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FROM

Dr. M. P. Apmador

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SUBSTANCE

OF

THE DEBATE

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 15TH MAY, 1823,

ON A MOTION FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS.

WITH

A PREFACE AND APPENDIXES,
CONTAINING FACTS AND REASONINGS ILLUSTRATIVE OF
COLONIAL BONDAGE.

LONDON:

Printed by Ellerton and Henderson, Gough Square;

FOR THE

SOCIETY FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS;

AND

SOLD BY J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY; AND
J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL.

1823.

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P R E F A C E.

IT is thought right to prefix to the Substance of the Debate on Slavery a republication of the Prospectus and occasional Circular Letters of the "Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions."

PROSPECTUS OF THE SOCIETY.

(Published in March 1823.)

AMONG the manifold evils to which man is liable, there is not perhaps one more extensively productive of wretchedness than **PERSONAL SLAVERY**.

Slavery may, without exaggeration, be described as inflicting on the unhappy subjects of it almost every injury which law, even in its rudest state, was intended to prevent. Is property an object of solicitude? The Slave, generally speaking, can neither acquire nor securely enjoy it. Is exemption from personal wrong indispensable to comfort? The Slave is liable to indignity and insult, to restraint and punishment, at the mere caprice of another. He may be harassed and rendered miserable in a thousand ways which, so far from

admitting of the proof that would be requisite to obtain legal redress (even where any legal redress is ostensibly provided), can perhaps with difficulty be distinguished from such exercise of a master's power as admits of no regulation or controul. Even life itself may, with impunity, be wantonly sported with : it may be abridged by insufficient sustenance ; it may be wasted by excessive labour ; nay, it may be sacrificed by brutal violence, without any proportionate risk of adequate punishment.

In short, the Slave can have no security for property, comfort, or life ; because he himself is not *his own* : he belongs to another, who, with or without the offer of a reason or pretence, can at once separate all from him, and him from all which gives value to existence.

Again : What sense of moral obligation can he be expected to possess who is shackled with respect to every action and purpose, and is scarcely dealt with as an accountable being ? Will the man, for example, whose testimony is rejected with scorn, be solicitous to establish a character for veracity ? Will those who are treated as cattle, be taught thereby to restrain those natural appetites which they possess in common with their fellow-labourers in the team ? Or will women be prepared for the due performance of domestic and maternal duties by being refused the connubial tie, or by being led to regard prostitution to their owner, or his representative, as the most honourable distinction to which they can aspire ?

From this source of Slavery, then, flows every species of personal suffering and moral degradation; until its wretched victim is sunk almost to the level of the brute; with this farther disadvantage, that, not being wholly irrational, he is capable of inspiring greater degrees of terror, resentment, and aversion, and will therefore seem to his owner to require and to justify severer measures of coercion.

And let it not be forgotten, that Slavery is itself not merely the effect, it is also the very cause, of the Slave Trade—of that system of fraud and violence by which Slaves are procured. If Slavery were extinct, the Slave Trade must cease. But while it is suffered to exist, that murderous traffic will still find a fatal incentive in the solicitude of the Slaveholder to supply the waste of life which his cupidity and cruelty have occasioned. Thus, in every point of view, is Slavery productive of the worst consequences to all the parties concerned. Besides all the direct and wide-wasting injuries which it inflicts on its immediate victims, it substitutes for the otherwise peaceful merchant a blood-thirsty pirate trading in human flesh; and, by ministering to pride, avarice, and sensuality, by exciting the angry passions, and hardening the heart against the best feelings of our nature, it tends to convert the owner of Slaves into a merciless tyrant.

The Society, be it remembered, are not now endeavouring to rouse indignation against particular acts of extraordinary cruelty, or to hold up to

merited reprehension individuals notorious for their crimes. They are only exhibiting a just picture of the nature and obvious tendencies of Slavery itself, wheresoever and by whomsoever practised. They are very far from asserting, or supposing, that every one of the enormities to which they have alluded will be found to co-exist in all their horrors in every place where Slaves may be found ; but they know that in such places they have existed, at one time or other, in a greater or less degree ; that in many places they are even now in full and fearful force ; and that they are liable to be revived in all. Should this picture appear to some persons to be overcharged, they would refer them to the most decisive and unquestionable authorities. The felon Slave-trader, indeed, they consign to the laws of England, and to the recorded reprobation of Europe. But for the accuracy of their delineation of the wretchedness and degradation connected with the condition of Personal Slavery, (most willing as they are to admit the humanity of many of the owners of Slaves, and the praiseworthy efforts which some of them have made to mitigate, on their own estates, the evils of colonial bondage,) they appeal to ancient and to modern history, and to every traveller worthy of credit who has visited the regions where that condition of society prevails. Three thousand years ago, a heathen poet could tell us,

Jove fixed it certain, that whatever day
Makes man a Slave takes half his worth away.

And this might be shewn to be the concurrent testimony of all ages.

The enemies of Negro freedom, in our own age and country, were so sensible of this truth, that with great shrewdness they disputed the claim of the Negro race to be regarded as men. They doubtless felt with Montesquieu, that, if "Negroes were allowed to be men, a doubt might arise whether their masters could be Christians." This position, however, has been abandoned as untenable; and we may therefore indulge a sanguine hope of at length recovering for them the indubitable rights of humanity, so long and so cruelly withheld by the strong arm of oppression.

Some persons, however, may here be disposed to ask, how it is possible, if slavery is an evil so enormous as it has now been represented to be, that it should not only have been tolerated, but recognized and established as a legal condition of society, by so many polished and even Christian nations, up to this very day? The Society admit, that, to a humane and considerate mind, nothing can seem more extraordinary, than that this and other enormities, the removal of which lies obviously within the compass of human ability, should yet continue to torment mankind from age to age. But our past supineness in no degree weakens the obligation we are under to attempt their removal, when their real nature has been detected and exposed. Nor will the plea of prescription and antiquity, or of previous connivance, justify the

prolongation of practices which both religion and natural justice condemn as crimes. The African Slave Trade, with all the abominations accompanying its every stage, had been carried on for centuries, without attracting observation; and, even after it had excited the attention of a few benevolent individuals, it cost many a laborious effort and many a painful disappointment, before a conviction of its inherent turpitude and criminality became general, and its condemnation was sealed in this country. In the exultation produced by this victory, it was perhaps too readily believed that the Colonial Slavery, which had been fed by the Slave Trade, would, when all foreign supply was stopped, undergo a gradual, but rapid mitigation, until it had ceased to reprobate our free institutions and our Christian profession, and was no longer known but as a foul blot in our past history. It was this hope, joined to a liberal confidence in the enlarged and benevolent purposes of the colonial proprietary, which prevented the immediate prosecution of such further parliamentary measures as should have at once placed the unhappy Slave under the protection of the law, and have prepared the way for his restoration to those sacred and inalienable rights of humanity of which he had been unjustly dispossessed. But if, as is the fact, these hopes have proved illusory, and have only served to render the disappointment more bitter and mortifying, shall the friends of the African race be now reproached for wait-

ing no longer, when the real ground of reproach is, that they should have waited so long? They place themselves then on the immovable ground of Christian principle, while they invoke the interference of Parliament, and of the country at large, to effect the immediate mitigation, with a view to the gradual and final extinction, in all parts of the British Dominions, of a system which is at war with every principle of religion and morality, and outrages every benevolent feeling. And they entertain the fullest conviction, that the same spirit of justice and humanity which has already achieved so signal a victory will again display itself in all its energy, nor relax its efforts until it shall have consummated its triumphs.

The *objects* of this Society cannot be more clearly and comprehensively defined than in the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted at its first meeting.

“ That the individuals composing the present meeting are deeply impressed with the magnitude and number of the evils attached to the system of Slavery which prevails in many of the Colonies of Great Britain; a system which appears to them to be opposed to the spirit and precepts of Christianity, as well as repugnant to every dictate of natural humanity and justice.

“ That they long indulged a hope, that the great measure of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, for which an Act of the Legislature was passed in 1807, after a struggle of twenty years, would have

tended rapidly to the mitigation and gradual extinction of Negro bondage in the British Colonies ; but that in this hope they have been painfully disappointed ; and, after a lapse of sixteen years, they have still to deplore the almost undiminished prevalence of the very evils which it was one great object of the abolition to remedy.

“ That under these circumstances they feel themselves called upon, by the most binding considerations of their duty as Christians, by their best sympathies as men, and by their solicitude to maintain unimpaired the high reputation and the solid prosperity of their country, to exert themselves, in their separate and collective capacities, in furthering this most important object, and in endeavouring by all prudent and lawful means to mitigate, and eventually to abolish, the Slavery existing in our Colonial possessions.

“ That an Association be now formed, to be called ‘ The Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions ; ’ and that a Subscription be entered into for that purpose.”

With respect to the *means* of carrying these objects into effect, they must, in some measure, depend on circumstances. For such as are more obvious, particularly the obtaining and diffusing of information, considerable funds will be required ; and it will therefore be necessary to promote subscriptions, not only in the metropolis, but in all parts of the kingdom.

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE NATURE AND EFFECTS
OF NEGRO SLAVERY, AS IT EXISTS IN THE
COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

(Published in April 1823.)

THE Committee of the Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, understanding that a strong and very general desire prevails, in all parts of the country, to be furnished with a compendious view of the nature and effects of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the Colonies of Great Britain, have thought it their duty to draw up and circulate the following Summary of information on that subject.

In the Colonies of Great Britain there are at this moment upwards of 800,000 human beings in a state of degrading personal slavery.

These unhappy persons, whether young or old, male or female, are the absolute property of their master, who may sell or transfer them at his pleasure, and who may also regulate according to his discretion (within certain limits) the measure of their labour, their food, and their punishment.

Many of the Slaves are (and all may be) branded like cattle, by means of a hot iron, on the shoulder or other conspicuous part of the body, with the initials of their master's name; and thus bear about them, in indelible characters, the proof of their debased and servile state.

The Slaves, whether male or female, are driven to labour by the impulse of the cart-whip, for the sole benefit of their owners, from whom they receive no wages; and this labour is continued (with certain intermissions for breakfast and dinner), from morning to night, throughout the year.

In the season of crop, which lasts for four or five months of the year, their labour is protracted not only throughout the day, as at other times, but during either half the night, or the whole of every alternate night.

Besides being generally made to work under the lash, without wages, the Slaves are further obliged to labour for their own maintenance on that day which ought to be devoted to repose and religious instruction. And as that day is also their only market-day, it follows, that "Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to them," but is of necessity a day of worldly occupation, and much bodily exertion.

The colonial laws arm the master, or any one to whom he may delegate his authority, with a power to punish his slaves to a certain extent, without the intervention of the magistrate, and without any responsibility for the use of this tremendous discretion; and to that extent he may punish them for any offence, or for no offence. These discretionary punishments are usually inflicted on the naked body with the cart-whip, an instrument of dreadful severity, which cruelly lacerates the flesh of the sufferer. Even the un-

happy females are equally liable with the men to have their persons thus shamelessly exposed and barbarously tortured at the caprice of their master or overseer.

The Slaves being regarded in the eye of the law as mere chattels, they are liable to be seized in execution for their master's debts, and, without any regard to the family ties which may be broken by this oppressive and merciless process, to be sold by auction to the highest bidder, who may remove them to a distant part of the same colony, or even exile them to another colony.

Marriage, that blessing of civilized and even of savage life, is protected in the case of the Slaves by no legal sanction. It cannot be said to exist among them. Those, therefore, who live together as man and wife, are liable to be separated by the caprice of their master, or by sale for the satisfaction of his creditors.

The Slaves in general have little or no access to the means of Christian instruction.

The effect of the want of such instruction, as well as of the absence of any marriage tie, is, that the most unrestrained licentiousness, (exhibited in a degrading, disgusting, and depopulating promiscuous intercourse,) prevails almost universally among the Slaves; and is encouraged, no less universally, by the example of their superiors the Whites.

The evidence of Slaves is not admitted by the

Colonial Courts, in any civil or criminal case affecting a person of free condition. If a White man, therefore, perpetrates the most atrocious acts of barbarity, in the presence of Slaves only, the injured party is left without any means of legal redress.

In none of the Colonies of Great Britain have those legal facilities been afforded to the Slave, to purchase his own freedom, which have produced such extensively beneficial effects in the colonial possessions of Spain and Portugal; where the Slaves have been manumitted in large numbers, not only without injury, but with benefit to the master, and with decided advantage to the public peace and safety. On the contrary, in many of our colonies, even the voluntary manumission of Slaves by their master has been obstructed, and in some rendered nearly impossible, by large fines.

It is an universal principle of Colonial Law, that all Black or Coloured persons are presumed and taken to be Slaves, unless they can legally prove the contrary. The liberty therefore, even of free persons, is thus often greatly endangered, and sometimes lost. They are liable to be apprehended as run-away Slaves; and they are further liable, as such, to be sold into endless bondage, if they fail to do that which, though free, nay, though born perhaps in Great Britain itself, they may be unable to do,—namely, to establish the fact of their freedom by such evidence as the colonial laws require.

Let it be remembered also, that many thousand infants are annually born within the British dominions to no inheritance but that of the hapless, hopeless, servitude which has been described; and the general oppressiveness of which might be inferred from this striking and most opprobrious fact alone, that while in the United States of America the Slaves increase rapidly—so rapidly as to double their number in twenty years—there is, even now, in the British Colonies, no increase, but on the contrary a diminution of their numbers.

Such are some of the more prominent features of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the Colonies of Great Britain. Revolting as they are, they form only a part of those circumstances of wretchedness and degradation which might be pointed out as characterizing that unhappy state of being.

Confining, however, our view to the particulars which have been specified, every enlightened Christian, nay every reasonable man, must allow that it is a case which calls loudly for interference. Is it possible that any free-born Briton should contemplate such a state of things, without the liveliest emotions of shame and grief and indignation; or that, satisfied with the recollection of his own comforts, he should refuse to listen to the cry of the wretched Negro? These things being made known to us, we are bound, without hesitation or delay, to come forward and address our

earnest petitions to the Legislature, that a remedy may be applied to such enormous evils, and that our country may be delivered from the guilt of participating in a system so fraught with the grossest injustice and oppression to hundreds of thousands of our fellow-subjects.

It will hardly be alleged, that any man can have a **RIGHT** to retain his fellow-creatures in a state so miserable and degrading as has been described. And the absence of such **RIGHT** will be still more apparent, if we consider how these Slaves were originally obtained. They, or their parents, were the victims of the Slave Trade. They were obtained, not by any lawful means, or under any colourable pretext, but by the most undisguised rapine, and the most atrocious fraud. Torn from their homes and from every dear relation in life, barbarously manacled, driven like herds of cattle to the sea-shore, crowded into the pestilential holds of slave-ships, they were transported to our colonies and there sold into interminable bondage.

Great Britain, it is true, has abolished her African Slave Trade, and branded it as felony; and it is impossible to reflect without exultation on that great act of national justice.

The grateful acknowledgments of the country are also due to the Government, for their persevering efforts to induce other nations to follow the same course, and thus to rescue Africa from the desolating effects of the Slave Trade. Those

efforts, though hitherto unattended with all the success they merit, it is hoped, will be strenuously and unremittingly continued, until that nefarious traffic shall be declared PIRACY by the concurrent voice of all nations.

When the British Slave Trade was abolished, a confident expectation was entertained that the certain result of that measure would be the rapid mitigation and final extinction of the colonial bondage which had sprung from it, and which in its principle is equally indefensible.

Sixteen years, however, have now elapsed since the British Slave Trade was abolished; but, during that long period, what effectual steps have been taken, either in this country or in the colonies, for mitigating the rigours of Negro bondage, or for putting an end to a condition of society which so grievously outrages every feeling of humanity, while it violates every recognized principle both of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion?

The Government and Legislature of this country have on various occasions, and in the most solemn and unequivocal terms, denounced the Slave Trade as immoral, inhuman, and unjust; but the legal perpetuation of that state of slavery, which has been produced by it, is, surely, in its principle, no less immoral, inhuman, and unjust, than the trade itself.

Notwithstanding those solemn denunciations, thousands of children are still annually born

SLAVES within the British dominions, and upwards of 800,000 of our fellow-creatures (the victims of the Slave Trade, or descended from its victims) are still retained in the same state of brutal depression. They are still driven like cattle to their uncompensated toil by the impulse of the lash. They are still exposed to severe and arbitrary punishments. They are still bought and sold as merchandize. They are still denied the blessings of the marriage tie, and of the Christian Sabbath. And, in a variety of other respects, they continue to be an oppressed and degraded race, without any adequate participation in the civil privileges, or in the religious advantages, to which, as British subjects, they are unquestionably entitled.

Even if it were admitted, that inconvenience might have arisen from immediately relaxing the bonds of the actual victims of the Slave Trade, or of their adult descendants, yet no satisfactory reason can be assigned, why, since the abolition of that trade, the children of those whom we proclaimed to have been unjustly deprived of their liberty should continue to inherit the unhappy condition of their parents.

It is by no means intended to attribute the existence and continuance of this most opprobrious system to our Colonists exclusively. On the contrary, the guilt and shame arising from it belong in perhaps an equal degree to the People and Parliament of this country. But on that very account are we the more rigidly bound to lose no time in

investigating the state of colonial bondage, and in adopting such measures as shall bring it to the earliest termination which is compatible with the well-being of the parties who sustain its grievous yoke.

But, besides our paramount and indispensable obligations, on moral and religious grounds, to relieve our colonial bondsmen from the cruel and degrading state to which we have reduced them, and to remedy as far as we can the numberless wrongs of which we have been the criminal authors; it is further due to the character of Great Britain, in the eyes of foreign nations, that we should act agreeably to the principles which, in our discussions with them relative to the African Slave Trade, we have professed to make the basis of our representations. It would be vain to expect that they should regard those professions as otherwise than insincere, or that they should defer to our representations, however urgent, if we exhibit in our own conduct the glaring inconsistency of sanctioning as legal, in our own dominions, practices of the very same nature, in effect, with those which we reprobate and denounce as immoral, inhuman, and unjust, when they occur on the coast of Africa.

It is therefore our clear and indisputable duty completely to reform our present colonial system, even if it should require a large pecuniary sacrifice to accomplish that object. But the proposed change, we believe, is prescribed to us not more

by moral and religious principle than by the soundest views of political expediency. In the present advanced state of knowledge, it can no longer be a question that the labour of slaves is much less profitable than that of freemen, and that it can only be supported at a very heavy expense to the community at large. In proof of this, it will be sufficient to adduce the protecting duties and bounties afforded to the growers of sugar in the West Indies; and without which they declare it would be impossible for them to continue its culture. Indeed, we are persuaded that no institution which is directly at variance with the will of the Supreme Governor of the Universe can prove a source of permanent advantage either to nations or individuals. And, in the present case, it might be clearly demonstrated, that the personal slavery which deforms the face of society in the British Colonies, and stains the British character, is as detrimental to the interests of the Slave Owner as it is cruel and oppressive to the Slave; and that its abolition, instead of proving an injury to either, will prove an unspeakable benefit to both.

The Colonists say, that they shall sustain a great actual loss by the proposed change of system. If so, they will of course have an opportunity of preferring and establishing their claim to indemnity. But whatever the extent of that claim may be proved to be, it is obvious that it attaches not to the Negro bondsman, but to the British

nation. It would be repugnant to every idea of equity, if we were to discharge any debt we may owe to the Colonists, not from our own resources, but with the toil and sweat and blood of our African brethren.

But, in whatever degree it may be found necessary to indemnify the Colonists for any loss which may arise to them from the abolition of Negro Slavery; yet, *while that state of society continues unchanged*, there will be an insuperable objection in the mind of every conscientious individual to the adoption of any measures of pecuniary relief, by means of protecting duties or bounties on their produce, or otherwise; because it is obvious that such measures, however modified, would involve the people of this country in the farther guilt of upholding a system which, when the facts of the case are known, it is impossible not to feel to be utterly repugnant to the principles of justice and humanity, and to the whole spirit of Christianity.

In any event, it is hoped that this momentous subject will be taken into the earliest consideration of Parliament, with the view of providing an effectual remedy for the evils of colonial bondage, and raising the unhappy subjects of it, from their present state of wretchedness and degradation, to the enjoyment of the blessings of civil freedom and religious light; and it appears the unquestionable duty of the friends of humanity, in all parts of the kingdom, to address their early and earnest petitions to the Legislature for that purpose.

The Committee subjoin a List of Publications containing important information on the general subject of Slavery—viz.

- Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Negro Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies, 1784.
- Debates on the Slave Trade, 1791, 1792, 1806, and 1807.
- Wilberforce's Letter to his Constituents, 1807.
- Pinckard's Notes on the West Indies, 1815.
- Collins's Professional Planter, 1804.
- Dixon's Mitigation of Slavery, 1814.
- Watson's Defence of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies, 1816.
- Report of the African Institution on Reasons for a Registry of Slaves, 1815.
- Review of the Colonial Registry Bills by the African Institution, 1820.
- Sixteenth Annual Report of the African Institution, 1822.
- Stephen's Letters to Wilberforce on the Registry of Slaves, 1816.
- Cropper's Letters to Wilberforce, 1822.
- Singleton's Report of the State of Sierra Leone, 1822.
- Pamphleteer, No. XVI., containing Coster on the Amelioration of Slavery, 1816.
- Wilberforce's Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire on behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies, 1823.
- Negro Slavery, as it exists in the United States and in the West Indies, especially in Jamaica, 1823.
- Cropper's Letter on the Injurious Effects of High Prices and the Beneficial Effects of Low Prices on the Condition of Slavery, 1823.
- Hodgson's Letter to Say, on the comparative Expense of Free and Slave Labour, 1823.
- East and West India Sugar, 1823.
- Proceedings in the House of Commons, on Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1822.
- Declaration of the Objects of the Liverpool Society for Abolishing Slavery, 1823.
- Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies, with a View to their ultimate Emancipation; and on the Practicability, the Safety, and the Advantages of the latter Measure: by T. Clarkson, Esq. 1823.
- A Review of some of the Arguments which are commonly advanced against Parliamentary Interference in Behalf of the Negro Slaves, with a Statement of Opinions which have been expressed on that Subject by many of our most distinguished Statesmen, including Earl Grey, Earl of Liverpool, Lord Grenville, Lord Dudley and Ward, Lord Melville, Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, &c. &c. &c. 1823.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

(*Published in August 1823.*)

THE Committee of the "Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions," have for some time been anxious to fulfil their promise of communicating to the Public a brief view of their progress and prospects, and such suggestions respecting the farther measures to be adopted as the state of their cause may seem to require. The delay which has occurred has, however, been unavoidable. They felt it to be necessary, before they made the promised communication, to ascertain, with as much precision as possible, the intentions of his Majesty's Government with respect to this most momentous subject.

The circulation of the Society's various publications appears to have produced a more extensive effect than could have been anticipated; and although the Session of Parliament was already considerably advanced before the public attention was engaged, no fewer than about two-hundred and thirty Petitions were spontaneously addressed to Parliament, from all parts of the country, praying for the mitigation and gradual extinction of Slavery; and it is certain that the multiplication of similar Petitions was only prevented by the parliamentary discussion of the question which took place on the 15th of May.

On that day, Mr. Buxton made a Motion to the following effect,—

“ That the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion ; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British Dominions, with as much expedition as may be consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.”

Had this motion been agreed to, it was the intention of Mr. Buxton, as he stated succinctly in his Speech, to follow it up, by moving for leave to bring in a Bill, or Bills, which should embrace the following specific objects—viz.

To remove all the existing obstructions to the manumission of Slaves;—

To cause the Slaves to cease to be chattels in the eye of the law ;—

To prevent their removal, *as Slaves*, from colony to colony, and, under certain modifications, their sale or transfer, except with the land to which they might be attached ;—

To abolish markets and compulsory labour on the Sunday ; and to make that day a day of rest, as well as of religious worship and instruction ; and also to secure to the Slaves equivalent time in each week, in lieu of Sunday, and in addition to any time which independently of Sunday is now afforded them, for cultivating their provision grounds ;—

To protect the Slaves, by law, in the possession and transmission of the property they may thus, or in any other way, acquire ;—

To enable the Slave to purchase his freedom, by the

payment at once of a fair price for his redemption, or of a fifth part of that price at a time, in return for an additional day in the week to be employed for his own benefit :—

To make the testimony of Slaves available in Courts of Justice, both in civil and criminal cases ;—

To relieve all Negroes and Persons of Colour from the burden of legally proving their freedom, when brought into question, and to throw on the claimant of their persons the burden of legally proving his right to them ;—

To provide the means of religious instruction for the Black and Coloured population, and of Christian education for their children ;—

To institute marriage among the Slaves ; and to protect that state from violation, and from either forcible or voluntary disruption ;—

To put an end to the driving system ;—

To put an end also to the arbitrary punishment of Slaves, and to place their persons as well as property under the guardianship of the law ;—

To provide that all the children born after a certain day shall be free,—care being taken of their education and maintenance until they shall be capable of acting for themselves ;—

To provide that no Colonial Governor, Judge, Attorney-General, or Fiscal, shall be a possessor of Slaves, or shall have a direct and obvious reversionary interest in such property, or shall be the agent of the proprietors of Slaves.

Mr. CANNING, as the organ of his Majesty's Government, expressed his concurrence in the general object of putting an end, at some, though perhaps no very early, period, to Slavery through-

out the British Dominions. He abjured the idea of perpetual Slavery. He further expressed his concurrence in several of the specific measures by which it had been proposed to effect the general object. He objected, however, to the abstract form of Mr. Buxton's motion, and he proposed to substitute in its place the following Resolutions, which, at the close of the discussion, were unanimously adopted by the House—viz.

- “ 1st. That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the Slave population in his Majesty's Colonies.
- “ 2d. That, through a determined and persevering, but judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave population ; such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.
- “ 3d. That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the Slaves, the safety of the Colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein.
- “ 4th. That these Resolutions be laid before his Majesty.

As these propositions embraced substantially the general object which was contemplated in the original Motion, there could be no hesitation on

the part of its supporters in acceding to their substitution. It was of the very highest importance that his Majesty's Government and Parliament should be concurrently and unanimously pledged to so unequivocal a declaration of the duty of effectually mitigating and eventually extinguishing the state of Colonial bondage; especially as that declaration, while it placed on record this invaluable principle, did not preclude the discussion either of any one of the specific measures of reform above enumerated, or of the means by which, with a view to the attainment of the general object, those measures might best be carried into effect.

The unqualified acquiescence of the West-Indian body in the Resolutions proposed by Mr. CANNING, made it still more desirable to accede to them. Even the advantage to be gained by carrying the original Motion on a division, had this been a matter of choice, was not to be compared with that which could not fail to arise from the unanimous adoption of propositions so unexceptionable in themselves, brought forward as they had been by his Majesty's Ministers, and not opposed by any West-Indian proprietor in Parliament.

There still remained, however, considerable difference of opinion, with respect both to the specific plans of reform which were called for, and to the means by which those plans should be accomplished.

On this last point, Mr. CANNING proposed that the Government should take the matter into their own hands. By this course, he conceived that whatever danger was to be apprehended from public, and perhaps angry, discussion, might be avoided, while the conflicting interests of the various parties concerned might be more easily conciliated. With respect to such of the Colonies as had no local Legislatures, and in which the Crown possessed the sole power of making laws, the action of the Government would, of course, be more free and unfettered. There they might legislate by an Order in Council, which would also serve as a model of legislation for the other Colonies. In the case of the latter, all that it was intended to do, in the first instance, was, to recommend the adoption of the proposed reform to the Colonial Legislatures, whose full and fair co-operation, however, Parliament, he said, had a right to expect; but, if an unlooked-for spirit of resistance should manifest itself, his Majesty's Government would then resort to Parliament for counsel.

In specifying the measures which his Majesty's Government have signified their intention of adopting, the Committee will not confine the specification to what actually fell from Mr. CANNING during the debate on Mr. BUXTON's motion. Subsequent communications have enabled them to modify the statement then made, so as to present, if not a particular and detailed, yet a

clear general view of the present purposes of his Majesty's Government. They are as follow :—

That the existing obstructions to manumissions, arising from stamps or fines, or other fiscal regulations, shall be removed ;—

That the Slaves shall be protected by law in the possession, and also in the transmission, by bequest or otherwise, of any property they may acquire ;—

That means shall be provided of religious instruction for the Slaves, and of Christian education for their children ;—

That the driving system shall be peremptorily and entirely abolished, so that the whip shall no longer be the stimulant of labour ;—

That an end shall also be absolutely put to the degrading corporal punishment of females ; and that measures shall be taken to restrain, generally, the power of arbitrary punishment, and to prevent its abuse ;—

That, the means of religious instruction being provided, the Sundays shall be given up to the Slaves for rest, recreation, and religious instruction and worship (Sunday markets being abolished) ; and that equivalent time shall be allowed them, on other days, for the cultivation of their provision grounds ;—

That the marriage of Slaves shall be authorised, and sanctioned by law ; and that they shall likewise be protected in the enjoyment of their connubial rights.

In respect to the proposal of causing the Slaves to cease from being mere châtels, and attaching them, under certain modifications, to

the soil, it was said, that whatever reform of this kind was introduced must be prospective only, as its retrospective operation might disturb the present tenure of property, and take away, in many cases, the only security on which money had been advanced. The question was therefore reserved for further consideration.

