temper. With no thought for the morrow, the apologist goes on, food and clothing enough, moderate labor and kind treatment, what does the contented negro want? Suppose, that he wants nothing but the hope of advancement, nothing but the power of intellectual and moral improvement. How much is there in this want. It is the want of all that will enable him to fulfil the end of his being, of all that constitutes his high prerogative of manhood. It is not a want to be denied, nor are they to be derided who ask for him something more than mere



corporeal happiness, something more than mere vegetating existence.

But are all the scanty and grovelling enjoyments of the slave secured to him; is there no dread of change, no fearful thought for the morrow, no sad regret at the past? Let a slave reply.

“ ‘The colored people are poorly off here,’ said one who was driving a gentleman and lady from New England through the beautiful country in the vicinity of Harper’s Ferry. ‘They are all slaves. I am a slave for life,’ and his tone I never shall forget (I quote from the lady’s note-book before me). ‘Well,’ said I, ‘you have a good master who takes care of you, you are better off than if you were free.’ ‘Missess,’ said he, ‘*Free breath is good.*’ I was very much struck with this, and could not answer him. Mr. — then asked him if he had a wife. ‘No, Sir,’ said he, bitterly; ‘I got no wife nor children. Two years ago I was gone to the western country, and an old slave-dealer come along, *bought* my wife and children, and carried them to Alabama! My master (they did not belong to the same one) offer one hundred and fifty dollars more than he gave for her, but he would not take a thousand for her. She was an excellent woman, right smart, knew every thing bout a house. They carried her into Loudon county to hide her. There I found the old slave-dealer. I beg him not to carry away my wife: he say he want her for wife for himself. Oh death is’nt nothing like it! Why see — if she dead, Providence does it, and you must bear it. But to have your companion, your children, torn from you, and sold away, a man never can get over it,’ and he gave a deep groan.”

Such is American slavery, such the American slave-trade, the *only lawful* slave trade in the world. Can any one believe that human creatures who have suffered like the slave we have heard, or who have a continual fear of such misfortune before them, can be really happy? They are not so, it is a delusion to think it, and to suppose, that there is not with many of them a deep sense of wrong, and an ardent longing for freedom. To obtain clear notions on the subject, however, we must be more minute.

“Slavery,” says Montesquieu, “is the establishment of a right which gives to one man such a power over another, as renders him absolute master of his life and fortune.” I would rather say, confining the definition to domestic slavery, that, *It is a state in which one man is totally deprived of all his natural and inherent rights, by being held as property by another.*

Any one who will reflect upon the above definition will perceive, that the only way in which the state denoted in its first clause can become a reality, in a community claiming, and for the most part possessing, a government of laws, must be by the means pointed out in the second. The glaring inconsistency of the state of slavery with the fundamental principles of society, and of our own government in particular, is, however, only glossed over, when by a mere fiction of the law, a certain class of men, the slaves, are sunk below the level of humanity, and constituted *things* instead of *persons*. Let us see what the laws say.

*Slavery as established by Law.* “A slave,” says the civil code of Louisiana, “is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master.”\* The law of South Carolina says, “Slaves shall be deemed to be *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, &c. to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever.” The civil law which is generally referred to in the slaveholding States, as containing the principles of the institution, holds slaves, “*pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus.*” Thus the very laws of slavery begin with contradiction, and virtually acknowledge that man cannot be the property of man, by the pains taken to declare the slaves to be something else.

The foregoing accounts of the relation of master and slave ought alone to be a sufficient argument against slaveholding. They do not, however, convey an unfair

---

\* Stroud's Sketch of the Slave Laws, from which most of the subsequent account is taken.

impression of the existing state of slavery in the United States. For if we look over the slave laws of the several States, to see how far those immutable rights, in the enjoyment of which it is the duty and chief aim of society to protect each individual, are secured to the slave, we shall find, that while some are entirely set aside, none are adequately provided for. These rights are usually considered as reducible to three primary articles, viz. personal security, personal liberty, and the right of private property.\* All rights referable to the two last articles are of course out of the question. The right of personal security consists in a person's legal and uninterrupted enjoyment of life, limb, body, health, and reputation. Reputation of course a slave has none. It can be of no use to him, he need not care for it, and it would be idle to talk of its protection. Health is a more important affair; it is of value to his master, whose interest it is to preserve it. But this is the slave's only security. Should circumstances arise which rendered it the master's interest to sacrifice the health of the slave, there would be no legal protection for it. While the master may determine the kind, degree, and time of labor, to which the slave shall be subjected; can supply him with such food and clothing only, both as to quantity and quality, as he may think proper, or find convenient; and may, at his discretion, inflict any punishment upon his person; the health of the slave must depend upon the accident of the master's character.†

It is true that in some of the States, the matters just enumerated are regulated by laws; but, besides these being altogether insufficient as to the amount of protection afforded, they are rendered almost wholly nugatory, by the withholding of that, on which depends the efficacy of all laws, namely, the right of testimony. "It is an

---

\* Blackstone's Commentaries.

† Thomas Clay, Esq. of Georgia, in a paper upon the Moral Improvement of Negroes on Plantations, published in 1833, speaks of the customary allowance of food from the masters, as not being in all cases sufficient. I cannot quote his words, his paper not being by me at this moment.

inflexible and universal rule of slave law, that the testimony of a colored person, whether bond or free, shall not be received against a white." The openings for abuse, that this rule affords, are too obvious to need mention. That abuses of the grossest nature do not unfrequently occur, is proved by too many undoubted histories, to admit of denial or question. It would be painful and disgusting to detail any of the evidence on this point.

How far the slave is protected in the enjoyment of his body and limbs, may be inferred from what has been already stated, as well as from what will be said about the security of his life. The wilful murder of a slave by a white is now a crime punishable by death in every State. But, beside the frequent difficulty of conviction, which must arise from the exclusion of the evidence of colored persons, the law contemplates several modes in which the life of a slave may be taken away, without the risk of any harsher sentence, than that of "justifiable homicide." A slave may die under "*moderate punishment*," and no penalty await the inflicter of it. A slave outlawed, which he may be, for a very trivial offence; or one resisting, or offering to resist his master by force, may be lawfully killed. Enough has been said to show that the life, limbs, and body of the slave are insufficiently protected. The enjoyment of these are the only personal rights, which there is any pretence of securing to him. If we add, that the slave may be disposed of at his master's pleasure, or by the operation of law, as any other property; that slavery is hereditary and perpetual; and that in all States the greatest obstacles are placed in the way of manumission, we shall have finished the sketch of slavery, as far as the relation of master and slave is concerned.

A being, thus deprived of his absolute and inherent rights, cannot be expected to possess any of those social rights which result from the relations of man to man in society. Accordingly he has none. But he has social duties, for these spring from the rights of other persons. Debased as the slave is, and degraded in the eye of the law, and of his fellow man, it is impossible not to regard him as an accountable creature. He can commit crime,

and must be restrained therefrom, by the terror of punishment. The penal law, therefore, recognises his existence. Though he does not share in the benefits of its protection, he is liable to its penalties. A penal code for freemen and for slaves must necessarily differ. There is accordingly great difference, in the nature of the constituted offences, in the degree of punishment for similar offences, and in the nature of some of the punishments. Many acts, which in a freeman could scarcely be called crimes, are punished with considerable severity in a slave. Stroud says, there are seventy-one crimes in the slaveholding States for which slaves suffer death, for which the white man suffers nothing worse than imprisonment in the penitentiary. Cropping and the pillory, whipping and death, are the principal, it may almost be said, the only punishments for all crimes in the slave. There is, however, one penalty, sometimes suffered by free blacks in the slaveholding States, that ought to be mentioned here. It consists in being sold to slavery for life, or for a term of years, and is awarded for different offences in different States. This penalty is sometimes used as a mode of obtaining satisfaction for debt, or in case a free colored person is unable to pay a fine imposed upon him by law. It is not confined to these cases, however. By the laws of several of the slaveholding States, manumitted and other free persons of color, however respectable their characters, may be arrested in the prosecution of their lawful business, and, if documentary evidence of their right to freedom cannot be immediately produced by them, they may be thrown into prison, and advertised as runaway slaves. Should no owner, as must always be the case, unless injustice is done, appear within a limited time, the jailer is directed to dispose of them at public auction, as unclaimed fugitive slaves, in order to derive from the proceeds of the sale, the means of defraying their expenses while in prison. This procedure occurs upon the principle common at the South, that every colored person is to be presumed to be a slave, unless he can prove his freedom.\*

---

\* This doctrine has been promulgated from the bench.

It is but a short time since that there was an advertisement in the Washington papers, signed by the jailer and marshal of the district, giving notice, that on a certain day, would be sold at auction, a man nearly white, who called himself free. This sale was appointed for payment of the jail fees, under an old law of Maryland, authorizing such procedure. The law has been repealed in Maryland, but is still in force in that part of the District of Columbia, which was ceded by that State to the general government. Here, then, is one of the most flagrant violations of the laws of nature, and the laws of a great part of the land, occurring at the very seat of government of "the freest nation upon earth." Does this present "no visible aim, no tangible point to New England?" Pennsylvania has begun her duty by urging upon Congress the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Let the other free States look to theirs.

The exclusion of the evidence of all colored persons, in trials where whites are the defendants, must of course, in almost every case, prevent justice being rendered to the slave, nor can he in any case institute an action against his master or any white man. There is, however, a single exception to this rule of exclusion. A colored man claiming to be free, may be heard in his own defence. But he can call in the aid of no other colored testimony in his behalf. At the same time the evidence of one slave is admitted in all trials, even capital ones, against another, or even against a free black. Nor is the slave in such cases always put upon oath.

The benefit of petit jury is allowed the slave in trials for his life in most of the States. In some the case must come first before the grand jury. In three States the slave has not the benefit of jury in any case whatsoever, but is tried before a court of justices and freeholders, who are "to hear and determine the matter in the most summary and expeditious manner possible."

There remains but one circumstance farther to be mentioned, in the account of the legal condition of the slave. It is, that "the whole force of the laws is exerted to keep him in ignorance." He is deprived of the means

of education, and of moral and religious instruction. The same is true in most of the slave States, of free negroes also. For, "Whereas," says the act of North Carolina, "teaching slaves to read and write has a tendency to excite dissatisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion," therefore in that State and others, heavy penalties await those evil-disposed persons, who may endeavour to let a little light into the dark places of the negro's soul. On this point the laws are very strict and constantly increasing in severity. Scarce a year passes without some new enactment. Even the precepts of the peaceful religion of Jesus are thought dangerous. It would seem as if their whole character was changed when they are presented to the mind of the black. The influence which soothes and softens others, and teaches them whatever station they are in, therewith to be content, makes him a designing and malignant fiend.

The efficacy of all these prohibitions is probably as great as can be desired. If it were possible to destroy the germinating power of the human intellect without destroying the brain in which it resides, it would be in a fair way of being done. If any race of men could be so far degraded as to utterly lose the caste of humanity, we might expect this to happen to the negro slaves of North America.

We have spoken of slavery as established by law. Some of its provisions may seem unnecessarily stern. The makers of the laws, however, have done no more than follow out the fundamental principles of the institutions which declare the slave a chattel to be bought and sold. I cannot in this connexion forget the words of Bryan Edwards, a defender of slavery and of the slave trade. Speaking of the *Code Noir* of Louis XIV. a code remarkable for its humanity, he says, "In countries where slavery is established, the leading principle, on which government is supported, is *fear*, or a sense of that absolute coercive necessity, which, leaving no choice of action, supersedes all question of *right*. Every endeavour, therefore, to extend positive rights to men in this state, is an attempt to reconcile inherent contradictions,

and to blend principles together which admit not of combination."

*Effects of Slavery.* I shall now slightly speak of some of the effects of slavery, which, though apparently indirect, are necessary.

We have seen how carefully all mental improvement was guarded against in the slave; and also how slight was the protection of his person. His morals are not better cared for. Honesty is, to be sure, cherished, or may be presumed to be; although where temptation is all around, and the sanctions of any virtue are so slight, this one cannot be secure. Another, quite as important to the character, though not to the master's interest, has less protection; that is chastity. It is perhaps idle to speak of what there is so little pretence of regarding. The domestic relations of the slave have no protection whatever in the law, and in practice, it is nearly the same thing. The ceremony of marriage is sometimes performed by a clergyman or a justice, but quite as often there is no farther preliminary to male and female living together, than simply taking each other's word, which is not thought very binding, for they divorce and marry again at pleasure. What a mockery indeed would be the marriage rites, with the solemn declaration, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder," to those whom, at the next moment, the ruthless hammer of the auctioneer, and the calculating bid of the cold-hearted slave-dealer, may separate for ever. But this is not all, and painful and disgusting as the truth is, it must be told, if we would know the realities of slavery. "Marriage among them (the slaves) is commonly allowed; but where a young man has a fine family, the planter very often, with a view to the increase of his stock, forces him to have many wives."\* Substitute for the word "forces" in the sentence just quoted, the words "allows and encourages," and then ask any slave-holder if it does not tell the truth. It cannot be denied. And how is it palliated?

---

\* Stuart's Travels, Vol. II. p. 120. The witness is impartial; his statements cannot be denied, but they have surprised and shocked many a reader.



What harm is done? it may be asked. The negro is ignorant and debased; such customs can scarcely corrupt him; why judge him by the standard of more refined society? To these questions I would simply reply by a few others. Is marriage a good institution or not? If it is good for the refined and the rich, is it not equally so for the ignorant and the poor? Is virtue, and are the safeguards of virtue, less necessary for any one class of men than another. The untutored negro slave may be pardoned for his licentiousness. But whether the plea of his ignorance will avail those who permit or promote it, who do not labor incessantly to restrain it, is left to their own consciences. I would gladly, if I could, draw a veil of thick darkness over the pollution of slavery, but it cannot be hidden. Shall no effort, then, be made to wipe it away?

*Domestic Slave Trade.* Another of the necessary evils of slavery is the extensive and systematic traffic in men, to which it gives rise. Of course while slavery lasts, slaves must be bought and sold, and any attempt to prevent it would be a blow at slavery itself, and in a most vital part too. The trade is, therefore, rather an essential part of the system of slavery, than an effect of it. Still, as it is not recognised as such, I believe, by the laws, and as it deserves special consideration, this seems the most proper place to introduce it.

The importation of slaves from Africa, or any foreign coast, into the United States, was made illegal in 1808, the Federal Constitution containing an express stipulation that this should not be done before. From that time, of course, the country was to raise its own slaves. The act prohibiting importation, though not intended for a protecting tariff, virtually became such, and at the present day it happens that slave-breeding is the only kind of home-production, with which foreign competition is entirely prohibited. It is well. It is some gain at least, that the united voice of the civilized world has pronounced the African slave trade, "inconsistent with justice, humanity, and religion." The day may come, when the same stigma shall be cast upon the American slave trade. But this, it is said, is a very different thing.

Is it so indeed? and how different? As light from darkness, as purity from sin? I fear not; and yet *good* men, men of reputation, men of very high name, sanction it, and strange language has been used sometimes. "It is, after all," says one of note, "an extraordinary circumstance, that, whilst emigration to this country, of parents who have voluntarily separated themselves from their children, and of children who have left behind them their parents, never to revisit their native shores, passes daily before our eyes, without observation, so much sensibility should be felt when similar occurrences take place in relation to this class of people." And of whom is this person speaking? Of men, women, and children, sold in the District of Columbia or Virginia, to be driven to New Orleans, there, for the miserable remnant of their days, to till the ground and eat the bread of the stranger. And this is emigration! Ask the meanest Irish laborer, who heaves the weary spade, upon our railroads or canals, what brought him from his native land. He will tell you, — hope. And did he want to come? oh no! It was tearing the very fibres of his heart to leave the loved home of his childhood, and seek across a wilderness of waters a livelihood, the reward of steady industry, his lot denied him there. He is glad, now, for success is before him, he is in freedom and plenty. But what has the slave to do with all these? Hope — it is not for him; freedom — it is not his birthright; success — he knows not what it means. Call not, then, the transportation of slaves, emigration! Else why may they not thus emigrate from Africa? What a precious argument would that idea have given to the enemies of Wilberforce! African emigration! It did not occur to them.

Some estimate of the extent and importance of this domestic trade may be formed from the fact, that not less than six thousand slaves are annually sent out of Virginia to the Southern and Western markets; Maryland keeps her slave population equal; and the District of Columbia, forming a depôt for the neighbourhood, exports about one thousand annually; not of its own growth of course, but it is an exceedingly convenient place for large dealers, and very extensive establishments are situated

there.\* There are in the District more than one private gaol for the storing of the wretches who may be on hand for sale, and those traders who have not capital enough to own or rent houses for themselves, find ample accommodation in the garrets and cellars of hotels and private dwellings, or what is still better, in the public prisons belonging to the United States.†

Mr. Miner, member of Congress for Pennsylvania, brought the subject of slavery and the slave trade, in the District of Columbia, before the House of Representatives in 1829. In his speech on the occasion he made the following statement.

“By papers furnished me by the keeper, it appears that there were sent to prison for safe keeping, that is, as is well understood, for sale;

In 1824 . . . . .	81 Slaves
1825 . . . . .	124
1826 and 1827 . . .	156
1828 . . . . .	91 = 452.

So that it would appear that in the last five years, more than four hundred and fifty persons had been confined in the public prison of the city, — a prison under the control of Congress, and regulated by its laws, — for sale in the process of the slave trade.” Mr. Miner justly adds that such was ~~not~~ the purpose for which the prison was built.†

It is thus upon soil, which should be peculiarly sacred to freedom, that the practices which give to slavery its vilest features, are most frequent and open. It is there,

---

\* It is not worth while to affect reserve or delicacy on this topic. The slave-raising of Virginia is acknowledged by her own writers. And any one who is curious or incredulous may be referred to two articles in the *American Quarterly Review*, Nos. 23, and 24, upon the Slavery Question in Virginia. Both articles bear internal proof of being written by citizens of that State. One of the writers says, “It may be that there is a small section of Virginia (perhaps we could indicate it) where the theory of population is studied with reference to the yearly income from the sale of slaves.” Well may he exclaim, “And will the aspiring blood of Lancaster’ endure it to be said that a Guinea is still to be found in America, and that Guinea is Virginia?” *American Quarterly Review*, No. 24, p. 391.

† Dr. Torrey’s *Portraiture of Slavery*, published fifteen years ago. *American Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1833.

that without "the prostitution of a royal negative," a "market is kept open where *men* are bought and sold." \* There is the great haunt of all concerned in this infernal traffic, which is carried on under the very eyes of Congress, whose power to extirpate it totally and immediately, root and branch, is unquestioned and unquestionable.

How long must "the sound of the hammer" be heard, how long must "the smoke of the furnace be visible, where chains and fetters are forged for human limbs?" How long shall be seen the visages of those, who not "by stealth and at midnight," but in the broad glare of day, "labor at this work of hell." How long before a voice shall be heard, under the domes of our capitol, saying, "Let *this* spot be purified, or let it cease to be of America. Let it be purified, or let it be set aside from the Christian world; let it be put out of the circle of human sympathies and human regards; and let civilized man henceforth have no communion with it." †

Let it not be forgotten, moreover, that the same clause in the constitution which empowered Congress, in 1807, to pass an act prohibiting the foreign slave trade after the year 1808, gives it the authority, whenever it shall see fit, to prohibit the domestic slave trade. ‡ Let it be understood also, as susceptible of the clearest proof, that there is not one crime that can be laid at the door of the

\* First Draft of the Declaration of Independence.

† Webster's Plymouth Oration. Allusion to the African Slave Trade.

‡ "Commerce in slaves, since the year 1808, being as much subject to Congress as any other commerce, if it should see fit to exact that no slave should ever be sold from one State to another, it is not perceived how its constitutional right to make such provision could be questioned." Such was the language of a memorial, drawn up in 1819, by a committee of the inhabitants of Boston and the vicinity, of which committee the Honorable Daniel Webster was chairman. The memorial was addressed to Congress, and its subject was the Prohibition of Slavery in the New States; referring to Missouri. And now another territory is knocking at our doors, and asking to be admitted to the rank of an independent State and member of the Union. She too will claim the glorious privilege of a slave representation. And who shall oppose her? None. The spirit of eighteen hundred and nineteen is broken and gone.

“accursed (African) slave trade,” which is not also chargeable upon our own. It severs all earthly ties; it carries old and young, male and female, in chains and with stripes, into distant, hopeless bondage, and consigns them to a strange taskmaster; it makes slaves of freemen, by kidnapping, and otherwise; it causes the prolific energies of the African mother to be stimulated to the utmost, that as many wretches as may, shall be born into this hapless state, and go to swell the multitude, whose condition even now presses upon the nation, a burthen and a curse.\* It is at once the daughter and the nurse of slavery, which ere this perhaps, in some of the States, would have proved too decayed and worthless a system to be sustained, but for the fresh life-blood infused into its veins, by the disgusting filial piety of its offspring. “For it is believed,” says the Honorable Henry Clay, “that no where in the farming portion of the United States would slave labor be generally employed, if the proprietor were not tempted to raise slaves, by the high price of the Southern market which keeps it up in his own.”†

Thus the continuance of slavery in more than one of the States, is fairly attributable to the Domestic Slave Trade. This cannot continue always.