The admission of the testimony of Slaves in Courts of Justice was also thought to be beset with so many difficulties as to require a more deliberate investigation. At the same time, Government professed themselves friendly to the principle of admitting the testimony of Slaves, subject only to such modifications as the interests of justice might for a time require.

The propriety of relieving Negroes and Persons of Colour from the operation of that unjust principle of Colonial law which subjects them to be dealt with as Slaves, unless they shall be able by legal proof to establish their right to freedom, was admitted; and it was signified that further inquiry should be made as to the means for granting them the requisite relief.

It was also admitted to be desirable that no Governor, Judge, Attorney-General, or Fiscal, nor any of the religious instructors about to be appointed, should hold property in Slaves; and though it might be unfair to give to this principle a retro-active effect, yet that there could be no objection to its being made to operate prospectively.

The only remaining points were, the granting of facilities to the adult Slaves to purchase their freedom; and the liberation from bondage of all children born after a certain day. In neither of these propositions have the Government hitherto signified their concurrence. Indeed, to the measure of freeing all children born after a certain day, they appeared to feel a more decided objection than to any other that had been suggested. Both the points were deemed of so much moment as to render further information and more mature consideration necessary, before they came to a final decision upon them.

In reviewing the Resolutions adopted by Parliament, and the declared intentions of his Majesty's Government, the Committee see very abundant cause of congratulation. They feel much gratified both by the admissions which they involve; and by the concurrent determination, which has been expressed by his Majesty's Government and by Parliament, to proceed to the immediate redress of some of the existing evils, and to secure eventually the extinction of the very state of slavery.

Still the Committee deeply regret that the mode of proceeding by Parliamentary enactment, in effecting the Colonial reforms which have been recognised as necessary, should not have been preferred to that of leaving this great work to be carried on through the medium of the Colonial

Legislatures. Past experience, to say the least, discourages any sanguine hope of their prompt, cordial, and efficient co-operation ; and the Committee, therefore, lay their account in meeting with much delay and disappointment, as the consequence of this arrangement.

But, besides this disadvantage, it must be recollected that there are some points, of great and vital moment, on which no distinct hope of reform has as yet been given. It has not been declared that Slaves shall cease to be chattels ; that they shall no longer continue, in this respect, as well as for every other purpose of sale or transfer, on the same degrading level with the beasts of the field. They are still liable to be transported, as the master's interest or caprice may dictate, from one Island to another, and separated for ever from their families and dearest connexions, and from their native home. It has not yet been settled, that their testimony shall be received in Courts of Law, although without this the value of many other provisions in their favour must be greatly diminished. No expectation has yet been given that they shall enjoy facilities for obtaining their freedom by their own exertions. And, above all, their progeny are still doomed to be born to the same wretched inheritance with their parents, notwithstanding the undeniable injustice and cruelty of such a destination. And with respect to the points on which a more favourable decision has been signified, they are yet to be fulfilled, and that in

the face, it is to be feared, of many unappreciated difficulties.

Let not, therefore, the friends of our enslaved fellow-subjects assume that their work is accomplished. In fact, it is only begun. We are only entering on the field of our labours. We have made, it is true, a fair and hopeful commencement. The influence of the public feeling which has been so remarkably displayed, has effected much. But the ground we have already gained may be lost; and, still more, our farther progress may be delayed, or even wholly obstructed, if we should remit our efforts. Nothing which has occurred ought to have the effect of relaxing, in the very slightest degree, our vigilance and activity. On the contrary, the success already obtained should only stimulate us to increased exertion; for whatever measures, with a view to the ultimate attainment of our objects, were previously deemed necessary, may be considered as no less imperiously called for at the present moment.

In this persuasion, the Committee would particularly recommend that ASSOCIATIONS should be formed in every part of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of co-operating to diffuse information, to procure the requisite funds, and to call forth the distinct expression of public opinion on the subject.

The Committee feel that their cause owes much to those petitioners who, in the last session, addressed Parliament with such promptitude and

effect. They trust that the same earnest pleadings will be renewed at an early period of the next session. They trust that, not only from the same places which have already raised their voice in the sacred cause of justice and humanity, but from every county and every town in the United Kingdom, one energetic and concurrent appeal will be made to both Houses of the Legislature, in behalf of our enslaved fellow-subjects ; praying that they may be admitted, at the earliest safe and practicable period, to a participation in those civil rights and privileges, and in those moral and religious blessings, which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects : and that this nation may not be permitted to incur the farther guilt (now that our eyes are opened to the flagrant iniquity of such a course of conduct) of daily augmenting the miserable victims of an unjust and merciless policy, by subjecting the Children, who may hereafter be born, to the same state of abject and degrading bondage to which we have been the criminal instruments of reducing their progenitors.

To activity, vigilance, and perseverance in this course, there are the strongest motives to animate us which can call forth the exertions of Britons and of Christians. We have the cheering hope of being instrumental in rescuing upwards of Eight Hundred Thousand of our fellow-subjects from a state of Slavery which outrages every feeling of humanity, which violates every principle of the

British Constitution, and is repugnant to the whole spirit of the Christian Religion. And, still more, we may indulge the hope of contributing to deliver them from that more fatal bondage,—that yoke of ignorance, vice, and irreligion,—beneath which our institutions have continued so long to retain them. May these considerations operate on every mind with an energy which no delay or disappointment can enfeeble, and which no difficulties or opposition shall be able to resist; and, with the blessing of God upon our zealous, united, and unintermitted efforts, we may look forward to the not very distant time when we shall be called to rejoice together in the final accomplishment of our work of mercy.

18 Aldermanbury, 12th August, 1823.

*Petitions presented to the House of Commons for the
Abolition of Negro Slavery.*

Alfreton.	Associate Congregations of
Allenby.	Linlithgow.
Ampthill.	Mid-Calder.
Andover.	Muckhart.
Appleby.	Peebles.
Ashburne.	Selkirk.
Ashley.	Associate Synod of the Secession.
Associate Congregations of	Attelboro'.
Alnwick.	Baldock.
Anthillet.	Ballitore, Kildare.
Auchtermuchty.	Banbury.
Biggar.	Barnard Castle.
Braehead.	Bath.
Cambusnethan.	Bawtry.
Carnwath.	Beccles.
Crail.	Bedwellty.
Cupar.	Belfont.
Dundee.	Belper.
Ediubnrgh.	Bergholt, East.

DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS
TO THE FUNDS OF THE
Society for mitigating and abolishing Slavery
WILL BE RECEIVED

- By the* **TREASURER**, at *Messrs. Hoare and Co.'s, Bankers, 62 Lombard Street ;*
— *the* **SECRETARY**, 18 *Aldermanbury* (to whom Communications may be
addressed);
— *the* **Members of the** **COMMITTEE** ;
— *Messrs. HATCHARD, 187 Piccadilly, and Messrs. ARCH, Cornhill, Book-*
sellers to the Society ;
— *Messrs. HOARE, Bankers, Fleet Street ;*
— *Sir P. POLE and Co., Bankers, Bartholomew Lane ; and*
— *Messrs. DRUMMOND, Bankers, Charing Cross.*

SUBSTANCE,

&c. &c.

MR. FOWELL BUXTON rose, and addressed the House nearly as follows.—

Sir—I feel so sure, that every gentleman is prepared to ask me one obvious question, that I cannot do better than save the time and curiosity of the House, by affording that question an immediate answer. The question which, as I suppose, gentlemen are anxious to put, is—Why do you move in this question? What right have you to interfere in this great cause? Is there not in the House, and even by your side, a man to whom, when a motion on slavery is to be made, all eyes naturally turn; a man who now, for a period very little short of forty years, has been the faithful, indefatigable, eloquent, and, upon one great occasion, the victorious advocate for the Negro? I hope there is no one, who deems so meanly, and I will say so unjustly, of me, as to suppose that I encroach uninvited on the province of my honourable friend. It is in compliance with the earnest request, it is in obedience to the positive injunction of him whom I honour as the father of the cause, and who, no matter who may introduce the subject, must ever be recognized as its truest and best advocate. It is at his express bidding that I now rise.

Before, however, I enter on the important, and, as some gentlemen deem it, the very perilous question of which I have given notice, I feel myself called upon to advert to the advice which I have received, and to the

warnings with which I have been favoured, of dreadful evils likely to be produced in the West Indies by the agitation of this subject. It is no slight matter, I have been told—and I admit it—to agitate the question at all. It is no slight matter to excite apprehensions, even the most groundless, in the minds of persons so respectable as those who signed the petition which has just been presented by the honourable Member for Taunton. I can truly say, that I feel no degree of animosity, I harbour no species of prejudice, either against the whole body, or against any individual of the body of persons connected with the West Indies. I consider them as eminently unfortunate, particularly the hereditary proprietors, in this, that their predecessors were tempted to embark their property in a species of investment which, at that time, was considered to be moral and consistent with justice; but which, when the subject has been thoroughly sifted, is found to be irreconcilable with the principles of justice and humanity. With these feelings towards the West Indians, deeming them rather unfortunate than culpable, I do consider it no slight matter to introduce any motion painful to their feelings.

It is no slight matter to drag into public view before the nation, and before surrounding nations, jealous of the reputation of this country, the worst, perhaps the only capital stain, on British policy; at a moment, too, when we have felt so keenly, and expressed ourselves so warmly, and all but incurred the hazards of war for the sake of a Nation threatened with political servitude: it is, I say, no slight matter to divulge the fact, that, of British subjects, there are one million living in personal slavery;—not Spaniards, but our own fellow-subjects; not threatened with but enduring, not political interference, but personal slavery,—“personal slavery, in comparison of which,” said Mr. Fox, “political slavery, much as I hate it, is a bare metaphor.”

I have heard much privately—and the House has heard somewhat publicly—of the responsibility which I incur.

by the agitation of this question. And I admit, that a man ought to be pretty sure that his cause is good, as I am; and not only that the cause is good, but that the time is discreetly chosen, as I am; and that he is free from all personal considerations and prejudices, as I am; before he ventures to reject such advice, and to incur such responsibility. Why, then, do I incur that responsibility? First, because I am quite sure that the dangers, if not utterly groundless, if not utterly imaginary, as I believe they are, have been much over-rated: and, secondly, because I am sure, that it is impossible to over-rate the real and substantial blessings that will accrue to a million of men, by the agitation of this subject in this House. I have not a notion that slavery can endure investigation. It must perish, when once brought under the public eye. And I feel confident that a few minutes ago, we commenced that process which will conclude, though not speedily, in the extinction of slavery throughout the whole of the British dominions.

The good, then, to be obtained is incalculable. Now let us consider, for a moment, the price we are to pay for it. We have heard a good deal of late of the danger of insurrection in the West Indies. If this were the first time that slavery had ever been mentioned in this House; if I were the first rash man who had ever ventured to commiserate the condition of the Negroes, perhaps there might be something alarming in the allegations of danger. But, it does so happen, that this same subject of slavery, and that infinitely more delicate subject of emancipation from slavery, to name which in this House, said the honourable Member for Taunton, is to shed blood in the West Indies, have been debated again and again and again within these walls. It does so happen, that a Committee of this House sat some thirty years ago, took evidence on this subject, and, what was unusual then, published it to the world. A Committee of the House of Lords did the same. A Committee of the Privy Council did the same. And it does so happen, that during those

thirty years, every man of distinction in this House, without exception, has put forth his opinions on these subjects: not only the men professing to be the most eager for liberty, and who therefore might be supposed to overlook all dangers in pursuit of their favourite object—such men as Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Whitbread, and Sir Samuel Romilly—but the very opposite of these in every point, except in point of talents; men, whose whole strength was opposed to the pursuit of ideal good, at the expense of present danger. When such men as Mr. Burke, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Windham, and my Lord Grenville: when such men as these unreservedly and repeatedly avowed their sentiments on the condition of the Slave; when they saw no danger in the avowal; when, of these cautious men the most cautious, Mr. Dundas, and the least addicted to change, Mr. Burke, each of them prepared, and one of them introduced into Parliament, a bill for the emancipation of the Negroes, which, if it had passed, would have been in operation three-and-twenty years ago, and would have liberated, by this time, half the Slaves in the West Indies;—when, I say, these men thus thought, spoke, and acted; when they did so, in despite of those very arguments, and, as I will presently shew, in defiance of those very warnings which have been offered to the House this night, I should feel that I betrayed a good cause if I suffered myself to be intimidated by any such extravagant apprehensions, or amused from my purpose by predictions which the fact, hitherto, has never failed to falsify.

It is at least a singular fact, that no motion was ever made in this House, on the subject of Negro Slavery, which has not been met with just the same predictions. No matter what the motion was; it was always attended with the same predictions in almost the same language.

In the year 1787, a very feeble attempt was made to abate the horrors of the Middle Passage—to admit a little more air into the suffocating and pestilent holds of the

Slave-ships. The alarm was instantly taken. The cry of the West-Indians, as we have heard it to-night, was the cry of that day. An insurrection of all the Blacks—the massacre of all the Whites—was to be the inevitable consequence. In the House of Lords, a man of no mean consideration in point of rank, the Duke of Chandos, besought their lordships not to meddle with this alarming question. He might, he said, pretend to know a little more of the subject than their lordships—that his pockets were filled with letters from his correspondents in the West Indies, who declared, that the English newspapers were read by the Negroes as regularly as the ships brought them; and that, so soon as they had come to the paragraph announcing that their lordships had thought it fit to lessen the sufferings of the Middle Passage, they would burst out into open rebellion! The bill passed, however; and, somehow or other, the prediction was not verified. About the same year, my honourable friend commenced that career with which his name will always be coupled; and which he brought to a glorious termination twenty years afterwards. Let any gentleman look to the proceedings in any one of those twenty years, and he will find three things:—First, an effort made by my honourable friend on behalf of the Negro: next, on the part of the West-Indians, a prediction of insurrection amongst the Blacks: and, thirdly, that prediction contradicted by the events of the year. Not only was each separate prophecy falsified by the fact; but, it is really remarkable to observe, if you place the whole train of prophecy on the one side, and the whole train of events on the other, how fully the latter refutes and overturns the former. Those twenty years, which, if the West-Indians are true prophets, ought to have been marked with perpetual violence, bloodshed, and desolation, were, in point of fact, remarkable for a degree of tranquillity in the British West-Indies, unexampled in any other period of their history.

Again: at that time, this country was so greedy of the gains of Slave-trading, that she not only supplied her own

colonies with Slaves, but became the carrier of other nations. My honourable friend, with his usual vigilance, discovered this; and introduced a bill to stop the practice. The cry of danger was revived. "If you stop that trade," said, in this House, the agent of one of the West-India Islands, "you will occasion an insurrection of all the Blacks. You will cause the murder of all the Whites." But this—perhaps the fiftieth prediction of the same kind—was utterly falsified by the fact. Our Negroes actually did not rebel, because we ceased to supply rival colonies with Slaves.

In the year 1802, Lord Seaforth discovered a series of the most horrid and shocking murders that have ever been brought to light. I will not vex the feelings of the House, by detailing the barbarous particulars. But many honourable gentlemen will, no doubt, remember them—particularly the fact of the boy, who was killed in the gully. In short, never were there greater cruelties, than those perpetrated at that time in Barbadoes, by White men upon Black. (See Appendix A.) Some persons were brought to trial; convicted upon the clearest evidence; and punished with all the rigour of the law. And—what was all the rigour of the law? A fine, somewhat less than we, in this country, impose upon a man for killing a partridge: eleven pounds, four shillings, was the fine for these detestable murders. The Governor proposed to the Legislature of the Island, that murder should be made a capital offence. The answer was precisely the same, as that contained in the petition laid upon the table this evening—"It will cause a rebellion." The Negroes, no doubt, would have been so shocked at the possibility of a White man suffering death, merely for killing one of themselves, that they would have taken to arms!

I will only notice one other prediction of the same kind. In 1847, little more than five years ago, Governor Maxwell stated, in a letter to Lord Bathurst, that "many acts of undue and unlawful severity towards the Slaves had come to his knowledge, and particularly some cases

where iron collars and chains had been added to their punishment; after they had undergone a severe whipping." He then states the following cases :—

Cases of Negroes, who were brought to Governor Maxwell in Chains, in which they were obliged to work; by their Owners or Managers, during the last three Months :

" 1st, A boy, about fifteen years of age : a large iron chain round his neck, fastened with a padlock, total weighing 22 lbs.

" 2d, Two girls, of twelve years of age; much marked by [the effects of the cart-whip; fastened together with iron chains round their necks, padlocked, weighing 18 lbs.

" 3d, A full grown man, after a severe flogging with the cart-whip, loaded with an iron collar and chains, weighing 21 lbs.

" 4th, An old man, apparently sixty years of age, after having been severely beaten by his master, was placed in the stocks, with an iron collar round his neck, and chains, weighing 20 lbs.

" 5th, A boy, about twelve years of age, loaded with an iron collar, chains, and log of wood, weighing 26 lbs."

What was the effect of the discovery of this abuse? The effect was, that the Grand Jury of Dominica, who met a few days afterwards, presented their Governor as a nuisance. Here is the Presentment—

Copy of Presentment of Grand Jury of Dominica, dated 26th August, 1817.

" The Grand Jury of our Sovereign Lord the King do present: first, That they find the gaol in the same state as in February last, notwithstanding the repeated presentments of former Grand Juries: secondly, The Grand Jury lament, that they are under the necessity of noticing an improper interference, on the part of the Executive, between Master and Slave, which has caused con-

siderable agitation and discontent amongst the Negroes, and, if persevered in, is likely to lead to the most ruinous consequences."

Now, Sir, if the Grand Jury had said, that these whippings, and "iron torments," as the Governor calls them, had produced agitation amongst the Blacks, and that the interference of the Governor had produced dissatisfaction among the Whites, the Presentment would have been very intelligible. But, when they say—and in such a formal manner too—that the Slaves would be dissatisfied at the interference of the Governor, which was intended for their protection,—as if they felt themselves, as of right, entitled to be flogged, chained, ironed, and padlocked; and as if they were so tenacious of this, their precious right, that they would burst into rebellion, if any symptom were shewn of a disposition to rob them of it;—this is really a little too much for English ears!

Precisely parallel, however, to this is the argument against me. I interfere, it is true. I shall offer suggestions, tending to improve the condition of the Negroes: But, I should be glad to know which of these is likely to produce agitation and discontent amongst them. One of our first propositions is, That the Slave shall have Sunday for rest and religious instruction; and that another day in the week shall be allowed him for the cultivation of his provision ground. Is there any thing irritating in this?—Next, we say, That all Negro children, born after a certain day, ought to be free—free from their birth—never subjected to be bought and sold, and whipped, and brutalized. Surely, such a provision will be far from producing discontent! I am informed, on what I consider the best authority—that of a person intimately acquainted with the feelings of the Negro population,—that he knows of no bond, so likely to secure their fidelity, as benefits conferred on their children—the advantages of education—and freedom.—Next, we propose to get rid of the cart-whip. Will the Negro be offended at that? Is he so fondly

attached to the cart-whip, that, in order to secure the continuance of its use, he will rise in rebellion? In point of fact, all we propose to do is this—to ameliorate the condition of the Negro—to give him something like the protection of British law—to reduce, not so much the power, as the possible abuse of power, in the master—and, above all, to rescue his children from that terrible condition, of which he well knows the bitterness. And, what is there in all this, calculated to rouse the furious passions of the Negro? On the contrary, I am fully persuaded, that security is to be found—and is only to be found—in justice towards that oppressed people. If we wish to preserve the West Indies—if we wish to avoid a dreadful convulsion—it must be by restoring to the injured race, those rights which we have too long withheld.

I must notice one point requiring consideration, both from the West-Indians and from the members of his Majesty's Government: I mean the great change which has taken place, during the last twenty or thirty years. What does the Negro, working under the lash, on the mountains of Jamaica see? He sees another island, on which every labourer is free; in which eight hundred thousand Blacks, men, women, and children, exercise all the rights, and enjoy all the blessings—and they are innumerable and incalculable—which freedom gives. Hitherto, indeed, no attempt has been made, from that quarter. The late Emperor Christophe, and the President Boyer, may have been moderate men; or they may have found at home sufficient employment. But, who will venture to secure us against the ambition of their successors? It would be singular enough, if the only Emperor who did not feel a desire to meddle with the affairs of his neighbours should be the Emperor of Hayti. I touch lightly upon this subject. Let Government—let the West Indians—justly appreciate the danger with which they may be menaced from that quarter. It is a danger, however, which is aggravated, by all the hardships you inflict upon the

Slave, and is abated exactly in proportion as you abate the misery of his lot.

Look at America. She may send at her own leisure, and from the adjacent shore, an army to Jamaica, proclaiming freedom to all the Slaves. And—what is worse still—she may do so in exact conformity to our own example; not only in the first American war, but in the recent contest of 1813. Surely there is a lesson in this. And what is the lesson it teaches? That we ought to grind down the Negro, until almost any change will be for the better—or that we shall upraise him in the scale of being, till almost any change will be for the worse? Mr. Pitt declared, that “it was impossible to increase the happiness, or enlarge the freedom, of the Negro, without, in an equal degree, adding to the security of the colonies, and of all their inhabitants.”

I do not mean to say, that there are not very great perils connected with the present state of the West Indies. On the contrary, I am quite sure—as sure as it is possible for any man in the House or in the country to be—that there is imminent peril at the present moment; and that that peril will increase, unless our system be altered. For I know, wherever there is oppression, there is danger—wherever there is Slavery, there must be great danger—danger, in proportion to the degree of suffering. But the question is, how that danger can be avoided. I answer, that it is to be avoided by that spirit of humanity which has avoided it in other places—by doing justice to those whom we now oppress—by giving liberty for slavery, happiness for misery. But even supposing the danger of giving to be as great as the danger of withholding; there may be danger in moving, and danger in standing still—danger in proceeding, and danger in doing nothing: then, I ask the House—and ask it seriously—whether it be not better for us to incur peril for justice and humanity, for freedom, and for the sake of giving happiness to millions hitherto oppressed; or, whether it be better to incur peril for slavery, cruelty, and injustice—for the sake of destroy-

ing the happiness of those wretched beings, upon whom we have already showered every species of calamity?

I now come to tell gentlemen the course we mean to pursue: and I hope I shall not be deemed imprudent, if I throw off all disguise, and state frankly, and without reserve, the object at which we aim. The object at which we aim, is the extinction of Slavery — nothing less than the extinction of Slavery — in nothing less than the whole of the British dominions:—not, however, the rapid termination of that state—not the sudden emancipation of the Negro—but such preparatory steps, such measures of precaution, as, by slow degrees, and in a course of years, first fitting and qualifying the Slave for the enjoyment of freedom, shall gently conduct us to the annihilation of Slavery. Nothing can more clearly shew that we mean nothing rash, nothing rapid, nothing abrupt, nothing bearing any feature of violence, than this —that if I succeed, to the fullest extent of my desires, confessedly sanguine, no man will be able to say, I even shall be unable to predict, that at such a time, or in such a year, Slavery will be abolished. In point of fact, it will never be abolished: it will never be destroyed. It will subside; it will decline; it will expire; it will, as it were, burn itself down into its socket and go out. We are far from meaning to attempt to cut down slavery, in the full maturity of its vigour. We rather shall leave it gently to decay—slowly, silently, almost imperceptibly, to die away, and to be forgotten.

Now, see the operation of our principle. We say—No more Slaves shall be made; no more children shall be enslaved. At present, we have in our Colonies, a certain body of Slaves. This will be reduced (to use a military phrase) by all casualties; but it will not be replenished and re-inforced by any new recruits. At present, the number is about a million. Next year, that number will be somewhat abated. In ten years' time, it will be visibly diminished. In twenty or thirty years' time, all the young, the vigorous, and those rising into life, will be free;

And the Slaves will be those who have passed the meridian of their days—who are declining into age—the aged and the decrepid. Every year, then, will make a considerable change: every child born will increase the one body—every Slave dying will reduce the other. A few years further; and you will find, only here and there, scattered over the face of the country, a remnant of Slavery. A very few years farther, he too will have followed his brethren, and Slavery will be no more.

Now observe. This is not speculation. It is not a theory, which has never been tried: it is not one of the “new lights,” to use the expression of the honourable Member for Taunton: but it has taken place, and in a country too with which that honourable Member is very familiar. It may perhaps, nevertheless, be unknown to part of the House, that just in this way Slavery has gone out and expired in New York. Thirty years ago, New York was what is called a Slave State; that is, a proportion of its labourers were Slaves; and it was liable to those evils which Slavery never fails to generate. The principle which I now advocate was applied; and—without rebellion; without convulsion; without a single riot, without any thing that deserves the name of inconvenience—Slavery has gone out in the State of New York. The same thing has been done in Philadelphia, New Jersey, and several other of the United States. If any man asks me, with what effect this has been done; I answer, that there is not a person connected with that part of the world, who will not acknowledge, that much as it has contributed to the happiness of the Blacks, it has in no less degree promoted the happiness, the moral improvement, and even the pecuniary prosperity of the Whites. The fact is, every American from that part of the country is ready to acknowledge, that the worst of all curses has fled away, and left them. Here, then, the principle which I now recommend has begun, and concluded, its operation.

There are other parts of the world, where the same principle is now in action, where Slavery is gradually and quietly

working itself out. And now, Sir, I am going to take a great liberty—just to put a question to each gentleman in the House. Does he know in what part of the British dominions this very principle is in action? The point in dispute, be it observed, is this. I say, that our principle operates without noise and tumult. My opponents say, that it will be attended with violence and convulsion. Then, I put it to my opponent, if he know where this noisy, turbulent, convulsive, principle is at work? If he do not know, my point is proved—its quiet, peaceable, silent, nature is proved.

It is in full operation, at this moment, in Ceylon; and has been so, since 1816. The activity of the Governor, General Brownrigg, and of Sir Alexander Johnstone, there introduced it; and, as yet, it has produced no ill effect of any kind. The same thing occurred at Bencoolen, under the administration of Sir Stamford Raffles. The same, at Saint Helena. Now, this last does tell positively in my favour. Public curiosity has recently been excited, in an extraordinary degree. Books, enough to fill a library, have been written, detailing the administration of Sir Hudson Lowe. Acts the most slight—*anecdotes* the most trivial—expressions the most unmeaning, have been recorded with exact fidelity. Generations yet unborn shall know, that on such a day in July, Sir Hudson Lowe pronounced that the weather was warm; and that on such a day of the following December, Bonaparte uttered a conjecture that it would rain in the course of the week. Nothing has escaped the researches of the historian—nothing has been overlooked by the hungry curiosity of the public—nothing—Yes! one thing only has never been noticed; namely, that Sir Hudson Lowe gave the death-blow to Slavery at Saint Helena.

The same principle, only upon a much larger scale, has been operating in South America. By a fundamental law of Columbia, every child born after the day when the Constitution was proclaimed, is, *ipso facto*, free. They

did that at which I am now aiming; and they did more. They liberated the children, but they also took measures for emancipating the parent. They levied a legacy duty, varying from three to ten per cent. upon all disposable personal property: they set apart this fund for a special object: and they declared, that no power should exist in the state to alter the destination of a single shilling. The purchase to which that tax is devoted, is the purchase of Negroes from personal slavery, and it is to continue till no Slave remains in Columbia. If ever there was an opportunity of trying, whether the principle was productive of peace or of convulsion, that opportunity was now afforded. Columbia was overrun by hostile armies. The masters were often obliged to abandon their property. The Black population amounted to nine hundred thousand persons. An honourable friend of mine, on a former occasion, contended, that the numbers were inconsiderable. He was mistaken. I have in my hand a letter from Mr. Ravenga, in which he states, that, in a population of three millions, the number of Blacks and Indians is nine hundred thousand. Now, of these a large number were suddenly emancipated. Bolivar gave liberty to seven hundred. Others acted in the same way. The law to which I have alluded, which liberates all the children, is rapidly liberating the adults. What has been the effect? Where the opportunities of insurrection have been so frequent and so tempting, what has been the effect? Mr. Ravenga authorizes me to say, that the effect has been, a degree of docility on the part of the Blacks, a degree of confidence and security on the part of the Whites, unknown in any preceding period of the history of Columbia.

Now for the application of this principle. What we contend for is this, that we should cut off the supply; that we should intercept the fountain by which Slavery is fed; that all Negro children, born after a certain day, should be free. I have already shewn the safety and practicability of acting upon this principle. Will any man deny its propriety and justice? A Negro child is

born to-day. What right on earth have we to say, that that child shall be a slave? I want to know by what authority we act, under what warrant we proceed, when we say, that that child shall eat the bitter bread, and do the bitter labour of a bondsman, all the days of his life? I know the answer that will be given me: "The father is mine; the mother is mine; and therefore the child is mine." That is, you have made his parents eat the bitter bread, and do the bitter labour of Slaves; and this crime, which you have committed against his parents, is to be your apology for the crime which you design to commit against him.

But, Sir, I hope that every man in this House, nay, that every man and woman in Great Britain, will seriously weigh this question. By what principle of justice, by what tenet of religion do we act, when we say to the planter, "There! a Black child is born to-day: take him: do what you like with him: make him a brute, if it so please you; a brute in his labour, a brute in ignorance: feed him like a brute, flog him like a brute!" I say, how are we authorised, on a child that has done no wrong, to pronounce that sentence, to inflict that curse?

It is a crime to go to Africa, and steal a man, and make him a Slave. For two centuries this was no crime at all. It was most just and innocent commerce. My honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) instituted an inquiry into this innocent traffic, and it turned out to be a most intolerable enormity. It is a crime, then, by the laws of England, to make the full-grown African a Slave. And, how is it less a crime, to make a new-born Creole a Slave? I say, it is as great—it is even a greater crime. The African has at least passed a considerable portion of his life in freedom: for twenty or thirty years, he has tasted the innumerable enjoyments which liberty confers. But, the child who is made a Slave from his birth, knows nothing but servitude and misery.—Then, as to guilt. Formerly, we divided it with another party. The Black factor made the man a slave: that was his share of the guilt. We kept

him as a Slave; that was our share. But, in the case of the child whom we enslave, the whole abomination is our own. We make him a Slave, in the first place: we use him as a Slave, in the second. It is a crime to murder a man: it is no less a crime to murder a child. It is a crime to rob a man: it is no less a crime to rob a child. It is a crime to enslave a man: and, is it no crime to enslave a child?

Now, Sir, let the House observe the moderation with which we proceed. We say, "Make no more Slaves—desist from that iniquity—stop—abstain from an act, in itself as full of guilt, entailing in its consequences as much of misery, as any felony you can mention." We do not say, "Retrace your steps;" but "Stop." We do not say, "Make reparation for the wrong you have done;" but, "Do no more wrong; go no further." Slave-trading and slavery (for they are but two parts of the same act), are the greatest crime that any nation ever committed; and when that day comes, which shall disclose all secrets, and unveil all guilt, the broadest and blackest of all will be that, the first part of which is Slave-trading, and the last part Slavery; and no nation under heaven has ever been so deeply tainted with both the one and the other as we have been. To a nation thus steeped in this species of iniquity, can less be said than this: "We do not ask that you should suffer punishment; we do not ask that you should undergo deep humiliation; we do not ask that you shall make reparation to those you have wronged; we do not even say, Cease to enjoy those acts of criminality which you have begun; but, Take the full benefit and fruition of past and present injustice; complete what you have commenced; screw from your Slave all that his bones and his muscles will yield you: only stop there; and, when every Slave now living shall have found repose in the grave, then let it be said, that the country is satiated with Slavery, and has done with it for ever."

This, after all, is the main point. It secures, a distant indeed, but a certain extinction of Slavery. And I give

notice to his Majesty's Ministers—I give notice to the gentlemen connected with the West Indies, that if they concede every thing else, but withhold this, we shall not relax in our exertions. The public voice is with us; and I, for one, will never fail to call upon the public, loudly to express their opinion, till justice has so far prevailed as to pronounce that every child is entitled to liberty.

Now, for the existing Slaves. Slaves they are. Slaves, I fear, they must too generally continue; but Slaves, under a description of servitude considerably mitigated.

I cannot say I deserve any credit for abstaining to liberate them at the present moment. I must confess, that if I conceived it were possible for the Slaves to rise abruptly from their state of bondage, to the happier condition of freemen; if we could clothe them, not only with the rights and privileges, but with the virtuous restraints of social life; if I did not know that the same system, which has reduced them to the condition of brutes, has brutalized their minds; if, in fact, I deemed them ripe for deliverance, my moderation, I confess it, would be but small. I should say, "The sooner *you* cease from doing injustice, and *they* from enduring it, the better." I should take no circuitous course: I should propose no tardy measures of amelioration: I should name no distant day of deliverance: but this night, at once and for ever, I should propose to strike off their chains; and I should not wait one moment, from a conception that the master has the least shadow of a title to the person of the Slave. But, alas, Sir! the Slave is not ripe for liberty. The bitterest reproach that can be uttered against the system of slavery, that it debases the man, that it enfeebles his powers, that it changes his character, that it expels all which is naturally good; this, its bitterest reproach, must be its protection. We are foiled by the very wickedness of the system. We are obliged to argue in a most vicious circle. We make the man worthless; and, because he is worthless, we retain him as a Slave. We make him a brute, and then allege his brutality as a valid reason for withholding his rights.

Now, one word as to the right of the master. There are persons (not in this House, I trust,) whose notions of justice are so confused and confounded by slavery, as to suppose that the planter has something like an honest title to the person of the Slave. We have been so long accustomed to talk of "my slave," and "your slave," and what he will fetch if sold, that we are apt to imagine that he is really yours or mine, and that we have a substantial right to keep or sell him. Then, let us, just for a moment, fathom this right. Here is a certain valuable commodity; and here are two claimants for it—a White man, and a Black man. Now, what is the commodity in dispute?—The body of the Black man. The White man says, "It is mine;" and the Black man says, "It is mine." Now, the question is, if every man had his own, to whom would that Black body belong? The claim of the Black man to his own body, is just this—Nature gave it him. He holds it by the grant of God. That compound of bone and muscles is his, by the most irreproachable of all titles—a title which admits not, what every other species of title admits—a suspicion of violence, or fraud, or irregularity. Will any man say, he came by his body in an illegal manner? Does any man suspect, that he played the knave, and purloined his limbs? I do not mean to say the Negro is not a thief; but he must be a very subtle thief indeed, if he stole even so much as his own little finger.

At least, you will admit this—the Negro has a pretty good *prima facie* claim to his own person. If any man thinks he has a better, the *onus probandi* is on him. Then we come to the claim of the White man. What is the foundation of your right? It shall be the best that can be conceived. You received him from your father. Very good! Your father bought him from a neighbouring planter. Very good! That planter bought him of a trader, at the Kingston Slave-market: and that trader bought him of a man-merchant in Africa. So far you are quite safe! How did the man-merchant acquire him? *He*

stole him—he kidnapped him! The very root of your claim is robbery, violence, inconceivable wickedness. If any thing on earth was ever proved by evidence, it was proved, before the Slave-trade Committee, that the method of obtaining Slaves in Africa was robbery, man-stealing, and murder. Your pure title rests on these sacred foundations! If your Slave came direct from Africa, your right to his person is absolutely nothing. But, your claim to the child born in Jamaica is (if I may use the expression) less still. The new-born infant has done—can have done—nothing to forfeit his right to freedom. And, to talk about rights, justice, equity, and law as connected with slavery, is to talk downright nonsense. If we had no interest in the case, and were only speaking of the conduct of another nation, we should all use the same language; and we should speak of slavery, as we now speak of Slave-trading: that is, we should call it rank, naked, flagrant, undisguised injustice.

But when I say, that the planter has no claim against the Slave, I do not say, that he has no claim against the British Nation. If slavery be an injustice, it is an injustice which has been licensed by British law. But, whatever may be the claim of the planter against the British Government, he can pretend to none to the person of a child because he happens to be born of Negro parents.

I will now take the liberty of reading a short extract of a letter which, on the 11th of last April, I addressed to my honourable friend opposite, in order to put Lord Bathurst, and his Majesty's Government, in full possession of our views and intentions on this subject:—

“ The subject divides itself into two: the condition of the existing Slaves, and the condition of their children. With regard to the former, I wish the following improvements:—

“ 1. That the Slave should be attached to the island, and, under modifications, to the soil.

“ 2. That they cease to be chattels in the eye of the law.

" 3. That their testimony may be received, *quantum valeat*.

" 4. That when any one lays in his claim to the services of a Negro, the *onus probandi* should rest on the claimant.

" 5. That all obstructions to manumissions should be removed.

" 6. That the provisions of the Spanish law (fixing by competent authority the value of the Slave, and allowing him to purchase a day at a time,) should be introduced.

" 7. That no Governor, Judge, or Attorney-General should be a Slave-owner.

" 8. That an effectual provision shall be made for the religious instruction of the Slave.

" 9. That marriage should be enforced and sanctioned.

" 10. That the Sunday should be devoted by the Slave to repose and religious instruction; and that other time should be allotted for the cultivation of his provision grounds.

" 11. That some (but what I cannot say) measures should be taken, to restrain the authority of the master, in punishing his untried Slave, and that some substitute should be found for the driving system.

" These are the proposed qualifications of the existing slavery. But I am far more anxiously bent upon the extinction of slavery altogether, by rendering all the Negro children, born after a certain day, free. For them it will be necessary to provide education. God grant, that his Majesty's Ministers may be disposed to accomplish those objects, or to permit others to accomplish them."

For all the blood spilt in African wars fomented by English capital—for civil war which we contrived to render interminable—for all the villages set in flames by the contending parties—for all the horrors and the terrors of these poor creatures, roused from their rest by the yells of the man-hunter whom we sent—for civilization excluded—for the gentle arts which embellish life excluded—for honest and harmless commerce excluded—for Christianity, and all that it comprehends, expelled for

two centuries from Africa—for the tens and tens of thousands of men murdered in these midnight marauds—for the tens and tens of thousands suffocated in the holds of our Slave-ships—for the tens and tens of thousands of emaciated beings, cast ashore in the West Indies, emaciated beings, “ refuse men ” (for such was the mercantile phrase) lingering to a speedy death—for the tens and tens of thousands still more unhappy who, surviving, lived on to perpetual slavery, to the whip of the task-master, to ignorance, to crime, to heathen darkness—for all these, we owe large and liberal atonement. And I do thank God, we still have it in our power to make some compensation. We have it in our power to sweeten a little the bitterness of captivity—to give the Slaves of the West Indies something to render life more endurable—to give them something like justice and protection—to interpose a jury between the Negro and the brutality of his master’s servant—to declare that the Slave shall not be torn from the cottage he has built, from the children he has reared, from the female whom he loves—above all, for that is effectual compensation, we may give him the truths of the Christian Religion, which, as yet, we have withheld.

For his children, there is a wider range of recompence. We may strip them of every vestige of servitude; and, by taking upon ourselves, for a season, the whole burthen of their maintenance, education, and religious instruction, we may raise them into a happy, contented, enlightened, free peasantry. I conclude, as I concluded my letter to Lord Bathurst—God grant, that his Majesty’s Ministers may be disposed to accomplish these objects, or to permit others to accomplish them!—I move,

“ That the State of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian Religion; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British Colonies, with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.”

Mr. Secretary CANNING.—The appeal to his Majesty's Cabinet with which the honourable gentleman concluded his speech, makes me feel it my duty to address myself to the House at this early period of the debate, for the purpose of stating, without reserve, the opinions entertained by myself and my colleagues with respect to this most important, and I must say, at the same time (notwithstanding what has fallen from the honourable gentleman), this most fearful question.—I never in my life proceeded to the discussion of any question under a stronger impression of its manifold difficulties: not indeed in reference to the principles on which my opinions are grounded, nor with respect to the practical conclusion to which I may think it expedient to come, but on account of the dangers, which, even after all that the honourable gentleman has said to the contrary, appear to me to attend a discussion, in which one rash word, perhaps even one too ardent expression, might raise a flame not easily to be extinguished.

I mention these circumstances, Sir, not for the purpose of imputing any blame to the honourable gentleman, or to those friends in conjunction with whom he has brought forward the resolution in your hands, nor for that of discouraging fair and free deliberation; but I take the liberty of throwing out a caution to those who, in a more advanced stage of the discussion, and when conflicting opinions may have produced a warmth which I do not feel, might be induced to colour more deeply the pictures which the honourable gentleman himself has sketched with no light hand; and who might thus excite feelings which it is not necessary to awaken for the accomplishment of any practical good, but which, if awakened, might either impede the attainment of that good, or expose it to gratuitous hazard.

And here the honourable gentleman must allow me to ask, What had the latter part of his speech to do with his present purpose? Why did he think it expedient to recur to the former delinquencies of this country, which, if

capable of expiation, have been expiated? Why did he go back to a state of things in the West Indies, to which, so far as they could be remedied, remedy has been applied? Why did he go out of his way to recal the horrors and cruelties connected with the now abolished Slave Trade, which were at former times brought under the notice of Parliament? Why, when he was stirring a question totally new, (and I mention that character of the question, not as matter of blame but as matter of fact)—why did he mix it up with that other odious question, often indeed discussed, but long ago decided, with which, during an agitation of twenty years, it was never before placed in *juxta*-position but for the purpose of being contrasted with and separated from it? In all former discussions, in all former votes against the Slave Trade, it cannot surely be forgotten that the ulterior purpose of emancipation was studiously disclaimed. I have myself frequently joined in that disclaimer on former occasions. In doing so, I certainly did not mean to advance so untenable a proposition as that it was intended to purchase the abolition of the Slave Trade by an indefinite continuance of Slavery. Undoubtedly that was not my meaning; but what I at least did mean—what in all fairness any man who took the same distinction must be held to have meant—was, that the two questions should be kept separate, and argued on their separate grounds; that the odium of that which we were labouring to abolish should not be brought to bear with increased intensity on that of which we were compelled to allow the continuance. Slavery, not willingly but necessarily, was allowed to continue. I do not say that it is therefore to continue indefinitely; I speak not of it as a system to be carefully preserved and cherished, but as one to be dealt with according to its own nature, and with reference to its inherent peculiarities. We must be considered as having tacitly, if not expressly, taken the engagement, not, on every subsequent discussion, to look back to atrocities which have ceased, not to revive animosities which have been extinguished, and to throw

in the teeth of those whose interests are at hazard, cruelties with which they in fact had no concern. After such an implied pledge, it is somewhat hard in the honourable gentleman to revert to those past-gone topics, instead of confining himself to facts and arguments which properly belong to the motion which he has introduced.

I will not follow the honourable gentleman through the various matters of this kind which he has brought to his aid; but I will here take the liberty to dismiss the consideration of the Slave Trade as of a thing forgotten and gone by: and I will entreat the House to look at the present situation of the West Indies, not as at a population accumulated by a succession of crimes such as those which the honourable gentleman has detailed, but simply as it is.

The honourable gentleman has treated this subject rather with powerful declamation than with sober statement: for I must beg leave to consider as a figure of eloquence, rather than as a practical argument, the intimation that we must deal with this question not as a matter of justice and judgment, but of impulse and feeling. That is not a ground on which Parliament can be called upon to act. The manner in which the Black population of the West Indies has been collected may indeed be the subject of reflection to the historian, or discussion to the moralist: but, in calling upon the Legislature to adopt a measure of the greatest importance, and of the utmost difficulty, the honourable gentleman addresses himself, not to the prudence, but to the feeling of the House, I confess it seems to me that he pursues the course least likely to lead to a satisfactory result.

Looking then at the present condition of the West Indies, I find there a numerous Black population, with a comparatively small proportion of Whites. The question to be decided is, how civil rights, moral improvement, and general happiness are to be communicated to this overpowering multitude of Slaves, with safety to the lives and security to the interests of the White population, our fellow-subjects and fellow-citizens. Is it possible that

there can be a difference of opinion upon this question? Is it possible that those most nearly concerned in the present state of property in the West Indies, and those who contemplate the great subject with the eye of the philosopher and the moralist, should look at it in any other than one point of view? Is it possible for a member of Parliament, still more for a member of the Government, to say that he does not wish, so far as is consistent with other great considerations necessarily involved, to impart every improvement which may tend to raise in the scale of being the unfortunate creatures now in a state of servitude and ignorance? Undoubtedly, sacrifices ought to be made for the attainment of so great a good; but would I on this account strike at the root of the system—a system the growth of ages—and unhesitatingly and rashly level it at a blow? Are we not all aware that there are knots which cannot be suddenly disentangled, and must not be cut;—difficulties which, if solved at all, must be solved by patient consideration and impartial attention, in order that we may not do the most flagrant injustice by aiming at justice itself?

The honourable gentleman begins his resolution with a recital which I confess greatly embarrasses me: he says, that “the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian Religion.” God forbid that he who ventures to object to this statement, should therefore be held to assert a contradiction to it! I do not say that the state of Slavery is consonant to the principles of the British Constitution; still less do I say that the state of Slavery is consonant to the principles of the Christian Religion. But though I do not advance these propositions myself, nevertheless I must say, that in my opinion the propositions of the honourable gentleman are not practically true. If the honourable gentleman means that the British Constitution does not admit of Slavery in that part of the British dominions where the constitution is in full play, undoubtedly his statement is true; but it

makes nothing for his object. If, however, the honourable Member is to be understood to maintain that the British Constitution has not tolerated for years, nay more for centuries, in the Colonies, the existence of Slavery, a state of society unknown in the mother country,—that is a position which is altogether without foundation, and positively and practically untrue. In my opinion, when a proposition is submitted to this House for the purpose of inducing the House to act upon it, care should be taken not to confound, as I think is done in this resolution, what is morally true with what is historically false. Undoubtedly the spirit of the British Constitution is, in its principle, hostile to any modification of Slavery. But as undoubtedly the British Parliament has for ages tolerated, sanctioned, protected, and even encouraged a system of colonial establishment of which it well knew Slavery to be the foundation.

In the same way, God forbid that I should contend that the Christian religion is favourable to Slavery. But I confess I feel a strong objection to the introduction of the name of Christianity, as it were bodily, into any parliamentary question. Religion ought to controul the acts and to regulate the consciences of governments, as well as of individuals; but when it is put forward to serve a political purpose, however laudable, it is done, I think, after the example of ill times, and I cannot but remember the ill objects to which in those times such a practice was applied. Assuredly no Christian will deny that the spirit of the Christian religion is hostile to Slavery, as it is to every abuse and misuse of power: it is hostile to all deviations from rectitude, morality, and justice; but if it be meant that in the Christian religion there is a special denunciation against Slavery, that Slavery and Christianity cannot exist together,—I think the honourable gentleman himself must admit that the proposition is historically false; and again I must say, that I cannot consent to the confounding, for a political purpose, what is morally true with what is historically false. One peculiar charac-

teristic of the Christian dispensation, if I must venture in this place upon such a theme, is, that it has accommodated itself to all states of society, rather than that it has selected any particular state of society for the peculiar exercise of its influence. If it has added lustre to the sceptre of the sovereign, it has equally been the consolation of the Slave. It applies to all ranks of life, to all conditions of men; and the sufferings of this world, even to those upon whom they press most heavily, are rendered comparatively indifferent by the prospect of compensation in the world of which Christianity affords the assurance. True it certainly is, that Christianity generally tends to elevate, not to degrade, the character of man; but it is not true, in the specific sense conveyed in the honourable gentleman's resolution, it is not true that there is that in the Christian religion which makes it impossible that it should co-exist with Slavery in the world. Slavery has been known in all times and under all systems of religion, whether true or false. *Non meus hic sermo*: I speak but what others have written on this point; and I beg leave to read to the House a passage from Dr. Paley, which is directly applicable to the subject that we are discussing.

“ Slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries when Christianity appeared; yet no passage is to be found in the Christian Scriptures by which it is condemned and prohibited. This is true; for Christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as behoved it, from intermeddling with the civil institutions of any. But does it follow, from the silence of Scripture concerning them, that all the civil institutions which then prevailed were right; or that the bad should not be exchanged for better? Besides this, the discharging of all slaves from all obligation to obey their masters, which is the consequence of pronouncing Slavery to be unlawful, would have no better effect than to let loose one-half of mankind upon the other. Slaves would have been tempted to embrace a religion which asserted their right to freedom; masters would hardly have been

persuaded to consent to claims founded upon such authority; the most calamitous of all consequences, a *bellum servile*, might probably have ensued, to the reproach, if not the extinction, of the Christian name. The truth is, the emancipation of Slaves should be gradual, and be carried on by the provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government. Christianity can only operate as an alterative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities which folly, or wickedness, or accident have introduced into their public establishments. In this way the Greek and Roman Slavery, and since these the feudal tyranny, had declined before it. And we trust that, as the knowledge and authority of the same religion advance in the world, they will abolish what remains of this odious institution."

The honourable gentleman cannot wish more than I do, that under this gradual operation, under this widening diffusion of light and liberality, the spirit of the Christian religion may effect all the objects he has at heart. But it seems to me that it is not, for the practical attainment of his objects, desirable that that which may be the influencing spirit should be put forward as the active agent. When Christianity was introduced into the world, it took its root amidst the galling slavery of the Roman Empire; more galling in many respects (though not precisely of the same character) than that of which the honourable gentleman, in common I may say with every friend of humanity, complains. Slavery at that period gave to the master the power of life and death over his bondsman: this is undeniable, known to every body: *Ita servus homo est!* are the words put by Juvenal into the mouth of the fine lady who calls upon her husband to crucify his Slave. If the evils of this dreadful system nevertheless gradually vanished before the gentle but certain influence of Christianity, and if the great Author of the system trusted rather to this gradual operation of the principle than to any immediate or direct precept, I think Parliament

would do more wisely rather to rely upon the like operation of the same principle than to put forward the authority of Christianity, in at least a questionable shape. The name of Christianity ought not to be thus used unless we are prepared to act in a much more summary manner than the honourable gentleman himself proposes. If the existence of Slavery be repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion, how can the honourable gentleman himself consent to pause even for an instant, or to allow any considerations of prudence to intervene between him and his object? How can he propose to divide Slaves into two classes; one of which is to be made free directly, while he leaves the other to the gradual extinction of their state of suffering? But if, as I contend, the British Constitution does not, in its necessary operation, go to extinguish Slavery in every colony, it is evident that the honourable gentleman's proposition is not to be understood in the precise sense which the honourable gentleman gives to it; and if the Christian Religion does not require the instant and unqualified abolition of Slavery, it is evident, I apprehend, that the honourable Member has mistated in his resolution the principle upon which he himself is satisfied to act. But while I contend against the literal sense, and too positive language, of the honourable gentleman's resolutions; and while I declare my unwillingness to adopt them as the basis of our proceedings; let me not be misunderstood as quarreling with their intention. I admit as fully as the honourable gentleman himself, that the spirit both of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion is in favour of a gradual extermination of this unquestioned evil: and I am ready to proceed with the honourable gentleman to all reasonable and practicable measures for that purpose.

On these principles I feel disposed to agree in much that the honourable gentleman has said. To many of his measures of detail I have not the slightest objection;

without, however, admitting the solidity of all his ingenious illustrations, or subscribing to the correctness of all his arguments. I think the House will be of my opinion, that at this time of day we must consider property as the creature of law; and that, when law has sanctioned any particular species of property, we cannot legislate in this House as if we were legislating for a new world, the surface of which was totally clear from the obstruction of antecedent claims and obligations. If the honourable gentleman asks me, on the other hand, whether I maintain the inviolability of property so far as to affirm the proposition, that the children of Slaves must continue to be Slaves for ever,—I answer frankly, No. If again he asks me how I reconcile my notions of reverence for the sacredness of property with the degree of authority I am prepared to exercise for the attainment of my object, I answer with equal frankness, In accomplishing a great national object, in doing an act of national justice, I do not think it right to do it at the exclusive expense of any one class of the community. I am disposed to go gradually to work, in order to diminish both the danger to be risked and the burden to be incurred. My opinion is also, and I am prepared to state it (the honourable gentleman having made his appeal to the Government on this question some weeks ago) as the opinion of my colleagues as well as my own—that in order that the object which we have all in view may be undertaken safely and effectually, it is better that it should be left in the hands of the Executive Government.

With that view I have taken the liberty of preparing certain resolutions, which I shall propose to substitute for those of the honourable gentleman. Between the two sets of resolutions the substantial difference, it will be seen, is not very essential; but from the difference of responsibility between the honourable gentleman and myself, I must of necessity lay down my principles with greater caution than he has done; and proceed more coolly, and

considerately, so as to avoid the liability to misrepresentation. Not that I wish to shrink from particulars, so far as it may be expedient to enter into them.

I may say then, that there are two or three points referred to by the honourable gentleman, to which I cannot refuse my concurrence. For instance, he asks if the present mode of working—that which is described by the term, driving—the slaves, by means of a cart-whip in the hand of one who follows them, ought to be allowed? I reply, Certainly not. But I go farther; I tell the honourable gentleman, that in raising any class of persons from a servile to a civil condition, one of the first principles of improvement is in the observance paid to the difference of sexes. I would therefore abolish, with respect to females, the use of the whip, not only as a stimulant to labour in the field; I would abolish it altogether as an instrument of punishment,—thus saving the weaker sex from indecency and degradation. I should further be inclined to con-
cur with the honourable gentleman as to the insufficiency of the time allowed to the Negroes for religious and moral instruction, so long as the cultivation of his provision ground and his marketing occupy the greater part of the Sabbath. In this point I am anxious to introduce improvement into the present system.

These are points on which I have no hesitation in agreeing with the honourable gentleman; but there are some others requiring more mature consideration in practice, although, in principle, I feel bound to say that I agree with him. I agree with him in thinking that what is now considered, by custom, and in point of fact, the property of the Negro ought to be secured to him by law. I agree with him in thinking that it would be beneficial if the liberty of bequest were assured to him: perhaps it might be made conditional upon marriage. I agree with him in thinking that it may perhaps be desirable to do something with regard to the admitting the evidence of Negroes; but this I hold to be a much more difficult question, and one requiring more thorough

deliberation than I have yet had time to give to it. It is a point of such extreme delicacy, and demands so much local and practical knowledge, that I hardly feel justified in pronouncing at this moment any decided opinion upon it. Thus far I concur, that it well merits favourable and patient investigation; and for myself, and those who act with me, I can say that we should commence that investigation with a leaning to the view of the subject taken by the honourable gentleman. More at present I will not say.

I agree further with the honourable gentleman in thinking, that (though great difficulties may be experienced, not from the moral but from the legal part of the question) the process of the writ of *venditioni exponas*, by which the Slaves are sold separately from the estates, ought, if possible, to be abolished.

I have mentioned these particulars as those which have most immediately attracted the attention of his Majesty's servants. I can assure the honourable gentleman and the House, that they have looked at this subject with a sincere desire to render all possible assistance to the undertaking of the honourable gentleman, and to co-operate in every practicable measure for ameliorating the condition of the Negroes.

I should ill discharge my duty this day, after the warning of the last few weeks, during which this great subject has been in discussion, if I were not to say that, upon most of the particulars which I have mentioned, if not upon all, there is every disposition among those who may be considered as representing the colonial interests in this House and in this country, to give them a fair, liberal, and candid consideration.

The immediate question before the House may therefore be narrowed to this point,—whether it is better to enter upon this question in a temper of mind unembittered by the retrospect of past evils and atrocities, and with a chance of carrying with us a degree of consent on the part of those most interested and most exposed to the hazard of injury from any change; or, at the risk of angry discussions,

which, however innocuous in this House, yet, if echoed in other places, might be attended with the most frightful consequences, to adopt at once the propositions of the honourable gentleman. The question is, whether, upon the declaration of principles now made to the House, the honourable gentleman and his friends will be contented with the resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose, or will press his motion to a division, at all the hazards which I would rather leave to be imagined than describe.

There is, however, one point in the honourable gentleman's statement upon which I certainly entertain a difference of opinion: I mean, the proposal of fixing a period at which the children of Slaves shall be free. I doubt—not from any peculiar knowledge that I have of the subject, but upon the general principles of human nature—whether the measure recommended by the honourable gentleman would produce the degree of satisfaction which he anticipates, and whether it might not produce feelings of an opposite nature, I doubt whether in its operation it would not prove at once the least efficient and the most hazardous mode of attaining his own object. But I throw out these observations with the same frankness and candour with which I have expressed myself in approval of those points of the honourable gentleman's propositions in which I have had the pleasure to concur. I desire not to be bound by these observations any more than I feel myself bound to carry into effect; at all risks, and at all hazards, those points upon which I have given a favourable opinion. I declare openly and sincerely my present impressions, formed after the best deliberation that there has been time to give to the consideration of the subject. I trust and believe that I have not spoken positively upon any thing, upon which there is a probability of my having hereafter to retract what I have said. I speak doubtfully on some points, even where the bent of my opinion is very strong: but the one thing I am most anxious to avoid, is the declaration of any pledge of an abstract nature; the laying down any principle, the construction of which is to be left to those whose feelings

and prejudices and passions must naturally be awake to these discussions, and who, when they learn by a declaration of this House, that "the continuance of Slavery, and the principles of the Christian Religion, are incompatible," might imagine they saw, in such a declaration, what, I say, in abstract reasoning I have, I think, shewn they would be fairly entitled to see in it, their own immediate and unqualified emancipation. Lay down such principles I say, and those persons would have a right to draw that conclusion; and when the House had once made such a declaration, the qualification would come too late.

I am therefore peculiarly desirous that the qualification should be embodied in the same vote which affirms the principle, and that nothing should be left to inference and construction; that even the hopes held out for the future should be qualified with the doubts, with the delays, and with the difficulties to be surmounted before they can possibly be realized.

I will now, with the leave of the House, read the Resolutions which I propose to submit to the House for its consideration.

"1st, That it is expedient to adopt effectual, and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the Slave population in his Majesty's Colonies.

"2d, That through a determined and persevering, but judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.

"3d, That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose, at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the Slaves, the safety of the Colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein."

If the House should be inclined to adopt these Resolutions, I shall then follow them up with a

"4th, That these Resolutions be laid before his Majesty."