*Effect of Slavery on the Free.* The effects of slavery upon the free blacks in the Southern States are almost as bad, as upon the slaves themselves. We have seen that many of the most restrictive regulations of slavery applied to the free persons of color as well as to the slaves. They are, in all the slaveholding States, deprived of the right of testimony, in almost all, of that of suffrage; and also of the means of mental and religious instruction. These and numerous other disabilities render their state virtually one of civil slavery, as rigorous and hopeless as that of the subjects of the Grand Seignior. Indeed, it is idle to talk about free persons of color.

---

\* See Torrey's Portraiture of Slavery. American Quarterly Review, Nos. 23 and 24.

† “Shut up all outlet into the Southern and South-western States, and the price of slaves in Virginia would sink down to a cipher.” *American Quarterly Review*, No. 24, p. 392.

There are none such in the Southern States.\* They who are called so, are free only from the whip and compulsory labor. Forbidden by written law from presuming to equal themselves with the whites, debased by former slavery, and bound down by all the force of public opinion and private prejudice; degraded systematically, and then distrusted, despised, and hated for the vices inseparable from their condition, it is mockery to call them free. Of the condition of this class of people in the United States and its causes, more will be said hereafter. But let it not be called "not casualty but fate," and the necessary result of that emancipation which others, than "hair-brained fanatics," are asking for them.

Of the influence of slavery upon the character of the masters, it is not my purpose to say much. Mr. Jefferson's testimony upon this subject is in accordance with what we should expect from the general principles of human nature and human action. His language is so well known, that it need not be repeated. A system full of essential injustice, and of actual pollution, as this has been shown to be, can never be a source of good to any within the sphere of its influence. My present object, however, being rather to speak of the moral evils of slavery as seen in the ill-starred race, who are its peculiar victims, and of the hopes that may offer of their release, I shall pass by this part of the subject, with a few remarks only, upon a sentiment which, it has been said, was peculiarly cherished by slaveholding. This is the love of liberty. It would seem somewhat paradoxical, at first, to hear of "the plant of liberty flourishing best in the rank soil of slavery," if indeed any meaning could be attached to the words at all. But something like this is not a rare opinion among slaveholders themselves, and it is worth a little attention. It would be stating the case more fairly perhaps to say, that liberty has been thought to find her warmest advocates in those freemen who were masters of slaves. And the high authority of Mr. Burke

---

\* The same remark will apply to some of the non-slaveholding States. Ohio forbids their evidence from being taken in the courts, and Connecticut has quite distinguished herself in relation to them.

has been often quoted as sanctioning this doctrine. His own fair and pure mind, however, would have been shocked at the use made of his expressions. Speaking of the stubborn resistance the colonies would make to all encroachments on the part of the mother country, and of the circumstances which would cherish the spirit of opposition, he says, — “ In Virginia and the Carolinas they have a multitude of slaves. Where this is the case, in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not merely an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege, and looks amongst them like something more liberal and noble. I do not mean, Sir, to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at least as much pride as virtue in it; but I cannot alter the nature of man. — Such were all the ancient commonwealths, and such will be all masters of slaves who are not slaves themselves. In such a people the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, and renders it invincible.”

Now it is not strange at all, that the greater “ the rank and privilege ” of liberty, the greater should be its value in the eyes of its possessors, and the more stubborn its defence. Those who have most to lose, are naturally most jealous of encroachment, and not the less so probably, when they perchance possess something beyond their share. Perhaps the last man in the world to part with his “ rank and privilege ” of liberty, would be the Autocrat of all the Russias, but he has never yet claimed the title of *friend* of freedom. This sentiment, of which slaveholders have sometimes boasted, is not then the pure spirit of liberty. There is something else engrafted upon it, which, if it adds to its strength, certainly does not to its beauty. It may be doubted if it does either; and howsoever just might have been the remark of Mr. Burke, at the time when it was made, the history of our own revolution, and of more than one people since then, has shown that it is no longer true.

There is no lack in the world of a willingness to level down, but the truly liberal spirit is willing to level up, or at least to remove all artificial obstacles to elevation. Does

such a spirit exist in a slaveholding community? And yet it is said, that slavery is not unfavorable to the spirit of equality. "Where all menial offices," it is said, "are performed by a distinct class, all who belong to the other meet upon an equal footing; and nowhere is there such open frankness among white men, as in our Southern States; for the color marks exemption from labor, and of course the rank of gentleman."\* Admitting this, to what does it amount? Simply to this, that one half or quarter of the community are made a sort of vicarious sacrifice for the rest, upon the altar of social freedom. That some may enjoy entire liberty, others must enjoy none. This cannot be called republicanism.

*Free and Slave Labor.* Respecting the influence of slavery on national prosperity it is safe to say there is not at present much dispute. Without placing implicit confidence in the declarations often made for the planters of the cotton and sugar growing States, and sometimes by them, that they would gladly be rid of the system, if they could with safety, it is believed that a large portion of the reflecting and well informed men, throughout the Union, view it as both a moral and an economical evil. How any person can doubt that it is such, who can give even a bird's-eye glance around the world, and compare the respective condition of those countries where it prevails, and of those where it does not, is a marvel. Compare Kentucky with Ohio, Western with Eastern Virginia; mark the immense depreciation of plantation property in the West Indies, where, even in Cuba, the most fertile and the most abundantly supplied with negroes of all the islands, so many estates, with their hundreds of acres and of slaves, are insolvent, and ask if slavery can be gainful. It is not so, it never has been so. Slave labor, unless conducted with the most remorseless cruelty, has never been cheaper than free. Nothing more has been proved with relation to it, than that it was better than no labor at all. It was introduced into America, when laborers could only be procured by compulsion; and because, at that period, and

---

\* American Quarterly Review, No. 23, Art. Slavery.



for a long time afterward, in new and rich countries with peculiar products, and never competing with free labor, it reared immense fortunes, it obtained an estimation to which it had no rightful claim. Now, the superiority of free labor over slave is only doubted in the production of a few articles of tropical growth. These are sugar, rice, and cotton. To the subject of their cultivation by free labor I shall recur hereafter. With regard to all others, the question of "wages or the whip" may be regarded as settled. And we may hope the time is not very far distant, when it will be acknowledged, without limitation, that, economically considered, slavery is half a century too late in the world; that it is a rude and cumbrous species of machinery, a relic of past ages, whose very existence betokens decrepitude or premature infirmity. Wherever it remains, no labor-saving power can ever be introduced; it is death to all improvement, and must necessarily cause degeneration. It is an incubus upon the fortunes of the master, cramping all his energies, and rendering abortive all his schemes for physical or moral improvement. Its long duration, its protracted fall, will be the wonder of another age.

*Slavery Morally Wrong.* To say that slaveholding is morally wrong, and yet that it ought not at once to cease, is one of those inconsistencies into which men often fall, by allowing themselves to be governed by rules of short-sighted expediency in questions admitting but one solution, and which have been already decided by the moral sentiment, the consenting reason of the Christian world, and by the law of God.

To assume "that no human being has an abstract right to hold another in a state of perpetual bondage," and yet to admit, "nay to maintain, the innocence of slaveholding, under present circumstances,"\* any where, is to say that a man may do innocently, that which he has no right to do, or else that "an *abstract right*" is not "*a right.*" Or I would ask by what kind of right men may do innocently that which abstract right forbids? The answer of course will be, the *right of ex-*

---

\* American Quarterly Review, No. 24, p. 403.

*pediency.* But abstract right, if it mean any thing, is moral right, right in itself and in the sight of God. It is not merely the highest, but it is the only right, for there can be but one; and that which men call expediency, is nothing more than the best choice which human understanding, unassisted and alone, is able to make, in cases where that which is right in itself, or abstract right, is not surely discernible. We may infer that a thing is right from its seeming expedient, but expediency is only really good, as it approximates to moral right, and where this is known, to choose any thing else is to prefer doubt to certainty, darkness to light. To discuss a subject on the narrow ground of expediency, which has already been decided upon the broad and final one of morality and religion, is something worse than arguing in a circle, it is appealing to earth from the arbitration of heaven. That which is morally wrong can never be expedient. The only way for one to get out of the dilemma, who thinks that slavery ought to continue not always, but yet a little longer, is at once to deny that the decision of the moral sentiment has been given in the case, and refer it wholly to expediency. He must not say that slaveholding is morally wrong; nor that slavery is unjust, even in the abstract, but simply, that the one is right or wrong, the other just or unjust, according to circumstances.\*

---

\* This is the ground taken by the very able writer who defends slavery in the 23d No. of the American Quarterly Review. The article is the most powerful I have ever seen upon the same side of the question, superior perhaps to any that have appeared in the London Quarterly. Its *conservative* spirit would have done honor to the English journal or to Blackwood. There is indeed something beyond conservativeness in it, something of the spirit which, in 1793, in the British House of Lords, "deprecatd the new philosophy. It was as full of mischief as Pandora's box. The doctrine of the abolition of the slave trade was a species of it." Vid. *Sel. Journ. of For. Per. Lit.* No. 7, *Crit. Notices*, p. 49. The American Quarterly Reviewer evidently considers the doctrine of the abolition of slavery as another species of the new and mischievous philosophy. He calls the slaves "the happiest of the human race;" and says, "that in the contact between civilized and uncivilized man, all history and experience show, that the former will be sure to sink to the level of the latter." A singular idea, by the way, considering that civilization has spread, and the

The only question to be decided in the case, then, is, whether man has or has not an inherent right of liberty, or slavery is or is not morally wrong? If slavery is wrong, that it ought to be abandoned, and immediately too, is the unavoidable conclusion, since we are not to do wrong that good may come of it. It may appear to some idle and useless to attempt, at the present day and in this land, to prove the affirmative of the above question. It is not, however, always granted, even speciously, and never really, by those who would justify the continuance of slavery. To all such, then, as maintain that man can hold property in man, I put the question, — Do you consider the right of property as an *inherent* one, or as the *creature of civil society*? If the former, I ask in and to what has man an inherent right of property, if not in his own labor, and to the use and enjoyment of his own productive powers? To what else than this very right, can the right to any property whatever more certainly be traced? To nothing else in the world. The right of private property, if there be such a thing, resolves itself at once into a right to the use and enjoyment of one's own faculties. He who deprives a man of this use and enjoyment, therefore, violates the very principle which is the basis of the right of property, and is guilty of robbery, just as much as when he violates the right of property in any other of its forms or stages. And it matters not the least, whether this violation commence at birth, in infancy, or in adult years, the principle is still the same. He, then, who maintains the right of holding property in man, must give up the doctrine, that the right of property is inherent, and take the other, that it is the creature of civil society. But the slaveholder will beware of this, for that which society gave, it may at its good pleasure take away.

The choice of ground, however, is not granted to the

---

only obvious direction is toward and among the uncivilized. He thinks nothing but slavery can "prevent the *facilis descensus*" of the whites in Virginia to a level with the blacks. *Facilis*, indeed, if slavery prevents it. Vid. *American Quarterly Review*, No. 24, p. 242.

slaveholder. That the right of property is an absolute and inherent one, is not only a necessary postulate in all law, but in itself incontrovertible. But not for the above reason only is slavery said to be morally wrong. There is a higher and stronger one. It is, that whereas man may hold brute animals as his property, their being no discoverable object in their creation the perfect attainment of which is not compatible with their being so held, the whole aim and end for which man was brought into the world is and must be necessarily defeated by his being subjected in all things to the will of another. Self-improvement, growth in knowledge and in virtue, the approximation of the soul to the likeness of the All-wise and Good, are the objects of man's being; and are not these entirely defeated by his being subjected to absolute control in every act; so shut in and hampered, if it is chosen, in the exercise of his faculties, that his mind is to him a useless instrument, and his heart and affections are deprived of all healthful and kindly influences, while he is exposed perchance, if not of necessity, to overpowering temptations? Is not slavery precisely such a state as this? Do not its principles make it so, and its laws and its well-known realities prove it not otherwise? I appeal to the picture I have given, feeble though it is; I appeal to slaveholders themselves, to any and all of them. It is not sufficient, if some among them say, (and that there are good men and conscientious men among them I know,) that they try to remedy the evil, and think that they have succeeded; I speak of the system, with the chance of those who shall be its ministers, in the ordinary and necessary course of human nature; and I would ask them also if there is not a bound, and that not a very wide one, which, with all their efforts, they cannot go beyond? Can a slave make exertions of himself, can he do any thing to form his own character; can he shun that which is evil, or seek that which is good, but at the capricious pleasure of another; can he ever be else than a very dependent being, totally dependent on one far below him, whom alone, he, as well as his owner, has been directed to call Master?

Man's liberty, then, is indeed inalienable, if we would seek accordance with nature's laws. And if the moral sentiment and the revealed word of God have decided that slavery is practically wrong, we may know thereby that there is a remedy; and that its extinction cannot do more evil than its continuance, for no man is placed in a situation where he is compelled to be unjust. When the advocate of immediate emancipation, therefore, urges it as a duty, and declares his reliance on Heaven for the consequences, he means not to talk of results without means, but simply to express his conviction, that a way may be found to do justice with safety. He does not say, the consequences of such a course may be awful, but will be only the just reward of wrong doing, but that worse consequences can never ensue from beginning to do right, than continuing to do wrong. Who shall foretell all the evils the continuance of slavery will engender? Who beside Omniscience shall say what would be all the consequences of emancipation? If the understanding, then, and experience are at fault, we must refer to that higher principle, whose decisions outstrip the deductions of logic, yet never run counter; whose counsels never err, while he who runs may read them.

"There is a law," says Lord Brougham, "above the enactment of all human codes—the same throughout the world—the same in all time—it is the law written by the finger of God upon the heart of man; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, while men despise fraud and loathe rapine, and abhor blood, they will reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy, that man can hold property in man." Has not America, has not New England something to learn? \*

---

\* "There is nothing new under the sun." The principle of the abolitionists at the present day, is precisely that adopted by the Friends, seventy years ago, and the latter carried it farther at that time than many of the former do now, for they refused Christian fellowship to those who held slaves. — The conscientious planter will say in answer to all this, that my premises are assumed; that to be sure the law regards slaves as chattels, and himself as their owner, but that he regards them as men, and treats them as such; that he conceives himself in the order of Providence as their ap-

*Immediate Emancipation.* The duty of immediate emancipation is an inference from the principle that slaveholding is morally wrong, so plain and unavoidable, that had it not been denied, what has already been said about it would have been superfluous. As it is, it may be worth while to attend to a few more points in relation to the subject, and view the whole in another light. To be a slave, we have seen, is to be held by another man as property, regarded by the law, and, perchance at least, by the owner, as a being possessed of no natural right, but that of life, — a chattel. To be emancipated is to cease to be held as property, to have all the natural rights thenceforth protected by law, as are those of any other human being, to cease to be a chattel, and to become a *person* or a *man*. It is obvious, that, with regard to an individual, whenever emancipation takes place at

---

pointed guardian, and that he feels no more at liberty to give up this guardianship, than a parent to give up his control over his children. In answer to this it is to be said, that every planter does regard his slaves as property, an idea in itself false and contradictory, since man cannot in the nature of things be the property of man, and so long as he holds to this, he cannot properly respect the image of God in his slave; that the latter is essentially deprived of the first motive to self-improvement, in rude or refined minds, namely, the near prospect of advancement; that let the master do what he may himself, he cannot make others do the same, the slave is necessarily subject to the caprice and tyranny of any unprincipled white who may by chance cross his path; and, lastly, supposing that the conscientious slaveholder does treat his slaves as though they were free, (for, after all, nothing short of this will serve his plea, and if this be actually true, there appears no good reason why their freedom should not be declared,) what security have the slaves for the continuance of their good fortune? The death of the master, or a turn of the wheel of fortune, subjects them to a change, to the hazard of an auction, or an almost equal hazard in the character of heirs at law. With the average of human character it is utterly out of the question, unless that average is far higher in the slaveholding States than any where else in the world, that the mass of the slaves should be under any thing that deserves the name of guardianship, under any thing better than absolute irresponsible power, which is exercised with no higher restraining motive than interest. Denmark is an absolute monarchy, but its citizens are governed only by laws, and are practically free. An American prefers a constitution. Why? To be assured of his freedom. Few of the slaves are well off, and none are assured of being so.

all, it must be immediate, — instantaneous. He must be at one moment an item of property, and the next a being capable of holding property himself. There can of course be no middle state; he must be one or the other, a slave or a freeman.\* To speak of the gradual emancipation of an individual would be absurd. It is only in relation to a number that the term has any meaning.

But if it is a duty immediately to emancipate one slave, because slaveholding in itself is wrong, no less is it a duty so to emancipate every other. To speak of emancipation, therefore, as a duty, and yet to admit that it may rightly be gradual, in the only possible sense of the term, i. e. take place at intervals, involves a contradiction. The advocates of gradual emancipation, to be consistent, must rest the whole question of slavery and emancipation on the ground of expediency. It cannot be morally wrong to hold slaves at all, and yet right to hold one for a day, another for a month, another for a year, and so on. The same moral law which makes emancipation a duty demands at once the emancipation of every slave, or in other words, immediate emancipation. To talk of gradual emancipation as a duty, because slaveholding is morally wrong, would be a mockery.

There is a sense, to be sure, in which the word *emancipation* is often used, namely, as synonymous with enfranchisement, in which the word *gradual* may be applied to it, when spoken of as a duty, without impropriety. It is worth while, however, in using these terms in connexion with domestic slavery, to observe a distinction between them, for I apprehend that not a little of the doubt and confusion that has prevailed on this subject has been owing to the want of it.

The word enfranchisement is properly the more general of the two, and though sometimes used to signify merely deliverance from personal bondage or manumission, generally also implies the endowing or being endowed with the

---

\* It may be thought that the state of serfs is an exception to this remark. Serfs are property, however, and not capable by law of holding property themselves. They are essentially slaves.

privileges of a freeman, or with those civil rights which grow out of the institution of society. Emancipation, on the other hand, strictly denotes merely manumission, and does not necessarily imply more, than the restoration of lost natural rights, than the mere cessation of personal thralldom; it may be complete, and yet give but a small amount of liberty.

Now it is not likely that any sincere friend of the negro slaves, however ardent, would speak of at once bestowing upon them all the "rank and privilege" of freedom now possessed by the whites. That justice and true expediency demand that those severe legal restrictions which now oppress in a peculiar manner, as it has been seen, the present free colored population, should at once be removed, and that there should ultimately be no distinction made by the laws between the two races, there cannot be much doubt. Surely if nature has drawn a strong line of demarkation between the whites and blacks, we may safely trust to her laws for its preservation, without the aid of legal enforcements. If natural feeling does, as there is no doubt it does, forbid close alliances, it does not absolve either party from the obligations of human charity and Christian kindness; and there is no cause founded in nature or recognised by religion, why both should not live together in amity, without either saying to the other, "I am better than thou." It has never appeared that men of African descent were, under equal advantages of education, less capable of performing the duties of freemen, than those of European origin, and certainly no harm has ever arisen from their possessing civil rights in those States where the laws do not entirely forbid it. It is not less certain, that mischief has been caused in the slaveholding States and some of the others, by shutting out emancipated slaves and their descendants from the enjoyment of all social rights, even from the privilege of instruction, thus nourishing in the bosom of those communities a class of persons who can have but little interest in the preservation of order, because they are without the hope of bettering their own condition by steady industry, having the means of gaining only the scantiest living in honesty. And here let



me protest against that most unfair argument, which would draw from the present condition of the free people of color in the Southern States an inference unfavorable to the cause of general emancipation. In the first place, they cannot, as was before remarked, rightly be called free, while they labor under their present disabilities. Secondly, the universal employment of slave labor in those States has hitherto made emancipation, except in rare instances, equivalent to expulsion from wonted homes, accustomed occupations, and old associations. The testimony of almost though not quite all slaveholding communities at the present time is in accordance with the remark of Mr. Archer of Virginia, that the free blacks in slaveholding States are doomed by a fixed social law to a want of occupation. What wonder, then, that they should become "miserable wretches, herding together in towns," where having gone for employment, they are exposed without safeguard to every temptation, and learn at length to "subsist chiefly by plunder." Admitting this account as fair, to what is the mischief owing? To slavery, which forbids the employment of free laborers, and to an emancipation which opens to the blacks no sphere for honest industry, and affords no hope of ultimate elevation by useful and respectable living. Let a market for free labor be opened by a general emancipation, the advantages of instruction become general, and the hope of speedily though gradually rising in the enjoyment of civil and political privileges be held out to them, and the case will be a very different one.

It is said, that slaves will often prefer slavery to freedom, and who can wonder at the choice, when to be freed is indeed to be let loose, nay to be turned adrift, houseless and forlorn, unprotected by the laws, and suspected by the whites; and to have their former companions made to shun them, as they would the shadow of the Upas. Such is not the emancipation contended for by any friend of the blacks, nor is it the only one practicable. This is an emancipation by law, without course the consent of the masters, who must be the makers of the law. An act, which, while it secures the rights of the slaves, shall also secure those of the mas-

ters; while it continues to the slave his accustomed occupation, his wonted domicile, and his familiar companions, shall secure to the master his former laborers, and the means of still employing his capital, which is not less his rightful means of support, than the work of the slaves' own hands is theirs. The usual routine of occupations for the one and the other should be as little broken in upon as possible, substituting only in the slave, for the brutal stimulus of the lash, or the fear of the lash, the more quickening one of self-interest, and the conscious exercise of power; and taking from the master only the ability to be cruel, to give to him a better power, that of visibly aiding in the developement of newborn energies, and the formation of true character. Such emancipation, binding together only more strongly, by the powerful yet flexible tie of "identity of interest and sympathy of feeling," those who had been bound mainly by the ties of fear and rigorous laws, has heretofore been given, and no reason has been shown why it cannot be again.