There now remains but one point, which, after having so fully expressed my sentiments to the House, I am peculiarly anxious to impress upon its consideration: I mean, the mode of execution—the manner in which the Executive Government would have to act in respect of these Resolutions, in the event of their adoption. The House is aware, that over certain of the colonies in the West Indies, the Crown exercises immediate power, without the intervention of any Colonial Legislature. In their case, the agency of the Crown, of course, will be more free and unfettered than in Colonies having their own separate government. At the same time, I must declare, that we have a right to expect from the Colonial Legislatures a full and fair co-operation. And, being as much averse by habit, as I am at this moment precluded by duty, from mooted imaginary points, and looking to the solution of extreme though not impossible questions, I must add, that any resistance which might be manifested to the express and declared wishes of Parliament, any resistance, I mean, which should partake, not of reason, but of contumacy, would create a case (a case, however, which I sincerely trust will never occur) upon which his Majesty's Government would not hesitate to come down to Parliament for counsel.

I will not further prolong a discussion (which it has been my object to bring to a close) by any general reflections further than this, that giving every credit as I do to the motives which have actuated the honourable gentleman, I am sure he will feel that it is perfectly consistent with a complete sympathy with his moral feelings, and consistent equally with my duty, that I should look at this subject more practically, more cautiously, and more dispassionately, and (if the honourable gentleman will permit me to say so much) more prudently than the honourable gentleman; whose warmth, however, though I must not imitate, I do not mean harshly to blame.

And further, I would assure those whose interests are involved in this great question, that whatever may be the

result of the present discussion, I and my colleagues are not more anxious, on the one hand, to redeem the character of the country, so far as it may have suffered by the state of Slavery in the Colonies, than we think ourselves bound, on the other, to guard and protect the just interests of those who, by no fault of their own, by inheritance, by accident, by the encouragement of repeated Acts of the Legislature, find their property vested in a concern exposed to innumerable hazards and difficulties, which do not belong to property of another character; such as, if they had their option (as their ancestors had it), they would doubtless, in most cases, have preferred. If they have stood these hazards, if they have encountered these difficulties—and have to stand and encounter them still—we may not be able to secure them against the consequences of such a state of things; but at least we have no right to aggravate the hazards or the difficulties which we cannot relieve. (See Appendix B.)

The original Resolution was then read by the Speaker, and the question put upon the Amendment.

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—Before I enter into any discussion of the question before the House, I think it necessary to say a few words in vindication of the line pursued by my honourable friend near me (Mr. F. Buxton) on the present occasion; more particularly with reference to the proposition with which my honourable friend commenced his speech. My honourable friend addressed himself to a British Parliament, and fully, fairly, and candidly, told the House what were his real intentions in submitting his motion to its consideration,—a gradual but total extinction of Slavery in the Colonies of this country. With powerful eloquence, and the justest reasoning, my honourable friend appealed to the understandings of honourable Members, and called to their recollection the sound and wholesome principles of the British Constitution;—principles which declared to be objectionable, in the highest degree, the very existence of Slavery. But

it is rather my wish to avoid any useless repetition of points on which there is no dispute; and to adopt the opinions and principles which have already been fully acknowledged, and indeed justly respected.

It is with no little pleasure that I heard my right honourable friend (Mr. Canning) accede to several of the propositions made by my honourable friend near me (Mr. Buxton). I refer particularly to the abolition of the system of female punishment; the reservation of certain days to the Negroes for labouring on their own account; the discontinuance of the practice of working on Sundays; the abolition of the Sunday markets; the abolition of the driving-system, or of urging the Field Slaves to their labour by the whip; and, above all, the introduction and universal establishment of a system of religious instruction, and of the moral reformation of the Slaves, of which marriage was of course to be one of the principal particulars. But I wish my right honourable friend to consider, what I think he does not seem sufficiently to bear in mind, in relation to what has been often alleged of the mischiefs likely to arise from the discussions of this question, that whatever may be the dangers to be apprehended from such discussions, there are yet no dangers so great, or so formidable, as those which must arise from a continuance of the present West-Indian system. And therefore I must assure my right honourable friend, that in directing a superintending and vigilant eye to the state of things in the West Indies, and by endeavouring to apply remedies to the existing grievances, with a fair regard to the interests and well-being of all the parties concerned, he is doing no more than discharging duties powerfully incumbent on him as a Member of the British Legislature, and still more as a Minister of the Crown, and a watchful guardian of the general interests of this Country. And now, Sir, let me say a word or two on my honourable friend's having laid the grounds of his resolution in the principles of the Christian religion.—What could be more reasonable, what more appropriate, in the

Senate of a nation which calls itself Christian and acknowledges the Divine authority of the holy Scriptures ?

Again; let me remind my right honourable friend, and the House, that it was necessary for my honourable friend boldly to assert and maintain the rights and privileges of the Black population in the West Indies. At the same time, I am thoroughly convinced, that there is no man more ready than my honourable friend (Mr. Buxton) fairly to consider the situation in which many of the West-Indian proprietors would be placed in the event of the execution of his plans, the effect of which undoubtedly would be gradually to extinguish Slavery in the West Indies. I entirely agree with my right honourable friend, in thinking, that nothing would be more unfair than to consider those whose interests are involved in this question, in any invidious point of view: but surely, on the other hand, if we are really desirous of putting an end to slavery, it is absolutely necessary boldly to state that it is a great and intolerable grievance.

With respect to the dangers which may arise from a discussion of these points, I can only state, that my right honourable friend must enter into an investigation of the requisite measures for putting an end to the evils acknowledged to exist, with a recollection of the infinite danger which must attend a continuance of the present system of slavery. Many reasons present themselves to my mind why it is far safer to get rid of these evils altogether, than to modify them. But I must remind the House, that, as to the discussion being so dangerous as has been frequently alleged by those who oppose any alteration in the present system, the notion has been in fact contradicted, and exploded by the West-Indians themselves, who from time to time have been in the habit of inserting in their colonial newspapers articles which might be supposed to be of the most dangerous tendency, calculated to inflame the minds of the Black population, and even to tempt them to insurrection. Now, Sir, this fact, and it is impossible to dispute it, is a great encouragement to us in the present dis-

cussion ; for the House must be now aware, that whatever apprehensions concerning the effects, on the minds of the Negro Slaves, of discussions in this House, might be deemed reasonable by individuals resident in this country, yet that these alarms have not been felt in the slightest degree by those resident on the spot, where danger only could arise, and where the probabilities of it might be most justly estimated. There are doubtless, however, dangers great and serious, and even formidable, to be encountered ; but they are such as arise out of the state and circumstances of our West-Indian colonies, in relation both to their insular and their continental neighbours ; and on the whole, they are such as on the whole would be lessened rather than augmented by the reforms in the contemplation of my honourable friend.

I cannot forbear alluding to another point, which I confess has made a strong impression upon my mind. We have had laid before us " Returns of the Slave Population of the West-India Islands." I do not know whether my right honourable friend is aware of this important circumstance, that there is every reason to believe that, in all the West-India islands, the population has been for some years past, and is at this very time, decreasing. I beg the very particular attention of my right honourable friend to this fact ; and let the House also attend to it, because it will be a sort of specimen of the difficulties we may in future have to encounter. It is an established and well-known fact, that in our West-India islands, the Slaves, though in a climate similar to their own, instead of keeping up their numbers, have for a long series of years been gradually decreasing ; and though the decrease has been gradually lessening, yet these Returns clearly shew that it still continues. This decrease is the more extraordinary, because the Negro race is found to have greatly increased its numbers in every other country, even in the, to them, uncongenial climate of North America. The causes to which the Abolitionists chiefly referred this deviation from the ordinary course of nature,

this exclusion from the benefit of the fundamental law of nature established by the Almighty on the first formation of man, "Increase and multiply," were over-working, under-feeding, and licentiousness.

The West-Indians themselves, though acknowledging that the general licentiousness operated powerfully in producing this effect, ascribed the decrease of the Black population chiefly to the numerical disproportion of the sexes, the number of the women, they alleged, being greatly inferior to that of the men. We acknowledged, indeed, that, of the original importations, the greater proportion of almost every one consisted of men. But we maintained, that in almost all our islands, more especially in the two greatest, Jamaica, and still more Barbadoes, as the numbers born of the two sexes would only shew the ordinary small deviation from a complete equality, the inequality arising from the importations must long ago have ceased to exist. The West-Indians, however, went on contending for a large inferiority of number in the women, assigning in a great degree to this the strange phenomenon that the Slaves diminished, and thereby negating the operation of those circumstances in their treatment to which we ascribed the diminution. At length, however, the establishment of a Registry gave us a nearer approximation than ever before to the real numbers of the Slaves; and then what, Sir, was proved to be the real fact? That in every one of the West-India islands, so far was it from being true that it was this alleged disproportion which prevented the increase of the Negroes, there has been in truth no such disproportion existing; and that in fact in all our islands, except the lately settled island Trinidad, the women are in greater numbers than the men. As the whole population is made up of that of the different estates and families of domestic slaves, and as every owner had an accurate account of the number of his own, it is very surprising, indeed quite unaccountable, how the hypothesis, universally prevalent and enforced on us, could be believed; and yet such was the account invariably given to us. Let this

then be a proof that we ought not to trust implicitly to the accuracy of the statements received from the West Indies. But the important inference to be drawn from the decrease of the Slaves, even under the circumstances of an equality of the sexes, is, that we must find the means of encouraging the natural increase of the Negroes, or that the Planters will lie under the strongest temptations to resort once more to the old source of the Slave Trade, carrying it on illicitly. Something must be done, to effect an entire reformation in the system, not merely with a view to justice, and humanity, but also to sound policy: for however this country may be determined not to permit the recommencement of such a traffic, the temptation to renew it, which the deficiency of Slaves would hold out, would be too much for human nature, at least for human nature in the West Indies. The Register Bills that have been enacted by the different Colonial Assemblies, are altogether inadequate to their effect. I freely confess that I cannot depend upon them for producing the desired effect of preventing the illicit importation of Negroes; and let any one who may have any doubt on this head, remember what was formerly stated by the Colonial Assemblies themselves, that if the Abolition Law should be passed, it would be practically impossible to enforce it.

There are only two other matters on which I am anxious to say a few words. First, I entirely concur with my right honourable friend in thinking, that it is highly to be wished that the conversion of the Slaves into a free peasantry should rather be the gradual effect of the operation of moral causes, than that it should be suddenly effected by an Act of Parliament. But he will allow me also to tell him, and to tell the House, that when we consider the claims of these unhappy people, and the time that has been already lost in accomplishing this great and high duty, we ought not to prolong their slavery an hour longer than is absolutely necessary, with a view to their own benefit, as well as to the interests of other parties. I believe most sincerely that any reform which should convert the Slaves into a free

peasantry would be no less advantageous to the planters themselves than to those who are at present in bondage to them. Still it is deserving of serious consideration, whether it would be either wise, or just, or prudent, to leave to time the emancipation of the Slaves, allowing it to become general merely by the operation of principles such as have been alluded to; or whether it would not be fit to adopt something like the plan recommended about thirty years ago by the late Lord Melville, and which, if carried into effect, would have left at this time scarcely a single Slave in the whole of our West-Indian possessions. I cannot reflect that this plan was not carried into effect, without deep concern. But there is another point of extreme importance on which practically all parties ought to agree. It is, whether the improving of the condition of the Negroes ought to be the work of the British Parliament, or whether it ought to be left to the Colonial Legislatures? For myself, I frankly confess, that if the Colonial Legislatures would make the reform, I should greatly prefer it. But how is it possible for me to expect that they will do it? Have we not large experience on this head; and does not all our experience shew, that they will not do their duty? Do we not remember that, from the first moment when any proceedings were commenced for the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves, the Colonial Legislatures invariably opposed every endeavour of the kind? There were no consequences so fatal, no injuries so great, that were not in the first instance predicted as certain to be the effect of any interference, even to lessen the horrors of the Middle Passage; by which, it may be now necessary to state, was meant the conveyance of the wretched victims from Africa to the West Indies. Let me also call to the recollection of the House, that such was the case, not only when propositions of the kind came from persons who might be looked upon as obnoxious to the West Indians, or likely to be suspected by them; but when they were brought forward by individuals most respectable from their rank and fortune, and character;

and who had long been regarded by the planters with favour, as decidedly partial to their cause. In 1797, an honourable gentleman now sitting opposite to me (Mr. C. Ellis), who had shewed a disinterested spirit of benevolence towards the Negroes on his own properties, wished to prevail on the Colonists to adopt some general reforms. The personal efforts he had used, and the sacrifices he had made, were a testimony of his unquestionable sincerity. He was desirous of introducing a reform, that, if carried into execution, he hoped might have had the happiest results. But he wished his reform to be patronised and carried into effect by the Legislatures of the West Indies. The consequence was, that all his exertions were ineffectual; and that though his application was enforced by the most powerful of all pleas, viz. that, if they did not reform the system themselves, the British Parliament would infallibly pass the much dreaded Abolition Law, yet even with this enforcement, the Colonial Assemblies would do nothing. Again; it is not to be forgotten, that Mr. Bryan Edwards, the historian of the West Indies, and one of their chief champions, himself suggested the reform of one of the greatest practical grievances of the West Indies, viz. that of the Slaves being liable to be seized, and separately and even singly sold for the payment of their master's debts; and also the abolition of the Sunday market. He stated, that it was only necessary for the former of these objects to repeal a particular law of George II. We yielded most gladly to what he recommended. The law that stood in the way of this improvement was repealed accordingly. But to this day not one of the thirteen Colonial Assemblies has verified Mr. Edwards's prediction, that, so soon as they should be able, they would redress this crying grievance. Nothing whatever has been done, and the evil still remains in all its force. Will my right honourable friend then say, that he thinks such reforms as are necessary will be fairly and practically attempted by the Assemblies of the islands? Can he think it possible that they will? I know my right honourable friend's

talents and principles so well, that I am willing to believe he will not suffer himself to be imposed upon in this respect. But let him beware; for if he does rely on them, he will assuredly be disappointed. And, let it never be forgotten, as Sir Samuel Romilly used to exclaim, these poor Negroes, destitute, miserable, unfriended, degraded as they are, are nevertheless his Majesty's liege subjects, and are entitled to as much—aye, let me remind my right honourable friend, by the principles of our holy religion, to more—of the protection of the British Constitution, *because* they are deserted, destitute, and degraded. On this very account, they have a peculiar claim to our sympathy and protection. The great and the powerful, the noble and the affluent, ought to feel it their special duty to extend their aid to the weak, the helpless, and the oppressed. The object, I trust, will be accomplished in one way or another: Slavery is a great moral evil, and a great physical suffering; and I trust that, ere long, means will be found to put an end to it. It is impossible, in the present state of the world, and with all the knowledge that has broken in upon us, to suppose that Slavery can exist much longer.

I do not wish to enter into any invidious topics; though I confess my right honourable friend almost tempted me to do so, when he took upon himself to compare the state of the Slaves of antiquity with the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies. Let me remind him at least of one difference between the two: that among the ancients it was not in general difficult for the Slave, by his industry or by his good conduct, to obtain his emancipation in a few years; but we all know the extreme difficulty of doing so in the West Indies: we all know how in fact, of late, obstacles have been thrown in the way of individual manumissions. But upon this point I do not wish at this time to go into any unnecessary discussion. I will only, therefore, in conclusion, remind the House and my right honourable friend, that the grand point to be kept in mind is, that the great changes that are contemplated, and the

benefits resulting from them, must not only be recommended strongly to the Colonial Assemblies; but the Government at home must see them carried into effect. It is a part of the duty of Government to see that what is held out in the resolutions is in truth performed. I do not wish to state what is invidious; but it is necessary that something should be mentioned on this head, because I must say, without reserve, that hitherto neither Government nor Parliament itself has done its duty.

On the whole, I congratulate my honourable friend (Mr. F. Buxton) on the degree of success which has thus far attended his motion. He has made his appeal to the House and to the Country; and that appeal has not only been heard with attention, but has created the most general and lively interest. Let us hope and trust that my right honourable friend will pursue his course, the course he has declared that he will pursue; and that the benefits he wishes to be communicated to these unhappy beings may, in fact and practically, be secured to them. After all that my right honourable friend has conceded, I know not what my honourable friend proposes to do as to the motion he has made; but it may be observed, that we now stand in a perfectly new situation, entirely different from that in which we stood at the time of our entering the House, and when the motion was brought forward. Let it be remembered, that we have now an acknowledgment on the part of Government that the grievances of which we complain do exist, and that a remedy ought to be applied. We have also the assurance that a remedy shall be applied. This state of things must give the utmost satisfaction to my honourable friend, and to all those who feel interested in the success of his object; and under these circumstances, I will no longer detain the House, than by expressing my confidence that we shall this night lay the foundation of what will ultimately prove a great and glorious superstructure.

Mr. ELLIS.—There is something so fascinating in the pe-

culiar character of the eloquence of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, the topics also on which he has dwelt in his speech are calculated to appeal so forcibly to all the best feelings of his hearers, that it requires no ordinary effort to rise in opposition to him on such a subject. But though I am sufficiently conscious of this disadvantage, and of the still greater disadvantage of my own insufficiency, I feel myself called upon by a yet stronger sense of duty towards the class of persons to which I belong, whose interests are deeply implicated in this question, to stand up in support of their rights and in vindication of their characters. For, notwithstanding the declaration with which the honourable gentleman who made this motion commenced his speech, I must take the liberty of saying, that he did not very cautiously abstain from imputations of no light or uninvincible character; and I trust, therefore, that the motive which impels me thus to claim the indulgence of the House will induce them not to withhold it.

In standing up, as I do, on behalf of the planters of the West Indies, and as one of that body, I beg not to be considered as the champion of Slavery. As a West-India planter, I do not hold myself in any degree responsible for the establishment of that system. The planters of the present generation, most of them at least, found themselves, by inheritance, or by other accidental causes, in possession of property the fruit of the industry of their ancestors or other predecessors, and of capital vested in the West Indies by them, under the sanction of the Government and of the Parliament of this country, through their encouragement, and in reliance on their good faith. Thus circumstanced,—their own property, and that of their nearest connexions, intimately bound up with, and dependent upon, the existence of the scheme of society established in the Colonies,—what were the duties which these circumstances imposed upon them? I conceive them to have been—to administer that system with liberality—to exercise the power placed in their hands with

tenity and humanity;—in a word, to do all that depended on them, consistently with their own safety and the security of their property, to mitigate and progressively to improve the condition of the Negroes. If they have failed in these duties, they have incurred a fearful responsibility, and to a higher Tribunal than this House. But for the establishment of Slavery, for the inherent vice of the system, for that original sin, they are not responsible: the responsibility attaches upon the Government who framed the system, and upon the Parliaments which have repeatedly sanctioned it, and who framed and have upheld it, for views of British policy. For be it remembered always, in treating this question, that our colonial system was not established for the sake of the Colonies, but for the encouragement of British commerce and manufactures; for the purpose, to use the words of the Navigation Act, “of rendering his Majesty’s Plantations beyond seas beneficial and advantageous to this kingdom, in the employment of English ships and English seamen.” It is the same with respect to the Slave Trade. The Slave Trade, in its origin, had no reference to our Colonies: there are on record Slave-trade voyages, anterior to the period of our possession of the West-India Colonies: it has been carried on for its own sake, and in order to supply foreign countries with Slaves; and the British Parliament has invariably treated it as a part of that system of navigation and commerce upon which our naval power mainly rested, and with which the interests of the Colonies were connected only as secondary and subservient, and as being instrumental to the support of those great paramount British objects. Parliament, for nearly a century and a half, encouraged, watched over, and regulated that trade, not as was the case from the period when the honourable Member for Bramber undertook the subject for purposes of mercy towards the unhappy victims of it, but for the purpose of securing to British subjects the exclusive profits of the traffic, and in order to render it, under our navigation laws, one of the means of our maritime strength. Parlia-

ment enacted, that no Slave ships should be admitted into our Colonies but from British ports; that they should be British built, and navigated by three fourths British seamen. Let not Parliament then suppose, that it can throw off from itself, and fix upon the planters in the Colonies, the responsibility for this long course of crime. The planters, even if they can be considered as participators in the crime of the Slave Trade, must be acknowledged to have been seduced into it by the mother country. For the establishment of Slavery, therefore, they are in no degree responsible: it was exclusively the work of the Government and Parliament of Great Britain; and whatever may be the sacrifice involved in a due atonement for it, they are bound to take it upon themselves. They have no right to inflict it upon the Colonies.

It is admitted, on the part of those who bring forward this proposition, or at least it has been declared, that it is not their intention to injure or destroy the property of the planters. All *they* ask is, the fair protection promised under the faith of Parliament: Parliament is bound to fulfil its duty equally to both parties—to the Slaves and to the Planters. We are bound not to allow a natural propensity to indulge an amiable feeling of humanity, to lead us away from the discharge, however irksome or inconvenient, of the obligations of justice: still less should we be warranted in permitting an intemperate zeal, in the performance of the one duty, to lead us into a course which would produce the violation of both of them. The force of this obligation has been fully admitted by the honourable gentleman on the other side, and especially by the honourable Member for Bramber, in the speech in which he called the attention of the House to the subject early in the present session; he then admitted, that we had not a right “to pay a debt of African humanity with West-Indian property.” (See Appendix C.) All I ask of him, and of the House, is the equal performance of these duties: I would even be content to rest the decision of this question, and my whole argument on behalf of the West-India planters, on the

fair fulfilment of one of them; namely, the duty which this country owes to the Negroes. I entreat the House to recollect that liberty, though the greatest of all political blessings, is a blessing capable of being abused, if conferred on persons not fitted to receive it; and abused to the injury of those very persons upon whom it is bestowed. If the result of emancipation were to be, as at this moment it would probably be in Jamaica, or in any other of the islands, where there are the means of subsistence in the mountains abundantly sufficient for all the wants of savage life, and when there would exist no stimulus to labour but such as arises from the artificial wants of civilized society; if the result were to be, that the Negroes on their emancipation were to betake themselves to the mountains—to revert to their former habits of savage life—if, forgetting the doctrines and truths of Christianity as yet but recently and imperfectly inculcated, they were to relapse into their former superstition—if, abandoning the habits of peaceful industry, they were to have recourse to plunder and violence for subsistence; if such were to be the result of emancipation, let me ask whether we should have performed our duty towards the Negroes.

I conceive our duty to be very different—to be more difficult and more complicated. I conceive it to be—so to prepare them, by religious instruction, by the gradual acquisition of civil rights, and by the habits of civilized life, that the influence of those habits may be substituted for the authority of the master whenever that authority shall be withdrawn; that they may become honest, peaceable, moral, and industrious members of a free society, and that the transition may take place without a convulsion. In a word, I conceive the only means of making atonement for the original crime of the Slave Trade, and the establishment of Slavery, to be, through the benefits which we may thus confer on the progeny of those upon whom we inflicted the original injury.

It is, because, in my opinion, the resolutions proposed

by the honourable Member would not have the magic power of effecting this object—because, I think, the consequence of adopting them must inevitably be to produce results in direct opposition to the purpose which I have no doubt the honourable gentleman and his friends have in view—because I am satisfied that the resolutions, if passed, would operate like a proclamation of enfranchisement—because the declaration that their liberty had been withheld from them, contrary to the principles of Christianity and the British Constitution, could not fail to be considered by the Slaves as an admission of their right to assert their liberty by whatever means of violence might be in their power, that I must protest against this work being undertaken by this House. If this House were to resort to compulsory enactments, producing resistance on the part of the Colonies, whether their resistance should arise from unreasonable apprehensions, or our enactments should originate in ignorance of the feelings and habits of the inhabitants of the West Indies; whichever party might be in the wrong, it matters not; if you were to hold up to the Negroes the spectacle of the British Parliament legislating in their favour, and the Colonial Assemblies resisting the benevolent intentions of Parliament; would not the Negroes consider the British Parliament as their benefactors, and the Colonial Assemblies as their oppressors? And could the existence of such a feeling be by possibility consistent with contentment, or long even with submission?

I conceive that it is not fair or just to say, with the honourable Member who spoke last, that the House is driven to this extremity because the Colonial Legislatures proceed so slowly in the work of amelioration. I beg the honourable gentleman and the House to reflect what has been the rate of progress by which the peasantry of Europe have arrived at their present condition from their former state of villeinage; how large a portion of Europe is, even at this moment, inhabited by a population which, if somewhat raised in the scale of society above the Ne-

groes of the West Indies, are scarcely in a less degree depressed below the state of freedom which is enjoyed by the subjects of the Crown of Great Britain. It is therefore only fair to consider how far a slow progress may be essential to a peaceable transition from slavery to freedom, at all times and in all countries; and we must not forget how much the difficulties are complicated and increased, and the dangers augmented, I should say, almost incalculably, in the case of our Colonies, by the difference of colour—by the feelings and prejudices associated with that distinction—by the overpowering numbers and physical force of the Slave population as compared with the White inhabitants of the colonies—and by the great political power which must of necessity be conveyed by an equal participation in all the civil rights which are enjoyed by British subjects under our free constitution.

After taking into account all these considerations, and giving due weight to the complications introduced into the question, by the fears of the one party, and the claims of the other, we shall find that this is a problem, perhaps, of more difficult solution than any that was ever submitted to the legislature of any country. It is only by looking fairly at this difficulty, that we can judge the right which we have to charge the colonial legislatures with being culpably slow in the progress which they have made. (See Appendix D.)

Perhaps I might be justified in resting their defence solely upon these general grounds; but as reference has been made by the honourable Member who spoke last to an Address adopted by the House, on a motion which I had the honour to make in 1797, and as he has taken occasion to reproach the Assemblies of the islands with having paid little attention to the appeal then made to them, I feel myself rather personally called upon to advert somewhat more particularly to this part of the subject. I will frankly admit that the sanguine expectations in which I at that time indulged (I was then a very young man) have not been altogether realized: I admit

that I think more might and ought to have been done : I believe that more may, and I trust will be done by the Colonial Legislatures, when applied to, as there is reason to believe they will now be applied to, by the Government at home.

But while I make these admissions, I trust I may be allowed to state, on the other hand, that it is not quite fair to say nothing has been done by the Colonial Legislatures ; and that much of the reproach which has been cast upon them has been unmerited. In confirmation of this assertion, I beg leave to notice some of the enactments which have been passed in the Assembly of Jamaica, with a view to the improvement of the condition of the Negroes. I am sorry to trouble the House by going into these details ; but after the appeal which has been made to me, and after the reproaches to which I have referred, deeply implicating the characters of most respectable persons, I feel that I am in a manner compelled to enter into them. In the same year in which the Address which I have mentioned was voted by this House, in 1797, an Act was passed by the Assembly of Jamaica, with a view of promoting the religious instruction of the Negroes, and of affording further encouragement to respectable clergymen to establish themselves in Jamaica. In this Act it was made part of the duty of the curates and rectors of every parish to attend for a certain time on every Sunday in their churches, for the purpose of affording religious instruction to the Negroes or Persons of Colour who might be disposed to receive it. A fund was at the same time established for the maintenance of the widows of the deceased clergy. In the years 1801, 1807, 1809, and 1816, the consolidated Slave Laws were passed, forming a consecutive series of revisions of the Slave Laws from 1787 ; each revised law containing new regulations in favour of the Negroes. In the last law, passed in 1816, some clauses were inserted specially for the purpose of meeting some of the objections urged in this country against the colonial codes : one of them furnishing new

facilities to manumission by will, and providing protection for any Negroes detained in any jail or workhouse, alleging themselves to be free ; and making it imperative upon the senior magistrate to summon a special session for the investigation of such allegation.

This last revision of the Slave Laws was preceded by a Committee of the House of Assembly, who made a long and elaborate Report, in which they recommended, First, the prohibition of the sale of Slaves under writs of *venditioni exponas* ; next, the prohibiting the purchase of Slaves by middle-men,—a very improper practice, and one which certainly required a remedy ; and, thirdly, the enlarging of the powers of vestries as a council of protection, and the placing under their care the cases of all Negroes who might have cause of complaint against their masters. The two last of these recommendations were adopted by the Assembly. The first of them was taken into consideration by the House, with every disposition to amend the law ; but it was found to involve difficulties that had not been foreseen by the Committee—difficulties of a legal character, which the Assembly were not able to surmount. The Committee had also taken into their consideration the question of attaching the Negroes to the soil. The difficulties attending the enactment of a law of this nature are stated fully in their Report. The objections were such as either had reference to the inconveniences which might result from it in point of law, or to the hardship which the Negroes themselves might occasionally suffer, from being attached to a barren and unproductive spot. With respect to the enactment of this law, and the repeal of that of *venditioni exponas*, I have only to say, that if the honourable gentleman can obtain a solution of the legal difficulties from his Majesty's Attorney-General, or from the noble lord who presides in the court of Chancery ; and, if the inconveniences affecting the Negroes themselves cannot be obviated ; I think I may venture to say, no objections will be made of any other character—certainly

none on the part of the West-India Planters, connected with their own immediate interests. (See Appendix E.)

But this is not all that has been done by the Assembly. In 1817, a Law was also passed to make it imperative on every overseer or manager of an estate to give information to the coroner of the death of any Slave who may die otherwise than according to the common course of nature. In 1816, also, an Act was passed for the appointment of a curate in each parish with a salary of 300*l.* for the purpose of promoting the religious instruction of the Slaves. It was notified to the Assembly that this provision of 300*l.* currency (something more than 200*l.* sterling) was inadequate. The Assembly did not say, as they might have done, that the sum so provided was more than double the amount of the generality of curacies in this country, and even equal to the amount of many livings; but with great liberality they immediately increased the salary to 500*l.* currency.

If gentlemen should say, as has been not unfrequently the practice, that these enactments are a dead letter, I must beg leave most positively to deny the truth of such an allegation; and I appeal to the general improvement which has, as I understand, taken place in the condition of the Black population, in proof of the correctness of my assertion. In 1805, when I was myself in Jamaica, the treatment of the Slaves, I can venture to assert from my own observations, was such as reflected credit on the liberality and humanity of their masters; and I have been informed, and from authority which I cannot doubt, that since that period a further and very considerable improvement has taken place both in the habits and behaviour of the Negroes, and in their treatment by the White inhabitants. Since that period also, nearly the whole Negro population of Jamaica have been baptized; and I am further informed, that in many districts marriages have become very frequent among them. I do not state these improvements, as claiming any great credit on behalf of the Legislature of

Jamaica ; but I think I am justified in saying, that they bear me out in the assertion, that a general and progressive improvement has been, and is still, going on in that country. (See Appendix F.)

With respect to many of the regulations alluded to by the honourable gentleman who opened this debate, I believe that no objection will be offered on the part of the planters in the West Indies. For instance, as to the regulation for securing to the Negro by law, that property which he now possesses through custom only, I think I can venture to say, there will not be made the slightest objection. With regard also to a point which has been made the subject of great reproach—I mean what is commonly termed the driving system—I must beg leave to say, I do not believe, however confidently it may have been asserted, that the whip is used as a stimulant to labour. I believe it will be found that the whip is generally placed in the hands of the driver—who is always a confidential Negro—more as a badge of authority, than as an instrument of coercion. I admit, that it may be—as the appellation denotes—the remnant of a barbarous custom. But it is, in fact, considered at present only as a symbol of office. (See Appendix G.) It is not, however, of importance now to discuss this point ; for I am persuaded the planters will make no objection whatever to the prohibition by law of its use for either purpose.

With respect to another practice, the indecent punishment of females with the whip, there can be no doubt as to the propriety of passing a law for its prohibition. With regard to the abolition of Sunday markets, and the affording equivalent time to the Negroes to work on their own account, I have no hesitation in saying, that the planters would readily agree to such a proposition, provided that the means of employing the time so given up to the Negroes, in religious instruction, can, as I trust it will, be afforded. (See Appendix H.)—With respect to some other points adverted to by the honourable Member, I fear serious objections, and greater practical difficulties than he is

may be found to exist. I have shown
 that the West-India Company will con-
 sider any fair and reasonable proposal for the improve-
 ment of the condition of the Slaves. But gentlemen
 will not be surprised if modifications of detail, which
 might have occurred to them, should be deemed essential
 to the safe or beneficial adoption of such improvements in
 the colonies. It is with great reluctance that I trouble
 the House of going into these details; but there is another
 point on which so much stress has been laid, that I cannot
 pass it over. Much obloquy has been cast upon the colonies
 on account of the general neglect paid to religious
 duties in those countries, and the licentious habits both of
 the Black and White inhabitants. I am far from meaning
 to be the apologist of such a state of manners: but I must
 beg it to be recollected, that, among other paramount rights
 which the mother country has retained, she has included
 that of the superintendance and patronage of the Church
 Establishment in the colonies. She has undertaken to pro-
 vide them with religious instruction: she has placed the
 clergy under the jurisdiction of an English bishop: and
 she has given to the Governor of each colony, who is ap-
 pointed by the Crown, the nomination of all the livings.
 The sole and single duty left to the colonies is the charge
 of providing salaries for the clergy. If that duty has been
 discharged by them with a degree of liberality which sets
 all reproach at defiance;—if that very liberality has ope-
 rated as a temptation to the abuse of the patronage so
 reserved by this country;—if clergymen have been select-
 ed with less regard to their fitness for the due performance
 of their religious duties than to their need of the large
 profits of the livings; and if the clergy, so appointed, did
 not pay that attention to the moral and religious instruc-
 tion of the Negroes which they ought to have done, and
 which all admit to be so desirable; if they have not ob-
 tained that influence over, and that respect from, the White
 inhabitants of the colonies, which belongs to their sacred
 office, I ask where does the responsibility attach for

the bad state of morals of a society so neglected, as to that point upon which the morality of all society must depend? (See Appendix I.) I do not mean to insinuate, that such complaints can be truly urged against the clergy in the colonies at the present moment: I believe, on the contrary, that the church patronage, in the island of Jamaica at least, is judiciously bestowed by the noble Duke at the head of the government there; and I beg leave to offer to the right reverend prelate, under whom the clergy are at present placed, the humble tribute of my gratitude for the zeal and interest which he has shewn in furthering the religious instruction of the Slaves. But the present state of morals and manners in the West Indies, is the fruit of seed sown long ago, and not easily nor speedily to be eradicated. Be the responsibility, however, as to the cause, where it may, the duty of remedying the evil, I agree, is not the less urgent. But that remedy is not to be found in the emancipation of the Negroes. No mode of arguing can be more fallacious, nor, I must take the liberty of saying, more unfair, than to cite the bad state of morals in the West Indies, as a reason for the enfranchisement of the Slaves. It may be an argument *ad invidiam*, a powerful means of exciting feelings prejudicial to the inhabitants of the colonies, but it can be no reason for emancipation. Emancipation is not the only, nor the best remedy—as that argument would imply—the best, and, I will venture to say, the only remedy for the present state of morals in the colonies, is the influence of religion. Emancipation, I contend, has not, *per se*, any tendency to remedy the evil. The utmost state of moral licentiousness, we all know, is compatible with the utmost degree of political freedom. And freedom, if given to the Negroes before they are fitted to receive it, would only confirm and aggravate the evil. (See Appendix K.) We must therefore look to another course. The only course, as I conceive, consistent alike with the duties of real humanity towards the Negroes, and of justice towards the proprietors in the colonies, is that recommended in the Resolu-

tions of my right honourable friend. In pursuing that course, the Government are entitled to the fair and honest co-operation of the West Indians in this country, and in the colonies; and I trust that the confidence which will be inspired by the able and statesmanlike manner in which my right honourable friend has treated this question, will ensure the application to the Colonists not being made in vain. Time was, when I should have hazarded the anticipation that such a course would have also met with the approbation of honourable gentlemen most particularly interested in favour of the Africans. That course is indeed pointed out and described with equal distinctness and eloquence, by a writer supposed to be the organ of their sentiments; and an authority to which I am particularly glad to be able to appeal, as not being liable to the suspicion of any undue partiality to the West-Indians. In describing the views of the Abolitionists, in respect to the future emancipation of the Negroes, he says,—“ They did not aim at an emancipation to be effected by insurrection in the West Indies, or to be ordained precipitately by positive law: but they never denied, and scrupled not to avow, that they did look forward to a future extinction of Slavery in the colonies; to be accomplished *by the same happy means which formerly put an end to it in England*; namely, by a benign, though insensible, revolution in opinions and manners, by the encouragement of particular manumissions, and the progressive melioration of the condition of the Slaves, till it should *slide insensibly* into general freedom. They looked, in short, to an emancipation, of which *not the Slaves, but the masters*, should be the willing instruments or authors.” p. 8.

The writer then goes on to describe the particular mode in which the extinction of Slavery was accomplished in England.

“ In England, if it be asked what cause most powerfully contributed to the dissolution of the degrading bondage of our ancestors, the answer must clearly be, The extreme favour shewn to individual enfranchisements by

the judges and the laws. That baneful growth of foreign conquest, or early barbarism, *villeinage*, had nearly overspread the whole field now covered with the most glorious harvest of liberty and social happiness that ever earth produced, and where not one specimen of the noxious weed remains; yet it was *not ploughed up by revolution*, or mown down by the *scythe of a Legislative Abolition*, but was plucked up, *stalk by stalk*, by the progressive hand of *privats and voluntary* enfranchisement. Slavery ceased in England only because the last Slave at length obtained his manumission, or died without a child." p. 40.

I would recommend this text to my right honourable friend and his colleagues for their guidance, in the prosecution of the great work which they have now undertaken. He will find it in the eighth and the fortieth pages of the Report of the African Institution, published in the year 1815. I will only add, that to the extinction of Slavery, so to be accomplished—namely, “by the same happy means as in England,” with the same regard to private property, and a similar maintenance of the public tranquillity,—I not only have no objection to offer, but, with such limited means as I possess, I should feel bound to lend my humble support. (See Appendix L.)

MR. WILLIAM SMITH.—Notwithstanding there may have been something objectionable in the tone and manner of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Ellis), I have on this account nothing to retort, but I am ready to give him all imaginable credit for the sentiments he has himself declared, and on which, I hope, he has consulted the opinions of a large number of persons, who in a resistance to a proposition of this nature would be extremely ready to join him. In many of the facts he has stated, and in much of the reasoning he has advanced, I am much disposed to agree, and in nothing more than what was insisted upon so strongly by my honourable friend, who began this debate, that this, the first, and every other step towards emancipation must be gradual. But still

there is this great distinction between us, more material than I wish it were, that while I admit, on the one hand, that the emancipation of the Negroes must be gradual, I think at the same time it is absolutely necessary that it should be rendered certain. It is upon the uncertainty of what has been proposed to us this night by the right honourable gentleman on the other side, that I feel myself most dissatisfied. The honourable gentleman who spoke last has referred to a measure taken by himself, or at his suggestion, many years ago, which unquestionably did him great honour at the time: he has acknowledged, that, because the execution of his proposition was left to the Legislatures of the West Indies, it did not effect all the good he had intended towards the Negroes. Now, on this particular point, I must beg leave to call the attention of the House, and of the right honourable gentleman, to a circumstance which he may have forgotten. On the 19th June, 1816, an honourable relative of the honourable gentleman on the other side, proposed a Resolution, from the conclusion of which I will read the following words: "And that his Royal Highness will be pleased to recommend, in the strongest manner, to the local authorities in the respective Colonies, to carry into effect every measure which may tend to promote the moral and religious improvement as well as the comfort and happiness of the Negroes." Here then we get into this dilemma; either the Colonial Assemblies have carried those ameliorating measures into effect, or they have not: if they have not, it may arise from one of two causes;—either that the parties were inattentive to the recommendation so strongly urged by this Government; or that they saw the moral and religious improvement, and the comfort and happiness of the Negroes, with eyes very different from those with which Parliament contemplated them. I should wish to know, then, what greater security we have at this moment for effective exertions on the part of the West-Indian Legislatures, if we adopt the Resolution of the right honourable gentleman which has just been proposed. We may

again declare, "That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the Slave population of his Majesty's colonies:" but are we sure that it will be of any use to declare it? After the adoption of the former Resolution which I have just noticed, we received information from the best authority that the laws passed in the West Indies were, even *avowedly* among themselves, only to gain time, and to quiet the Parliament and People of England.

[The honourable Member read a quotation from the document he referred to, and then proceeded.]

What I have to ask is this: Have the important objects, so recommended, been accomplished within the last seven years, or have they not? Nay, I will ask a question much more home: Has *any one* of the propositions mentioned to-night as almost a *sinè qua non*, with a view to the improvement of the condition of the Negro, been put even in a train of accomplishment in the West Indies? The fact is, that when the returns from the Colonies were laid upon the table the other day, (which, allow me to say, ought to have been there long since, having been ordered two years ago), I turned over the book, expecting, of course, to find the proper return from Jamaica; and it was not till after I had gone through it twice, that I could persuade myself, which I did very reluctantly, that it was really wanting. Not one word from that most important of all the islands. (See Appendix M.) And yet without that return we must take what has been done, merely upon the representations of the honourable gentleman: I mean what has been done, among other things, for the moral and religious improvement of the Negroes. I hold in my hand a Jamaica Gazette, dated no longer ago than in November last, in which it appears that a Committee of the House of Assembly reported, that, excepting in two or three large parishes, it had not been found that the measures taken for the religious improvement of the Blacks had been attended with success. As far as my own private information goes, I may say, that those measures have been attended with very

little advantage indeed. I am afraid it will be found that the expectations of the British Parliament, so far from being realized, have been grievously disappointed, and that, as to moral cultivation, the cause has gone as much backward in some cases as forward in others: so far too from any facilities having been given to manumission, it is now more difficult than it was at any former period.

It concerned me much to hear the honourable gentleman who spoke last, so openly object to any interference on this subject by the British Parliament. He was opposed to all interference and almost protested against it.

Mr. Ellis [interposed]—My observations were directed against the policy and consequences of interference.

Mr. William Smith.—I understood him to protest, or to say what nearly amounted to a protest, against any interference on the part of the Legislature here on behalf of the Slaves. If I was mistaken, I am glad of it; and I would rather take his interpretation of his own words, than attempt to put my own sense upon them. But if we are to be threatened with consequences, and to be talked to of the impolicy of interference on the part of the British Parliament, if the proceedings of the Colonists should be too dilatory and inefficient to meet the just expectations of this country; and if we are to forbear because we are so threatened, I fear that the conclusion of our undertaking for the benefit of the Negroes is by no means so near as we could desire. During the first period of our labours, we know, from the honourable gentleman himself, that they did not satisfy his own expectations; and, during the latter period, we are equally sure that they did not satisfy ours. What better ground of confidence do we now possess? I must indeed think that, after all we have seen upon this subject, after all the experience we have had, during a long series of years, we are entitled to demand some greater security than the right honourable gentleman, in his Resolutions, has given us.

It is not my intention at this period, and after what has been already said, to go into details; but I feel disposed

to contend against some of the most material points adverted to by the honourable gentleman. As to the first settlement of the colonies, it is a long way indeed for the honourable gentleman to look back; and I confess I see no necessity for it, since it makes nothing for his argument. I shall not follow him thither; but when he tells us, that the emancipation of the villeins, and the destruction of feudal tenures, was the work of many ages, I must ask whether gentlemen really do think that *now*, in the nineteenth century, we are to make no quicker progress in the annihilation of Slavery? and when we know too, that it is held in detestation by the whole British people? Have we no additional lights to guide us in 1823, beyond those which were possessed in 1400? We know, in point of fact, that at that time the trade in Slaves between Bristol and Ireland had scarcely ceased. In the 13th century, it is an unquestionable fact, that Englishmen were kidnapped on the shores of the Bristol Channel, then taken to Ireland, and there actually sold as Slaves, until the practice was put an end to by the *Irish* themselves—on account of its acknowledged inhumanity.

But I beg leave upon this, and every occasion when the opportunity offers, to enter my strongest and most indignant protest against the doctrine of treating man as the property of man; and never will I admit that claims of a nature so immoral and extravagant, are to be treated with as much delicacy as private rights of a legitimate description. Unless we utterly reprobate this idea in the first instance, we do almost nothing; and it is chiefly to endeavour to destroy this notion, which in some quarters seems even yet to prevail, that I have risen: very much indeed for this especial reason, do some of the propositions of my honourable friend deserve to be preferred to those of the right honourable gentleman. As long as we suffer ourselves, or any person or persons connected with us, or dependent upon us, to apprehend that it is possible to hold the same unconditional property in their fellow-men as in any other species of production—until that

impious opinion, destructive of all the distinctions which the Almighty has established between man and brute, is removed so completely that not a trace of it shall remain, the march of amelioration in the condition of the Negroes will be slow indeed.

Having said thus much, I will content myself with repeating, that I entreat the right honourable gentleman to give us a little more information as to the time when this amelioration, according to his Resolutions, may be expected to take place ; and as to the security on which he rests that, without the interference of Parliament, it will ever, at any definite period, however distant, receive its accomplishment.

The Right Honourable Sir GEORGE ROSE said, that although the turn the debate had taken induced him to address himself to the House far more briefly than he had originally intended, there still were considerations which he deemed it indispensable to lay before it. These arose from the altered state of Christianity amongst the Slave population of the British West-India settlements, which, whilst it is by no means such as it undoubtedly ought to be, is yet not so hopeless as it has been represented, and by no mean authorities. Even the University of Cambridge, in its petition, has declared, in speaking of the Negroes, that "religious instruction is nearly altogether precluded,"—a statement in no wise warranted by the case. He begged the House, however, to believe, that very far from considering the progress made, as that which ought to satisfy those interested in that highly important matter, he looked upon it but as the earnest of what remained to be done by the West-Indian proprietors, and as the proof of what may be effected. Being by inheritance one of these proprietors, he had, from the moment of becoming such, felt the immensity of the responsibility which devolved upon him as charged with the spiritual welfare of the Negroes on the property in question ; the small extent of it being of course no measure of that responsibility ;

and he was led to state circumstances which had occurred to himself, as testifying powerfully to the beneficent effects of religious instruction, both to the Slaves themselves, and to their owners. Inheriting a small landed property in one of the lesser islands, he at once ascertained that, both from local circumstances, and from the duties of the parochial clergy to their White and Coloured flocks, and from their being too highly educated for the missionary task among human beings so utterly ignorant, narrow-minded, and thoughtless, as the unconverted Negroes are, he could not obtain spiritual aid for them from the clergy of the Church of England. He then solicited it of the Moravian Brethren; doing so with the concurrence of respectable persons in the island, whose co-operation he was most anxious to obtain for the success of his views, as he knew how favourably they were impressed with regard to that very respectable and meritorious sect. Circumstances foreign to himself, but in which the pious and excellent persons to whom he addressed himself were blameless, rendered this application unsuccessful: there then remained no other source of religious instruction but that of the Wesleyan Mission. This was the one he was the least inclined to address himself to, on account of the strong feelings against them which he knew to exist in the bosoms of those whose co-operation was most important to the attainment of his views; but as no other resource remained, and the choice was between heathenism in its worst shape, and Christianity as preached by a Protestant sect, he could not hesitate a moment what to do. He was bound to say, that the Wesleyan Committee had met his wish for missionary aid with distinguished readiness, piety, and liberality. From his intercourse with its members, and his increasing knowledge of the operations of its servants, and of the subject in general, he had no less reason to be surprised, when, on the responsibility for the conduct of two other estates in Jamaica devolving in a great degree upon him, at a subsequent period, he found a state of things which was sufficiently in-

structive. On one of these estates, the best and the largest, the Negroes, though baptized, were in every other respect completely heathen; grossly depraved and immoral; and its affairs very disadvantageously circumstanced.

The condition of the other estate was decidedly better. It is in the immediate neighbourhood of one of the stations of the Wesleyan missionaries, whose labours had led the far greater part of the Black population to real and practical Christianity. He had ascertained that, in the year 1821, of 120 males, ten were found to be of conduct more or less reprehensible, and had been punished; of 130 females, one alone had received reprehension and punishment: and the attorney of the estate, a man of very respectable character, speaking of the great improvement in the morals and conduct of the Negroes within a few years, says, that "this improvement is so decisive, and the progressive discontinuation of punishment so marked, that he has a confident hope that punishment will die away, and be extinguished at no distant period; and that the beneficial effects are to be attributed almost exclusively to the labours of the Wesleyan missionaries,"—men whose zeal for the cause of their Master, and active exertions for the weal of their fellow-creatures, he pours in strong colours.

Sir G. Rose observed, that enough had now been said to shew the practicability of effecting the conversion of the Negroes, by following up the beginning thus made; that, besides these considerations of the highest nature, there can be no doubt of the power of Christianity alone to effect the objects of the House in favour of the Negroes, when it shall be general in the West Indies; that slavery cannot stand against real and universal Christianity; that obstacles to the emancipation of the Slaves, now multiplied and most serious, must vanish before it; that he could, were it not to trespass too much on the time of the House, give proofs that the improved religion of the Slaves had already reflected a light upwards, and acted on classes of society above them, producing new feelings, and a new

impulse ; and that in an island where the greatest progress had been made in evangelizing the Negroes, institutions were actually in progress, of which the West Indies would not have been regarded as susceptible a few years back. But he was bound to shew that he was holding out no illusive hope ; a regular improvement in the feelings of the West-India proprietors and of their attorneys, was in rapid progress, as demonstrable by various facts.

The Wesleyans are excluded from no one island ; and as, with respect to them alone, of all Christian teachers, have exceptions been taken, where *they* are admitted, all others assuredly are. Upon seven islands every estate is open to their missionaries ; and this will be the case with an eighth, when they can occupy the ground. They have access to a third of the estates in Jamaica, and to a half of those in Dominica ; and they have missions in Barbadoes. The following may be a tolerably accurate statement of the progress of conversion amongst the Slaves of the British West-Indies. There are in those settlements not quite 800,000 Slaves ; of them, about 63,600 are adults, under the care of the Wesleyans ; and of these, a very large proportion, are not merely baptized Christians, but such in their lives ; as those whose conduct is repugnant to their Christian profession are excluded from their communion. If to this number is added that of children under instruction, and children of Christian parents baptized, and who receive instruction as soon as they are capable of profiting by it, the total number of Christians aggregated to the Wesleyans may be taken at about 80,000. And if those in real communion with the Moravians, who form a considerable mass ; with the Baptists in Jamaica ; with the Scotch Church, and the agents of the London Missionary Society at Demarara and Berbice ; and with the Church of England ; are computed at 20,000, the total will be 100,000, or an eighth part of the whole. It is particularly to be observed, that besides whatever aid may be derived from other missionary sources, the Wesleyans alone, had

they sufficient pecuniary resources, could double the number of their preachers of the Gospel instantly, independently of whatever increased supply they may be able to furnish to meet a growing demand. Each of their missionaries costs them annually from 150*l.* to 250*l.*, according to the state of his family. The average may then be taken at 200*l.*, and one missionary is considered as competent to the instruction of 1000 Negroes. It is true that they wisely allow no one to pay their servants but themselves: but they accept of all contributions to their funds; and such proprietors as will contribute, either jointly with others, or separately, according to the circumstances of their estates, the means of maintaining a missionary, on the footing of expense and extent of labour specified, are sure of obtaining for their estates the spiritual labours necessary for the conversion of their Negroes.

The duty to obtain such instruction is solemn, urgent, and imperative: the facility of obtaining it is such as has now been shewn; and it is one that should be made positive and obligatory by law: and he felt an extreme anxiety that legal provision should be made to compel exertions of the landholders to procure teachers of the Gospel for the Negroes through the whole of the British West-India settlements; that returns of the progress of religious instruction should be required; and that every proprietor should at certain, and not distant periods, be obliged to shew, either such progress actually made amongst his Slaves, or that the absence of it arose from no fault of his; that he has made every practicable endeavour to promote it. (See Appendix N.)

Mr. BRIGHT.—But for the turn the debate has taken, it was my intention to have gone at full length into the subject; but after what has already passed, I shall not occupy the House for many minutes. It cannot be denied that the question is of the highest importance to the interests of a large class of his Majesty's subjects; I mean the West-

India planters; who, I think, have to complain of a good deal of unmerited obloquy thrown upon them out of doors. I believe that the conduct of the planters has been much misrepresented; that justice has not been done them generally in this country; and I believe that they have been occupied as actively as was possible, under the circumstances, in ameliorating the condition of their Slaves. I believe that by numerous authorities this could be shewn to be the fact; but I will not enter into that subject at the present moment. The West-Indians have a just right to complain that their remonstrances and representations have not been duly attended to at home, and that many misstatements have gone abroad as to the actual condition of things in the colonies. Some individuals, who have been instrumental in putting forth these misstatements, ought to have been better informed. I will read a passage from a publication upon this subject, which, as I contend, is wholly unfounded; because I will afterwards submit to the House a direct contradiction of it.

[The honourable gentleman here read a quotation from a tract in his hand, stating that the fines upon manumission had been nearly doubled.]

Now this assertion I will undertake to refute. Within two or three days, returns have been laid upon the table from nearly all the islands in the West Indies; and from these returns I will take the liberty of submitting certain results. It appears that, in the years 1808 and 1809, the tax on manumission in the island of Dominica was 100l.; and it is now only 16l. 10s. on Slaves born in the island: on foreign Slaves, it is 33l. In Jamaica, in the year 1797, the tax on manumission was 100l. currency; and so it continued till the year 1818: but now there is no tax on manumission; and out of 400 Slaves freed between the year 1808 and 1818, only five paid any thing for their liberation. In St. Vincent's, up to September 1820, the fine or tax was 100l.; but since that date there has been no fine or tax at all. Eight per cent. were paid by freemen under a former law. In Barbadoes, from 1808 to 1816, the

fine on the manumission of a female was 300*l.*, and of a male 200*l.*; and so it continued until August 1816, when the fine was repealed: since that time, 250 Slaves have been freed. In Antigua there has been no tax or fine on manumission, nor have there been any fees paid. In Tobago there is at this time no payment at all on the manumission of a Slave. In St. Christopher's there was no tax or fine on manumission from 1808 to 1821. In Tortola in 1812 there was a fine of 6*l.* 12*s.*; and under that law only fourteen paid the fine; and it expired in 1813. In Trinidad there is no tax or fine on manumission. In Demarara a large sum is sometimes imposed; but it is thrown into the Poor Fund, upon which the Slaves have a claim.

After these statements from official documents, let me ask the House if I have not made out, that in respect of manumission, in nearly all the colonies, the tax or fine has been remitted from time to time, and in some of them that it does not exist at all. What then becomes of the assertion, that the fines upon manumission have been nearly doubled? Yet that assertion was made by the honourable Member for Bramber, who, on this most important point, seems not to have looked at the returns upon the table. Have I not overturned the proposition? Have I not shewn that it is without a shadow of foundation; and that the fines upon manumission have been reduced or abolished in Dominica, Jamaica, St. Vincent's, Barbadoes, Antigua, Tobago, St. Christopher's, Tortola, Trinidad, and Demarara? I quoted the words of the honourable gentleman's pamphlet, and they will bear but one meaning; and I put it to any man whether that meaning is not, that at this time there are heavy fines upon manumission, and that the fines have been greatly increased. (See Appendix O.)

There are many other instances in which the West-Indians have been harshly and unfairly treated by their opponents. There is a most notorious book which has been distributed in this country, which is generally believed to be an honest and true representation of facts; but it is far

from it. I mean the book entitled, "Negro Slavery." I impute a bad intention very reluctantly to any man; but I do impute a bad intention to the man who put this book together. In that book a letter of the Rev. Mr. Cooper has been much talked of: an extract is given from it, or professed to be given from it; but I will compare Mr. Cooper's letter itself with what is said of it in the pamphlet.

[The honourable gentleman here read the quotation to which he referred.]

Does not this, let me ask, convey a very strong imputation upon the Jamaica planters? But if I can shew, as I will do, that such an imputation was not in the mind of the writer of the letter, ought it to go forth to the country with that interpretation? The real passage, as it stands in Mr. Cooper's letter, is this.

[Mr. Bright read the passage.]

I put it to the House whether what is printed in this book called "Negro Slavery," as a fair quotation, is so, or such as ought to be promulgated as the real sentiments of this respectable gentleman. (See Appendix P.)

The author of the same work goes on, in another place, to quote Dr. Williamson, a medical man, who for a long time resided in the island of Jamaica. Of course he might be conversant with scenes of the utmost distress, if they occurred there: his object was to apply remedies to the evils he witnessed, and his statement is highly creditable to the humanity of the planters of Jamaica. I will read one or two quotations from what he says, to prove what I have advanced. I admit that passages may be found to shew considerable mischief and considerable evil may exist under the present system; yet the whole result of his opinion is highly favourable to the colonists, and to their management of the Negroes.

[The honourable gentleman read several passages from the statements of Dr. Williamson.]

I could cite innumerable instances of the same kind; so that it is not fair that he should be put forward as a witness!

upon the other side, and against the planters of the West Indies. (See Appendix Q.)

Mr. D. SYKES.—I am most happy to hear the statements of the honourable Member opposite (Sir G. Rose), with respect to the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies; but I confess I should have received still greater satisfaction if the right honourable gentleman had been more explicit as to the mode, time, and manner in which the future emancipation of the Slaves is to be attained. In this respect the House is as yet left in almost total darkness. It was my intention to have taken a fuller share in to-night's debate, and to have entered largely into a subject, in my view, more interesting than any that has engaged the attention of Parliament: but after the conciliatory, and in many respects satisfactory, speech of the right honourable gentleman, I shall occupy the attention of the House for a very few minutes. The difference between the Resolutions moved by my honourable friend, and those of the right honourable gentleman, is not so wide as to call on the friends of the former for an extended discussion.

The main object of my rising is to say a few words in answer to an honourable and learned friend of mine, sitting behind me (Mr. Bright). He has thrown out some observations with respect to those engaged in discussions upon Negro Slavery out of doors. He has addressed a speech against the pamphlets of others who are not now present; and who consequently cannot be heard in support of their own statements. With regard to the author of the pamphlet entitled "Negro Slavery," my honourable and learned friend has asserted that he has misquoted Mr. Cooper. Now I confess I do not see in what manner the author of the pamphlet has misquoted him; and, as I understand the passage, he has in substance stated the same thing. The point in dispute relates to the use of the whip; and I really think the same sense is conveyed in both passages.