The above statement supplies an answer to the objection which has been made to emancipation, that it is attempting to raise the slaves faster than circumstances will allow. (*Amer. Quart. Rev.*, No. 23, p. 217.) Immediate emancipation is not sudden elevation, it is but an act removing the tremendous obstacle to all improvement and all elevation, which exists in the law that makes them property. The change is less in the actual and present condition of the negroes, than in the promise offered by the future. The emancipated slaves are still but debased and ignorant human beings, but a way of advancement is opened to them, that was hopelessly closed before. For this change they cannot be unprepared. No man, while he retains the essential attributes of his nature, can become unfit for that degree of civil liberty which is implied in his ceasing to be a chattel, in his receiving the protection of the law in the enjoyment of life, limbs, health, reputation, the right of property, and of such amount of personal liberty, or of the power of loco-motion, as may not be taken from him by the very just exercise of civil authority.

“Civil liberty,” says Blackstone, “is no other than natural liberty, so far restrained by human laws (and no farther) as is necessary and expedient for the general good of the public.” Is not this definition, from its very nature, a commission broad enough to enable society to protect itself against any real or supposed dangers that may ensue from emancipation? It seems to me unphilosophical if not preposterous, when the civil power is so supreme, to say that the *only* mode of preserving order in a slaveholding community is by the perpetuation of that very system of entire and absolute subjection of individuals of one class to those of another, which is itself the whole source of the unfitness and incapacity for freedom complained of. Those who favor the continuance of slaveholding not only assume that the slaves need restraint, and to have others provide for them, but that domestic slavery is the only system by which these objects can be accomplished. They seem to forget that the law can coerce, and that vagrancy and beggarly idleness may be crimes; that the moral influence of masters over their slaves need not cease upon emancipation, and that those who have been guardians before, can be guardians still. There will remain the same means of governing in many respects as before. These means were, fear with some, kindness with others, habit and long-established authority with all. The last will not lose their force, and for the first there will be a substitute. Strict and peculiar laws will doubtless at first be necessary. But it has never yet been shown that a system of police, which shall not transgress the principles of civil liberty, may not be sufficient to preserve tranquillity among a body of men whose physical power will not be increased, and who must remain morally feeble, until long after they will have become accustomed to the new order of things. It ought not to be forgotten, that the chief source of discontent and mischief will be removed with their servitude. The negro, imbruted as he is, is still a reasoning animal, and if it were certain, instead of being more than doubtful, that at present his only notion of freedom is of a state of listless idleness, can he not be made to understand that in declaring him no longer a

slave, the necessity for labor will not be removed, that he must work or starve; and that should he help himself out of the property of others, he will be punished for it just as certainly, if not quite as severely, as though he were not emancipated.

That the colored population of this country, now constituting one sixth of the whole, will always remain here admits of hardly a doubt. There are, to be sure, some who appear still to dream of removing it. But one would think that a scheme, which, at the end of sixteen years from its adoption, having during that space of time had the united support of much of the wisdom and popular feeling of a great portion of the country, presents even less hope of ultimate accomplishment than it did at the beginning, would scarce now be looked to as a practicable one. The people of this country have no choice, but must allow the colored race to remain in the land, to which they came for no pleasure of their own. There is no alternative, but to exterminate them; when that shall be recommended, it will be time enough to talk about it. The only question is, whether they are to remain for ever as slaves, or at some time or other to become free laborers. If slavery is to be abolished at any time, what possible gain is there in delay. Is it that the slaves may be better prepared for the change? But what mockery is this, when no effort is making to prepare them, and each year sees them as a class sinking lower and lower in the scale of being. If preparation is necessary, why is it not begun? It never will be begun, until men have resolved at all events speedily to abolish slavery. For so long as it is thought to preserve it, knowledge will be feared for the slaves. "Do you teach your slaves to read the Bible?" asked a Northern of a Southern lady, some ten years since; "Oh no! only some favorite and trusted ones," was the reply, "for it makes them want to be free." And so it will always make them want to be free, and slavery to be safe will ever need ignorance for its handmaid. With emancipation, but never without it, can knowledge safely come; with emancipation, but never without it, will the mind of the slave expand, and his now hidden powers be unfolded.

I have spoken of direct abolition of slavery by law as the duty of those with whom the power lies. When it is asked, how this is to be done, the answer is, there is the light of history to guide us, there are the lessons of experience upon the emancipation of slaves that we may study. The laws which would need to be enacted for the new order of things, must of course vary in different sections of the country, according to the previous habits of the slaves, according to their character and condition, and to the kind of labor in which they have been employed. But the leading principles, which have been adopted in all previous emancipations, are, for all that has ever been shown to the contrary, capable of application again and in this country. For it is remarkable, that all the most important arguments which have ever been brought against the speedy emancipation of the slaves in the United States, apply with equal propriety to emancipation in any country, and in any mode. The whole argument of an article in the twenty-third number of the *American Quarterly Review*, which has been already referred to, goes to prove the impossibility of ever liberating those who have once been in servitude. The strongest instances of the evils of emancipation are drawn from the history of Eastern Europe, and from the condition of the serfs of Poland and of Hungary. The argument, if it has proved any thing, therefore, has proved a great deal too much. For though there may be some in the country who stand ready to say that slavery is good for man, and who think a great deal too much is granted to the friends of emancipation, when it is allowed that liberty is always better, yet such a doctrine will not be either generally admitted, or very openly maintained, at the present day. The love of liberty and its great truths have taken too strong hold on the public mind of Europe, as well as America, to admit of the doctrine of divine right and legitimacy being defended here, even though it be confined to "the domestic institutions of the South." The remark often made therefore to abolitionists, that they offer no determinate plan for the accomplishment of their object, seems to me at present an idle objection. They are not called

upon to offer a detailed project of emancipation, nor would it be of the slightest advantage to their cause at this time. The public mind is not yet ready to admit the thought of having two million and a half of people of color in this country who shall not be slaves, and who of course will be rightfully looking forward to some share in civil and political privileges. There is yet a great deal to be done to bring even the people of a single State to believe, that a general emancipation within its limits may be effected without violent convulsion, and without involving great sacrifice of property, or the risk of having no laborers at all, instead of those, who, now performing only reluctant tasks, they imagine will then become paupers and vagabonds.

*Objections to Emancipation.* It will be the purpose of the remainder of these remarks to answer, by the evidence of well authenticated facts, the foregoing three capital objections to a general and early emancipation. My object will be to show,

First. That with the consent of the masters a general emancipation of all the slaves might be effected with no farther delay, than the passing of the necessary laws would occasion, without more danger than will be incurred by the continuance of slavery.

Secondly. That the abolition of slavery is not necessarily, and probably would not be in fact, productive of any other than a trivial pecuniary loss to the masters.

Thirdly. That if emancipated, the slaves would adequately maintain themselves by their own labor, and that the proprietors could procure from them an equal amount of labor, and at as little cost, after as before emancipation.

In point of fact, all three of the objections would be answered with the last. For in spite of the horror that is felt of immediate emancipation, no sensible person would suppose that danger would result from the measure, except from the slaves yielding to a natural indolence of disposition, and soon suffering from famine, abandoning themselves to disorder and pillage. The mere act of emancipation will not lead to violence except through previous idleness and want. And as, if the emancipated

slaves continue their labors, there will be no disorder, so there will be no pecuniary loss to the masters. Slaves are valuable for the work they perform; if their owners are sure of getting as much work out of them at no greater cost, after as before emancipation, they can have no pecuniary interest in withholding from them their freedom. As these objections, however, are each brought forward in a distinct form, it seems worth while to answer them separately. But before going farther, let me premise that there are two positions which, in pursuing the enquiry, I feel at liberty to assume. First, that negro slavery as it has existed in law and practice, and so far as the mere relation of master and servant is concerned, has not varied materially in the different parts of the New World where it has prevailed. It is generally thought, that though more strict in law, it has been more humane in practice in the United States than elsewhere. The difference, if there has been any, would probably be in our favor in the case of emancipation. Secondly, that the character of the African race is, in all its material points, the same in this country and in the West Indies and South America. Instances taken from other Cis-Atlantic countries, therefore, may be considered fairly adducible as examples and illustrations here.

*Immediate Emancipation not Dangerous.* On first thinking of the effect of emancipation, one would naturally suppose that the granting a great boon to the slaves, for such assuredly they would think their liberty to be, would lead to any thing rather than acts of violence. He would expect it to strengthen the bonds which united the kind master and the affectionate slave, while it soothed the refractory and won the obstinate. Yet how often is it spoken of as the necessary and immediate precursor of outrage and desolation. It is not to be overlooked that those who apprehend these results, suppose that the first thought of the slave upon emancipation will be gratification of revenge, revenge for treatment which it is denied has been otherwise than kind, and that, in the second place, he possesses means for this gratification which he did not possess before. If the slaves desire blood, it does not appear that there is any

thing to prevent their seeking it before emancipation, which will not also prevent it afterward, and if they have not the desire now, the act of emancipation does not seem likely to create it. There is an inconsistency between these apprehensions, and the strong assertions of the very persons who profess them, which is truly remarkable.

If there is little reason *a priori* for apprehending danger from emancipation, there is little also from the lessons of experience. It may safely be said, that history does not contain an instance of convulsion or outrage produced by the general emancipation of slaves by law, however sudden it may have been. Suddenly acquired freedom may have been, as it is very likely to be, abused, where it has been obtained by a hard fought contest. The first draught of liberty to the oppressed and injured people of France, flushed and excited as they were by the struggle which gave it, was more than they were able to bear; but those who have read the philosophical memoirs of Dumont, and other fit witnesses of those early days of the revolution, will perhaps doubt whether wise and timely concessions, united with a firm and dignified maintenance of their rights; on the part of the king and nobility, would not have brought peace to the troubled kingdom, when its mad career was scarce begun. The excesses were the consequence of the successful overcoming of resistance, not simply of newly acquired freedom. No one doubts that freedom, suddenly acquired by successful insurrection, would be terribly abused on the part of the negroes, but when voluntarily bestowed on them by their masters, that the result would be the same, is contradicted by reason and experience.

The dangers, apprehended from the sudden acquisition of their freedom on the part of the slaves, are not of course attributed to the difference of color between them and their masters. Whatever evils this may produce, they will not appear at first. Those dangers of emancipation are supposed to have their origin in the nature of man, which renders him incapable of adapting himself readily to a great change of circumstances. It has already been said, that this change would be less in reality



than is commonly imagined. But such as it is, it must be as great to slaves of one race as of another, if their previous condition were equally abject. What, then, was the case in Europe? The answer is in the words of M. Sismondi, "the profoundest historian of the age." After speaking of the great advantages that might be hoped from the emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies, he says,—

"It would be bold to promise such a result by the application of any theory whatsoever; but one might with confidence and modesty invoke the lessons of experience. He who would not dare trust to his own speculations to decide the fate of so many thousand individuals, might, with some assurance, have recourse to history, that great depository of social experiments. What has been done might be done again, only observing and judging well the analogy of circumstances. We know that the whole of Europe has been once subject to the slave system. In the country we now inhabit, every cultivator of the land, almost every artisan, was the property of rapacious, and often of cruel, masters. The slaves, by whom the whole work in Europe was done, were as debased and oppressed as are now the African slaves in the colonies. This state of things has ceased in the whole of Western Europe, and even where the emancipation has been sudden, it has ceased without shock, violence, or rebellion.—A more attentive study of the history of slavery in Europe teaches us, that its abolition was neither a philanthropic nor a religious work; that it was simultaneous in vast districts and in whole provinces; that the slave-peasantry of many villages having been enabled, by the accumulation of their scanty savings, to purchase their freedom from their masters, the advantage to these last became so evident,—the value of their land increased so rapidly,—their revenues were so greatly augmented,—that all who witnessed the effects hastened to follow the example, and innumerable serfs were every where enfranchised. A few corporate bodies only, attached by a common prejudice to all that is ancient, resisted this amelioration; so that slavery was still preserved in

some domains of the Church, in France, and Germany, till towards the end of the eighteenth century."\*

The foregoing quotation will perhaps be referred to again. At present I have only to remark, in the first place, that M. Sismondi evidently considers the British act of emancipation as in no small measure a work of philanthropy; and, secondly, that he considers the emancipation of the white slaves of Europe as possessing strong points of analogy to the emancipation of the negro slaves of the West Indies. This last idea will not probably be readily received here. Fortunately, however, we are not left wholly to conjecture, with regard to the results of the general and simultaneous emancipation of large numbers of negro slaves, and to all the appalling accounts of the supposed inevitable consequences of such emancipation there is this reply; that so far as the testimony of experience is a proper guide in this momentous question, it is entirely against the doctrines of the alarmists. In Mexico and Colombia, in Guadaloupe and St. Domingo, thousands of negro slaves have been simultaneously manumitted, without, in any instance, convulsion, violence, or insubordination being the consequence.

Emancipation by private individuals on a large scale, and without any moral preparation on the part of the slaves, began in Mexico early in this century. An account of the effects of this measure on the productiveness of the estates on which it was adopted, by Mr. Ward, late British envoy at Mexico, will be quoted at length hereafter. It will serve my present purpose to say merely, that in 1808 there was not a single slave remaining on several of the largest estates, and that in 1826 slavery had been entirely abolished in one of the largest cane-growing districts in Mexico, and that not the slightest disorder had in any instance ensued. In 1829 slavery was for ever abolished in Mexico by a decree of the government, which "desired to signalize the anniversary of its Independence by an act of national justice and beneficence, that should more and more confirm

---

\* New Monthly Magazine, No. 7, Boston edition, pp. 1, 2. Article by J. C. L. de Sismondi.

public tranquillity." Nor has the least disturbance of public tranquillity ever been heard of as the consequence of this act. We have the evidence of a New England gentleman, who resided for some time in Mexico, that the measure was highly beneficial. "No one was made poor by it; it gave property to the servant, and increased the wealth of the master." He considered the result so favorable to the interest of all concerned, as to afford an important example to the United States. (Mrs. Child's Appeal, p. 97.)

During the war of the revolution in Colombia all slaves who joined the Colombian armies were declared free. Bolivar himself emancipated all his own, to the amount of several hundred. Many of the wealthy proprietors followed his example. On the 19th of July, 1821, it was ordained by the Colombian Congress, that after that day no slave should be born in Colombia. A fund was at the same time established for redeeming as rapidly as possible all who were still held in servitude, so that now the period of the total extinction of slavery in Colombia is nearly at hand. It is perfectly well known, and universally acknowledged, that no disturbance of public peace and no injury to the welfare of either proprietors or slaves was produced by this measure. A perfectly competent witness, M. Ravenga, has said that it produced a degree of docility on the part of the blacks before unknown. Some of the unbelievers in the fitness of the blacks for emancipation have denied any authority to this example, because the newly emancipated slaves found employment and strict discipline in the army.\* Supposing that had been the case with all of them, which is far from true, do the objectors mean to say that the discipline of an army violates the principles of civil liberty and natural justice to the same extent with the laws of slavery? And if not, they grant, of course, that sufficient restraint can be exerted without such violation, which is all that I desire to show.

It is certain, however, that vast numbers of slaves were suddenly and simultaneously emancipated in Colombia,

---

\* American Quarterly Review, June No. 1833.

without the least injury to themselves or hazard to the public peace, and who did not enter the army, but continued tranquilly at their labors as before. Colonel Duane, in his Narrative of a Tour in Colombia, speaks of his visit to a large sugar plantation of Bolivar's, which he found in fine order, and upon which he was told by the blacks themselves that there were no slaves employed.

Admiral Fleming stated before the Committee of the House of Commons, that "during the three different times that he visited the Caraccas, subsequent to the act of emancipation, he never saw any disorder, and never heard of any, except such as were occasioned by political causes." He stated also, that after the emancipation of slaves by Bolivar's order the cultivation of sugar had increased in Colombia, and that on his second visit he found a very visible improvement in the general culture of the land, and the condition of the blacks.

Passing over many instances of peaceful emancipation on a large scale, one more exactly in point occurs in the history of Guadaloupe.

"Guadaloupe, in common with all the colonial possessions of France, partook of the convulsions with which the revolution of 1792 so violently agitated the mother country. And in that colony the contests of the partisans of royalism and democracy, and those of the white and colored colonists, were carried on with a fury which could not fail to excite the slaves, who, from time to time, were called in to aid the contending parties. No insurrection, however, properly servile, followed; and the slaves who were not converted into combatants continued their usual labors. In February, 1794, the French Convention passed a decree, giving liberty to the slaves in all the colonies of France. This decree was carried into effect in Guadaloupe, under certain local regulations called *La Police Rurale*, which was administered, in the different districts of the island, by commissioners appointed by the government. By these regulations the laborers were entitled to a fourth part of the produce of the estate which they were employed in cultivating, independently of their food, which was wholly furnished from the estate. The only deductions to which this

fourth part was liable, before it was divided in fixed proportions among the laborers, were the expenses of a medical attendant and medicines, and of packages for their own share of the produce. All other expenses of every kind, including taxes, were to be defrayed from the other three fourths. The shares of laborers absenting themselves from labor were to be reduced in proportion to the length of their absence, and the sums thus deducted were to be added to the shares of those who had labored regularly.—Under these regulations agriculture appears to have flourished, after a vigorous government had repressed the furious intestine commotions among the different political parties of whites, and between the whites and the free people of color; and in April, 1801, we have an enumeration of the plantations then under cultivation, amounting to 390 of sugar, 1,355 of coffee, and 328 of cotton, beside 25 pasture or grass farms. In the succeeding year, on the peace of Amiens, a powerful French force was sent to take possession of Guadeloupe, and to reduce the negroes to their former state of slavery. This attempt was resisted on the part of the negroes, and it was not till after a severe struggle, and dreadful slaughter, that they were again brought under the power of the cart-whip; for what will not men who have once felt it endure, to escape that calamity? The accounts from the island immediately preceding this event were most satisfactory. The reports of the commissioners of different cantons to the local government speak of the tranquillity which reigned in the agricultural districts, and on the plantations; and the government, on the other hand, in its circular addresses to the commissioners, dwell upon it most anxiously and sedulously as an essential part of their duties, that while they enforce order and regularity among the laboring classes, they should maintain their just rights, and secure to them the full measure of the remuneration to which they were entitled for their labors; punishing with exemplary severity proprietors who should be guilty of any failure in this respect, or of any other conduct towards the laborers which should be inconsistent with the claims of humanity and justice. The regulations by which the rights and

privileges of the laborers were guarded were ordered, by the law, to be translated into the creole dialect, to be posted up in conspicuous places, and to be read and explained once a month on every estate. We have before us a letter addressed by the supreme council of the colony, in February 1802, to the Commissary Valluet of the canton de Deshayes, to this effect: 'We have received, Citizen Commissary, your letter of the 6th instant, with the different returns relating to the payment of their FOURTH to the cultivators. We perceive with pleasure that you have devoted your attention to this most essential branch of your administration. It is in exercising this justice towards the men whose sweat is the source both of our private and public wealth, that you can alone acquire a right to exert your authority to enforce upon them the due performance of their duties. Continue, Citizen Commissary, to maintain that order in your canton which now reigns universally throughout the colony. We shall have the satisfaction of having given an example which will prove, that all classes of people may live in perfect harmony with each other, under an administration which secures justice to all classes.'

"In the *Moniteur* of 19 Germinal, an 10, (April 1802) there is inserted a communication from Guadaloupe, dated in the preceding February, stating that all was perfectly tranquil in that colony. 'Cultivation,' the writer adds, 'has never been discontinued, and although the last sugar crop happened to be not very productive, yet there is now considerable produce in hand, and the next sugar crop is likely to be large.'"\*

But all the colonists were not pleased with this state of things; and Bonaparte, having troops to spare after the peace of Amiens, sent General Richepanse to restore slavery in the island. Had the slaves been tired of their liberty, such a measure would scarcely have been necessary. And that they had not abused it, might be inferred, if it had not already been shown, from the instructions given to the French general. These were,

---

\* *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 70, pp. 463-465.

“That if the mulattoes and negroes of Guadaloupe received the French with pleasure, he should employ means to induce them to revolt, that he might have a pretence for attacking them.”\* Richepanse, it appears, did resort to these nefarious measures; and the result was, that 20,000 negroes laid down their lives in defence of their liberty, and then, and not till then, was slavery restored. A practical commentary this on a common assertion, that suddenly emancipated slaves soon sicken of their fatal gift of freedom.

“This result, unfortunate as it was, does not prove the ~~un~~fitness of the slaves of Guadaloupe for the liberty that had been granted to them; and which, as we have seen, was granted under circumstances of public disturbance, particularly unfavorable to their quiet enjoyment of its blessings. When we take into view all those circumstances, it is impossible not to feel that the case of Guadaloupe is so far from justifying the anticipations of our opponents, that it furnishes an undeniable confirmation of the general view we have ventured to give of this subject, namely, that an act of emancipation by the supreme government, in quiet and peaceful times, accompanied by such precautionary measures as would be obviously expedient, and not resisted but acquiesced in by the masters, might be carried into complete effect, without the slightest danger to the public tranquillity, and with the most unquestionable advantage to the slaves themselves.”†

The last instance which will be adduced is more important than any other. It is that of St. Domingo, and its consideration and right apprehension is particularly important, because its “horrors,” as they are emphatically called, are so continually the theme of those who believe, or profess to believe, the extinction of slavery in the United States a hopeless case, and the discussion of it criminal. The history of Hayti during the last forty

---

\* Richepanse communicated this to General Moreau, and the latter to Colonel Malenfant, in 1805, at Morrisville, near Philadelphia. Vid. *Memoirs of St. Domingo*, by Malenfant, note, p. 98.

† *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 70, p. 465.

years is important to the question of negro emancipation on two accounts. First, as it illustrates the immediate effect on the public safety of an act of sudden and general emancipation. Secondly, as it affords testimony respecting the disposition of the blacks to voluntary industry when left entirely to themselves. The whole history of Hayti may be against the fitness of negro slaves for entire freedom, without its affecting the question of the danger of immediate emancipation. It is simply as it relates to this last point that it will now be considered. The history of the island subsequent to its independence, and of its present condition and prospects, will be taken up in another place.

Our means of information respecting the important events of the last eight years of the eighteenth century in Hayti are sufficiently ample. There are among us living witnesses of the most exciting portion of them, and we have the published testimony of actors and eyewitnesses of the whole. That able but most prejudiced writer Bryan Edwards has left us a picture of a portion of the events as they appeared from one point of view, and Malenfant and Lacroix, participators in the losses, anxieties, and partial successes of the times, have sketched them from another. But there is nothing important to the purpose in hand, as to which the testimony conflicts. And if any person will from either of these sources, or any other now attainable, bring any thing to show that the emancipation of the slaves upon that fated island was the cause of massacre, of pillage, or of tumult, I for one will give up the whole question.

At the commencement of the French revolution, the French colony of St. Domingo occupied the western and most fertile third of the island. The whites were in number 30,000. They were divided in their politics as were their fellow-countrymen at home, and party spirit ran high. The number of slaves was 480,000. The mulattoes or free people of color were 24,000 in number, many of them polished and wealthy, but all oppressed with great burdens and civil disabilities. They had strong friends in France, and in March, 1790, a decree was passed, giving to them an equality of civil rights with



the white colonists. The execution of this decree was resisted pretty effectually by the latter, until, in August, 1791, an insurrection broke out among the negro slaves of the northern province near Cape François.\* Of the details of this dreadful rebellion it would be to no purpose to speak. Suffice it to say, that it did not spread to the southern or western provinces, where, although the mulattoes were in arms, the slaves remained quietly at their labors; † and that, if the slaves in some instances showed they could be demons in outrage and cruelty, there were not wanting instances on their part of the most faithful kindness, and heroic devotion to their masters. There is little doubt that a timely concession on the part of the white colonists would, at no long interval, have restored tranquillity and subordination, had not the commotions been kept alive by the uncertain and vacillating policy of the National Assembly. As it was, the civil war, for it was not wholly servile, the blacks, strange to say, being on the side of the royalists, and at first even wearing the white cockade, lasted until 1793, when three commissioners, Santhonax, Polverel, and one other arrived in the island with instructions to grant the demands of the mulattoes, and with 6000 troops to aid in restoring order. They were not of course very acceptable to the white planters, who were displeased at seeing persons of color receive commissions in the army of the republic. They found large numbers of the blacks in arms in the north, under Jean Biassou and Toussaint Louverture. In the south and west the slaves were peaceable and at work; the mulattoes, some of them in arms. The commissioners were very assiduous, though not perhaps very judicious, in the discharge of their

---

\* It is possible that some persons have regarded the Bill of Rights of the National Assembly passed in 1789, which bill it was the intention of the act of March, 1790, to enforce in the colonies, as an act emancipating all the slaves. It certainly was never meant as such or understood as such in France or in the colonies. Its operation was never supposed to extend beyond the free people of color. The insurrection of the slaves did not commence until two years after. On the origin of this insurrection, vid. Edwards's History, Note on Ogé.

† See Edwards and Malenfant.

official duties ; but they had not been long engaged in them, when there arrived at Cape François a M. Galbaud, with a commission of governor, which was to supersede their commission. The rivals met in the city of the Cape, and, in consequence of some informality in his appointment, M. Galbaud was finally persuaded or compelled to return to his ship. Before he left the harbour, however, a quarrel arose between some of his party and some of that of the commissioners, which led to a bloody conflict in the streets of the city. The sailors in the harbour all joined Galbaud, as did some regiments of the line and some of the citizens. The commissioners were supported by the troops under their command and the mulattoes, but fearing to be overpowered, sent to Biassou and Toussaint, who were without the city at the head of the insurgents, and offered their freedom to all who would join the army of the republic. The offer was refused by them. The fight had commenced on the 20th of June, and it lasted to the next day. The sailors becoming intoxicated, committed the greatest excesses, putting to death indiscriminately all colored persons whom they met. On the 21st the city was entered by about 3000 blacks, who it does not appear had ever heard of the offer of the commissioners, and who took side with neither party. The whites were panic stricken, and all who could, made their escape in the vessels that were in the harbour. The blacks having, as their first step, liberated several hundreds of their comrades, who were in the prison, plundered, and then set fire to the city.\* Santhonax and his colleague, however, remained unharmed. "This," says Malenfant, "is the history of the burning of the city of the Cape," the catastrophe of that awful drama, the insurrection of St. Domingo. It was during the two years preceding this event that those massacres and conflagrations occurred, which have left so indelible an impression on the memories of all who

---

\* If there is any thing which could give color to the assertion, that the act of emancipation was productive of excesses, it is this incident of the descent upon the Cape ; but it is plain that the blacks concerned were not newly emancipated slaves.

the white colonists. The execution of this decree was resisted pretty effectually by the latter, until, in August, 1791, an insurrection broke out among the negro slaves of the northern province near Cape François.\* Of the details of this dreadful rebellion it would be to no purpose to speak. Suffice it to say, that it did not spread to the southern or western provinces, where, although the mulattoes were in arms, the slaves remained quietly at their labors; † and that, if the slaves in some instances showed they could be demons in outrage and cruelty, there were not wanting instances on their part of the most faithful kindness, and heroic devotion to their masters. There is little doubt that a timely concession on the part of the white colonists would, at no long interval, have restored tranquillity and subordination, had not the commotions been kept alive by the uncertain and vacillating policy of the National Assembly. As it was, the civil war, for it was not wholly servile, the blacks, strange to say, being on the side of the royalists, and at first even wearing the white cockade, lasted until 1793, when three commissioners, Santhonax, Polverel, and one other arrived in the island with instructions to grant the demands of the mulattoes, and with 6000 troops to aid in restoring order. They were not of course very acceptable to the white planters, who were displeased at seeing persons of color receive commissions in the army of the republic. They found large numbers of the blacks in arms in the north, under Jean Biassou and Toussaint Louverture. In the south and west the slaves were peaceable and at work; the mulattoes, some of them in arms. The commissioners were very assiduous, though not perhaps very judicious, in the discharge of their

---

\* It is possible that some persons have regarded the Bill of Rights of the National Assembly passed in 1789, which bill it was the intention of the act of March, 1790, to enforce in the colonies, as an act emancipating all the slaves. It certainly was never meant as such or understood as such in France or in the colonies. Its operation was never supposed to extend beyond the free people of color. The insurrection of the slaves did not commence until two years after. On the origin of this insurrection, vid. Edwards's History, Note on Ogé.

† See Edwards and Malenfant.

official duties ; but they had not been long engaged in them, when there arrived at Cape François a M. Galbaud, with a commission of governor, which was to supersede their commission. The rivals met in the city of the Cape, and, in consequence of some informality in his appointment, M. Galbaud was finally persuaded or compelled to return to his ship. Before he left the harbour, however, a quarrel arose between some of his party and some of that of the commissioners, which led to a bloody conflict in the streets of the city. The sailors in the harbour all joined Galbaud, as did some regiments of the line and some of the citizens. The commissioners were supported by the troops under their command and the mulattoes, but fearing to be overpowered, sent to Biassou and Toussaint, who were without the city at the head of the insurgents, and offered their freedom to all who would join the army of the republic. The offer was refused by them. The fight had commenced on the 20th of June, and it lasted to the next day. The sailors becoming intoxicated, committed the greatest excesses, putting to death indiscriminately all colored persons whom they met. On the 21st the city was entered by about 3000 blacks, who it does not appear had ever heard of the offer of the commissioners, and who took side with neither party. The whites were panic stricken, and all who could, made their escape in the vessels that were in the harbour. The blacks having, as their first step, liberated several hundreds of their comrades, who were in the prison, plundered, and then set fire to the city.\* Santhonax and his colleague, however, remained unharmed. "This," says Malenfant, "is the history of the burning of the city of the Cape," the catastrophe of that awful drama, the insurrection of St. Domingo. It was during the two years preceding this event that those massacres and conflagrations occurred, which have left so indelible an impression on the memories of all who

---

\* If there is any thing which could give color to the assertion, that the act of emancipation was productive of excesses, it is this incident of the descent upon the Cape ; but it is plain that the blacks concerned were not newly *emancipated* slaves.

were living at that time. Immediately *after this event* the commissioners, urged by some of the wealthiest proprietors, and assured by Toussaint that nothing else would restore tranquillity in the colony, decreed the total abolition of slavery in the northern province.

And as far as the slaves were concerned, tranquillity certainly was restored. Toussaint and many of his followers joined the army of the republic. Biassou retired into the Spanish provinces, and finally to Spain. Soon afterward Polverel issued another edict in the south, abolishing slavery there also. "He caused to be opened a government register, in which all the citizens might sign the liberty of their slaves," and all did sign but one. These slaves in the south and west had been quiet during the troubles in the other parts of the colony. And was this state of things changed by the act of emancipation? Colonel Malenfant, himself a proprietor, assures us, that "*After this liberty the negroes remained tranquil in the south and west, and continued their labor upon all the plantations.*" Upon some of the estates, which, in consequence of the disturbances and the fear of the mulattoes or free persons of color, who were in arms near Port au Prince, had been abandoned by the proprietors and stewards, "the negroes continued their labor under the direction of inferior agents; and afterwards, when no whites remained to guide them, they betook themselves to planting provisions. Wherever the whites remained upon the plantations, the negroes tranquilly continued their labors." — "Do not talk to them," he says elsewhere, "of the restoration of slavery, but speak of freedom and their *fourth*, and you will chain them down to their labor. What did Toussaint do? What did I do before his time in the plain of the Cul de Sac, on the plantation Gouraud, during more than eight months after the emancipation of ~~the~~ slaves? Let those who knew me at the time, let the blacks themselves be asked; they will all reply that not a single negro upon that plantation, where there were more than four hundred and fifty laborers, refused to work; and yet this plantation was thought to be under the worst discipline, and the slaves the most idle of any in the plain. I inspired

the same activity into three other plantations of which I had the management."

Such is the evidence of a slaveholder, who was no visionary advocate of "the rights of man," but a French gentleman, who had a deep interest at stake in the prosperity of the colony. Such was his opinion of the best means of managing the ignorant African slave, and rousing him to industry.

This unquestionable testimony to the good conduct of the negroes, suddenly emancipated under the most unfavorable circumstances, is confirmed by Bryan Edwards himself, who nevertheless has not spared his vituperations upon the authors of the measure. The negroes were told, he says, that they must not abandon their work, but must continue upon the plantations or else join the army, and the greater part of them preferred the former course, and were, he expressly adds, even "more than usually orderly and industrious."\* How can evidence be more explicit or satisfactory as to the early operation of the act of emancipation? These witnesses could not have been deceived, and they cannot be misunderstood.

In 1793, immediately after the emancipation, the island was invaded by the English forces from Jamaica, who came with the intention of restoring slavery, and adding another to their West India colonies. Thus began a war that lasted five years, during which the invaders gained neither honor nor advantage. The war was finally concluded by a treaty between the English commander and Toussaint, commander-in-chief of the French forces.

Thus was peace at last restored after seven years' war, during which the planters were divided against each other. During the two first in the northern part of the colony, large numbers of the slaves were in arms, and of course a great portion of the efficient laborers were withdrawn from cultivation. This interruption, added to the great destruction of property by the insurgents, would alone account for vast diminution of the products of the

---

\* See note on the act of Emancipation in St. Domingo. Edwards's History.

island, between the years 1791 and 1798, had no change been made in the condition of the cultivators. It is enough at present, however, to say, that so far as the public tranquillity was concerned, the act of emancipation, though made and executed at a most unfortunate time, produced nothing but good. As soon as the war of invasion was terminated, order and industry were restored, and the colony was in a constantly progressive course until 1802. During this interval, and for some years previous, the affairs of the colony were administered by Toussaint, who held it as a dependence of France. To his successful administration we have the most unqualified testimony. "The colony," says Malenfant, "flourished under Toussaint; the whites lived happily and at peace upon their estates, and the blacks continued to work for them."

General Lacroix, also, who published his "Memoirs for a History of St. Domingo," in 1819, informs us, that when Santhonax, who had been recalled to France by the government, returned to the colony in 1796, "he was astonished at the state in which he found it on his return." "This," says Lacroix, "was owing to Toussaint, who, while he had succeeded in establishing perfect order and discipline among the black troops, had succeeded also in making the black laborers (in the north) return to the plantations there to resume cultivation." The same author tells us that in the next year (1797) the most wonderful progress had been made in agriculture. He uses these remarkable words. "The colony marched as by enchantment towards its ancient splendor; every day produced perceptible proofs of its progress. The city of the Cape and the plantations of the north rose up again visibly to the eye."\*

It would be easy to multiply testimony to the success of the measure of emancipation in St. Domingo during the time of Toussaint. We shall merely add that of

---

\* The system under which this was accomplished was similar in most respects to that adopted in Guadaloupe. The white colonists who remained spared no pains to bring it to perfection, and it has never appeared that any of them were dissatisfied with the change.

General Vincent, now or lately living in Paris, who was a proprietor in the colony at that time. He was sent by Toussaint to Paris in 1801, to lay before Bonaparte the new constitution. He found an expedition fitting out for the purpose of restoring slavery. He remonstrated to no purpose; assuring the First Consul, that such a measure was at once unnecessary and impracticable. He told him that every thing was going on well in St. Domingo; that the proprietors were in peaceful possession of their estates; cultivation was making rapid progress; and the blacks were industrious, orderly, and happy. But his entreaties were of no avail. Leclerc landed at Cape François. The war which followed began with perfidy on the part of the invaders. Toussaint, seized by treachery, perished in a dungeon of France. The blacks under Dessalines and Christophe fought with desperation, and vied with, though they could not equal, the whites in cruelty. Either party intended to make it a war of extermination. An immense amount of property was destroyed. The sugar-works were all ruined, and so great was the devastation, that for a time the necessary food could scarcely be procured. The attempt of the whites was unsuccessful, and, after near two years of the most horrible and cruel war, they were glad to take refuge on board of an English squadron. Thus France lost her colony, and the Haytians gained their independence. How they have used it; whether it has been a blessing or a curse, it is not my purpose now to inquire. It is sufficient to say, that up to the period of the iniquitous attempt to restore slavery in the colony, the most perfect harmony prevailed between the white planters and those who were once their slaves. The former continued to be treated with respect, and the latter were gradually rising from the abyss of ignorance and degradation in which they were sunk, previously to their emancipation. It is only between the years of 1798 and 1802 that the history of Hayti affords a fair sample of what may be the result of the extinction of slavery in the British colonies, or in the United States. During that period the island was quiet and prosperous, and its people orderly and happy.



It seems to me that, whatever may be the inference as to the disposition and capacity of the blacks for voluntary and self-directed industry, which is drawn from the whole history of Hayti for the last forty years, it is plain that there is nothing in that history to sustain the notion of the awful dangers of immediate emancipation, when bestowed freely and graciously by the masters themselves. On the contrary, although this great experiment was tried in a colony already distracted with civil and servile war, and under the apprehension of foreign invasion, there did not result from it the least outrage upon the persons or property of the whites, or the least disturbance of public peace and safety. The slaves whom the act of emancipation found at their labors did not desert them, and those who were in arms against the republic took service under its banners, or returned to the cultivation of the soil.

The instances which have been cited are the most important upon record. I think, therefore, that I am justified in saying, that neither reason nor experience teach that there is necessarily any thing to be apprehended from the general and simultaneous emancipation of slaves, when accompanied with just regulations defining and enforcing the duties which would spring from the new relations of the master and the slave, now become citizen. I of course presuppose the consent of the former, and their hearty coöperation with the laws. For the slaves being utterly destitute, would be almost as much at their mercy directly after, as before emancipation. If the masters choose to withhold from the slaves employment; if they take from them their houses, their clothing, and their tools, thus resisting the beneficence of the law, and setting themselves at once in hostility to those to whom by every claim of justice, and every motive of interest, they are still bound as friends, they can first make them miserable, and then, goading them into frenzy, cause if they will the verification of their own prophecies. The cry of danger proceeds from the fear that the slaves are unfit to become freemen; the real hazard is, that their masters are not ready to treat them as such. The slaves might be made to feel that

the object of their emancipation was their and their masters' mutual good ; that the benefit was certain if each party would be faithful ; and that it depended not more upon one than the other. But the masters, as the superiors in power and intelligence, must set the example of fidelity. If they fail in their duty, they can hardly expect the ignorant negroes to be true to theirs.

*The Abolition of Slavery will not cause great Pecuniary Loss to the Masters.* This objection, which is next to be considered, lies in fact equally against gradual and immediate emancipation. What is its nature ? It is said that the emancipation of slaves would be an almost ruinous sacrifice of the acquired rights of one party to the abstract rights of another. It is even said that the abolition of slavery throughout a State would bring a loss it could not bear ; and that the whole country must share the burthen ; as if there were a *bona fide* destruction of property to the full amount of the market value of all the slaves. And it is to be observed, that this objection is urged by many who fully acknowledge the claim of the slave to his freedom, and who have no misgivings as to his adequately supporting himself and becoming a profitable free laborer. Now I ask of what valuable vested right does the emancipation of a slave, deprive the master ? The value of his right consists in his claim to the services of the slave during his life, in return for which services he is obliged to feed and clothe the slave. If he is assured of retaining those services at no dearer rate, he will lose nothing by emancipation. This is so plain that the only pretence of loss, which a thinking man could urge, would be that the services of the negro as a slave are of more value to the master than his services as a freeman. Now it has already been remarked, that, excepting in the cultivation of a few articles of tropical produce, the labor of freemen is cheaper than that of slaves. This is acknowledged universally with regard to whites, and by some with regard to blacks. With respect to the latter, however, it is not allowed by all, many presuming a difference in the natural disposition of the races which is not warranted by facts. On the justice of this presumption the issue depends. As

## 54 EFFECTS OF EMANCIPATION ON PROPERTY.

it is the most important point in the question, I have reserved it to the latest. Under the next head I shall consider the probability of the emancipated blacks remaining on the soil, and working for hire, and the possibility of raising sugar, &c. by free labor. At present I take these points for granted. The importance and the great prevalent misconception of the question of injury to property demand for it a more full examination.

First, let us consider the effect of a general emancipation on the wealth of a State. Let us suppose that Georgia, for example, which State employs herself all the slaves she can raise, were by an act of her legislature to emancipate at once her two hundred thousand slaves, still retaining them of course as free laborers at their accustomed occupations. What would she lose? Not one jot or tittle of her property. Her wealth is made up now of her lands and houses, her cattle, her slaves, and her half million of freemen. Abolish slavery, and what is it then? The same in all things but one. Instead of two hundred thousand slaves with no other than animal power, she has as many freemen with an indefinite capacity of improvement, a productive power far greater than before. She has gained in wealth by annihilating all property in slaves. If her individual citizens have suffered loss, she can herself afford to compensate them.

There is nothing new or strange in the above, but a misapprehension exists as to the nature of slave property, which produces doubt and uncertainty in many minds. We value wealth according to our use and enjoyment of it. We wish to call things our own, that we may be assured of having this use and enjoyment, and most articles of property can be used and enjoyed only while they continue such. A machine owned by no one, is used by no one; a house that has no possessor, has no inhabitant; even a horse, to be of use, must have a master. I speak of course of communities governed by laws. Not so a man, for he can be an owner and a master to himself; and nature and all experience tell us, *that since* it is his own will which must put his powers

in exercise, he will be of the greatest value to society, when conscious of himself profiting by the exertion of that will, and in proportion to it, he brings his utmost powers into action. So far as society is concerned, the emancipation of slaves may be looked upon as merely a transfer or restoration of property in human beings from *second* to *first* persons, and this property is necessarily more available to society in the hands of the latter than of the former, for then the prime motive to exertion acts directly upon the very will on which the exertion itself ultimately depends. If by emancipation the master suffers loss, the slave is to an equal amount a gainer, the State then stands at least as well as before.