The honourable Member, after having dwelt at some length upon this pamphlet, adverted to the work of Dr. Williamson; but my honourable and learned friend does not seem to have been more triumphant in this quotation than in the other. Dr. Williamson is a staunch friend to the system of Negro Slavery; and the honourable Member reads a passage to the House, shewing that the result of the Doctor's observations was highly favourable to the planters of the West Indies. It is not in the least surprising that such passages are to be found in this book; which was quoted expressly as being the work of an adverse witness. But does my honourable friend mean to say, that the cart-whip is not the main organ of communication between the Negro and his owner? Does he mean to deny that it is used to this very day; that it is suspended over the unhappy Slaves during the time of their labour; and that it is uninterrupted until they go to their miserable rest at night? But facts have been stated over and over again, on this and on every other part of their case, which must have already produced their effect upon the House—more effect than all the arguments which had ever been urged by the ablest advocate for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. Were more wanting, I have now in my pocket a file of Jamaica Gazettes which would furnish them, where is advertised the sale of Negroes, together with chattels of various kinds; and where we have lots of cattle, household furniture, and Slaves, coupled in the same advertisement.

Then with respect to property; it is absurd to talk of it. The evidence of these unhappy beings is never taken; and what means have they therefore of defending their property, when it is the acknowledged law of the country that the testimony of the Slave cannot be taken in a court of justice. Upon no consideration whatever is it admitted. And here let me observe the wide difference between the West-Indian Slaves and those in other parts of the world. I confess I was somewhat surprised at the comparison drawn by the right honourable gentleman be-

tween the state of these Slaves and the state of Roman Slavery ; for it seems to have been entirely forgotten in this comparison, that there is this great and obvious distinction, that the Roman Slave was never excluded from giving testimony in a court of justice. I think I may state this in the most unqualified manner. In our colonies, however, the Slaves are wholly excluded from giving such testimony.

I did not rise to enter into any detail on this question, but rather to express my pleasure that this subject is now in the hands of Ministers. I hope that they will keep a watchful eye over the colonial legislatures. But I must say, that if the right honourable gentleman places much confidence in their exertions, I fear he will be most grievously disappointed.

Mr. Bright said a few words in explanation, which were inaudible.

Mr. MARRYAT.—It is far from my wish, Sir, to detain the House ; but I am anxious to correct a mistake into which the honourable Member opposite has fallen. I understood the honourable Member for Hull to say, that the evidence of Negro Slaves is wholly excluded from courts of justice in the West Indies. Now I feel it my duty to set him and the House right upon this point. In how many other islands the testimony of Slaves is admitted I know not ; but this I well know, that no longer ago than 1818, a law passed in the island of Dominica, making the evidence of Slaves admissible ; and I am happy to state further, that this law has been taken into consideration by the Committee of West-India planters and merchants in this metropolis ; and they having found that no inconvenience has arisen from that experiment in Dominica, I have every reason to believe, that, under their recommendation, a similar law will be introduced in every other of the West-India islands. (See Appendix B.)

The honourable Member for Norwich asked the House

if any thing had been done in consequence of the Addresses presented to the Throne seven years ago, pressing strongly for an improvement in the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies? To this question I will answer in the affirmative; and I will produce official documents in proof of this assertion. It is somewhat extraordinary that the honourable Member for Norwich has never read the Reports which were made by the different Governors, giving an account of the state of the Slaves in the islands over which they preside, in answer to the Addresses in question. In order to put the House, and the honourable gentleman, in possession of facts with which they seem at present to be unacquainted, I will beg the indulgence of the House while I read the Reports on this subject, extracted from "Farther Papers relating to Slaves in the Colonies, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons 19th June, 1818," but not actually delivered to the members till the session of 1819, which gave the following statements from the different islands.

DOMINICA.

(Extract of a Letter from Governor Maxwell to Earl Bathurst.)

"The Slaves in this island in general appear to be liberally treated and protected; and I think the Legislature is inclined to adopt any measure for their amelioration that may be recommended by his Majesty's Government, or experience may suggest." (p. 112.)

HONDURAS.

(Extract of a Letter from Lieut.-Colonel Arthur to Lord Bathurst.)

"With regard to the state of the Black population, I have the most heartfelt gratification in assuring your lordship that it is scarcely possible it can be meliorated.

"So great is the kindness, the liberality, the indulgent care of the wood-cutters towards their Negroes, that Slavery would scarcely be known to exist in this country was it not for a few unprincipled adventurers in the town of Belize, who exercise authority over their one or two Slaves in a manner very different from the great body of the community.

“The steps which I have taken with one of those characters, as reported in my dispatch to your lordship of the 21st ult., will, I have no doubt, be attended with the best effect; and I turn with pleasure from this unpleasant exception, to the general features of the picture, which are so truly excellent.

“Amidst all our difficulties in other respects, it is quite impossible, my lord, that any thing can surpass the treatment of the Slaves, men, women, and children, in this country. The system adopted in most other parts of the West Indies, of allotting to each Slave a patch of ground, on which he is to raise food for himself and family, is here quite unknown.

“All the Slaves are most abundantly fed by their proprietors, on the best salted provisions, pork generally, at the rate of five pounds per week for each man, with yams, plantains, rice, salt, flour, and tobacco. Every Slave has a Moschetta pavilion, blanket, and shirt found him; also two suits of Osnaburgh annually. The men and lads work on account of their owners five days in the week; for the Saturday’s labour they are entitled, by usage which has become a law, to half a dollar; and the Sunday is entirely their own.

“The women are only employed in domestic purposes, and, if they have young children, no work whatever is required from them by their masters. In fact, my lord, although I came to the West Indies three years ago a perfect Wilberforce as to slavery, I must now confess, that I have in no part of the world seen the labouring class of people possess any thing like the comforts and advantages of the Slave population of Honduras.” (pp. 115, 116.)

ST. CHRISTOPHER’S, NEVIS, MONTERRAT, TORTOLA.

(Extract of a Letter from Governor Probin.)

“The Slaves in general appear to be contented and happy.” (p. 117.)

ST. LUCIA.

(Extract of a Letter from Major-General Douglas.)

“The effects of the Abolition of the Slave Trade are

certainly favourable to the condition of the Black population ; inasmuch as it is now more than ever the interest of every proprietor to preserve the health of his Slaves, and particularly to cherish the rising generation, which was formerly very much neglected, upon the sordid principle that it was cheaper to buy Slaves than to rear them.

“ In general, the treatment of this class of the population is just and kind : but there are many instances of the reverse, according to the disposition of the owner, and some of very great cruelty ; but these, I am happy to say, are not numerous.” (p. 124.)

TOBAGO.

(Extract of a Letter from Mr. President Campbell.)

“ I beg leave to inclose your lordship the Report from the Committee to the Council and Assembly, which was unanimously approved of, upon the present situation of this colony ; and I do most firmly believe the whole to be true. The eleventh clause points out the situation of the Negroes.” (p. 126.)

“ Eleventh clause. Your Committee refers with confidence to the personal knowledge of every member of the two branches of the legislature, and of his honour the president, to bear testimony to the fact of the improvements which within these few years have taken place in the comforts and manners of the Negroes. In confirmation thereof, your Committee refers to the public documents of the colony, to shew how the annual reduction in numbers is now so much less than it used to be, that we may confidently hope, that, instead of an annual reduction, we shall speedily obtain an annual increase. To the diffusion and increase of property among the Negroes (generally evinced in their houses, their grounds, their dress, and their food), the diminished practice of *obeah*, the infrequency of punishment, and the total relinquishment of all night-work upon the estates, your Committee believe that as much gradual improvement has been made, as the nature of our Black population (a great portion of it yet consisting of imported Africans) admits of.

Other matters of amelioration of the condition of the Negroes are in gradual advancement upon many of the estates, and will become general : but if any thing could more effectually prevent their beneficial attainment, it will be the attempt at direction in these matters of the African Institution, at once disgusting the master, and alarming him for the security of his property ; and, by rendering him discontented with his situation, alienating the slave from all sentiments of respect and affection to his master." (p. 130.)

JAMAICA.

(Extract of a Letter from his Grace the Duke of Manchester.)

" I really believe there is a strong desire felt to consult the comfort of the Slaves as much as possible ; and if this object does not advance so rapidly as could be wished, it proceeds from no disinclination on the part of the proprietors, but from an apprehension of the consequences of too sudden a change in the habits and manners of the Negroes, and which the events in Barbadoes have a tendency to increase." (p. 270.)

(Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, presented the 10th of December, 1817.

" Your Committee have also considered the effects which have been produced by the measures adopted, during the last session, for the improvement of the condition of the Slave population : the interval which has since elapsed has been too short to admit of any particular effects having resulted from their operation.

" Your Committee, however, are fully persuaded that the tendency of those measures, and the spirit in which they were adopted, have produced a general effect of great importance, both as it respects the condition of the Slaves, and the public tranquillity of the island.

" The Slaves are satisfied that their condition is of sufficient interest to engage the attention of those under whose authority they are placed, and that their comforts and personal security are the objects of protection. In availing themselves of the facility which has been afforded

them in making their complaint of any real or supposed grievance, they have observed the attention with which it has been decided. The increase which has taken place, during the last twelve months, in the number of proceedings, both civil and criminal, which have been instituted by or on behalf of Slaves, is a fact which, accompanied as it has been by the greatest degree of subordination and good order on their part, may be referred to as the most decisive proof of their well-founded confidence in the justice of those to whom they appeal. This feeling, whilst it operates directly on their present condition, by lessening the possibility of their being exposed to injury without receiving redress, and by rendering them contented with their situation, is calculated to impart to them those principles which will enable them to estimate the benefits, to acquire the habits, and to practise the duties which belong to a more civilized state of society.

“Your Committee attach great importance to this consideration, because it encourages the belief, that a foundation is laid for future measures of progressive improvement.

“Every view which your Committee can take of the present and future condition of the Slave population, confirms them in their opinion, that the improvement of their religious, moral, and civil state, can only be effected by gradual and progressive measures; and that any experiments which have a tendency to produce a sudden change in their present state, by the introduction of principles which are unknown to, and inconsistent with, the policy of colonial institutions, and the habits of the Slaves themselves, would be as fatal to them as dangerous to the security of the island.” (p. 271.)

TRINIDAD.

(Extract of a Letter from Governor Sir Ralph Woodford.)

“To proprietors of Slaves, as to mankind in general, no incentive can be so great as their own interest. It is not in their power now to replace a Slave, whose physical

powers are exhausted by a short service : therefore the value of a Slave of good character is greatly enhanced beyond the value of his ordinary appraisement ; and proportionate efforts are made to keep up his natural health and vigour.

“ The comforts of the Slaves depend upon themselves and their own industry, and their health upon their own imprudences, or the quantum of work they are required to perform.

“ They can, if they choose, with very little trouble, amass much beyond the wants of the utmost ambition or profligacy ; but the idle and drunken (of which there are many) will always be in poverty and in rags.

“ I have frequently known cases of Negroes preferring to continue Slaves, rather than with ample means to purchase their freedom, or even to accept it. With a humane owner the Negro is most happy ; and as a Slave, and when sick, he always shares the fare of the owner's table.” (pp. 275, 276.)

(See Appendix S.)

In my opinion, nothing can be more satisfactory than these Reports, to shew the gradual and continued improvement in the condition of the Slaves. These, let it be remembered, are high authorities ; and I beg to remark, that they are not the statements of West-India proprietors, but of governors, who, as far as their opinions go, must speak disinterestedly : and least of all are they men liable to be influenced by colonial prejudices. But there is another circumstance connected with these Reports, which ought to give them still greater weight with the House ; that several of them come from gentlemen who have been, and still are, extremely zealous in support of the cause of the Abolition of Negro Slavery. For instance ; Governor Maxwell, the Governor of Dominica, after having resided at Sierra Leone, obtained his present appointment through the interest, I believe, of the honourable Member for Bramber. Colonel Arthur, too, who

writes from Honduras, professes that he went out there a perfect Wilberforce as to Slavery. Sir Ralph Woodford, the Governor of Trinidad, is a correspondent, and a very valuable one, of the African Institution, and very honourable mention has been made of his name at one of the anniversary meetings of that Society.

Do not these official reports refute the calumnies thrown out by some honourable members; and more particularly the assertion, which I was sorry to read in a pamphlet recently published by the honourable Member for Bramber, "that the system of Slavery in the West Indies is a system of the most unprecedented degradation and unrelenting cruelty?" (See Appendix T.)

The difference between the amendment and the original motion appears to me to be a difference rather in the mode of execution, than in the end we all have in view. As to the preference to be given to the amendment, I think no doubt can be entertained, upon this one plain principle, the conciliation of the White and Black population in the West Indies. If an abstract resolution, declaring "that the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be abolished," was known to emanate from a British House of Commons, it might produce excitement in the minds of the Negroes in our colonies. But if merely an intention to ameliorate the condition of the Black population is held out, the effect will be very different, and no irritation whatever will be excited in their minds. In the one case, any amelioration in their condition will appear to be the work of this House, forced upon their masters in the West Indies, and will excite a spirit of dissatisfaction; but if, on the other hand, as in the resolutions of the right honourable Secretary of State, measures are proposed to, and adopted by, the Colonial Legislatures, it will then appear as if they were the effect of the good-will of the masters towards their Slaves; and instead of discontent and dissatisfaction, gratitude and contentment will be excited in their minds.

For these reasons, I am bound to express my most hearty concurrence in the resolutions proposed, by way of amendment, by the right honourable Gentleman on the Treasury Bench.

Mr. BROUGHAM.—Sir, I am quite sensible that at this late hour of the night it would be unbecoming in me—it would be acting in contradiction to the general sense of the House—were I either to go into much detail on this important question, or to resist the adoption of the amendment proposed by the right honourable Gentleman opposite. But I confess I cannot leave this question to be finally disposed of, without trespassing for a few minutes upon the patience of the House, that I may guard myself against the suspicion of having made myself a party, to what I fear may ultimately prove to be, a delusion,—a delusion, however, unintentioned, I am persuaded, on the part of the right honourable Gentleman; because, to do him justice, he has been from the beginning a warm advocate of every measure tending to the abolition of the African Slave Trade.

It is upon this ground alone—upon my knowledge of the line of conduct which has hitherto been pursued by the right honourable Gentleman, that I build my confidence that it is not *his* intention, however it may be that of others, to delude the House by getting rid of the motion of my honourable Friend. That motion is set aside as being too abstract; and yet in that of the right honourable Gentleman, which it is proposed to substitute for it, I find nothing specific, nothing practical, pointed out. True it is, the resolutions moved by way of amendment emanate from Ministers, and are to be communicated to the Crown. But this, let it be recollected, is no new course. It has before been pursued, over and over again, with little or no effect. The honourable Member for Seaford (Mr. Ellis), in 1797 moved some excellent resolutions (very similar to the present), on which he grounded an Address to the Crown for ameliorating the condition of the Slaves in the West

Indies. Again, in 1816, the West Indians, in conjunction with the right honourable Gentleman's predecessor, moved resolutions in the shape of an Address to the Crown—an address in which both Houses of Parliament concurred—calling upon the Prince Regent, in the strongest terms, to recommend to the local authorities in the colonies to carry into effect every measure which might tend to promote the moral and religious improvement, as well as the comfort and happiness, of the Negroes. A more unexceptionable and comprehensive declaration could not well have been made, by the warmest friend to the mitigation and abolition of slavery. But twenty-six long years have now elapsed since the first Address was presented, and seven since the second, and where are the benefits, the visible effects, of these Addresses, to be found? We are, in fact, not one step more advanced in the great work of improvement than we were before. No practical advantages have resulted from these addresses: and yet the last Address in particular, that of 1816, was unanimously voted, and was carried, by the joint recommendation of both Houses of Parliament, to the foot of the Throne. It was also most graciously received, and a most gracious answer was returned, promising to carry the wishes of Parliament into effect.

I am told, however—notwithstanding these facts staring us in the face—I am told that my mistrust of the West-India legislatures is either totally misplaced, or at all events greatly exaggerated; and the honourable Member for Bristol (Mr. Bright), as well as the honourable Member for Sandwich (Mr. Marryat), who went still more at large into the subject, have endeavoured to convince us that we are mistaken, and that the most satisfactory improvements have taken place. I wish I could take the same flattering view of Slavery in the West Indies as the honourable Gentleman. If I could, it would relieve my mind from the load which now oppresses it, believing, as I do, that the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies is revolting to the feelings of human nature. My honourable Friend, the

Member for Bristol, forgetting for an instant those habits, so inherent in professional men, of distrusting the testimony of interested parties—forgetting that professional maxim, ever to be remembered, that “no man is to be trusted as a judge or a witness in his own cause;”—I say, forgetting all this, he makes his appeal to the unbiassed authority of Slave-masters—to the pure, unsuspected, disinterested testimony of the owners of the Slaves themselves! He tells us that the result of his many conversations with them, and of his laborious efforts to obtain information from them, is a conviction that the condition of the Slaves is so greatly improved, that they are now perfectly contented, and happy! The honourable Member for Sandwich then, in *his* turn, informs us that gentlemen, who have gone out with opinions hostile to slavery, have been so converted by a view of the comforts and delights of that state, nay, even as it exists in Honduras, perhaps the most detestable spot on the face of the globe, a swamp, where the forests are still uncleared—a place, in comparison of which, such places as Jamaica and Barbadoes might without exaggeration be termed a perfect Paradise;—yet these gentlemen, who went out thus biased in their opinions, the honourable Member tells us, were so converted by what they saw, as to come to the conclusion that the Negroes endured no misery whatever, and that all we had heard of the wretched condition of West-India Slaves were mere idle tales!

But there is one part of the speech of the honourable Member for Bristol, to which I must for a moment address myself, and for which I must claim the indulgence of the House. I am told that I must not trust the book called, “Negro Slavery,” a work which certainly contains damning proof of the state of Negro Slavery in the West Indies. (*Hear, from the honourable Member for Bristol.*) The honourable Member seems by his cheer to adhere to his former charge against that work; a charge which, I must confess, I cannot but feel as one of a grave character made against one of my oldest and most valued friends.—[Mr. Brougham here entered at some length

into a vindication of the character and accuracy of the author, and then proceeded.]—And what is the charge made against him? It is one of a specific nature, and I will admit that general character is nothing against a specific charge. The charge then is, that the author of this pamphlet has garbled and misquoted Mr. Cooper. So says my honourable Friend. But I will go a step beyond my honourable and learned Friend, for a correct view of this point. I will go to the author of the statement; to Mr. Cooper himself; and the House will judge whether it is probable that Mr. Cooper's statement has been changed, garbled, or misquoted, when I tell them that Mr. Cooper himself corrected the sheets for the press, and that every syllable of the pamphlet which concerned him passed through his hands before publication, and received his express approbation. After this statement, will it not be wasting the time of the House to say one word more upon the subject?

But another evidence in favour of the author is the still more valuable testimony of his accuser, my honourable and learned Friend himself. The honourable Member has read two passages to the House, and has observed upon the difference to be found between them; but, after paying the most studious attention to the two passages so read, I confess I could not discover the slightest difference between the one statement and the other.

Then, to return to the honourable Member for Sandwich: he has made a most triumphant appeal to the House with respect to the condition of the Slaves in Dominica; and he has read the Report of the Governor of that Island, wherein the Slaves are represented to be most happy, and contented. Are things really so? Are the Slaves in Dominica too, as happy as the honourable Member would represent them to be in Honduras? The Governor of Dominica says, indeed, that the Slaves in general appear to be liberally treated and protected; but I am curious to know how soon after his arrival in Dominica this letter from Governor Maxwell was written; and whether it was before or after his having been presented by the grand inquest of

the island as a nuisance, for interfering to protect the Slaves from cruelty. If written afterwards, it would only shew how forgiving a character, what a good-natured creature, the Governor must be. It must, however, have been written before. And why, let me ask, was he presented by the grand jury of the island as a nuisance? Was it because he impeached the rights of the owner to the services of the slave? Or was it for *illegally* interfering between master and slave? No, nothing of this kind. It was only for wishing to put in force the laws of the Island in favour of some unhappy Negroes who had been most barbarously ill-treated by their masters. For this it was that the grand jury found a presentment against the Governor for a nuisance. In proportion to the weight of such a fact as this, uncontradicted, to deny which not even an attempt has been made, down goes my confidence in the local authorities of the West Indies; all my hopes resting upon the exertions of these authorities vanish into air. For what confidence can possibly be placed in the efforts or endeavours of those who have presented their Governor as a nuisance, because he had made an attempt to put the laws in force against masters for their inhuman barbarity towards some poor helpless Negroes? Down then, I say, goes all my confidence; down go all my hopes, my fond expectations, of the exertions, not only of these particular authorities, but of the legislative bodies in general, whose conduct has, on many occasions, been not a whit less strange.

In Jamaica too, I am told, all is perfect; and that the Negro, who must be allowed to be the best judge of his own happiness, is perfectly contented with his lot—so well contented that he would not change it. But, unfortunately for this assertion, it appears, from consulting a single page of the Jamaica Gazettes, that it cannot be supported. It is curious enough to observe the broad and most unequivocal contradiction given by these Gazettes to this grave statement of the Jamaica Assembly—for it thence appears that many of the Negroes have shewn a most pointed

desire to change their happy situation, in a single page of these Gazettes there are no less than fifty "Run-aways"—persons quitting this enviable situation, not only with a certainty of many privations, but at the risk of all the severe penalties which attach to their crime. But let us look to one of the advertisements: "For sale: 140 head of horned cattle"—I beg pardon of the House; that is not the paragraph I allude to. It is the next column which contains the long list of "Run-aways."—"Cecilia, a young Creole Negro woman"—— It has been said that young women are never known to be punished in these realms of Negro bliss, where they are so much better off than in their own country, that they ought to bless their stars that they have been taken from it. Such is the kind of language to which our ears have been accustomed on the subject of Negro slavery, from the beginning of this controversy to the present day; but it proves a great deal too much, and consequently proves nothing. But facts must always bear down such arguments; and the very papers I have in my hand, while they describe the persons of the fugitives, distinguishing them by their various marks and brands—the badges of the sufferings and the degradations to which these unhappy beings have been exposed—speak volumes on the subject. But to proceed: "Cecilia, a young Creole woman, five feet high, marked (branded!) S. M. and W. S. on top, on right shoulder, belonging to the estate of John Stevens." Then here is another, who "says he is free, but has no documents to prove his freedom." Then come several others, described by various maims, and marks on different parts of their bodies. Many have "lost several of their front teeth;" others are described as being marked with letters in a diamond on the shoulders and breasts, and having sores on the arms or legs, and scars on their face or shoulders, with marks of flogging on their backs. And so they go through all the sores, and marks, and brands, and scars, and traces of the cart-whip, which distinguish these happy individuals, who, though we are told they are

so contented, are yet, somehow or other, so insensible to their own bliss, that they will run away from their kind-hearted, humane masters, by whom we have been told, too, that the whip is now in nearly total disuse !

I cannot but express my great astonishment that the right honourable Gentleman should have compared the Negro Slaves in the West Indies with the Roman domestic slaves, and with other slaves of antiquity. And I am the more surprised, when I reflect on the classical taste and profound classical knowledge for which the right honourable Gentleman is so remarkable. There are certainly some points in which the condition of the West-India Slaves resemble those of antiquity ; but, speaking generally, the two states do not admit of a comparison. Will any man say, that in a country where the land was filled by freemen, as among the ancients, it was possible the same habitual cruelty and severity of exaction could prevail, as in those colonies, where men are compelled by the whip, by mere brute force, to cultivate the soil, and where habitual dread of the lash stands engraven on the very front of the system as the sole motive to exertion ? Not that I mean to assert that the whip is always used, any more than the whip of a waggoner is always in use ; but what I assert is, that the Slaves on plantations are worked by placing the men and the women, of various degrees of strength and capacity, in a line, in which they are compelled to toil by the imminent fear of the lash being applied to their backs ; and it is applied, as often as their laxity of exertion may seem to render it necessary. Such a system, I say, converts a man into a brute animal. All the noble feelings and energies of our nature, and almost all traces of humanity, are eradicated by this base practice, by which the man is made to work, and act, and move at the will of another, and is thus of necessity reduced to the level of a brute : it is a practice which makes its appeal, not to the qualities which distinguish him from the beasts of the field, but to those which he shares in common with them.

It is said that efforts have been made to ameliorate the condition of the Slave, by giving him religious instruction; and that since this question was last discussed in this House, those efforts have been increased. If this be so, it shews at least the benefit of such discussions, since it is now admitted even by those who then so loudly cried out against them. We were then run down by clamour: we were accused of doing that which would raise a revolt through the whole of the West-Indian Archipelago; and we were loudly and vehemently charged with aiming a deadly blow at the interests both of the Black and the White population in the West Indies. There was, it was said, no occasion whatever for our interference; the Negroes had kind masters, tender drivers, a zealous clergy, amiable governors, and wise legislators, to superintend, controul, and co-operate in works of humanity. But, notwithstanding all we then heard of this machinery of mercy, by our interference with which we might do mischief and could possibly do no good, it now appears that the effect of our discussions has been, that religious instruction has been much more widely spread, and that it is still spreading, through the Colonies. I am happy indeed to find the prediction of evil so completely falsified.

I observe that there is on the table a paper, and that not the least important on this interesting subject, which has not been referred to by the honourable Member for Sandwich. I allude to the Letter of a worthy Curate, which enters into some details with respect to the religious instruction of the Slaves. This worthy person states, with great simplicity, that he had been between twenty and thirty years among the Negroes, and that no single instance of conversion to Christianity had taken place during that time—all his efforts to gain new proselytes among the Negroes had been in vain. All of a sudden, however, light had broken in upon their darkness so rapidly, that between 5000 and 6000 Negroes had been baptized in a few days! I confess I was at first much surprised at this statement; I knew not how to comprehend it; but all of a sudden light

broke in upon *my* darkness also. I found that there was a clue to this most surprising story ; and that these wonderful conversions were brought about, not by a miracle, as the good man seems himself to have really imagined and would almost make us believe, but by a premium of a dollar a head paid to this worthy curate for each Slave whom he baptized ! I understood, too, that the whole amount of the previous religious instruction which each Negro received, was neither more nor less than attending, on one occasion, at the church where the curate presided. Such was the mode of propagating religion which seems to have afforded so much satisfaction, and to have given so much cause for triumph. If any person thought that any real practical good could result from such an administration of religious instruction and of Christian baptism, let him enjoy his hopes : I cannot agree with him.

What then has been done, let me ask, since the Abolition of the Slave Trade, to improve the condition of the Slave ? I think I now hear my lamented friend, Sir Samuel Romilly, ask that question, as he once did with so much effect. I never shall forget the impression he produced upon those who, like myself, for ten long years had been indulging in a fond, but vain hope, that the abolition of the Slave Trade was all that was wanted for bettering the condition of the Slaves. We have now unhappily survived him between four and five years, and with how much more force might we now put the same question ? It was indeed long our hope, that, if we did but abolish the Slave Trade, through the gradual progress of improvement, Slavery itself would soon be extinguished. I myself gave into the delusion. I said, with others, Leave measures of internal regulation to the Colonial Legislatures : only abolish the Slave Trade : it will then be the interest of the master to treat his slaves well, and under the influence of that feeling the condition of the slave must rapidly improve.

How bitterly have we been disappointed in these fond expectations ! I beg, however, not to be understood as

casting any particular blame on the owners of estates for this failure, for they have perhaps little in their power. We ought to be aware that the state of landed property in the West Indies is not in the least analogous to the state of landed property in England, although it has often been erroneously compared to it. The owners of West-Indian estates usually reside in this country, and can have but a feeble controul over the course of proceedings in the colonies. And though some of them, it is true, may have got their estates by inheritance, yet this is not the case with a great majority: they have obtained them by purchases on speculation, or by debt, having advanced money on mortgage and with a view to consignments. In short, landed property in the West Indies partakes much more of the nature of a hazardous commercial speculation, than of that stable enjoyment of territorial property which characterizes the British landholder. Men in these circumstances, it is obvious, have no permanent interest in the soil. Their object is to make the most they can in the shortest time; and therefore they will not be deterred, by considerations of humanity for the Slaves, from extracting, during their temporary possession, by means of the uncontrouled power they possess over those wretched beings, the utmost benefit which the estate is capable of yielding. But even if the owners acted with the best intentions—and many of them I believe do—they are absent, and know nothing of what is actually going on on their estates. It is an individual who has no real interest in the estate, who is placed as their agent on the spot to superintend the whole concern. Some owners of estates may be very honest, honourable, humane men, who would not work their slaves too much; but what security have we that this will be the case with all, or that many may not even think it their interest to act otherwise? Indeed, I am persuaded that it is not so plainly the pecuniary interest of the slave-owner in all cases to be humane, as some have imagined. The West-India purchaser of an estate may consider himself engaged in a gambling concern, and may

hope in a few years to scourge a handsome profit out of the unhappy beings committed to his charge; and he may even flatter himself that he will clear a greater profit in this way than he would have done had he pursued a different course. His object is to get a great return in a short time; and although in a long series of years it might be against his interest to over-work his Slaves, yet, his object being a rapid return for his capital, he cannot wait the slow progress of improvement in order to attain it. It is very well known, and the simile is far from being a new one, that some post-masters use their horses exactly upon this principle. They might keep their horses longer alive, by making them do less work and by giving them better treatment; but they prefer making them do more work, though it may wear them down sooner, upon a mere calculation of profit and loss. Far be it from me to charge such a sordid calculation as this upon the West-India planters; but what I say is, that the identity of their interests and those of humanity ought not to be so much relied upon: you cannot trust to the former alone in the treatment of the Slave, because I have shewn that views of interest may be supposed to require treatment, in certain circumstances, wholly different from that which would be dictated by the principles of humanity.

Such being my view of the situation in which master and slave stand to each other, I confess I look with the greatest distrust, with the slenderest possible hope, to any real and solid advantage to be derived from the resolutions moved by the right honourable Gentleman, and which refer the matter to the Colonial Assemblies. Let the House remember, that we have done the same thing twice before; the effect produced by it has been very small indeed; and I greatly fear that we shall only meet with further disappointment if we again resort to the same expedient. Those Legislatures may pretend to meet fully the wishes of Parliament, and yet may do nothing effectual; and, after five years more have elapsed without any progress having been made, we shall be again called

upon, either by events which have happened in the West Indies, or by our own consciences at home, to look into the question in good earnest, when it will brook no further delays; and then we shall have the painful reflection, that if we had acted boldly in the first instance, five years of misery would have been saved to these unhappy beings.

How comes it to pass, I would ask, that no steps have yet been taken towards the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves? For how many years has it, for example, been proposed to attach the Slave to the soil? The question, I know, has been discussed; but why has no progress been made in consequence of that discussion? It has been said that there are many difficulties to encounter. Doubtless there are. It would be hard upon the Slave, it is argued, to be kept upon a barren soil, an exhausted plantation; but it seems to have been forgotten, that the very exhaustion of the soil, unfitting it for sugar culture, is in the Negro's favour. But how comes it, that in the West Indies the richest soils in the world thus undergo exhaustion, while in other countries the poorest soils are subject to no such process, and do not, under ordinary cultivation, deteriorate, but improve? Is it not that a just curse seems, in the dispensation of Providence, to attend the cruel and blood-thirsty method of culture by Slaves? else why would not culture keep the land in the West Indies in the same heart in which the land in the East Indies or in Europe is kept?

But are we to say that the Slaves shall not be attached to the soil, merely because some possible inconveniences may, in supposable cases, be pointed out as the result? Certainly not. If the argument urged on the score of the poverty of the soil in certain situations were valid, the same might have been said of England, when *villanage in gross* was converted into *villanage regardant*; and copyholders would then have had no existence: there would have been no such thing as a freeman in the land, because, forsooth, a gust of wind might have blown a part of Norfolk into the sea, and then it might have been said,

How can subsistence be drawn from the sands of Norfolk : we must retain the power of transferring the v^{il}lein to richer lands elsewhere. If this sort of argument had been allowed to weigh in former times, we should have been all of us at the present moment *villains in gross*. I have never heard it said that there is one single plantation in the West Indies so barren that provisions will not grow upon it sufficient for the maintenance of the slaves belonging to it. But I would make a broader and more general answer to the objection, and I would say, that we are bound to act upon the mass of cases, and that one exception is no argument against the general principle.

I cannot close these observations, which I have deemed it incumbent upon me to make to the House, without stating my decided opinion that we ought not to resist the amendment of the right honourable Secretary ; because it is at least a step in advance towards emancipation, although I confess I entertain but few hopes of its leading to any sound practical result. It may, however, be ultimately a ground for a stronger expression of the opinion of the House ; and I sincerely trust my honourable Friend will in no long time propose to the House some more specific resolution, with respect to the freedom of children born after a certain period. Holding that liberty to the Slaves in the West Indies must come sooner or later ; and being convinced, that, if they are not now ripe for actual emancipation, at least we are arrived at the time when it will be safe to legislate with a view to that consummation ; it seems to me to be now the imperative duty of the legislature to pass some act with respect to the freedom of unborn children. We shall be wanting in our duty to that part of our fellow-subjects, if we do not immediately announce our intention of taking up that part of the subject. Difficulties doubtless will be to be encountered—difficulties there are in every change—but are they insurmountable? I trust that no man will be stopped by them, who does not wish to be impeded.

Sir, we hear of the risk of insurrection ; we have heard of

it in every stage of the discussion : from the first moment this question was brought under the consideration of the House, to the present instant, the cry has never been out of the mouths of those who oppose all change. But yet our discussions, although declared to be so injurious in theory, have never produced the slightest practical injury. Even the insurrection in Barbadoes, it might easily be shewn, had no connection, as was alleged, with the discussions on the Registry Bill, but sprung from causes perfectly distinct. This is a sufficient answer to all such chimerical apprehensions. Parliament has certainly not shewn any desire to interfere between master and slave ; but if steps are not taken by the master to convert his present tenure into one of a more restricted nature, Parliament is bound to interfere, by the right which it holds of legislating for all his Majesty's subjects. This right, sacred and unalienable, is inherent in the British legislature, and has never been abandoned, excepting as it regards taxation.

Sir, I beg pardon of the House for having troubled it by going at greater length into the subject than I at first intended, but I thought there was a chance of some mistake arising as to the grounds on which we accede to the resolutions now proposed by the right honourable Gentleman ; and I wish more particularly to guard against being understood as expressing any great hopes of benefit from the present measure, which is little more than a repetition of the former Addresses of Parliament to the Crown, and the former references of the Crown to the Colonial Assemblies, followed by an entire disappointment of every expectation that had been indulged. With these recollections deeply impressed upon my mind, let it not be supposed that I can indulge a sanguine hope of any beneficial practical results from these resolutions.

Mr. BERNAL was surprised that his honourable and learned Friend (Mr. Brougham), who must acknowledge that conciliation was the tone most fitting to be adopted, should

yet have thought proper to select the topics which he had done. He might have selected topics much happier. The laws did not leave the Negro so destitute of protection as was supposed. Appeals were allowed to the Negroes under those laws, pending which they were to hold their liberty. They might also bring actions of trespass; and the Attorney-General and the law authorities of Jamaica returned very many cases, in which those actions had been successfully maintained. He complained especially of the argument of his honourable and learned Friend, as to the failure of the owners in not having attached the slaves to the soil, and the comparison made by him between the culture of England and that of the sugar plantations. What resemblance could be fairly assumed between the *adscripti glebæ* and the West-Indian Negroes? The particular mode of cultivation in the colonies had been induced and continued under the sanction of the Legislature; and if the Legislature now were to insist upon a change in that mode, they were bound to compensate the persons whose property and interests were to be so materially affected. (See Appendix U.)

Mr. ALEXANDER BARING.—Having been alluded to by my honourable Friend who opened the debate, I cannot avoid stating to the House how strongly I feel the necessity of something being done, and something considerable, on the present question. I feel that it is one of the greatest possible importance and delicacy; but I fear that honourable gentlemen around me, whose feelings I respect, have been led away by the ardour and fervency of those feelings to exaggerate the real facts, and to under-rate the many difficulties and dangers which must accompany any alteration in the present system. I am anxious to state my own ideas as to the extent of these difficulties; and undoubtedly, if there really exist such a state of things, a case of that extreme atrocity which has been represented to the public, every possible risk ought to be encountered to get the better of the system which

produced them. I confess it does not surprise me, that those who believe in the existence of these barbarities should wish that no time should be lost in remedying such an evil. My own opinion, however, is, that, as far as the physical sufferings of the Negro go, they have been much over-stated; and I may even cite my own observations on the subject to prove the fact. I am not myself a West-India proprietor, but I have seen cultivation carried on by Slaves in some of the American States, in Georgia and Carolina; and I must say, that, from all I saw there, and from every information I have received from our own colonies, I do not believe, on looking about the world and considering the general lot of mankind, that, if I was called upon to say what part of the globe most particularly excited my sympathy and commiseration, I do not believe that I should fix upon the Negroes of the West Indies, as far as regards their food and clothing, and the whole of their treatment. (See Appendix V.)

I must say, that when my honourable and learned Friend (Mr. Brougham), in a speech of much energy and eloquence, sets aside the testimony of all those colonial governors (which was detailed to the House by the honourable Member for Sandwich), and takes up the opinions, published in the form of pamphlets, of honest but enthusiastic men, who are much more likely to be misled as to facts than those public functionaries in their official reports, I confess I cannot fully approve of such a mode of arguing the question. I should say, in opposition to these feelings, and to those of my honourable friend the Member for Bramber (Mr. Wilberforce), that unless he himself had been in the colonies, and had been an eye-witness to the scenes he has described, I would rather take the reports of those governors, men of education, having no interest in the Colonies, than the opinions of these individuals, who are not very likely to be sparing in their descriptions of the cruelties and atrocities committed in the West Indies, well knowing that such glowing and exaggerated accounts,

where solitary instances of oppression, instead of being the exception, are converted into the rule, would not be unacceptable to those to whom they communicated their statements. My own opinion is, that the condition of the Slaves is undoubtedly, in many respects, superior to that of most of the European peasantry. They are well clothed, well fed, and, I believe, generally treated with justice and kindness.

But the circumstance which weighs the heaviest on my mind, is the moral condition of the Slaves, and the almost impossibility of their deriving, in their present situation, any religious or moral instruction from those who are placed over them, and who cannot boast of the best morals themselves. There is something altogether so painful in their situation, in this respect, that I am induced to wish that something could be done to ameliorate their moral condition; nor can I see any danger which could possibly arise from a prudent plan of religious instruction, by which they might be raised in the scale of being. (See Appendix W.)

As to the objection taken by my honourable and learned Friend to the statement with reference to the insurrection at Barbadoes; I believe it to have been correctly stated that the insurrection was owing to the report spread in the colony of what was doing at home, and to the consequences which the Negroes anticipated from it. It was, I think, the statement of the Governor, Sir James Leith, that the insurrection was owing entirely to that circumstance. Indeed, it is impossible to consider the state in which men in that country exist, without supposing an extreme liability to excitement among them. The same excitement might, and probably would, be produced at home by similar means. Supposing a question were argued in the House of Commons on the subject of a division of the property of the rich among the poorer people of this country; and there were among us men enthusiastic enough to maintain the justice of this division, and to argue how

impious it was that one portion of the population should live upon coarse food, and drink nothing but water, while another portion should feast on venison and champagne, and indulge in all the luxuries and delicacies of life;—supposing, I say, these opinions were to spread (and I really think a great deal of good argument might be stated in their favour upon the score of Christianity), and discussions on some future occasion were to arise in this House; I would ask, whether they could possibly take place without producing considerable irritation even in this country, accustomed as we are to free discussion? We do not want, therefore, these governors of the West Indies to tell us what dangers would result from such a course of proceeding. It is quite sufficient for us to know human nature, to be sensible that the danger is extreme, and that the discussion, therefore, must be entered upon with the greatest possible caution. (See Appendix X.)

The honourable Gentleman who opened this discussion has given us some instances where Slavery has been entirely got rid of without the slightest danger resulting from the application of the necessary remedies for curing the evil; and the states of Pennsylvania, of New York, and of New Jersey, have been quoted for this purpose. The honourable Gentleman seemed as if he could not express himself in terms of sufficient delight and rapture: it was beautiful to observe, he said, how gradually the whole mass of Slavery sunk, and, as it were, melted away, without disorder, or the slightest interference on the part of the legislature being required to prevent the dangers which might have been anticipated. But he has cited these cases to the House without possessing a sufficient knowledge of the real facts. In New York there were 1,000,000 Whites, and the whole Black population did not amount to more than 5000. Is this, then, an analogous case? The same is the case precisely with the State of New Jersey: there the whole amount of the Black population was not more than 10,000. In Penn-

sylvania the number was still less. That judicious people, the Quakers, resident in Pennsylvania, began very early to abolish the system of slavery, and the amount of them was comparatively nothing. These are, therefore, all the cases which have been mentioned by the honourable Gentleman with respect to North America. Not one of them is in point, to prove that no danger exists from the proposed alterations.

I should say, that with respect to the other case, of Columbia, although it is undoubtedly more in point, yet that it is still not to be compared with our Colonies in the West Indies. In the case of Columbia, there was, I think, a population of 3,000,000, out of which 800,000 were Blacks; so that the Whites at least were more than enough to keep the Negroes in awe of them. The case stated of the Island of Ceylon is not in the least analogous to the present, because that is a case where the inhabitants of the country itself were in a state of vassalage and personal servitude, and where they were released from their bonds by measures instituted by a strong military government on the spot. Are then, I would ask, any of these cases to be compared with a colony in the West Indies, where there is no mass of property represented by persons on the spot, where there is no physical superiority to counteract the effect of any insurrection which may arise in the colony, the Slaves outnumbering the Whites by at least ten to one? (See Appendix Y.)

With respect to the different remedies suggested by the honourable Gentleman who commenced this debate; so far as they have been acceded to by the right honourable Gentleman, they very much meet my own view of the subject; but certainly the question of the actual emancipation of the slaves is one which appears to me to be attended with the greatest difficulties. The suggestion of my honourable Friend is, that children born after a certain period should be free. At first sight, I confess it to be a very natural proposition, and one most accordant to our feelings; but it seems to

have been forgotten, that there is this question yet to be answered, and as it appears to me it will be difficult to meet it with a satisfactory reply ; it is this, If these children are born free, who is to take care of them ? It has been said that they may be apprenticed for a certain number of years ; but this, I think, will be impracticable, for it will not be worth the while of the planter to bring up these children—we will say from the age of twelve to nineteen—well knowing that at the end of that period they will be at liberty to leave him and go whither they please. I have very strangely miscalculated, if such a scheme can be carried into execution : it is in fact wholly impracticable. It is admitted, I think, on all hands, that one of the greatest advantages of the abolition of the Slave Trade is, that it tends to an improvement both in the condition and in the treatment of the Negro females and children ; that it gives an interest to the master in rearing the children, and in taking proper care of the mother while she is breeding. But if you do away with the interest of the proprietor in the offspring, as undoubtedly would be the effect of the proposition of my honourable Friend, all this beneficial result of the abolition of the Slave Trade immediately ceases. It is a fact too evident to be for a moment disputed, that, if this plan is adopted, the proprietor has at least not the same reason as before, for taking care either of the mother or of the offspring. (See Appendix Z.)

I am satisfied, however, that the matter is in the best possible hands to which it could be entrusted ; and I will only say, that if any measures are taken for abolishing Slavery, either directly or circuitously, they must have the effect of endangering the peace and tranquillity of our Colonies. And if we were to arrive at a free Black population, the inevitable consequence will be, that the whole of the islands will be gone from this country ; there will be an end to our colonial system. It would be absurd to suppose that a free Black population, so enlightened and cultivated as to value their rights and duly to appreciate

their strength; that a population so instructed and so civilized, will consent to continue devoting their labours to proprietors the greater portion of whom are resident in England. It is impossible for a moment to suppose such a state of things to exist; or that this country can possibly retain any interest whatever in colonies of this description. The instant such a state of society as I have described is established, we must, I say, bid adieu to our colonial system. The colonies would be of no farther value to Great Britain. (See Appendix AA.)

With regard to the question of compensation, I think that my honourable friend, the Member for Bramber, has not acted with his usual candour and liberality, in not having mentioned one word of compensation to those persons who are so deeply interested in this question. It is quite evident, that, in whatever way you proceed, you must vitally affect pecuniary interests. For instance; if you say that children shall be free after a certain period, you convert permanent property into a life estate, you totally alter the nature of that property. When it is considered with what extreme delicacy we touch property in this country, it never can be tolerated for an instant that a measure so vitally affecting the interests of the West-India proprietors should be unaccompanied by compensation, which would be the greatest possible injustice. When I recollect too—and let it not be forgotten by the House—the strong and able argument raised by my honourable friend, the Member for Weymouth, who introduced this question to the consideration of the House, on the subject of the brewers, to prove to us, that if the measure then before the House (a measure which I, for one, deemed a most important and salutary one) should pass into a law, the vested interests (as my honourable Friend termed them) of the brewers would be destroyed, and their property greatly injured—all these interests and this property would be sacrificed, if the beer trade were to be thrown open to the public. Now I cannot forbear contrasting these former

sentiments of my honourable Friend with his present proceedings in this House. I should be sorry to take an unfair advantage of any argument used by my honourable Friend, but I must say, conscientiously, that if there were a measure which I thought more than another could contribute to the health and secure the comfort of the poorer classes, it would be that which my honourable Friend so strongly, and with so much ingenuity, opposed, on no other ground than that one class of men would be probably injured, and deprived of a monopoly which I feel satisfied the law never intended to be allowed to them. But, of all the cases which have come under the consideration of the House, I think none could call more loudly for compensation, upon every principle of justice, than the one now under discussion. Those who have their interests so intimately involved in this question, have a right to call upon Parliament to consider their claim before any material alteration is attempted. I only hope that the subject, so properly left to the care of Government, will be treated with the delicacy it deserves.

I must observe, before I sit down, that I trust his Majesty's Ministers will not be unduly influenced by the petitions on the table, which have, in fact, been got up by a few persons in the metropolis. I know no question upon which petitions have been procured with more trick and management, than on the present; or where they have come so notoriously from persons having no means whatever of exercising a judgment upon the question. It is, in fact, considered one more of conscience than of judgment; and persons, according to the fashion of the day, think to quiet their consciences for the year, either by subscribing their money to one of the Missionary Societies, or their names to one of these petitions against Negro Slavery in the West Indies. I am, however, happy to see that such a feeling prevails in this country, and that there are people who are capable of being so actuated by such considerations; it is highly honourable

to the national character ; but I hope it will not have the effect of setting the machinery of government at work injuriously to the interests either of the public or of individuals. It is the same feeling which put the politics of Europe into an unusual state of ferment, and set the Congresses of Vienna and Verona at work ; and which every year brings upon the table of the House whole loads of humbug about the Slave Trade. It seems to me as if these negotiations were kept up merely to gratify the feelings of this country ; to shew to the people of England how much the great potentates of Europe have the abolition of the Slave Trade at their hearts. Austria and Russia, who have, God knows, slaves enough in their own territories to practise emancipation upon, are repeating every year their assurances to the good people of England of their anxiety for the abolition of Negro Slavery ; and, somehow or other, our Minister, who attends at these meetings of the European monarchs, is fortunate enough to bring home with him great masses of papers, to prove that these most humane and kind-hearted Emperors take a most lively interest in the question. (See Appendix BB.)

Undoubtedly I do most sincerely wish well to the efforts of his Majesty's Government on the present occasion ; and I feel great satisfaction that the task has been undertaken by them ; and, from the speech of the right honourable Gentleman, I feel great confidence that the resolutions proposed by him will be acted upon, not only sincerely, but with that judgment and discretion, with that caution and justice and delicacy, which such great and important interests deserve.

LORD ALTHORP.—I am anxious to address one or two observations to the House upon this important question. I certainly think that the Planters of the West Indies have a fair claim upon this House for compensation in the event of the adoption of the plans proposed by my

honourable Friend (Mr. F. Buxton.) With reference to what has fallen from my honourable Friend who spoke last, relative to the cultivation of the Colonies by free labour, I differ from him, certainly, in supposing that the conversion of the slaves into freemen would be such an immense loss to this country. I, however, look at this subject with a view chiefly to the interests of the Negroes. My honourable Friend has ridiculed the petitions which have been presented in such a mass for the abolition of Slavery in the West Indies. Undoubtedly there have been a great number of petitions presented; the feeling of the country seems to be pretty nearly unanimous upon the subject; and I would ask my honourable Friend, if he really thinks that the Slave Trade itself would have been abolished, if it had not been for the same general expression of the sentiments of the people of this country. It cannot be for a moment disputed, that it was the general feeling of the nation, the general abhorrence of the inhumanity and barbarity of the practice of dealing in human flesh, which produced its abolition.

I wish, however, the emancipation of the Slaves to proceed very gradually, because I feel apprehensive, that, if the greatest caution is not used in the application of the remedies, evils of an alarming nature may be the result. With respect, therefore, to the discretion to be exercised by this Government in the steps to be taken, I entirely agree with my honourable Friend. But, on the other hand, when I reflect on the moral degradation to which these unhappy beings are reduced; and when I consider how inconsistent it is with their comfort and their happiness, and how contrary to every principle of justice and humanity it is, that they should be suffered to remain in that state, when this Government has it in its power to ameliorate their condition; I would say, that the sooner emancipation can be brought about, the more satisfaction shall I feel at its accomplishment.

It has been stated several times to-night, that the con-

dition of the Negro in the West Indies is in many respects preferable to that of our labourers in this country; and my honourable Friend, who spoke last, asserted that the physical sufferings of the Negro have been greatly over-rated. The honourable Member for Sandwich, too, has stated broadly, and has quoted various documents to prove it, that the slave is perfectly contented and happy. If we look only to the clothing and food allowed to these unfortunate beings, it is enough to convince any reasonable man, without further investigation, of the necessity of an alteration in the present system; and it is idle to the last degree to talk of the happiness and comfort enjoyed by them. But it is said, that some of these happy Slaves are so conscious of their bliss, that they have even refused to take advantage of an offer of their liberty, and have preferred to live and die in Slavery. If the object were to prove the low state to which, as moral creatures, these beings have been reduced, nothing could be stronger than this single statement. Good God! can it be imagined for a moment, that a man, possessing the least particle of the sympathies and affections of his species, should prefer to doom himself without remorse to Slavery for life; that he should doom his children after him, from generation to generation, to be born to live and die in the bonds of Slavery; that he should doom for ever his sons to the lash of the slave-driver, and expose his daughters to the will and power of a cruel task-master, who might at pleasure subject them to his wanton lust? If any thing, I say, can raise feelings of indignation and horror in the breast, it would be the knowledge of such a fact as this. But what must be the feelings of a free-born Englishman, enjoying the glorious blessings of freedom, on hearing such a statement as this? The coldest heart could not but be keenly affected by it; and even those who are most interested in the question must sympathize with the general feeling of the country.

I will not trouble the House by going further into this

question, but I must express my gratitude to my honourable Friend for bringing this subject under the consideration of the House. If nothing more has been done, at least it has had the effect of producing the resolutions of my right honourable Friend opposite, which, I hope, may be considered as one step towards the total emancipation of the Negroes in the West Indies.

Mr. BUXTON (in reply.)—I had made up my mind not to trouble the House with a single observation in reply. I had already trespassed long on your attention; and I was abundantly contented to rest the defence of the statements with which I opened the business, on the powerful speeches of my honourable Friends. In this determination I should have persevered, had it not been for the speech of the honourable Gentleman who spoke last but one (Mr. Baring.) That Gentleman has charged me with inconsistency—he has accused me of using one sort of language on this question, and another upon subjects where my own interests are concerned. He tells us that I was sufficiently mindful of the rights of private property, when that property was my own; but that I never even whispered a syllable about compensation to the West-India Planter. Now I appeal to the House, whether there is justice in the charge. I ask those who listened to my statements, whether I did not clearly and explicitly declare my opinion that the question of compensation to the Planter was one that merited attention. I appeal to the honourable Gentleman himself, whether the language I used was not to this effect:—Slavery is an injustice, but it is an injustice sanctioned by our law: the crime is ours, and ours must be the expense of getting rid of it. The honourable Gentleman is, then, in error, when he says I never alluded to compensation. But what if I had not? Is there no difference between a vested interest in a house or a tenement, and a vested interest in a human being?

No difference between a right to bricks and mortar, and a right to the flesh of man—a right to torture his body and to degrade his mind at your good will and pleasure? There is this difference,—the right to the house originates in law, and is reconcilable to justice; the claim (for I will not call it a right) to the man, originated in robbery, and is an outrage upon every principle of justice and every tenet of religion.

The right honourable Gentleman (Mr Canning) complains of my language in having referred to the Slave Trade. “Why,” he asks, “do you recall the horrors of that odious and abolished practice?” For this plain reason, that your title to a slave is founded on that practice. By the Slave Trade you obtained him. Upon that practice, now reprobated, and now by us abolished, your claim is founded. Every reproach uttered against Slave Trading impeaches your title to the Slave. You say the man is your property. I ask in reply, how did you obtain that property? And you are driven to the necessity of acknowledging that it was gained by the blackest of crimes—by that act which you now punish as a felony; by that act which the British Parliament stigmatized as “contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy;” by that act which even the assembled Monarchs of Europe (not suspected of too ardent a love of liberty) describe as “desolating Africa, degrading Europe, and afflicting humanity,” and as “repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality.”

There is one point in the speech of the honourable Member for Sandwich, upon which, as I have risen, I must make a few observations—because it is really the most matchless exemplification of forgetfulness, the most memorable instance I ever met with of a treacherous memory. The honourable Gentleman quoted to us, from the papers during the last twenty years printed by this House, every sentence and expression which could be construed into a defence of slavery, or an approval of the condition of

slaves. One could hardly sufficiently admire the degree of industry which prompted him to search out, or the force of memory which enabled him to repeat, every passage in this voluminous correspondence which favours his view of the subject. Amongst other papers, he refers to the correspondence of Colonel Arthur. In 1816 Colonel Arthur declares that he came to the West Indies, three years preceding, a perfect Wilberforce as to slavery; but that experience had changed his views, and that he could hardly find terms to express his admiration of the comforts and advantages of the slave population of Honduras. The honourable Gentleman triumphantly appeals to these expressions. But in that same volume from which he extracted them, and within a few pages, there is a fact stated by the same Colonel Arthur, which speaks still more unequivocally than they do as to the "comforts and advantages of the slave population of Honduras." Now it is strange that the honourable Gentleman, who so accurately recollects the eulogy, should so entirely have forgotten the fact; for the House will perceive, when I state it, that it is a fact calculated to make a pretty strong impression on a memory less powerful than that of the Member for Sandwich. The dispatch which contains it is from Colonel Arthur, dated October 21, 1816, just seventeen days prior to that other dispatch in which he lauds the condition of the Slaves in that colony, and describes himself as having been metamorphosed from a perfect Wilberforce into—something, no doubt, very superior. I will now read an extract from it. You will find the whole in the papers relative to Slaves, ordered to be printed on the 10th June, 1818; the very papers from which the honourable Member for Sandwich has drawn his quotations.

“ Copy of a Letter from Lieut.-Col. Geo. Arthur to Earl Bathurst; with seven enclosures.

“ Honduras, 21st October, 1816.— My Lord, I have the honour to report to your lordship, that an inhabitant of this settlement, named *Michael Carty*, embarked by

the last vessel which sailed for England, in order to obtain redress for the oppressive measures which he represents to have been exercised towards him by me.

“ I could not have conceived it possible that this inhuman wretch was so destitute of all sense of shame, as to have taken such public means of promulgating his infamy; yet, as he has resolved upon it, I feel it necessary to transmit, for your lordship’s information, the accompanying documents respecting him.

“ By these papers your lordship will perceive, that this Carty was convicted before a special court, assembled for his trial, of having caused a poor young Negro female, his property, to be stripped naked, and her hands being tied to her feet with tight cords, a stick was passed under her knees and above the elbow-bend of her arms, a large cattle-chain was fastened round her neck with a padlock, and in this agonizing posture, exposed to the burning heat of the sun, was this wretched female tortured from morning until night; constantly, during that time, flogged with a severe cat by her inhuman master and servant, in the most wanton and barbarous manner: sometimes, on her buttocks; at other times, being turned over on the stick, on her face and breasts.”

Now, look at the evidence on which he was thus convicted.

“ At a meeting of the Magistrates at the Court House, Belize, River’s mouth, in Honduras, Thursday, August 29th, 1816.—Present, Marshall Bennett, Thomas Paslow, and Thomas Frain, esquires.

“ J. B. Rabateau came before the magistrates, and stated upon oath as follows:—The day before yesterday I was at Mr. Orgill’s, about half past twelve o’clock, and I heard somebody was crawling in Mr. Carty’s yard; Mr. Orgill told me it was Mr. Carty that was flogging one of his weuches, and which was the third time that day; I went from the house into Mr. Orgill’s yard, with Mr. Orgill and Joseph Belisle, and looked into Mr. Carty’s yard, and

I saw a girl which Mr. Carty brought from Mrs. Burn's, on the ground, her two hands were tied to her feet, and a stick run under her knees and above the elbow-bend of the arm, and lying on her back perfectly naked, and he, Mr. Carty, was flogging her with a cat; after flogging her some time on her buttocks, he came round and struck her ten or twelve stripes over her breast and face, and after his flogging her thus, he called another woman of his and made her hold one end of the stick, and he, Mr. Carty, took hold of the other, and he turned her from lying on her back over her head, when she fell nearly on her face, and then he flogged her again on her buttocks; after this I went away, and some time after returned, when I saw Mr. Carty flog the girl again in the same position and manner as before. I was then in company with Mr. Orgill, Joseph Belisle, Martha Sloasher, Jeremia Myvett, William Adams, and John M'Gregor, who all saw the same. After this I went away, and about five o'clock returned to Mr. Orgill, and saw the girl fastened in the same position."

"The magistrates and officers of the court then examined the woman Quasheba, who appeared to have been much flogged, and her wrists much cut, apparently from having been tied, and had a large cattle-chain fastened about her neck with a padlock."

"John M'Gregor sworn, deposed as follows:—The other day I had occasion to go into Mr. Carty's shop, with a Spaniard, to see some crockery ware; as I went into the shop, he, Carty, was just coming in from the yard, with a cat in his hand; this was about eleven o'clock. I went away; about four o'clock in the afternoon, I was in Mr. Orgill's yard, and I saw the girl Quasheba tied in Mr. Carty's yard; she was quite naked, and tied with her hands to her legs, and a stick run under the bend of the knees and above the bend of the arms; he was flogging her."

"John Antonia Portall sworn; and John M'Gregor sworn as interpreter:—Deposes, that he saw the girl Quasheba when tied, and saw her being punished by Mr. Carty;

that he sent his mate and the boatswain, who could talk English, to beg for the girl; that they went in and Mr. Carty said he would forgive her, but would put her in chains; and this was about half past four o'clock."