But what has the master lost, if he retain the services of his workman at no dearer rate than before? I am considering the case of the slaveholder who is a planter also. After the purchase money has been paid, all that the master can get from the slave is his services for life; in return, he is at the expense of his maintenance and that of his family, at all times.\* He will be at no greater expense for the free laborer, and will be equally sure of his services. So long, then, as he intends remaining a planter, he will be no loser. If the purchase money has been sunk, it was sunk before the emancipation. But suppose the purchase money is considered simply as capital invested, for which interest is received by the master in the income which the slave's labor brings him, over

---

\* "He who regards the labor of the slave as gratuitous to the master is a bad calculator." The master is obliged to maintain the slave with his family, old and young, well and ill, busy and idle. And the whole cost of this bears as great a ratio to the amount of work accomplished by the slave, as do the wages of the free laborer to his work. Otherwise slave labor would be cheaper than free. The injustice to the slave consists in this, that in depriving him of the only stimulus which will induce him to put forth all his powers, the master deprives him *pro tanto* of the use of those powers; and this injustice is not lessened by the fact that the master himself does not profit by them. The excess of labor which a man would perform if working for his own benefit, above what he will perform when working for the benefit of another, is totally lost by the slave system. The course of the slave's master in this respect is, unconsciously to him perhaps, very like that of a certain dog in the fable.

and above the cost of his maintenance. After emancipation the proprietor receives his interest just as constantly, in the excess of the income from the work of the free laborer, over the wages paid him.

It is only in case the proprietor wishes to sell his property, then, that he seems likely to incur a loss. Here, it may be said, the loss will surely come. The planter has originally bought his land, and then, at an equal cost perhaps, stocked it with slaves. He wishes to sell, but can offer only his land; his outlay in slaves is lost to him. This is not a fair statement, however. He can put into the market only his land to be sure; a plantation, but no slaves. But this land is already peopled, the plantation is stocked with free laborers, who are bound to the soil by a tie as strong as an owner's title could have been, the tie of self-interest and old associations. The income of the estate is as great as when the slaves made a part of it, and will be as certain and as regular. Would it be unjust in the proprietor to demand, as the price of his plantation, the whole original cost of the land and slaves both, since a fair income may be depended upon for the whole capital thus invested? Certainly not, and this he would do. The only change, then, which emancipation will necessarily produce upon the master's property, will be to fix the whole price of the slaves and land upon the land alone, the estate being worth to all intents and purposes precisely as much as before. In this calculation, I of course assume the success of the scheme of emancipation as it respects the conduct of the slaves. I suppose them to work as well as before. If they work better, the value of the property will be enhanced in a corresponding ratio. The following extract from Phelps on Slavery, where the statement is made on the authority of Niles's Register, will illustrate and confirm the above remarks.

“ The value of the houses and lands in Pennsylvania increased, in fifteen years, — from 1799 to 1814, — ninety millions of dollars more than those of Virginia, though Virginia is the largest. The valuation of the houses and lands in New York and Pennsylvania, under the United States' assessments, the principle of

valuation being the same in each case, was more than six hundred millions of dollars, while that of the houses and lands, and more than a million of slaves beside, of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, with a much larger area of land, and more than twice the number of inhabitants, was less than five hundred and twenty millions — nearly one sixth less.”

The experience of past instances of emancipation is in accordance with these principles. I leave out of consideration the immense moral effect of the extinction of slavery, which will infallibly, sooner or later, produce an hundred fold increase of wealth to the people among whom it occurs.

There are, however, two classes of persons who would suffer loss by an act of general emancipation, let its results be ever so favorable to the planters and to the slaves themselves. One consists of those persons whose only property is in slaves, and who are supported by letting out their services for hire. The other comprises those landholders who raise more slaves than they require for their own use, actuated by the demand for them in other quarters, which they supply in a regular course of trade. This class it has been seen is principally to be found in the more northern slaveholding States, where the present high value of the slaves depends mainly or wholly on the internal slave trade. The loss which would be incurred by the abolition of slavery in either of these States, would be equally incurred by the prohibition of the internal slave trade. It is not perceived that the claim for indemnity would be stronger in the former than in the latter case; and in this, such claim would rest precisely upon the same ground, that exists in every case of depreciation of property, in consequence of any act of legislative interference, or change of policy. Had Mr. Verplanck's proposed Anti-tariff bill passed into a law in 1833, it would have caused very heavy losses to merchants and manufacturers in this section of the country. It would perhaps have ruined many meritorious individuals, who had invested their whole capital in a particular trade, on the faith of the laws of Congress.

Was it wrong that the Tariff should be repealed? I say, no. Others may disagree. But had the act passed, would the losers have claimed indemnity? Probably not, for they would scarce have expected it. Yet I can see no claim which could be urged by the slaveholder who should incur a loss by the prohibition of the internal slave trade, or by the legislative abolition of slavery, which would not be equally good to the loser by the repeal of the Tariff. And I do not believe that the loss among an equal population would be as great in the former case, as it would have been in the latter. For it is to be considered, that while the market value of the slaves in Virginia and other middle States would "sink to a cipher," if the internal slave trade were prohibited, still, in that case and in case of the abolition of slavery, much the largest fraction of the present slave population would continue to find employment within the State to which it belonged, and it is more than possible that in a few years the revived industry of the State would give employment to all the laborers she could produce. In strict justice all loss on capital invested on the faith of government, sustained by individuals in direct consequence of a change in the policy of that government, ought to be compensated. There is one very essential preliminary, however, which is that the loss should be clearly proved. It is never to be taken for granted as the result of emancipation in any State. When proved, whether it be small or great, there is a fair claim for indemnification. This was not denied by the abolitionists of Great Britain. The claim cannot and ought not to interfere for one instant with the rights of the slave. This freedom is due to him at all events. The matter of indemnity is an after affair between the proprietor and the State. They have been parties in an act of wrong, and if in righting that wrong a loss comes wholly upon one party, the other is bound in honor to relieve it. A government must respect its own contracts even in revoking them. But it is exceedingly important that a very common notion, that slaveholders actually lose by the extinction of slavery the full market value of the slaves, or even what is an approximation to it, should be done away.

“The Colonists,” says a writer in the *Westminster Review* for October, 1829, “have tried to frighten the Government and the country, by holding out the necessity that, in the event of the emancipation of their slaves, they should be paid for them; and some of the friends of emancipation have been weak enough to show an inclination to admit the principle. Suppose now, that an Irish pauper, in the days when Irishmen worked their horses by the tails, had been interfered with by the parish officers with a view to put an end to his barbarous practice, and had answered, ‘If your honors stop my allowance till I give over working my horse by the tail, I hope you mean to pay me what I gave for him, *and allow me to work him in harness besides.*’ This is a fair statement of the West Indian proposition.”

And so it is of the question of indemnity in the case of emancipation every where. The master has a better servant than before, and the value of his property in his fellow-man has reverted to his land. For what is he to be indemnified?\*

*Blacks Capable of Voluntary Industry.* The third and last position that I wish to establish is, that if emancipated, the blacks would adequately maintain themselves by their own labor, and that the proprietors would procure from them an equal amount of labor, at as little cost after as before emancipation. If this is not true, we may not infer the future from the past, or else there must be some great and essential peculiarity in the negro’s character. White slaves have been suddenly and in large numbers emancipated, and their industry has been augmented by the change. Why may we not expect this of blacks? Are these not men, have they not the same wants, and are they not influenced by the same motives as other men? But they are a peculiar sort of people, it is said, and cannot be dealt with as whites.

---

\* It is obvious that the case of emancipation with deportation or “colonization” is a very different one. There a loss is occasioned, for which the proprietor has a claim to the full amount of the slaves’ market value. If the planting States had to choose to-morrow between emancipation with and emancipation without deportation, I have no doubt they would prefer the latter.



“ In the free black, the principle of idleness and dissipation triumphs over that of accumulation and the desire to better our condition ; the animal part of the man gains the victory over the moral ; — the free black will work no where but by compulsion.” Such opinions may be the result of a very limited and superficial observation, but not of careful inquiry.

We have in America known the blacks chiefly as slaves. Until during the last half century they were known as such only to the civilized world. In this situation their character was judged, and men referred to the race defects and vices which belonged solely to the condition. Are not slaves the same every where ? Are not white slaves and even white freemen, when kept in hopeless poverty and ignorance, degraded, grovelling, beastly, as truly as blacks ? In the former as well as the latter, does not the desire of repose prevail over that of accumulation, sensuality over the love of improvement, the animal over the moral nature ? The history of all nations and all times gives sad evidence that it is so. Judge not the negro, then, by his character while a slave, or while the marks of his chains are on him.

Hear the words of an intelligent traveller, Dr. Walsh. “ The first impression of all this,” (the sight of the negro slaves of Rio Janeiro) “ on my mind was to shake the conviction I had always felt, of the wrong and hardship inflicted on our black fellow-creatures, and that they were only in that state which God and nature had assigned them ; that they were the lowest grade of human existence ; and that it was not surprising that people who contemplated them every day, so formed, so employed, and so degraded, should forget their claims to that rank in the scale of beings in which modern philanthropists are so anxious to place them. I did not, at the moment, myself recollect, that the white man, made a slave on the coast of Africa, suffers not only a similar mental but physical deterioration from hardships and emaciation, and becomes in time the dull and deformed beast I now saw yoked to a burden.

“ A few hours only were necessary to correct my first impressions of the negro population, by seeing them *under a different aspect*. We were attracted by the

sound of military music, and found it proceeded from a regiment drawn up in one of the streets. Their colonel had just died, and they attended to form a procession to celebrate his obsequies. They were all of different shades of black, but the majority were negroes. Their equipment was excellent; they wore dark jackets, white pantaloons, and black leather caps and belts, all which, with their arms, were in high order. Their band produced sweet and agreeable music, of the leader's own composition, and the men went through some evolutions with regularity and dexterity. They were only a militia regiment, yet were as well appointed and disciplined as one of our regiments of the line. Here, then, was the first step in that gradation by which the black population of this country ascend in the scale of humanity; the negro advances from the state below that of a beast of burden into a military rank, and he shows himself as capable of discipline and improvement as a human being of any other color.

“ Our attention was next attracted by negro men and women bearing about a variety of articles for sale; some in baskets, some on boards and cases carried on their heads. They were all very neat and clean in their persons, and had a decorum and sense of respectability about them superior to whites of the same class and calling. All their articles were good in their kind, and neatly kept, and they sold them with simplicity and confidence, neither wishing to take advantage of others, nor suspecting that it would be taken of themselves. I bought some confectionary from one of the females, and I was struck with the modesty and propriety of her manner; she was a young mother, and had with her a neatly dressed child, of which she seemed very fond. As yet unacquainted with the coin of the country, I had none that was current about me, and was leaving the articles; but the poor young woman pressed them on me with a ready confidence, repeating in broken Portuguese, *outo tempo*.”

Lastly, he witnessed the performance of a funeral service by a black priest with peculiar decorum and solemnity. He adds,

“I had been but a few hours on shore, for the first time, and I saw an African negro under four aspects of society; and it appeared to me, that in every one, his character depended on the state in which he was placed, and the estimation in which he was held. As a despised slave, he was far lower than other animals of burden that surrounded him; more miserable in his look, more revolting in his nakedness, more distorted in his person, and apparently more deficient in intellect than the horses and mules that passed him by. Advanced to the grade of a soldier, he was clean and neat in his person, amenable to discipline, expert at his exercises, and showed the port and bearing of a white man similarly placed. As a citizen, he was remarkable for the respectability of his appearance, and the decorum of his manners in the rank assigned him; and, as a priest, standing in the house of God, appointed to instruct society on their most important interests, and in a grade in which moral and intellectual fitness is required, and a certain degree of superiority is expected, he seemed even more devout in his impressions, and more correct in his manners, than his white associates. I came, therefore, to the irresistible conclusion in my mind, that color was an accident affecting the surface of a man, and having no more to do with his qualities than his clothes; that God had equally created an African in the image of his person, and equally given him an immortal soul; and that a European had no pretext but his own cupidity, for impiously thrusting his fellow-man from that rank in the creation which the Almighty has assigned him, and degrading him below the lot of the brute beasts that perish.”\*

To estimate with tolerable fairness and accuracy the negro character, then, we must observe it under all circumstances, and see if it appears in any, other than it should if formed from the common elements of human nature. View it as it appears in the home of the race, in burning Africa, where the day-star of civilization is just rising, where, no longer sunk in hopeless barbarism, the people are opening to better influences, and com-

---

\* Walsh's Residence in Brazil, Vol. I. pp. 134 - 141.

merce is beginning to make some amends for the unnumbered woes she heretofore has caused them.

“Already,” says Major Denham, “the desire of exchanging whatever their country produces, for the manufactures of the more enlightened nations of the north, exists in no small degree among them (the Bornouese); a taste for luxury, and a desire of imitating such strangers as visit them, are very observable; and the man of rank is ever distinguished, by some part of his dress being of foreign materials. It is true, that these propensities are not yet fully developed; but they exist, and give unequivocal proof of a tendency to civilization, and the desire of cultivating an intercourse with foreigners.”

“All travellers in Africa,” says Mrs. Child, “agree, that the inhabitants, particularly of the interior, have a good deal of mechanical skill. They tan and dye leather, sometimes thinning it in such a manner, that it is as flexible as paper. In Houssa leather is dressed in the same rich, soft style as in Morocco; they manufacture cordage, handsome cloths, and fine tissue. Though ignorant of the turning machine, they make good pottery ware, and some of their jars are really tasteful. They prepare indigo, and extract ore from minerals. They make agricultural tools, and work skilfully in gold, silver, and steel. Dickson, who knew jewellers and watchmakers among them, speaks of a very ingenious clock made by a negro. Hornemann says, that the inhabitants of Haissa give their cutting instruments a keener edge than the European artists, and their files are superior to those of France and England. Goldberry assures us that some of the African stuffs are extremely fine and beautiful.”

The testimony of these earlier travellers, cited by Mrs. Child, is confirmed by the narratives of Denham and Clapperton, Caillié, and the Landers. These show us, that, with a fertile soil and tolerable agriculture; manufactures of various and no mean kinds; large and regular native fairs, which collect multitudes from great distances; the interior of Africa possesses a population far from idle, lively, and quick of imitation; that the native African can set himself to work, and, that whatever may be the case elsewhere, in his own half-

civilized land he manifests the desire of improvement, and shows within himself the progressive power of a man. "Amidst the moral darkness of the land also," says Mr. Murray, author of a 'Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in Africa,' "there shine forth virtues which would do honor to human society in its most refined and exalted state."

Let it not be forgotten that the slave trade, at once a cause and an effect of moral debasement, is a *refinement* in barbarism, which, originally learned from the Moors on the one side and the Christians on the other, some of the most powerful princes are sincerely desirous of being rid of.

"You say true," said the Sheikh of Bornou to Major Denham, "we are all sons of one father! You say also that the sons of Adam should not sell one another, and you know every thing! God has given you all great talents, but what are we to do? The Arabs who come here will have nothing else but slaves. Why don't you send us your merchants? You know us now, let them come and live among us, and teach us how to build houses and boats, and make rockets." The Sheikh referred to the *internal* African slave trade. Fortunately he was addressing an Englishman.

If we next observe the African on his first introduction to civilized life, not as a slave but as a freeman, we find strong confirmation of his readiness to adopt its arts, and of his facility in learning them.

Dr. Mechlin, late governor of the colony of Liberia, stated on his return last winter, that the slaves who were captured in their prison ships and sent into Key-West, and afterward transported to Liberia by the Colonization Society, readily took to the cultivation of the soil, and proved better agriculturists, than those who had gone under the ordinary circumstances. They quickly showed themselves sensible of the advantages of good order and the arts of civilization, and desirous of securing these to themselves and to their families. The same is true of the colony at Sierra Leone. Great as have been the difficulties under which that community has labored, from the immense number of liberated Africans that

have been thrown upon it annually,\* these people have still been introduced there, to the enjoyment of British freedom, and the protection as well as restraint of British law, from a state of utter nakedness and want, and have learned to live upon the fruits of their own industry.

Colonel Denham, governor of the colony, says in his first report in 1827, "The propensities of the people located in the different settlements are very generally in favor of agriculture." "I have not observed any disinclination to voluntary labor. It appears to be a system perfectly understood and practised by the liberated Africans here."—Laborers' wages have varied from one shilling to sixpence per day, yet there has never been any deficiency of liberated Africans who were willing to work for hire.—"An anxious desire to obtain and enjoy the luxuries of life is apparent in every village."—"The number of frame houses with stone foundations, and also of stone houses, has increased in all the villages. At Wellington there are already seven stone houses, all begun during the last two years. The owners of these houses, which cost them from one to two hundred dollars, have all acquired the means of so permanently establishing themselves, by free labor and industry. They were nearly all landed here from ships after capture, and merely given a lot of ground, and rations for a time." The testimony of General Turner and Sir Neil Campbell, the previous governors, perfectly agrees with Colonel Denham's.

Thus far, then, it does not appear that the laziness of the African is so extreme, his repugnance to labor so utterly invincible, as to insure his becoming a burden and a nuisance, if not kept under steady coercion.

Let us turn next to our own country, not regarding the task of inquiry as idle or hopeless, though it is so confidently said that, "taken as a class, the free blacks must be considered as the most worthless and indolent

---

\* From 25,000 to 30,000 in the course of twenty years. See account of Sierra Leone, taken from public documents, in *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 59.

of the citizens of the United States," and that "through the whole extent of the Union they are the drones and pests of society." If they are such in the Southern States, the causes have been already assigned. Indeed it would be a miracle if as a class they were not debased there. When white men have proved otherwise, under like circumstances, it will be time enough to condemn the blacks.

The same causes operate in a measure throughout the Union. There is not a State in which unequal laws and illiberal customs have not weighed upon them. Not even in New England, the land of free schools, has the black any fair chance for instruction. The voice of encouragement rarely falls upon his ear. He is uniformly excluded from the more respectable and lucrative employments. The ban which is upon his race damps all his hopes, and cripples all his powers. Hardly treated as a man, feeling that he is encompassed by many who "laugh at his losses, mock at his gains, and scorn his nation," it requires more than common energy to rise above the lowest level. Still he has done this here, and the experience of our own country is sufficient to demonstrate that the character of the black will, like that of other men, be elevated in proportion to the influences which surround him.

The assertion that the physical and moral condition of the Southern slaves is preferable to that of the free people of color, when it refers to those of the latter class in New England, is too idle for contradiction. For in proportion to their property and education there is no class among us whose *standard of comfort* is higher, than that of the colored population. They are neat and economical in their households, diligent in seeking for employment, and steady and faithful in their labor. As it respects the habits of civilized life and all the arts of an advanced state of society, they are much before the laboring Irish; and this any one who has had the opportunity of comparing them will affirm.

I have spoken of them as a class; there are among them individuals, who claim higher merit, and scanty as their means of self-improvement have been, are men of

no inconsiderable cultivation, and of more than ordinary force of character. In truth, it will be thought by many perhaps, and justly too, that in attempting to show the blacks not incapable of civilization, I give an undue advantage to the opponents of emancipation. For this ground is not now debatable, however it might have been thirty years ago. Those citizens of the United States, who choose to consider it so, evince an ignorance only equalled by their presumption. This country is the only one where the term "gentleman," when applied to a man of color, appears a solecism. It matters not whether there have been, or no, men of African descent distinguished for genius in philosophy or the arts, in literature or science. It is enough that they have shown themselves capable of appreciating the labors of others; that in mental and moral culture, and in their habitual breeding, they have appeared fit associates for cultivated men of the European race. That they have done this, and in numbers too great to be considered as exceptions to a general law, we have the most undoubted testimony.\*

To recur, however, to the precise point in discussion, the aptitude of the colored race for voluntary labor, it is a fact undeniable, that, in New England at least, they are industrious without the whip. As a laboring class, feeling the same stimulus with the whites, they accomplish as much; and do not suffer by comparison in any point of view.† Instances are as frequent among them as among the whites, of men who by the sweat of their

---

\* For proof of the intellectual power of the blacks, there is no work to which I would so soon refer the sceptical as Mackenzie's "Notes on Hayti." In spite of his unfavorable account of the condition of the people, there are so many instances given of individual talent and cultivation, which fell within his own observation, that no one can read his book without being convinced that the blacks are men, to be judged by the same standard with others under like circumstances.

† When the records of our penitentiaries have been brought in judgment against the blacks, it has been overlooked that they are absolutely forced, by exclusion from the higher schools, and from the more lucrative employments, to remain among the poorest of our population, and that their want of education is even greater than their want of property. To the two great sources of temptation,



brows have acquired for themselves at middle life a moderate independence. If in the Southern States they are "the drones and pests of society," it is because the whites have chosen to make them so. Not even the presence of slavery would have produced such a result, if it were not for the cruel intolerance of the laws.

But these laws, it is said, are essential for the protection of the whites. Protection against what? An evil of their own making. They have changed man, as far as they could do it, into a brute, and when he has been goaded with insult, and could bear oppression no longer, it has been found that still closer coercion was needed; still heavier chains to weigh him down. But since the black is still a man, and must always have the sense of one, would it not be wiser as well as more humane, to treat him as such at once, and, removing all provocation to malice, bind him by that law of kindness and of human sympathy, which all hearts acknowledge, and his sooner than any.

Wherever negro slavery has prevailed, it has been for the interest of the masters of course to make the condition of the free people of color as little enviable to the slaves as possible; and they would naturally be disposed to believe and to represent them as indolent and essentially worthless. Such, accordingly, has been the policy of slaveholding communities in the West Indies, not less than in the United States. But the question of the fitness of the blacks for free labor, and their capacity of providing adequate maintenance for themselves and their families, has been most carefully examined in England during the last few years, and the evidence upon it thoroughly sifted. So far as the West Indies are concerned, nothing can be more complete and unanswerable

---

then, poverty and ignorance, they are peculiarly exposed, and it is unjust to consider the amount of crime committed by them, compared with that of the whole population, as giving the ratio of the criminality of the two races. The greater part of the crime in every community is committed by the poor and the ignorant, and the true ratio will be obtained only by comparing the respective amount of crime in those of the two races, who belong to classes corresponding in property and education.

than the case made out in favor of the blacks by their friends in Great Britain.

"The time was," says an able writer,\* "when it might be disputed, whether the African could be induced to labor by the motives which are found to operate on all other species of the human race. As regards those who are already free, this can no longer be considered as problematical. That even the emancipated slaves would support themselves by their own labor, will not be doubted by any one who has the slightest knowledge of their habits, and of the very small amount of labor which would suffice to place them in comfort. Even now, it must be recollected, the slaves chiefly support themselves by their own voluntary labor on their provision-grounds."

"It is assumed," remarks the Archdeacon of Barbados, "that the slaves will become idle on obtaining their freedom; but *this is mere assumption.*"

"The report of the privy council (1788) speaks, on the authority of witnesses from the British West India Islands, of the 'invincible repugnance of the free negroes to all sorts of labor.' Messrs. Fuller, Long, and Chisholm declare, that 'free negroes are never known to work for hire, and that they have all the vices of the slaves.' Mr. Braithwaite states, that 'if the slaves in Barbados were all offered their freedom on condition of working for themselves, not one tenth of them would accept it.' Governor Parry reports, that 'free negroes are utterly destitute of industry;' and the council of the island add, that, 'from their confirmed habits of idleness they are the pests of society.' — (*Report, 1788, part 3.*) Strange, that in the face of these declarations, proceeding from persons in high official trust and authority, 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 Barbados is a white man. The working carpenters, masons, tailors, smiths,

---

\* Josiah Conder, Author of "An Essay on the Comparative Cost and Productiveness of Free and Slave Labor."

&c. 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. Do these facts indicate habits of irreclaimable idleness?"\*

The following is an abstract of the account of pauperism in several of the British slave colonies, given in Returns which were laid before the House of Commons in 1826. The returns embrace a period of five years, from Jan. 1, 1821, to Dec. 31, 1825.

In the Bahamas the number of white and colored poor relieved annually was very nearly equal. The number of free colored persons was double that of the whites.

In the Barbadoes the white population is threefold that of the people of color. In the five years nearly a thousand of the former annually received relief to one black.

In Berbice the free colored population was one half larger than the white. "In 1822 there were 17 white and 2 black paupers."

In Demarara the number of whites is double that of the free persons of color. The ratio of paupers is precisely inverse.

In Dominica there were "more than 9 white paupers to 1 black in the same number of persons."

In Jamaica the proportion of white paupers to colored, according to the whole population, was nearly 4 to 1.

In Nevis it was as 28 to 1. In St. Christopher's it was decidedly in favor of the colored population, and in Tortola it was as 14 to 1.

It appears, then, that in the West India Islands the

---

\* Eliot's Christianity and Slavery, pp. 225, 226.

free people of color could not be complained of as "drones," although they might be as "pests," for they would seem to have driven the whites out of employment.\*

Is there any imaginable reason, so far as the blacks are concerned, why, if they will labor for wages in Trinidad and Jamaica, they should not in Virginia and the Carolinas? I can conceive of none. It may be said, indeed, that, although the people of color already free are capable of voluntary labor, this will not be the case with the newly emancipated slaves. To meet this, we have the undeniable fact that a very large proportion of the slaves even now perform labor that is not compulsory. Wherever the mildness of the laws and the indulgence of their masters permits them to acquire and hold property of their own, they are found desirous of doing so, and work with double industry when working for themselves. With regard to the slaves in the British colonies this was most fully established, and the truth of the general assertion was not denied even by pro-slavery witnesses, with one or two exceptions.† If the sight of voluntary industry in the slave has been more rare in this country than elsewhere, it is because custom and the

---

\* In the Island of Trinidad, where there are from 16,000 to 17,000 free people of color, we learn from the Report of the treasurer of the colony, that there is no fund raised or required for the support of the poor. Half the property of the island is said to be in the hands of these people, and they are constantly advancing in the arts of civilization. "In Jamaica there are 40,000 free persons of color. At the close of the session of 1824, when the community had been disturbed for months with vain and unfounded alarms of servile insurrection, a committee of the assembly drew up an elaborate report on its internal state, which concludes thus: 'Their [the free people of color] conduct evinced not only zeal and alacrity, but a warm interest in the welfare of the colony, and in every way identified them with those who are the most zealous promoters of its internal security.'"

† In this respect the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Extinction of Slavery, containing the evidence of twelve witnesses for the Anti-Slavery party, and twenty-one for the planters, is a very remarkable document. The only points apparently, which the latter had any hopes of establishing were, that the slaves were well off in their present condition, and that they would not, after emancipation, do that voluntarily which they

laws afford less security to its rewards. Why should he toil whose wages are never sure, and when gained may be taken from him with impunity? (See Stroud's Laws of Slavery; section on the right of property in the slave, pp. 45-50. The case cited in note to page 49, deserves

---

acknowledged they did before. They failed most signally in proving either, notwithstanding some aid from citizens of the United States.

From an analysis of that report published in London I shall make a few extracts.

Mr. Taylor, a gentleman who had resided fifteen years in Jamaica, stated, that, "Soon after he took charge of Papine, a long line of fence was to be made between that and the Duke of Buckingham's estate, formed by a trench of four feet deep, with a mound thrown up. It is usual to do such labor by task-work, at so many feet a day. The laborers complained that they could not perform it in the usual hours of labor. The overseer, on the other hand, affirmed that they were imposing upon Mr. T., and it was solely owing to sloth that they did not easily get through their task. The overseer wished of course to get as much work as he could, and they had naturally an indisposition to do more than they could help. They were told to resume their work the following morning, and, if they performed it within the time, they should be paid for every minute's or hour's additional work they might perform. They began the task at five in the morning, and had finished it by half-past one, and the very slaves who had before complained, received pay for four hours' extra labor." — "They were, generally speaking, very industrious in laboring on their provision-grounds. It was a frequent practice to work for one another for hire, the hire being 20*d.* currency a day (14*d.* sterling), and a breakfast. Mr. Wildman indulged his negroes with fifty-two Saturdays in the year, instead of twenty-six, the number allowed them by law, that they might be able to attend divine service, and have no excuse for continuing to work on Sunday. This gave them additional time; and as Mr. T. had a large garden, and was very unwilling to draw from the labor of the estate to keep it in order, he was frequently in the habit of hiring them to work there. Some would come and offer their services, for which he gave them their breakfast and 2*s.* 11*d.* a day currency, being 2*s.* 1*d.* sterling. He was decidedly of opinion that, when an offer was made to pay negroes for their labor, they were always ready to work. He had known them, even when digging cane-holes, perform the task of 120 cane-holes, and, on being offered pay, dig 20 and 40 cane-holes, after having finished their task. But, by the ordinary method, the same quantity would not have been dug except by tremendous whipping. Ninety cane-holes indeed on unploughed land was the general task; but 120 if the land had previously been loosened by the plough. The farther exertion, however, produced by the *stimulus of wages* was such that the driver said it was too much

attention, as an exception it proves the rule.) It has again and again occurred that slaves, who have worked night and day for their freedom, have, when their task was well nigh done, been sold to another master, with him perhaps to go through again the same sad routine of anxious labor and bitter disappointment.

---

for them, and begged Mr. Taylor to interdict their doing so much. At the end of the week almost every slave had done so much extra work as to receive 3s. 4d., which he paid them, according to agreement. If they had worked in the usual way under the whip, they might have finished 120 holes in the course of the day; barely completing it at the end of the day; but if told that, if they did the same work, they might as soon as it was done go away, they would, by abridging their intervals of rest, finish it before three o'clock in the afternoon, beginning at five in the morning." — "The slaves will certainly do much more for themselves than when they work for their masters. Even when performing task-work, they are different beings. A negro will lift a load for himself which it would require a severe flogging to make him lift for his master. He had seen them travelling to market, groaning under a load of hard wood timber, which no overseer could make them carry. But the inducement was great; they were sure to get a high price for it, and they were laboring for themselves. He had often observed them, after working for their masters, and for their own maintenance, prolong their work to procure some little indulgences. Whenever they could contrive by task-work, or other arrangements, to obtain any extra time, their grounds were crowded with them, laboring for their own benefit. They cannot, therefore, be said to be an indolent race, or incapable of being actuated by the motives by which labor is generally prompted." — "Certainly the desire for freedom does not arise from the slave's connecting it with an exemption from labor; for they see under their own eyes many who had been slaves laboring hard for their support. Even an old negro on an estate, when he ceases to labor for his master, does not cease to labor for himself. There was one on the estate of Salt Savannah, who, though allowed to 'sit down and to be exempt from plantation labor, was most industrious and hard-working for himself.'"

The following is from the evidence of Captain Williams, a pro-slavery witness.

"He had affirmed the slaves to be naturally lazy; but he admits that the West India markets are supplied, by the voluntary labor of the slaves, with poultry, pigs, provisions, and vegetables, which they brought from a considerable distance to the Sunday market, and for which they knew very well how to drive a bargain; but all this industry, he added, was for themselves. And, being asked whether he knew who would work without wages if not compelled, he said he did not know any."

NOR in this country can the slave always buy his freedom, even if he have the pecuniary means. In some States it is almost impossible, so great are the obstructions placed in the way by the governments. Yet the force of the desire of freedom as a stimulus to industry is not unknown here, and its influence, wherever the laws and custom do not discourage manumission, will not be denied. In the State of Ohio may be found many colored persons who have earned their own freedom, and who are now laboring to purchase that of their friends. Some of them have "paid six hundred, nine hundred, and even near fourteen hundred dollars for themselves individually,

---

Mr. Scott, a witness on the same side, says, — "Many of them, even of the field negroes, by selling provisions, pigs, and poultry, have a good deal of money. They all have pigs and poultry, and some have cattle. The possession of property unquestionably increases the diligence and industry of the slave." — "He admits, too, that the negro is industrious in his own grounds, and raises food for himself and family, and buys comforts, and luxuries, and finery, though compelled to work so many hours for his master; yet now he has the advantage of being under control: if he were free it would be very different. — He is asked whether he thought that the desire of good food, and fine clothing, and the luxuries of life, or the love of money, supposing a man to have earned some as a slave, would cease the moment he became free, and had more time to indulge all these desires: he reluctantly, at length, admitted that it was not in nature that they should."

Another witness on the same side, — "William Watson, Esq., had been in the Caraccas from 1810 to 1814. Estates were then cultivated partly by slave labor and partly by free. The free worked with the slaves when they were wanted, which was chiefly in crop time. He had known many instances where slaves were managed wholly by persons who had themselves been slaves. The managers of estates were mostly colored or black persons, who had been emancipated. This was common in the Vale of Chaldo, five or six miles from the town. He has had no connexion with the Caraccas since 1814. But while he was there, he thought the free blacks were generally employed in cultivation, and that they were a better sort of people than he had seen in our islands. Great confidence was placed in them. The whole system of Spanish slavery is different from ours: it is much milder, and the consequence of this mildness is an improvement of character. He had no doubt at all that the blacks were, when well treated, susceptible of the same motives which influence other men. The most powerful stimulus in the world to a man is laboring to gain his freedom. In Louisiana the planters say that they get a great deal more work when they put the slaves on task-work; and, if

or themselves and families." It is said, upon good authority, to be probable that one third of the adult blacks of Cincinnati, having redeemed themselves, are employed in redeeming their friends and relatives from slavery. In the late debate on the subject of emancipation in Lane Seminary, Ohio, which has attracted some notice, one of the speakers, then a member of the school, had been a slave. "He was stolen from Africa when an infant, and sold into slavery. His master, who resided in Arkansas, died, leaving him to his widow. He was then about eighteen years of age. For some years, *he managed the plantation for his mistress.* Finally, he

---

the stimulus of freedom were generally tried, and men were allowed to free themselves by their exertions, they would be much more industrious, and would not cease to be so when free, though, in a country furnishing easily the comforts and conveniences of life, many might relax when free. He noticed the slaves after emancipation generally at work, raising provisions and other things. In his time the estates had slaves enough to keep the fields in order; except in crop time, when they called in free laborers. There was a very considerable free colored population in the Caraccas, who were in general very industrious. He had been in Mexico, but had never seen any slaves there. The great mass of the population are a mixed race, and those of the African were deemed as industrious as the rest. They were not more degraded, or more idle, than the others."

The last witness I shall cite, Mr. Wildman, was on the same side also. His treatment of his slaves had been peculiar. The use of the whip, as a stimulus to labor, having been wholly abolished on his estates. He says, — "He has had the most gratifying proofs of the gratitude of his slaves in their exertions by labor to bring up his estates from the low state to which they had fallen. The slaves on Salt Savannah voluntarily offered to give up their own time to repair the waste on that estate. When Mr. Farquarson, his present attorney and friend, took possession, the negroes came to him in a body, and said they were ashamed and hurt he should see its condition; and at night they came to him again in a body, to say that they would give up their whole time till the estate was put in order again; and since that time the work has been carried on to Mr. Farquarson's entire satisfaction." — "He has known negroes to carry loads to market which they could not be induced, even by force, to carry for their master; but it was voluntarily done for their own benefit: and, in point of fact, it is true that the negroes do exert themselves, with great energy, for the purpose of obtaining, not only food, but comforts and luxuries. — Mr. Wildman admitted that if the slaves, who had now only 26 days in the year during which to provide for themselves



purchased his time by the year, and began to earn money to buy his freedom. After five years of toil, having paid his owners \$655, besides supporting himself during the time, he received his 'free papers,' and emigrated to a free State with more than \$200 in his pocket. Every cent of this money, \$855, he earned by labor and trading." (H. B. Stanton's Letter to the N. York Evangelist.)

The important influence which the chance of procuring their freedom may have on the industry of the slaves, is strongly shown in Cuba, where the practice of manumission is more frequent than in any country where slavery prevails.

Superior mildness and equity have always been characteristic of Spanish and Portuguese slavery, and their whole treatment of the negroes in the colonies. The good effects are seen in the greater fidelity and industry of the slaves, and in the number, quietness, and usefulness of the free blacks.

The slaves are always allowed to labor for their own benefit, and, when they have earned their price, which

and their families, occupied themselves diligently in their own grounds, they would do so, supposing the number to be increased to 35, or any larger number; nor did he believe that there was any limit to which it might not be extended with advantage, and even with increased energy on their parts, with a view to the acquisition of wealth; and especially if their moral habits were improved by religious instruction. Of this he was so well persuaded, that he should not feel the least disinclination, in the course of a few years, that government should proclaim freedom to all slaves."

The Committee of the House of Lords on the same subject, contained a greater number decidedly opposed to emancipation than decidedly in its favor, yet there was nothing elicited by them to counterbalance the weight of evidence on the side of the abolitionists. The result of the reports of these committees, and the deliberations of Parliament thereon, was an act for the immediate emancipation of all who were in slavery. On the 1st of August, 1834, a day now past, and which will be among not the least memorable in history, every slave in the British Colonies was "absolutely and for ever manumitted." Yet even now we are told that this immediate emancipation is a scheme, "the very idea of which curdles the blood of every judicious friend of humanity." — (N. A. Review, July, 1834.) Alas for your fame as philanthropists and statesmen, — Clarkson and Buxton, Wilberforce and Macaulay, Brougham and Stanley, if such is the measure you so ardently longed for, so zealously urged, so ably defended!

may be fixed by a magistrate, to claim their freedom of their masters. There are no obstacles placed in the way of slaves being taught; but, on the contrary, this is always favored, as every thing is, which shall tend to elevate the slave, and enable him to procure his freedom.

In these facts, and in this, that the cultivation of the cane and other articles is in part carried on by free blacks, may be found some explanation of the great productiveness of the island, and cheapness of its sugar. Indeed so near does the labor of the slaves of Cuba approach the voluntary industry of freemen, that it has been said, and is probably true, that the total extinction of slavery there at once, by a simple decree to that purpose from the government, might be effected without the least confusion, and with but slight change in the relation of the cultivators to the proprietors.

The system of working slaves, which has been found most profitable in all parts of the world, and which we know is practised in many parts of the slaveholding States of the Union, itself affords evidence of the fitness of the blacks for free labor, and their susceptibility to the stimulus of reward. It is that of task-work, as it is called, and consists in giving to the slave a certain amount of labor, which being finished, he is free from labor for the rest of the day. Of the advantages of this system, over that of driving, we have the surest testimony. "The keen-sighted spirit of a necessary avarice," we are told by Mr. Brougham, in his *Colonial Policy*, "has taught the Dutch planter of Guiana to view the general introduction of task-work as the most profitable manner of working his slaves." Admiral Fleming stated that task-work prevailed on the sugar estates in Cuba, and also in the Caraccas.\*

---

\* William Taylor, Esq. was asked by the Committee of the House of Commons if it was not the fact, "that by means of giving them wages, you would get from them the greatest quantity of work that their physical strength was able to perform? — Certainly; I found that by giving them task-work, and then by paying them for extra work, I got much more work done, and it was cheerfully done."

Mr. Scott was asked, — "Were you in the habit of employing any of your slaves upon task-work? — Sometimes; in digging cane-holes, for instance, the overseer would give them task-work."

What yet more strikingly supports the position I wish to establish, is the fact that employing slaves as free laborers, that is, for wages, has in many instances been adopted with great advantage to the proprietors.

Admiral Fleming stated before the Committee of the House of Commons that the Marquis del Toro, a relative of Bolivar's, who owned immense estates in the Caraccas,

"Have you found that they performed that task-work with greater expedition than they would do the same quantity of work at day labor?—Certainly; they generally finished the task-work by two o'clock in the afternoon, by working at their dinner time.

"To what did they betake themselves after that during the rest of the day?—They often went to their grounds or to their gardens.

"Did it ever happen to you upon any estate, to offer the negroes any small compensation for additional labor?—I dare say it has, though I cannot call any instance to my recollection at this moment; I know that negroes are frequently paid for their extra labor.

"Do not they work willingly then?—Certainly they do."

The following statements occur in the evidence before the Lords' Committee.

Mr. Edm. Sharp. — "Have you ever worked the negroes under your care at task-work?—Frequently.

"Have you worked them on cane-hole-digging?—Cane-hole-digging is generally by task-work, where we can get it done; he does his day's work, and is at liberty to go where he pleases afterwards.

"Have you ever done it in clearing of canes?—That is work of that nature that we can scarcely give task-work in it.

"Have you given any other description of work?—Various other works in the trades; stone-wall building, and the cooperage.

"When you have put the slaves to task-work in respect to cane-hole-digging, have you not found that they have done the work at an early time in the day, so as to be able to get a portion of the remainder?—Yes, they have done their task-work by two or three o'clock; then they would work the two hours at noon to get that.

"What reason can you assign for his performing the task-work so expeditiously as to be enabled to get the remainder of the day?—Knowing there is a boon to him for the remainder of the day, of course he works harder."

Testimony to the superior diligence of slaves engaged in task-work, and to their readiness to work for themselves in the hours thus gained, is in like manner borne by the most intelligent and experienced planters of our own country. They will all say, however, with Mr. Scott, that the industry of the negro ceases upon his emancipation. What a singular race of beings these blacks must be! So long as their condition *essentially* forbids their holding property, they will work late and early for it. Tell them their rights are as sacred as the white man's, and all desire vanishes.

worked all his slaves by free labor as the most profitable method.

Mr. Telfair, a planter in the Mauritius, a decided opponent of the English Anti-Slavery Society, in "An Account of the State of Slavery at Mauritius," says, "It is easy to perceive that the fear of chastisement, hitherto considered almost the only motive of a black's exertion, is little calculated to call forth all the industry he is capable of exerting. Fear engages him to conceal, rather than to show the extent of his corporeal powers; and all the labor he can elude, is by him considered positive gain." In another place he says, "The adoption of tasks, whenever practicable, augmented the amount of work performed, and simplified the duties of the overseer, who had only to see that the task was done in a workman-like manner. Many of the more handy negroes could perform their portion before four o'clock, and some even before two, P. M." — "The only certain means," continues Mr. Telfair, "by which a master can influence the conduct of his servants, are punishments and rewards. Experience confirmed my anticipation of the superiority of the latter; and, in this view, every thing we could imagine was done to excite the emulation of the blacks, particularly by public trials of skill in ploughing, reaping, mowing, sowing, &c. And we were satisfied that the greatest ardor and energy were produced by the system of remuneration. A man, actuated by the hope of reward, labors cheerfully, and finds that he possesses powers of which he was not before aware."

"If," says Mr. Conder, the writer already quoted, "even the voluntary exertion of a slave is found thus to exceed the utmost sum of involuntary labor, that can be extorted from him in the same time by means of the *driving* system, how much more efficient must be the voluntary labor of a free man! Could a stronger proof be given of the paralyzing influence of slavery on human exertion, than the beneficial results that have followed this slight modification of the system, by which the will of the laborer is found to perform in ten hours, what the whip could not accomplish in twelve? If the mere prospect of getting through his task sooner, is thus suffi-

cient to stimulate the physical powers of the slave to a greater exertion than he would otherwise be capable of putting forth, (for there is a strength imparted by such a stimulant,) what reason can we have to suppose that the hope of remuneration would be less effective in stimulating the free laborer? If task-work thus increases the productiveness of slave labor, because it relaxes the manacles which fetter the will and energies of the laborer, how much more would the voluntary labor of the freeman accomplish, under the higher stimulation of self-interest, and with the prospect of personal gain!"

Mr. Wildman, and other of the pro-slavery witnesses before the House of Commons, who testified strongly and decidedly to the readiness of the slaves to work for hire, and their superior industry while doing so, still declared, they could not believe this would continue after they were emancipated. A similar notion is very commonly entertained among us.

So far as we know the character of the slaves in the United States, however, we have no reason to doubt that as slaves they would here, as elsewhere, accomplish more work, when actuated by the hope of reward, than they will under any compulsory system whatever. I would venture to refer this to any candid and benevolent slaveholder. Surely those who affirm the comfortable condition of the slaves in the United States, and who say, that, compared with that of many of the laboring classes of Europe, it will not be found inferior, mean to include in the word *comfort* the extent and variety of their wants, as well as the certainty of their gratification. Nor will they readily allow any superiority in character and condition to the slaves of Jamaica, of Cuba, or the Mauritius. Yet those who assert the necessity of slavery in this country must do this, or place themselves in the same predicament with the recent advocates of slavery in Great Britain. Acknowledging with them that the slaves are accustomed to order and obedience, and are easily managed; (see note to p. 71st, and the evidence before Parliamentary Committees, *passim*;) that they have the habits of civilized life, and the wants which grow out of them; that they are indeed

peculiarly fond of the comforts which belong to an advanced state of society, and are now in the practice of employing a portion at least of their leisure hours, if they have any, in working for themselves, and at such times show a capacity and industry never witnessed under the overseer, they must hold that all this desire of bettering their condition will cease upon emancipation. While they admit that no power on earth can force them to do, what the certainty of reward will, they must maintain that the hope of reward will do nothing, unless backed by the fear of punishment. The fear of starvation will of course keep them from utter slothfulness, for this is a law of the animal nature ; but although they now feel wants, beyond the body's cravings for bare sustenance, and are impelled thereby to voluntary and even strenuous exertion, all this belongs to their enslaved condition. They must believe that opening to them a wider field of industry, and offering a stronger motive of that very kind which is now found most effective, making its rewards more secure, and giving them instruction which shall increase their powers, will only check the desires now strong within them ; though it is the lesson of universal experience, that men's desires keep pace with their acquisitions, and that the thirst of gain is never sated. They must come in fine to the preposterous notion advanced by Mr. Scott of Jamaica, that "man is more industrious in a state of slavery, than in a state of freedom," and maintain that the black cannot be hired to be diligent, till he is first made a bondsman, and learns the value of property by being priced himself.

In this mode of reasoning, the original ground of objection to the abolition of negro slavery is lost sight of, and indeed wholly abandoned. This was, that the negroes were as yet wholly uncivilized, unwonted to the customs, and unconscious of the wants of men in an artificial state of society. They could not become at once free laborers, it was said, because they had not the desires or necessities to which we appeal, and on which we rely to obtain the labor of civilized freemen for hire. They not only lacked foresight, but their wants

were too few and too easily supplied to suppose, that they would be induced by any thing, but the whip, to toil all day beneath a tropical sun. Had this been true when the question of negro emancipation was first agitated forty years ago, when a vast proportion of the slaves were imported Africans, and there existed among the mass but slight attachment to soils which they had known only in their bondage, — the case is altered now, when the title of Africans is no longer their true one, when the land they inhabit is their native land, and they have acquired a taste for those comforts, which, though luxuries uncared for by the barbarian, are necessities to the meanest individuals in a civilized community. Ignorant, dull, and disposed to sloth and sensuality though the negro slaves may be, the epithet of savages does not belong to them. Though they may be the lowest in the scale of civilized man, and even inferior to some barbarians in quickness of mind and practical knowledge, they are nevertheless accustomed to regular labor, to quiet submission to constituted authorities, they have seen, though rarely to enjoy, the benefits of industry, and are aware that the wealth and enjoyments of their master result from their steady exertions, regulated by his skill, and combined by his foresight and superior knowledge. They have seen in their master's condition the advantages of established laws, securing to him his rights, protecting his property, and punishing by fixed penalties all breaches of good order. Even in their own deprivations they see advantages secured to others by concert and unity of action.

Their labor is called compulsory, and such it is, sometimes literally, being constantly urged by the lash, but as often, much oftener I am willing to believe, because there is a power which can drive them to work if they are refractory. It is the consciousness that there is such a power, rather than the constant application of it, which keeps them at labor. They are sensible that it is for their interest to work without resistance, though many will avoid it when possible. They are thoroughly broken in, in short, and feel that it is better for them to take their share of the load not only rather than be flogged, but *rather than be turned adrift upon the wild savannah.*

It has often been urged as an argument for slavery, that slaves when offered their freedom have sometimes refused it. Those who so use this argument, however, must never say that negroes will not labor from choice, and it is nothing else than absurd to say, as some have done, that "negroes would never accept their freedom on the condition of working for their living," for it is with no other condition than this, that they can take slavery instead. The choice itself shows that those slaves are sensible of the necessity and the advantages of steady labor. It is nothing else than the choice of constant and wonted occupation under a familiar and kind master, with the assurance of support, (and under no other circumstances will manumission ever be rejected,) to uncertain employment and more uncertain remuneration. The moral evils of their situation, the moral consequences of their choice they are not aware of. Looking merely at the physical condition, and beyond this no slaves will ever look, there is no doubt that some of them are better off than some of their free brethren. It is well to understand the idea slaves have of liberty when they reject it. "Timothy," said Mr. Dignum, one of the pro-slavery witnesses before the Parliamentary Committees, to a negro in Jamaica, "suppose your master says he will give you free to-morrow, — but this is not your land, — you must go and work for any body who will take you, and he must get somebody else and give him your house. You may go away, Timothy, but when you get on the road you will be hungry and have nothing to eat. If you beg you will be turned away, you know the negroes don't like to see the free people coming to their place to get food. Now your master takes good care of you, if you work for him, and you have a comfortable house according to your behaviour." Timothy was a sensible fellow; and believing Mr. Dignum, and being head driver, and possessing many privileges withal, no wonder replied, "Massa, I no care for free." He preferred labor in the condition of a favored bondsman, with the certain recompense of food and shelter, to a liberty which implied merely idleness and starvation. I would not argue for liberty offered



on such conditions, which are as unnecessary as they are impolitic and cruel.

Is it not plain, that slaves who make a similar choice do not, at all times, prefer idleness to exertion, and that they are able to conceive of pleasure purchased by toil? Is it right, then, to say that men, who can prefer slavery and labor to liberty and idleness, desire emancipation only for the indulgence of sloth, and will not, when freed from coercion, labor, if employment is offered, for the recompense which tempted them to be slaves?

The extent to which slaves can be left to themselves, and their conduct when so left, most satisfactorily show the advance made by them in the arts of civilization, and at what remove they now are from any thing that can be called a savage state. One instance of a plantation being managed by a slave has already been alluded to, (*supra*, p. 75.) I will now relate another as it was related to me by a New England gentleman, a practical agriculturist, on whose testimony the most perfect reliance may be placed, and who, during rather more than a year spent in Mississippi, gave great attention to the mode of managing the cotton estates. While he was there, a planter in his neighbourhood was trying the experiment of leaving the negroes entirely to themselves. He did not reside upon his plantation, but at a distance of fifteen miles. There was no white upon it. He told his people that if they would engage to be industrious and give him good crops, he would not place any overseer above them. If he found they failed, he should send one. The only article raised on the plantation was cotton. The meat and even the bread-corn was bought for them. The master of course attended to the purchases and sales, and exercised a general supervision, visiting the estate three or four times a month. The slaves had managers chosen from their own number. The result for one year, the duration of his trial at that time, was in favor of the plan. The proprietor said that his crops were not quite as large as under the old system, but as he paid no overseer's salary, he thought that he made a saving in money, and what deserves remark, in trouble also. He meant to persevere in the system so long as

it continued to work as well as it had done. In this case the only motive to industry, beside habit and a regard for their master's interest, was the desire of being saved from a white overseer. Even this slight deviation from the common slave system was found to be a saving of expense and trouble to the master. The operation of a reward in proportion to their industry, or to the size of the crops, was not tried. Had this stimulus been offered, can there be any doubt the slaves would have worked better? It is inconceivable that they should not. The statements of the West India witnesses make it impossible to doubt it. They would have felt then that they were really working for themselves; they would have given their hearts and minds to their labor, and the effect would have been perceived in the superior productiveness of the estate.

This case is probably not a solitary nor a very peculiar one. On very many of the large plantations negroes are left to conduct their own labors for days together; visited only occasionally by an overseer, who of course directs the general operations of the gangs. On many separate plantations there are no whites residing, though the slaves have an overseer to attend to them occasionally. The people there set themselves at work, and keep at work from habit, and a general notion that it is at once necessary and best for them to do so. Their condition as laborers differs from that of free laborers in that they have no choice as to their employment, nor any direct interest in exerting their powers to their full extent; but on the contrary, their only attainable good being rest, their tendency is always to seek it, and to conceal rather than to display their capabilities. Such instances deserve our attention on several accounts.\*

---

\* To the same class of instances belong those of slaves who are allowed by their masters to seek employment for themselves at wages, bringing to them a proportion of what they earn, or perhaps a fixed sum per month, being allowed to keep the remainder. This is practised, according to Mr. Hodgson, in South Carolina and Georgia. In the latter State, however, the master who allows a slave to hire himself out to another for his own benefit is liable to a fine, "for every weekly offence on the part of the master, unless the labor is done on his own premises." (See Stroud, p. 47.)

Is it conceivable that in any state of freedom, such as is enjoyed by any men in civilized society, the negroes should possess better opportunities for combination and rebellion, than under the circumstances just mentioned? If their first thought is ever to escape from labor, and they are always disposed to desert the plantations on the first opportunity, would they have continued faithful to the master under such liberty as was here given them, and for so slight a recompense? What kept them at work? Why did they not all betake themselves to the cane-brake? Two considerations probably restrained them. One, that there was a *remote* power which possibly might compel their return, and another more weighty, that it was for their interest, under existing circumstances, independently of every thing else, to remain steady at their occupations. If they were restrained by the first consideration, the only tolerable plea that can be offered for the perpetuation of that private despotism, which is the essence of slavery, is no longer available. If the sense of an unseen power which can bring them back to their tasks is sufficient to keep slaves from vagrancy, and the presence of an overseer with his whip in hand, to anticipate the tardy operation of the law, is not all-important, then why may not the restraints of the law alone be relied on? You may, if you please, appoint a supervisor and guardian to every body of an hundred negro laborers, with power to prohibit roving and to punish negligence in the few who shall be found too lazy or too vicious to support themselves by voluntary industry. The expediency of some such measure need not be denied, though it is perhaps debatable, but it is at any rate a very different thing from slavery. It in fact will not differ in principle from the compulsion of labor that

---

There are similar provisions in other States. Speaking of this practice of allowing slaves to hire themselves out, Mr. H. adds, "Surely no one will contend that a man who is capable of taking care of his family, while compelled to pay his owner a premium for permission to do so, will become less competent to manage his concerns, when exonerated from that tax, or that he will relax his efforts, when a stranger no longer divides with him the fruits of *his toil*." (*Hodgson's Travels in America*, Vol. I. p. 112.)

is practised in every New England workhouse. None need subject themselves to it, who will labor without ; and, moreover, the coercive power is a responsible one.

If they were restrained by the first consideration, as doubtless the majority were, it may be asked, Will it be less for the slaves' interest to continue at work, when, beside bare food and clothing, they shall be receiving either in the shape of money, or of a share of the products of the soil, remuneration in proportion to their industry ? Or when no longer kept in servile ignorance, education though of the simplest sort is given to them, will they be less capable than now of discerning what is their real good ? No, the negro slaves now feel that labor is requisite, that their master may have the means of providing sustenance for them and their families. And they will not regard this labor as less requisite, when the duty of this provision devolves upon themselves, nor will it be performed more reluctantly.

If there is one thing settled in the whole range of this subject, it is that the milder the management of the slaves, and the more the system of working them approaches to the free labor system ; in other words, the less the reliance placed on compulsion, and the greater the employment of the stimulus of reward, the greater will be the amount of work procured, and the greater the master's profits. We must either entirely reject the evidence which meets us on every hand, and wholly discredit the testimony of the numerous and competent witnesses who have above been cited, or we must believe this. The necessity of appealing to the terror of the lash, in the management of slaves, may be reduced *ad infinitum*, and this not slowly and by degrees, but at once and universally. When it is done totally and universally, to talk of fears about the consequences of emancipation will be childish. If the whip, then, even as an " emblem of authority," which is all some of the good West India slavery advocates chose to consider it, can be safely abandoned, and wages be adopted with negro slaves instead, why not abandon also this last hateful title, and tell the blacks at once they are no longer " chattels personal."

If negro slaves work best for hire, and people of color already free are as willing and efficient laborers as free white men, it certainly requires some new and unknown condition to be worked into the problem, to prove, that, in the change from slaves to freemen, they cannot be got to labor either for "love or money."

I have already gone beyond the limits I had prescribed to my pen, yet there remains much that ought to be said. I shall proceed now to give a brief account of some instances of emancipation, which confirm in the strongest manner the position I have desired to establish, with regard to the industry of the slave and the profits of the master. I wish to show also that the possibility of the application of free labor to the raising of tropical produce is not a subject of conjecture.

It has been said, that "there is no instance of the successful cultivation of the sugar-cane by free labor." (Amer. Quart. Review, No. 23, p. 261.) If it be shown that sugar can be cultivated with advantage by free labor, there certainly appears no reason why cotton, rice, and coffee should not be. In fact it is well known that all are so cultivated in various parts of the world.

In the inquiry respecting the cane, we are at the outset met with the broad fact, that "all the sugar cultivated in India, the original country of the cane, is cultivated by free labor. It is also notorious, that the sugar grown by slave labor cannot compete in cheapness with that which is grown by free labor in the East Indies. Attempts have been made to escape from the conclusive force of this fact, by representing the East India sugar to be the produce of slave labor; but, this representation is utterly devoid of the semblance of truth. Whatever may be the condition of the servile classes on the coast of Malabar, where no sugar is grown, the agriculture of the Bengal provinces, which supply the whole of the sugar exported from India, is entirely conducted by free labor."\*

---

\* The following extracts from a Minute of the Bengal Board of Trade, Aug. 7, 1792, quoted by Mr. Conder, in his work already cited, will settle this question.

“ Mr. Crawford, in his History of the Indian Archipelago, has given a long account of the husbandry of the sugar-cane, and furnishes an estimate of its comparative market value. He says,

“ Edwards has estimated the price of growing sugar

“ In this country (Bengal) the cultivator is either the immediate proprietor of the ground, or he hires it, as in Europe, of the proprietor, and uses his discretion in cultivating what he thinks best adapted to the nature of the soil or the demand of the market. One field produces sugar; the next, wheat, rice, or cotton. The husbandman is nourished and clothed from his own ground; or, if he thinks it more for his interest to sell the whole of his produce, supplies himself and family with the necessaries of life from his neighbour, or from the next public market.” — “ The Bengal peasantry are freemen, and are, in the usual course of nature, replaced by their children.” — “ The Bengal peasant is actuated by the ordinary wants and desires of mankind. His family assist his labor, and soothe his toil, and the sharp eye of personal interest guides his judgment.”

A gentleman who had been engaged in the cultivation of sugar in Jamaica for 15 years, William Fitzmaurice, Esq., in a letter addressed to the Directors of the East India Company, dated Calcutta, 1793, says, “ that even the West India planters might import them (sugars) from hence on much easier terms than they can afford to sell sugars in the curing houses on the plantations.”

Mr. Botham, a witness before a “ Committee of the Lords of the Council,” 1789, says, that the cultivation of the cane is carried on in China, Bengal, the coast of Malabar, and above all near Batavia by free labor, and that sugar of a superior quality and an inferior price to the West India sugar is there produced. Near Batavia sugar is cultivated by free Chinese husbandmen and manufacturers in a superior manner. From his own experience, Mr. B. declares that “ the sugar estates can be worked cheaper by free persons than by slaves.” “ Mr. Botham for some time conducted some sugar-works at Bencoolen by free laborers. Marsden, in his History of Sumatra, highly commends his management, and states that the expenses, particularly of the slaves, had frustrated many former attempts of the English to cultivate the sugar-cane profitably at that place.” He had previously spent two years in the West Indies.

See also a paper in the Appendix to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, containing the evidence of a native of Madras settled in the Mauritius, given to Messrs. Colebrook and Blair, Commissioners of Enquiry into the means of improving the British Eastern Colonies. He stated his conviction and the grounds of it, that sugar could be raised more cheaply by free labor in Bengal than by slave labor in the Mauritius. — See also Sir Stamford Raffle’s work on Java.

in Jamaica at 18s. 9d. per cwt. By the estimate I have furnished, this is 125 per cent. dearer than Java sugar."

Brougham, in his Colonial Policy, speaking of the culture of sugar in Egypt by freemen, says that we may know how cheaply the produce will be raised, from the prices of Asiatic sugars which are raised entirely by free hands. "In Cochin, the great sugar market of the south of Asia, the finest sugar is sold for less than a penny a pound."

The most important instance, however, in connexion with our present subject, is that related in a despatch of Mr. Ward, late British Envoy to Mexico, to Mr. Canning, dated March 13, 1826. He says, "The possibility of introducing a system of free labor into the West India Islands having been so much discussed in England, I conceived that it might not be uninteresting to His Majesty's Government to receive some details respecting the result of the experiment in this country, where it certainly has had a fair trial. I accordingly took advantage of Mr. Morier's prolonged stay here to visit the Valley of Cuernavaca, and Cuantla Amilpas, which supplies a great part of the federation with sugar and coffee, although not a single slave is at present employed in their cultivation. I have the honor to inclose a sketch of the observations which I was enabled to make upon this journey, together with such details as I have thought best calculated to show both the scale upon which these estates are worked, and the complete success with which the abolition of slavery has, in this instance, been attended."—"It is believed that the sugar-cane was first planted there about one hundred years ago; from that time the number of sugar-estates has gone on increasing, until there is now hardly an acre of ground on the whole plain which is not turned to account. The cultivation was originally carried on entirely by slaves, who were purchased at Vera Cruz, at from 300 to 400 dollars each. It was found, however, that this system was attended with considerable inconvenience, it being impossible to secure a sufficient supply of slaves during a war."—"Several of the great proprietors were induced by these circumstances to give liberty to a certain number of their slaves annually, and

by encouraging marriages between them and the Indians of the country, to propagate a race of free laborers, who might be employed when a supply of slaves was no longer to be obtained. This plan proved so eminently successful, that on some of the largest estates there was not a single slave in the year 1808. The policy of the measure became still more apparent on the breaking out of the revolution in 1810. The planters who had not adopted the system of gradual emancipation before that period saw themselves abandoned, and were forced, in many instances, to give up working their estates, as their slaves took advantage of the approach of the insurgents to join them *en masse*; while those who had provided themselves with a mixed cast of free laborers, retained, even during the worst times, a sufficient number of men to enable them to continue to cultivate their lands, although upon a smaller scale." — "The scale upon which these estates are worked is enormous."

The seven largest estates in Cuernavaca produced each annually about 30,000 arrobas, of 25 lb. each, of sugar. "The crops are usually most abundant, the cane being planted much thicker than is customary in Jamaica, and the machinery, in the opinion of Dr. Wilson, who accompanied me, and who has been much in the West India Islands, is fully equal to any used in the British colonies. The number of workmen generally employed upon an estate capable of producing 40,000 arrobas of sugar amounts to 150, with occasional additions when the season is late, or the work has been retarded by any accidental cause. The laborers are mostly paid by the piece, and many of them can earn, if industrious, from six to seven rials per diem, (about three quarters of a dollar.) Fifty men are employed in watering the canes, twenty in cutting, ten in bringing the cut canes from the field, (each with six mules,) twenty-five (mostly boys) in separating the green tops, which they use for fodder, and binding up the remainder for the muleteers. Twenty men, divided into gangs of four each, in feeding the engine day and night; fourteen attend the boilers; twelve keep up the fires; four turn the cane in the sun, after the juice has been expressed, and dry it for fuel; and



ten are constantly at work in the warehouse clarifying the sugar, and removing it afterwards to the general store-room, from whence it is sent to the market." — "The arroba of 25 lbs. sells in Mexico for about three dollars, or two dollars and a half, if not of the best quality. The great Haciendas expend in wages to the workmen, and other current charges, from 800 to 1200 dollars a week. It often happens, however, that in a good year the sale of the molasses alone is sufficient to defray this expense, so that the sugar remains a clear profit. For every arroba of sugar an equal quantity of molasses is produced, which sells, at the door of the Hacienda, for five rials and a half the arroba."

In Cuantla, some of the Haciendas are even larger than those above mentioned. Some also "are not only sugar but coffee estates."

Mr. Ward concludes, "The most remarkable circumstance, however, is the total abolition of slavery in a district where such a mass of colonial fruits is produced, and the success with which the introduction of free labor has been attended; it is this which has induced me to lay these observations before His Majesty's Government, and to hope that they may be esteemed not wholly unworthy of its attention."

We can hardly desire more unequivocal evidence of the advantage of employing free labor in the cultivation of sugar, than is afforded by this account of Mr. Ward. A detailed comparison of the sugar culture of Mexico and of Cuba and Louisiana will be found in the note below.\*

---

\* In his work on Mexico, published after his return, Mr. Ward states the produce of a hectare (two acres and a half) of land in the province of Vera Cruz to be 240 arrobos, or 6,000 lbs., over 2,000 lbs. to the acre. This he says is double the produce of Cuba, (p. 62.) In Louisiana, according to a Report of the Agricultural Society of Baton Rouge, 1829, the produce is 1,000 lbs. to the acre. But even this estimate is large, for in 1830 another Report states that they "were deceived by the abundant and extraordinary crop of the preceding year, 1828." (Amer. Almanac, 1832, pp. 241-2.)

In the Island of Cuba, Mr. Ward states that 150 slaves are required to raise 16,000 arrobos, or 400,000 lbs. In Cuantla, which is inferior in fertility to the province of Vera Cruz, 150 free laborers

Nor is the testimony which it affords as to the possibility of converting slave into free labor, and of emancipated Africans and their descendants becoming industrious and profitable hired servants less decisive. And I am unable to conceive of any reason why a plan which proved so easily successful in Mexico, cannot be practised with the same ease and advantage in any part of the United States.

“In a paper, printed by order of the House of Commons, on the 14th of June, 1827, there is given the testimony of Robert Mitchell, Esq., a planter of Trinidad, of nearly thirty years standing, and who was also the civil superintendant of a considerable body of free blacks settled in that island. The account he gives of them is, that each of these emancipated slaves possessed an allotment of land of his own, which he cultivated, and on which he raised provisions and other articles for himself and his family, his wife and children aiding him in the work. A great part, however, of the time of the men (the women attending to the domestic menage) was freely given to laboring on the neighbouring plantations, on which they worked, not in general by the day, but by the piece.”

The work usually performed by them on the sugar estates was that of planting canes and cutting them for the mill. If this part of the business of sugar culture is performed by emancipated slaves for hire, it is not easy to perceive why the other parts of the culture should not be performed in like manner.

Admiral Fleming stated that in Cuba free blacks were sometimes employed upon the sugar estates; and it is beyond dispute that sugar is cultivated with profit by the

produce from 32,000 to 40,000 arrobas, say 900,000 lbs., at a medium, more than double the quantity.

In Louisiana, according to the authority above cited, 80 hands produce 400,000, which gives 5,000 lbs to the hand, and this estimate, we have seen, is large. The produce of each hand in Cuantla, according to the above average estimate, is 6,000, by the largest estimate, 6,666. Mr. Ward says, that the amount received from the sale of the molasses alone is, in some years, sufficient to defray the whole expense for wages, &c., leaving only wear and tear of machinery to come out of the sugar.

hired labor of free people of color in Colombia, and to a moderate extent in Hayti.

The Rev. W. Austin testified before the House of Commons' Committee, that "he had seen in Guiana four instances of bodies of slaves being emancipated, and land given to them on which they not only raised provisions, but also canes, which were manufactured into sugar at the master's mill for half the produce."

This witness had spent 14 years in the West Indies, and had large reversionary interests in Guiana and Barbadoes. His interests were in slaves more than in land. Yet so strong was his conviction that the value of West India property would be improved and not injured by emancipation, that he earnestly desired it. As for the danger of emancipation, he should not hesitate to return to the West Indies if slavery were abolished, but otherwise nothing would tempt him to do so.

"There are in Surinam two settlements of emancipated slaves, with which he had had much intercourse. Their employment was to cut and saw timber into planks, and bring it down from the interior; and also their surplus provisions, as rice and yams, and other articles, which they bartered for whatever they wanted, besides accumulating property. Mr. Austin had in his possession 10*l.* to keep for one man; and he knew a friend with whom as much as 300*l.* had been deposited by various individuals belonging to those settlements, the produce of very hard labor; at least as hard, if not so regular, as the cultivation of sugar." — "It was his father's opinion, as well as his own, that if his 250 slaves were emancipated, and he could place them around him as a peasantry, paying rent for their houses and grounds, and having also wages for all the labor they did for him, he should be a great gainer. That he could not carry this plan into effect was owing to a heavy mortgage on the estate, comprising the slaves."

The following account will farther show the practicability of converting negro slaves into an industrious and happy peasantry. During Baron Humboldt's stay in the valley of Aragua in Colombia, previously to the revolution, "he was surprised to witness in every direction,

not only the progress of agriculture, but the increase of a free laborious population, accustomed to toil, and too poor to rely on the assistance of slaves. 'Our host,' (Count Tovar,) he proceeds to state, 'whose father had a revenue of 40,000 piastres, possessed more lands than he could clear; he distributed them in the valleys of Aragua among poor families, who chose to apply themselves to the cultivation of cotton. He endeavoured to surround his ample plantations with freemen, who, working as they chose, either on their own land, or in the neighbouring plantations, supplied him with day-laborers at the time of harvest. Nobly occupied on the means best adapted gradually to extinguish the slavery of the Blacks in these provinces, Count Tovar flattered himself with the double hope of rendering slaves less necessary to the landholders, and furnishing the freed-men with opportunities of becoming farmers. On departing for Europe, he had parcelled out and let a part of the lands of Cura, which extend toward the west at the foot of the rock of Las Viruelas. Four years after, at his return to America, he found on this spot, finely cultivated in cotton, a little hamlet of thirty or forty houses, which is called *Punta Zamuro*, and which we afterwards visited with him. The inhabitants of this hamlet are almost all Mulattoes, Zamboes, or free Blacks. This example of letting out land has been happily followed by several other great proprietors. The rent is ten piastres for a *vanega* of ground, and is paid in money, or in cotton. The price of hands is cheaper here than in France. A freeman, working as a day-laborer (*peon*), is paid, in the valleys of Aragua, and in the *Llanos*, four or five piastres a month, not including food, which is very cheap on account of the abundance of meat and vegetables. I love to dwell on these details of colonial industry, because they prove to the inhabitants of Europe, what to the enlightened inhabitants of the colonies has long ceased to be doubtful, that the continent of Spanish America can produce sugar and indigo by free hands; and that the unhappy slaves are capable of becoming peasants, farmers, and landholders.'" (Humboldt's *Pers. Narr.*, Vol. IV., pp. 126-8, cited by Mr. Conder.)

The next instance I shall cite affords evidence peculiarly applicable to the state of things in our own country, although the number concerned was not very large. The authority is the best possible.

In 1831 an order was sent out by the English government for the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies belonging to the crown. Mr. Burge, the recent champion of the West Indian cause in Great Britain, addressed Lord Howick, under secretary for the colonies, in the House of Commons as follows.

“ I wish to know whether Government took pains to obtain full information on the subject, before they sent out the order to emancipate those slaves, and particularly by consulting those connected with these islands? I wish also to know whether any, and what steps have been taken for the future regulation and maintenance of those slaves who are to be emancipated? The House is aware that at present the Crown has to pay all the expenses of those slaves; but it is possible, now they have been emancipated, that they may become chargeable to the different parishes in which they reside in those islands, unless some provision has been made for them. I think that the islands should have been protected from having any burdens imposed on them on this account.”

Lord Howick replied, — “ In answer to the questions of the honorable and learned gentleman, I beg to state, that Government did not send out or issue orders for the emancipation of the Crown slaves, until they had obtained the best information on the subject, and until that information had been fully considered.” — “ With respect to the results which the honorable Member seems to anticipate will arise from the step that has been taken, I am happy in being enabled to state, that the experience of the past, fully warrants our pursuing the course that we have adopted. I trust that the precautions we have now taken will prove, as they did on the former occasion, quite unnecessary. The House is aware that, in 1828, orders were sent out to the island of Antigua, to emancipate the captured negroes belonging to the Crown in that island. This was accordingly done, and was immediately followed by a great reduction in the Government

expenditure in that Colony, and at the same time no evil has resulted from that measure. Some years ago, the charge for the maintenance of the captured negroes in Antigua was £8,000 per annum; but immediately after their emancipation, this expense was materially reduced, and I am happy to say, that it is now not more than £1,000 a year. This charge also will yearly decrease, as it is principally for the support of those who are old and infirm. The House will recollect too, that it is much wiser to emancipate those who have long been in the Colony, and who have been accustomed to habits of industry, than it was to liberate the captured negroes. If, therefore, the measure carried into effect respecting the latter, was successful, the presumption is, that the present course will be attended with an equally happy result. I cannot let this opportunity pass without reading an extract from a letter written from the Governor of Antigua, on the subject of these Crown negroes. That gentleman says: — ‘It affords me much satisfaction in being able to state, that during the five months that have elapsed since the Crown slaves were set at liberty, there has not been a single complaint of their conduct, — not a single charge has been brought against any one of them before a magistrate, — not one of them has made application for relief on account of poverty, or other ground; but they have all been occupied industriously in providing for their own maintenance.’ The report of the Governor of Antigua of the 371 captured negroes who were suddenly emancipated, is equally favorable. No confusion resulted from this comparatively large body being liberated, for I believe all of them were enabled to obtain employment.”

Lord Howick’s account of the liberated Africans is confirmed by Mr. Loving, editor of a paper at Antigua.

“In 1828, there were 371 captured negroes, and 36 Creole escheated slaves, liberated from further dependence on the Crown in the island of Antigua. I think the conduct of these people, since their liberation, a fair proof by which to ascertain the fitness of any colonial slaves for speedy emancipation. With the solitary exception of a case of petit larceny, no others of their whole number have been guilty of any breach of the laws

of the island down to the period when I left it; that was in July, 1831, and they were pursuing an industrious course for their own support. Some of these Africans were employed by me from time to time as hodmen, while others, both male and female, lived in my immediate neighbourhood; and this gave me an opportunity of discovering personally their industry, the avidity with which they coveted the possession of money and other property, their love of fine clothes, and the desire of copying, as close as possible, the dress, manners, and speech of the Creoles; and in some instances, they have succeeded in gaining the advantage of the natives in these several respects. With reference to their industry, it is notorious, that most of the laborious work in the town of St. John is performed by them." — "Many of the women have become active hucksters and venders of dry goods and provisions in the markets; some are housemaids, some laundresses, and others drudges. But the most remarkable facts are, that not fewer than 5 per cent. have purchased their own houses, including three freeholds; and of the 371 who received their certificates of liberation, only one man and five women have returned upon the bounty of the Crown, and even these were obliged to do so by medical advice, because they were decrepit and unfit for labor." "Have you yourself authenticated these facts?—I have." "Was their religious instruction and their knowledge generally superior to that possessed by the slaves in the island of Antigua?—By no means." (Commons' Report.)

It would be easy to extend this list of instances of successful emancipation. But I fear to tax the patience of my readers. The instances already given are the fruit of no laborious search, and with no farther search, at least as many others might be added. Could I trust implicitly to the accounts given of Liberia by its warm supporters, another argument of the present fitness of the slaves for freedom might be obtained. It has been said, and I am not unwilling to believe it, that the emancipated negro appears a different being when first in freedom he sets foot on the land of his fathers. But is it the soil or the liberty consecrating it, that causes "his

soul to walk abroad in her own majesty?" Is it in Africa that is found the chosen home of the power-giving Genius of Universal Emancipation, and in America alone is there a "complexion incompatible with freedom?" Must the negro return to the land where his race were first "devoted upon the altar of slavery", that he may feel "his chains burst from around him," and see the "altar and the god sink together in the dust."

This cannot be. A recollection of the wondrous Providence that planted the black race in America; a belief in retributive justice, and a full faith that man, whatever color an "Indian or an African sun may have burnt upon him," was made for liberty, liberty of motion, liberty of thought, liberty of moral agency, forbid me to believe it. If Liberia affords examples of suddenly emancipated slaves, and colored people who are "below the slaves," the dross and refuse of America, becoming useful citizens, it demonstrates all that the advocate of general emancipation is in justice bound to prove; which is, that the character of the colored population of America is no longer such, if such it has ever been, as to require a government of other principles than are to be found in the Constitution.

The instances I have cited are enough to show how groundless is the unnatural belief, that slavery is essential for the production of any article that it is good for man to possess; and also that there is nothing in the character or condition of the negro slaves which necessarily forbids their being at once converted into profitable hired servants. I believe then that I am borne out in the conclusion, that if emancipated, the blacks will adequately support themselves, and that the proprietors will be able to procure from them as great an amount of labor as they now do, at no greater expense. For it is certain that this has been the case in past instances of "emancipation, and what has been done may be done again, only observing and judging well the analogy of circumstances."

It cannot be that the blacks of republican America are so far behind those of Mexico and the Caraccas, of Cuba, Surinam, Brazil, and the Mauritius, that the rule



which applies to these last will not hold good with them. It is inconceivable that when Englishmen, Spaniards, South and Central Americans have found by ample experience, that as a means of exciting industry in colored as well as white men, the hope of reward was far better than the fear of punishment; that a principle so accordant with the fundamental laws of human nature should completely fail in its application here. When the American slave-holder, then, in answer to all argument, and in objection to seeming proofs, points to the slaves he has emancipated and to their descendants in the United States, and says, they are drones and nuisances, and will never work for hire, I say, that if this be true, the cause must be found in some local and secondary circumstances, and not in the essential one of their being freemen.

If the character and condition of the free people of color of this country affords any argument against emancipation, it is to be observed that it affords an argument of equal force against emancipation in every mode. The progress of emancipation in the United States has certainly been as measured as the most strenuous gradualist could desire. It has hitherto taken place, as it has occasionally taken place in all countries where slavery has prevailed. Some have purchased their freedom by the sweat of their own brows; some have obtained it by bequest from their dying masters; and some by a speedier liberality. Others have become free either at birth, or some subsequent period of life, by the operation of laws for the gradual extinction of slavery. If, under these various circumstances, freedom has proved a fatal gift to the man of African descent, what hope is there that slavery will ever be removed from us. Must we not infer that the man who has once been a slave can never be a freeman, or else that the dark sons of the equator were born only to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to their more fortunate brethren of the European stock. I can see no other alternative. And it needs but a glance at the laws and prevalent tone of sentiment in many of the slaveholding States, to be convinced that one or the other or both of these opinions have practically been adopted by

them. Is it not said that the present system of governing the blacks, is one " admirably adapted to their natural character and capacity ? " Do not many, perhaps the majority, think it vain to " look forward to the time when, however desirable it may be in abstract speculation, involuntary servitude shall entirely cease ? " Is not the chief thought of the people of many of the States, how slavery shall be made safe and best be perpetuated, and is not the whole system of the laws and practice directed to this one end ? I say, without fear of contradiction, that through the greater part of the United States emancipation is not sincerely desired. Some may wish to get rid of slavery, but only in case they can get rid of their slaves at the same time. Few see much chance of this, and consequently they fold their arms, and resolve to go on in their present course. Satisfied that a mixed system of slavery and liberty for the blacks cannot be a lasting one, they have resolved on adhering to the present one of slavery, making it as pure as the spirit of the times will admit, for so only can it be preserved. Hence all the laws forbidding manumissions, and those prohibiting all but oral instruction of the slaves, which of course, except in rare instances, must result in depriving them of all instruction whatever.

What a contrast to this course is presented by the policy of the monarchical governments of Spain, Portugal, and Brazil. Under their empires liberty is a possible attainment to every slave. Never forgetting that the slave is a man, they do not permit his master's claims to interfere with those of his intellect and soul, if, indeed, to their more liberal apprehension, these ever appear at variance. Never losing sight of the essential wrong of slavery, they insure its ultimate extinction, simply by departing so far from its principles as recognise in the slave and secure to him the right of property. This is doubtless an interference with the rights of the master, for as the code of Louisiana says, the slave can " possess nothing and acquire nothing but what must belong to his master," and such is the lawful deduction from the principles of the institution. The indulgence thus allowed the slave must be regarded, as in fact it is, a decided step towards

final emancipation. In any State where it is permitted, the abolition of slavery has begun, and the period of its extinction, if slaves be not introduced from without, may fairly be calculated.\*

Wherever this practice of allowing the slave to enter the market as a purchaser of himself prevails, but not elsewhere, can it be said that slavery is an institution containing the elements of its own dissolution. Where it does prevail, however, there being no obstruction to the operation of some of the first principles of human nature in the slave, the extinction of slavery within a limited period is insured. Aware of this, no slaveholding States will admit this amelioration of slavery, until they shall have become reconciled to the ultimate abolition of the system. Hence the restrictive policy with regard to the holding of property by slaves, which marks the slaveholding governments of North America, the Federal government among the rest.

---

\* "It is hardly necessary," says Brougham, "to remark the striking analogy between the state of the Spanish and Portuguese negroes, and that of the European bondsmen, at a certain period of their progress towards liberty." In some respects, he adds, "the negro is even in a more favorable situation," in others in one less so. "Both situations have in common the great points of a bargain between the master and slave; privileges possessed by the slave, independent of, nay in opposition to his master; the rights of property enjoyed by the slave, and the power of purchasing his freedom at a just price." (*Colonial Policy*, Vol. II. pp. 514, 515.)

An authentic account of the law and practice in the Spanish colonies, respecting the manumission of slaves, was furnished to Mr. Canning by Mr. Kilbee, Commissioner at Havana, in a communication presented to Parliament in 1825. An abstract of this document may be found in a Supplement to the Number of the Anti-Slavery Reporter for June 1828.

The great advantages possessed by the slaves under the Spanish government over those of the United States need not be farther pointed out.

## A P P E N D I X.

---

THE view given of emancipation on pages 27, 28, is partial and incorrect, and the distinction made between emancipation and enfranchisement, on the whole, trifling.

Emancipation may be gradual with respect to individuals as well as to numbers. Slavery *essentially*, or to use an expression that has been the source of much abuse, slavery in the *abstract*, implying the total deprivation of all the natural rights, by subjection to an absolute and arbitrary master, may cease gradually by the successive restoration of these rights. The bondsmen of Western Europe were many of them emancipated in this manner. The negro slaves in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies are by the same rule at this time partially emancipated. The acknowledgment of the slaves' right of life in the laws of the United States is to be regarded as emancipation *quoad hoc*.

The term gradual is however often used in the sense given in the paragraphs above referred to. In this sense was the abolition of slavery in New York and Pennsylvania gradual. (See Stroud's Chapter on the Laws for the Abolition of Slavery.) To this sort of gradual emancipation the remarks heretofore made are perfectly applicable. Objections of a similar nature lie against gradual emancipation in the other sense of the term. The slave's claim is equally good to the possession of every one of his rights. If one can in justice be totally withheld, why may not all?

Much hypercriticism and false criticism has been expended upon the definition of slavery given by Mr. Phelps in his work on slavery. Mine is subject to the same or similar objections. We have not at this day, how-

ever, to define slavery anew. I have quoted one or two definitions, which substantiate the correctness of my own. If doubt still remains, we have only to go back to the origin of slavery among the ancients, or to the African trade, which has afforded its supply to Christian nations.

That the slave is essentially regarded by the institution under which he is held, as a mere animal of burden, held as property, just as truly as "brood mares," might easily be shown. I have neither time nor inclination at present to enter into the discussion. But the reader may be referred to Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Judge Tucker's note on Slavery in his edition of Blackstone; also to any general treatise on the subject; such, for example, as that in the Conversations Lexicon, translated by Lieber; and to the laws of slavery in all the different slaveholding States of Christendom.

Emancipation from domestic servitude has no reference to the kind or degree of civil liberty conferred. It merely denotes the removal of the arbitrary control of one man over the acts of another. It ensures civil liberty by declaring the slave amenable to no other authority than that of the laws. It is complete when all claim of property in the person of the slave is abandoned, and not until then. If the public good requires that the present negro slaves should continue to be restricted in the enjoyment of natural liberty, there is nothing in their being declared not "chattels," which can prevent it. For by the very definition of civil liberty, already quoted, some restraint is implied. But no natural right can be annulled.

The words "immediate emancipation" are used in precisely the same sense by the abolitionists of this country and in England. There it was understood to consist simply in the *annihilation of the right of property in man, and in the full recognition of a natural right in the slave to the enjoyment of personal security, personal liberty, and private property.* Their full recognition, I say. If in all organized society the natural rights of individuals are restrained, they are also unequally restrained. But none of them can be wholly abrogated without violating the principle which lies at the foundation of all society. Whether or not in theory, slavery

implies such a violation cannot, at the present day, be a question, although if we are to judge from late newspaper demonstrations, some Americans are disposed to consider it still a moot case. Nor can it be denied, that the slave laws of this Union bring slavery here as near to perfect slavery, as it has ever been seen since the days of the Roman Republic.







•

.

•