Now conceive a young female, her hands tied to her feet, a stick run under her knees and above the elbow-bend of her arm, and a merciless villain flogging her with a cat on the breast, the face, and every part of her body; and, as if insatiable in his barbarity, calling another woman of his and making her hold one end of the stick, he holding the other, and thus turning her, from lying on her back, over her head, when she fell nearly on her face; and then he flogging her again, in a manner too shocking, too brutal, too indecent for me to read. One witness saw this at half past twelve o'clock, and in that position he saw her again at five o'clock.

Observe, too, not only the intensity of the punishment, but how often it was repeated. The same witness, Mr. Rabateau, says, that at half past twelve o'clock Mr. Carty was flogging his wench for the third time that day. Another witness, M'Gregor, saw her tied in the same manner on the same spot at four o'clock, and Carty flogging her. Another witness, J. A. Portall, saw her undergoing this punishment at half past four o'clock. At five o'clock she is seen, for the last time that day, in the same position. Two days after, the "*wench*" is brought before the magistrates much flogged, much cut, with "a large cattle-chain fastened about her neck with a padlock."

On Carty's trial all this is proved; and what exemplary infliction awaits him? Let gentlemen consider his guilt, and what measure of punishment they, or any men with feelings unblunted by Slavery, would have dealt out to the convicted monster. Hear his sentence in the words of Colonel Arthur:

"Convicted of all this load of enormity; with the unfortunate young female before their eyes, lacerated in a manner the recital of which is shocking to humanity; her wounds festered to such a degree that her life was con-

sidered in the greatest danger ; still this picture of human misery, and human depravity, could not rouse a Honduras jury to award such a punishment against the offender (whom they found guilty to the utmost extent) as bespoke their commiseration for the former, or their detestation of the latter. Fifty pounds, Jamaica currency, equal to about thirty-five pounds sterling, was the penalty deemed adequate to the crimes of the offender ! a man in affluent circumstances, worth thousands of pounds ; and the poor female was doomed to remain the slave of this cruel wretch, still more exasperated against her than ever."

I know not whether the act itself is more enormous than the verdict. The act might only speak the cruelty of an individual ; the verdict betrays the tenor of feeling towards Slaves which prevails among the leading persons in the colony, the magistrates on the bench. Yes, Sir, it tells us, in language which cannot be mistaken, the degree of protection which the laws afford to the Negro, and the equal-handed justice which is dealt out between the slave and the master. Aye, and what a comment is it upon "the enjoyments and advantages of the Slave population of Honduras, a race of people truly to be envied by free labourers all over the world !" O wretched peasantry of England ! How would you mourn your fate, if you knew the comforts of which you are debarred ;—the indulgencies, denied indeed to you, but dealt out so liberally to the contented African in that terrestrial paradise for Slaves, Honduras !

The honourable Member for Taunton has said that the Negroes may complain of their lot, as the poor of this country may complain that they are not feasted on champagne and venison—a most blind and extravagant comparison ! Had this female nothing else to complain of but that she was denied the luxuries of life ? She might complain, and, in the name of thousands of these poor Negroes ; I complain, that she and they are denied the common rights of human nature, and that they are mercilessly lashed and tortured at the will of their brutal masters. Let no man

imagine that this case of Carty is one of isolated cruelty : there stand upon record multitudes of cases of a description equally horrible. I did not choose, though accused of doing so, to appeal to the feelings of the House and the public : I determined to address their reason. I rested my case upon the moral degradation of the Negroes. But let the honourable Member for Sandwich, or the honourable Member for Taunton, who has, he tells us, seen Slavery, and who, seeing, has learned to admire it—who is quite captivated with the felicity of these Negroes, admitted by himself to be in the lowest state of moral degradation ;—let either of these Gentlemen but hint a wish for a statement of particular and individual atrocities, and I am prepared, prepared with cases, authenticated by unquestionable evidence, which will shock and exasperate every honest man in the country.

Before I quit Carty's case, one word on the character of Colonel Arthur. It grieves me, Sir, that I am under the necessity ; that I am bound, by the fidelity I owe to the cause I have undertaken, thus to comment upon the expressions he has used. I owe it to his general reputation to say he has made ample atonement for that idle language. For the last six years he has been a generous and brave defender of the Slaves. I believe that there does not exist a man who has done more for that wretched race, and who has suffered more persecution in consequence of his exertions ; and I am grossly misinformed if he does not now, with further experience, bitterly repent of the error into which he was betrayed. I am content to be deemed an enthusiast, if Colonel Arthur be one who now considers the Negroes as any other than a most wretched and persecuted race.

The honourable Member for Taunton has complained most loudly of my having stated that there is no danger to be apprehended in the West Indies. Give me leave to say, the honourable Gentleman is as inaccurate in this as in his former assertion ; for I stated that I expected nothing else but danger in the West Indies. I said, if I

recollect right, that wherever there is Slavery there is oppression. I told you, that if you wanted to be safe you must be just; that the price you pay for your injustice is your insecurity. I know there is danger. Danger! why? because the few inflict, and the multitude suffer, gross injustice. But I confess it does appear to me to be the most extraordinary of all arguments, to contend that the danger arises not from Slavery itself, but from the discussion of Slavery in this House. What, then, does the Slave require any hint from us that he is a Slave, and that Slavery is of all conditions the most miserable? Why, Sir, he hears this; he sees it; he feels it too, in all around him. He sees his harsh uncompensated labour; he hears the crack of the whip; he feels, he writhes, under the lash. Does not this betray the secret? This is no flattery; these are counsellors which feelingly persuade him what he is. He sees the mother of his children stripped naked before the gang of male Negroes, and flogged unmercifully; he sees his children sent to market to be sold at the best price they will fetch; he sees in himself, not a man, but a thing; by West-Indian law, *a chattel*, an implement of husbandry, a machine to produce sugar, a beast of burden! And will any man tell me that the Negro, with all this staring him in the face, flashing in his eyes, whether he rises in the morning or goes to bed at night, never dreams that there is injustice in such treatment, till he seats himself down to the perusal of an English newspaper, and there, to his astonishment, discovers that there are enthusiasts in England, who from the bottom of their hearts deplore, and, even more than they deplore, abhor all Negro Slavery? There are such enthusiasts; I am one of them; and while we breathe we will never abandon the cause, till that thing, that chattel, is reinstated in all the privileges of man.

I beg pardon of the House for having trespassed so long upon its patience, but I can assure honourable Members, that I should certainly not have troubled them at such length, had it not been for the observations of the honourable Gentleman. Before, however, I conclude, I

wish it to be clearly understood, what is the point at which we are now arrived. If I understood the right honourable Gentleman rightly, the strong impression of his mind is, that the cart-whip may be wholly dispensed with;—that females ought not to be flogged;—that Sunday should be considered as the property of the slave, a day of rest and recreation;—and that the slave shall have a legal title to property. I understand the right honourable Gentleman also to have said, that he was doubtful as to the admission of Negro evidence in all cases; but that he was satisfied that the impediments to manumission should be removed, and that he is willing that the practice of *venditioni exponas* should be abolished. There, however, still remains one point, which has not yet been touched upon by the right honourable Gentleman,—I mean, allowing the slave to purchase out his freedom by a day at a time—a practice recommended not only by high authority, but also by its obvious justice.

There is still one other point, upon which I confess I did not receive quite the same satisfaction as I received upon the other propositions I submitted to the consideration of the House,—I mean, with respect to the freedom of children born after a certain period. What I understood the right honourable Gentleman to say upon this point was this; “If the honourable Gentleman asks me the question, whether the day shall never arrive on which children shall be free, I would answer peremptorily no.” Now I am anxious, before the close of this debate, to receive an explanation upon this most important point.

Mr. CANNING.—I wish to make myself intelligible to the honourable Gentleman and the House. If I am asked whether I can maintain the proposition that the progeny of slaves must be eternally slaves—the honourable Gentleman must feel that I am not at liberty to throw out a hasty opinion upon that, I readily admit, most important question; but my opinion certainly is, that the time must come when that object must be attained. I cannot now,

however, state a distinct opinion further than this, that the progeny of slaves must not be eternally slaves.

Mr. F. Buxton said—Then I am to understand that the day will arrive after which every Negro child born shall be free. That being settled, my next question is, when will that day arrive?

Mr. Canning.—I say I abjure the principle of perpetual slavery, but I am not prepared now to state in what way I would set about the accomplishment of the object. I abjure the principle, but I am not now prepared to give my opinion upon the question, because my mind is not yet made up, and I am unwilling to say any thing to-night which may reduce me hereafter to the necessity of qualifying any statement I may make.

Mr. F. Buxton.—I am fully satisfied with the answer the right honourable Gentleman has been kind enough to give to my questions, and I feel obliged to him for the very candid and decisive manner in which he has expressed himself.—I now beg leave to withdraw my Motion; but I wish it to be distinctly understood, that, in case a difference of opinion arises between the Government and myself, I shall reserve to myself the liberty of bringing the matter forward on a future occasion.

The original Resolution was then withdrawn. The SPEAKER put the question upon the Amendment, and it was carried unanimously.

APPENDIX.

A.

*Occurrences in the Island of Barbadoes, referred to by
Mr. Buxton, (p. 6.)*

(Extracted from "Debates on the Slave Trade" in 1806, pp. 166-172.)

"IN some papers presented to the House of Commons on the 25th February, 1805, is contained a letter from Lord Seaforth, the Governor of Barbadoes, dated 13th November, 1804, in which he thus writes to Earl Camden:—

"I enclose four papers, containing, from different quarters, reports on the horrid murders I mentioned in some former letters. *They are selected from a great number, among which there is not one in contradiction of the horrible facts, though several of the letters are very concise and defective. The truth is, that nothing has given me more trouble than to get at the bottom of these businesses, so horribly absurd are the prejudices of the people*—(not of one or two, or of a few individuals, but of 'the PEOPLE.')

"In a subsequent letter, dated 7th January, 1805, his Lordship thus writes: 'I enclose the Attorney-General's letter to me on the subject of the Negroes *so most wantonly murdered*. I am sorry to say, SEVERAL OTHER INSTANCES OF THE SAME BARBARITY have occurred, with which I have not troubled your Lordship, as *I only wished to make you acquainted with the subject in general.*'

"The letters to which Lord Seaforth refers, and which accompany the above extracts, are from four of the most respectable individuals in the Island of Barbadoes, viz. Mr. Ince, the President of the Council; Mr. Couthurst, the Advocate-General; Mr. Beccles, the Attorney-General; and the Rev.

Mr. Pilgrim. These Gentlemen all agree in the material facts of the cases which they state. It would, therefore, be an unnecessary repetition to transcribe the whole of their letters : it will be sufficient to give the substance of the statements which they contain.

“ 1. On the 10th of April, 1804, a militia-man of the name of Halls, of the St. Michael's regiment, returning from military duty, overtook on the road some Negroes who were going quietly home from their labour. When he came near, he called out that he would kill them, and immediately began to run after them. The Negroes, not supposing that he really intended to do them any injury, and imagining that he was in joke, did not endeavour to escape, but merely made way for him. The person nearest to him happened to be a woman, the property of a M. Clarke, the owner of Simmons's estate, who is stated to have been a valuable slave, the mother of five or six children, and far advanced in pregnancy. *Without the smallest provocation of any kind, Halls coolly and deliberately plunged his bayonet several times into her body, when the poor creature dropped, and expired without a groan.* Two gentlemen were eye-witnesses of this horrid action. One of them, Mr. Harding, the manager of the Codrington College estate, went up to Halls and spoke harshly to him, and said he ought to be hanged, for he never saw a more unprovoked murder, and that he would certainly carry him before a magistrate. Halls's reply is very remarkable. ‘ *For what?* ’ said he (with the utmost indifference as to the crime)—‘ *for what? FOR KILLING A NEGRO !!!* ’ This is a short but a significant sentence, strongly confirming an important truth, which has frequently been asserted, viz. that the Negroes are regarded by their white-skinned oppressors as an inferior order of beings, and, under the influence of this sentiment, are naturally enough denied the common rights of humanity, and excluded from the pale of that sympathy which a sense of a common nature and a common extraction is calculated to inspire. Mr. Harding, however, greatly to his credit, was proof against the force of Halls's compendious reasoning; and, having procured assistance, laid hold of him, and carried him before Mr. Justice Walton. Mr. Justice Walton, it would appear, was not indisposed to use the authority with which he was vested in

bringing Halls to justice; but he found, that '*in his situation as a magistrate, the law of the island gave him no jurisdiction or authority over him,*' and, in short, that he had no right to commit him. In this dilemma, Mr. Walton applied to Mr. President Ince. 'I told Mr. Walton,' says the President, in his letter to Lord Seaforth, 'that I regretted, with real concern, the deficiency in our law: but that there was a penalty due to the King in such cases,' (viz. the ELEVEN POUNDS FOUR SHILLINGS); 'and that, as Mr. Harding had sufficiently substantiated the fact, I would order him to be committed till he paid the forfeiture, or a suit should be commenced against him.' Accordingly he was sent to prison.

"2. The second instance produced by Lord Seaforth is not inferior in atrocity to the first. A Mr. Colbeck, who lives overseer on Cabbage-tree plantation, in St. Lucy's parish, '*had bought a new Negro boy out of the yard*' (meaning the Slave yard, where Negroes are exposed to sale, in the same manner as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield market), and carried him home. Conceiving a liking to the boy, he took him into the house and made him wait at table. Mr. Crone, the overseer of Rowe's estate, which is near to Cabbage-tree plantation, was in the habit of visiting Mr. Colbeck, '*had noticed the boy, and knew him well.*' A fire happening one night in the neighbourhood, Colbeck went to give his assistance, and the boy followed him. Colbeck, on his return home, missed the boy, who had lost his way; and as he did not make his appearance the next day, he sent round to his neighbours, and *particularly to Crone*, informing them, that his African lad had strayed, that *he could not speak a word of English*, and possibly he might be found breaking some sugar canes, or taking something else for his support: in which case he requested they would not injure him, but send him home, and he would pay any damage the boy might have committed. After a lapse of two or three days, the poor creature was discovered in a gully (or deep water-course) near to Rowe's estate; and a number of Negroes were soon assembled about the place. The boy, naturally terrified with the threats, the noise, and the appearance of so many people, retreated into a hole in a rock, having a stone in his hand, for the purpose, probably, of defence. By this time, Crone, and some other White persons, had come up. *By their*

orders a fire was put to the hole where the boy lay, who, when he began to be scorched, ran from his hiding-place into a pool of water which was near. Some of the Negroes pursued him into the pool; and the boy, it is said, threw the stone which he held in his hand at one of them. On this, two of the White men, Crone and Hollingsworth, fired at the boy several times with shot, and the Negroes pelted him with stones. He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition; for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot that it was like a cullender. The White savages (this is the language of Mr. Attorney-General Beccles) ordered the Negroes to dig a grave. Whilst they were digging it, the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him: but as soon as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it and covered over, and, as is believed, WHILE YET ALIVE. Colbeck, the owner of the boy, hearing that a Negro had been killed, went to Crone to inquire into the truth of the report. Crone told him, that a Negro had been killed and buried, but assured him it was not his, for he knew him well, and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave. On this, Colbeck went away SATISFIED! Receiving, however, further information, he returned, and had the grave opened, when he found the murdered Negro to be his own. Colbeck brought his action of damages in the courts of the island against Crone and Hollingsworth. The cause was ready to be tried, and the Court had met for the purpose, when they thought proper to pay double the value of the boy, and 25*l.* for the use of the island, (being 5*l.* less than the penalty fixed by law, of 15*l.* currency each), rather than suffer the business to go to a hearing. ‘This, I am truly sorry to say,’ observes the Advocate-General, ‘was the only punishment which could be inflicted for so barbarous and atrocious a crime.’

“This horrid recital (which is given almost in the words of the Report, merely avoiding repetition) seems to require little comment. One circumstance of it, however, may not strike the minds of some readers with its due force, although it appears to be the most affecting part of the whole case. Colbeck, it is said, on hearing that it was not his slave who had been murdered, WENT AWAY SATISFIED! O most opprobrious

satisfaction! The preceding part of the narrative had prepared us to expect in Colbeck some approximation to European feeling. But what is the fact? On being coolly told that a Negro had been killed and buried—told so by his neighbour, the murderer—is he shocked? Does he express any horror or indignation on the occasion? No! he goes away *satisfied!* Let the reader give its due weight to this one circumstance, and he must be convinced that a state of society must exist in the West Indies, of which, as an inhabitant of this happy island, he can scarcely form any adequate conception. Suppose, instead of a Negro Slave, that it had been a horse which had been thus killed: Colbeck, had his horse happened to be missing at the time, would have pursued exactly the same steps, and would have been affected in the same way as in the present instance.—We may also learn, from this impressive circumstance, the value of West-Indian testimony when given in favour of West-Indian humanity. The moral perceptions and feelings which prevail in that quarter of the world, it will be perceived, are wholly different from those on this side of the Atlantic. It may be allowed that these men mean what they say, when they give each other the praise of humanity. But examine their standard. Who is this man of humanity? It is one, who, hearing that a fellow-creature has been cruelly and wantonly murdered, *goes away satisfied*, because he himself has sustained no loss by the murder! An exception may be admitted in favour of a few men of enlightened minds; but the remark applies to *the people*—to the bulk of the community, whose prejudices are stated by Lord Seaforth to be so *horribly absurd* as to resist all measures for remedying this dreadful state of things. But, not to detain the reader any longer with reasonings on this subject, let us proceed to the third case communicated by Lord Seaforth, and which, if possible, is worse than either of the foregoing.

“3. A man of the name of Nowell, who lives in St. Andrew’s parish, had been in the habit of behaving brutally towards his wife, and one day went so far as to lock her up in a room, and confine her in chains. A negro woman belonging to this man, *touchèd with compassion for her unfortunate mistress*, undertook privately to release her. Nowell found it out, and in order to punish her, obliged her to put her tongue through a hole in a board, to which he fastened it on the op-

posite side with a fork, and left her in that situation for some time. He afterwards cut out her tongue nearly by the root, in consequence of which she almost instantly died. No punishment followed this monstrous act of barbarity.

“It will, doubtless, be argued, that individual instances of cruelty like those which have been cited, are no proofs of *general* inhumanity, any more than the annals of the Old Bailey can be considered as exhibiting a fair view of our national character. There is, however, this very remarkable difference in the two cases, a difference which is fatal to the argument. In this country, when we read of crimes, we read of their being followed by just retribution; by severe and exemplary punishment. In the West Indies, on the contrary, we not only hear of the greatest crimes escaping with impunity, but find the laws themselves conspiring to shelter criminals from justice: we find the most respectable and enlightened part of the community sanctioning the perpetration even of murder, by their refusal to recognize the commission of it as a felonious act.”

B.

Observations on Mr. Canning's Speech.

WE are very far from intending to comment in any unfriendly spirit on what fell from Mr. Canning on this occasion. But his speech has suggested a few observations, which justice to our cause requires that we should not suppress.

1. We are by no means disposed to regard the discussion of this question in Parliament as so pregnant with danger that “one rash word, one too ardent expression,” uttered there, may raise “a flame” among the Slaves in the West Indies, “not easily to be extinguished.” That such an apprehension is, to say the least, greatly exaggerated, may be seen by referring to a pamphlet published by this Society, and sold by Hatchard, entitled, “A Review of some of the Arguments which are commonly advanced against Parliamentary Interference in behalf of the Negro Slaves,” p. 3—12.

Is there, then, we shall be asked, no danger of commotion among the Slaves in our colonies? Undoubtedly there is; but not from the efforts which may be made in Parliament for their relief. Of these, it would scarcely, we apprehend, be too much to say, that they know almost as little as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield knew of Mr. Martin's benevolent and persevering efforts to protect them from the cruelty of man. The real source of danger is to be found in the oppressive nature of colonial bondage; and in the resistance which, under the influence of passion and prejudice, the colonists may be led to make to the measures which Parliament may adopt for alleviating its pressure. A reform in which the colonists heartily concurred would obviate all danger from public discussion. It would further obviate the far more formidable danger to be apprehended from the influence of the spectacle exhibited within the visible horizon of Jamaica—the spectacle, we mean, of Negro liberty in St. Domingo, achieved by blood and violence, and triumphant over the most powerful obstacles. And here, is it unseasonable to ask, whether any thing can prove so strongly the inaptitude of the Slaves to be roused to insubordination and revolt, by any events except those which press immediately on their senses, as this,—that the example of the neighbouring island of St. Domingo should have been placed for thirty years before their eyes, without producing the slightest perceptible effect on their habits of quiet submission? And yet we are expected to believe, that even one rash word uttered in St. Stephen's Chapel, at the distance of 6000 miles, may raise an inextinguishable flame of mutiny among them. They have remained unaffected by the sight of their fellows successfully wading through blood to liberty: they are, nevertheless, to be inflamed to insurrection by the echo of some abstract propositions propounded in the House of Commons; although there is no obvious mode by which the intelligence can be wafted to their ears; and although, if they heard it, they would not be able to comprehend its import.

Major Gaisford, of the Engineers, who passed upwards of four years in the West Indies, published, in 1811, some observations on the subject of colonial slavery. The following extract from his work is applicable to the subject we are now considering.—

“The British Parliament,” he remarks, “omitted certain expressions in the original preamble to the Abolition Act, lest they might be interpreted to give a sanction to revolt or disaffection among the Negroes. The total ignorance of this class of beings, regarding the transactions of society, renders such a caution at present needless. It is certain, the noble exertions of the British Parliament to better their condition are but very partially known by the Blacks in the West Indies. The stories told of their gratitude to the promoters of abolition, I am inclined to aver, are generally fabrications.”——“To ask a Negro Slave to repeat the English alphabet would be almost as generally an imputation of weakness, as to ask a chimney-sweep’s apprentice to recite Mahomet’s Koran.”

In the Correspondence relative to the condition and treatment of Slaves at Honduras, laid on the table of the House of Commons on the 16th of June 1823, some important light is thrown on the ordinary causes of servile insurrection. In May 1820, a considerable number of Slaves broke out into revolt. Colonel Arthur, the superintendent, while he made all the necessary arrangements for reducing the insurgents by force, resolved first to try “the milder means of persuasion to bring these poor deluded people to a due sense of the impropriety of their conduct.” “In my progress up the river,” observes Colonel Arthur, “I was much concerned to ascertain that the Negroes, who had first deserted and excited others to join them, HAD BEEN TREATED WITH VERY UNNECESSARY HARSHNESS BY THEIR OWNERS, and HAD CERTAINLY GOOD GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINT, if happily they had pursued that course, rather than having resorted to the unlawful means they were pursuing. But, as their animosity had not led them to any greater excess than the destruction of some cattle, and the robbery of one or two houses, a proclamation was issued, offering a free pardon to all such as would immediately come in and lay down their arms; but at the same time martial law was proclaimed, and a liberal reward for the apprehension of all who should continue in a state of rebellion. I then proceeded from work to work, to the distance of 220 miles up the river Belize, directing the different gangs of Slaves to be assembled; and by THUS TIMELY INQUIRING INTO THEIR SEVERAL GRIEVANCES, causing the proclamation to

be read, and pointing out to them the fatal consequences they would bring upon themselves, the evil seemed happily staid, and many, who had been hastily led to unite with the disaffected, were induced to return peaceably to their works. I cannot ascertain that the number now remaining of the principal body in the river Belize exceeds twenty."—"I feel it an unspeakable mercy that the country has been thus delivered by the hand of Providence from a commotion which at first appeared to threaten very alarming consequences; and I trust the gratitude of the Settlers will be fully awakened on the occasion, and evidenced by *increased acts of uniform kindness and humanity towards the poor Slave population.*"

If we compare the proceedings above detailed with those which took place in Barbadoes in 1816, on the occasion of the insurrection in that island, we cannot fail to be struck with the contrast which the wise forbearance displayed in the former instance, and the happy results produced by it, exhibit to the headlong and inconsiderate fury, and the consequent disasters, and carnage, which marked the latter. No parley with the misguided Slaves was thought of by the Barbadian authorities.

To conclude, whatever be the danger of insurrection among the Slaves, it is far less likely to be increased by the interference of Parliament, with a view to mitigate the rigours of their bondage, than by the attempt to veil the real nature of that bondage, and to obstruct the application of an effectual remedy to its evils. The danger lies in continuing to oppress after the oppression is acknowledged, and not in taking effectual measures for the relief of those who groan under it.

2. Why, it is asked, did Mr. Buxton "go back to a state of things in the West Indies to which, so far as they could be remedied, a remedy has been applied?" (p. 23.)

We are not aware of the remedies to which allusion is here made; indeed, we know of no remedies which had been applied to the various evils stated by Mr. Buxton to belong to the West-Indian system. The Slaves had not ceased to be chattels;—no means of education had been provided for them;—no effective steps had been taken for their religious improvement;—they were still denied the Sabbath;—the marriage tie was still unknown among them;—and to that hour every Slave, male or female, might by law have been punished,

without one reason being assigned, not only with any length of confinement, but with thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip on the naked body; and might have been compelled to labour, willing or unwilling, without wages, by the impulse of the same cruel instrument. And with respect to the instances Mr. Buxton adduced of unpunished outrages of the grossest kind in Barbadoes, what is the remedy which has been applied? The only remedy we know of, is a reluctant enactment of the Barbadoes legislature, entitled "an Act for the *better protection* of the Slaves of this Island," and which provides, not simply that the wilful murder of a Slave shall henceforward be punished as a capital felony, but that "if any person shall hereafter wilfully, maliciously, *wantonly*, and WITHOUT PROVOCATION, kill and murder any Slave," he shall be deemed guilty of felony without benefit of clergy.

Surely it was of some importance to shew what was the spirit which had animated the conduct and guided the legislation of our Colonists, when it became a question whether to them was to be entrusted the task of reforming colonial abuses, and of providing for the effectual protection and comfort, the improvement and happiness of the Negroes.

3. But why, it is again asked, did Mr. Buxton "go out of his way to recal the horrors of the now abolished Slave Trade," and "to throw in the teeth of those whose interests are at hazard, cruelties with which in fact they had no concern?" (p. 24.)

But can it be said that the West Indians had no concern in the horrors and cruelties of the Slave Trade, when, for nearly twenty years after those horrors and cruelties had been fully developed, they successfully employed the whole weight of their influence to prevent their abolition? But it was evidently for other purposes than that of unnecessary reproach that reference was made to the part which the West Indians had acted in the Slave Trade question. It ought to be carefully noted, that the ground on which they so obstinately and vehemently opposed every attempt to abolish the Slave Trade was, that the ruin of the West Indies would be the inevitable consequence of the measure, which would necessarily issue, according to them, in an insurrection of the Slaves, and, if not, yet in the loss of the whole of the capital embarked in the West Indies. Notwithstanding all this, however, they now admit that its tendency, instead of

being injurious, was beneficial, and that the ruin they predicted to follow from it was in fact only averted by its adoption. And was no useful lesson to be learned, with respect to the present question, from a retrospective view of what then occurred? Or would it be right to allow those, who so grievously mistook their true interests on the former occasion, and who, under the influence of that mistake, could lend themselves to the support of what Mr. Pitt stigmatized as "the greatest practical evil which ever afflicted the human race," to have credit given them now for taking a calm and judicious view of a question where prejudice and passion were likely to operate with still more uncontrollable influence? Had the concurrence of the West Indians been anticipated in the proposed plans of reform, doubtless, as a matter of prudence, any reference to such topics might have been omitted; but anticipating rather their opposition, it would have been doing injustice to the cause to have omitted them.

Be it remembered, that if Mr. Buxton was wrong in this, the same blame attaches to Mr. Huskisson, who, on Mr. Whitmore's motion for a Committee on East and West India sugar, though advocating the cause of the West Indians, broadly stated the same fact, namely, that for a long period of successive years, the West Indians, utterly mistaking their own true interests, had constantly and violently opposed the abolition of the Slave Trade.

But even if there had been no such reason for referring to the history of the Slave Trade, was it of no moment that the House should be reminded of the foul origin of that Slavery whose lineaments the mover was tracing? Was it of no moment that the House should be reminded, that many of the practices which are inherent in the existing system of Colonial Slavery, are in their nature and effects identically the same with the worst practices of the Slave Trade; and that, while we are justly reprobating in the face of Europe these practices, when perpetrated by the contraband Slave-traders of France or Portugal, we are guilty of a strange inconsistency by sanctioning in our own Colonies practices scarcely less immoral, inhuman, and unjust?

4. Mr. Buxton was further asked, "why, when he was stirring a *question totally new*, he should mix it up with that

other odious question of the Slave Trade, *with which it was never before placed in juxta-position but for the purpose of being contrasted with, and separated from, it.* In all former discussions on the Slave Trade the ulterior purpose of emancipation was studiously disclaimed. Slavery, not willingly but necessarily, was allowed to continue."

We apprehend, however, that the question mooted by Mr. Buxton was not a question, *totally new*; and also that it had always been mixed up with the question of the Slave Trade, and placed in juxta-position with it, not for the purpose of contrast and separation, but for the purpose of increasing the odium belonging to that traffic, and of giving the last aggravation to its horrors. So far, moreover, was the purpose of emancipation from having been studiously disclaimed, that one of the standing arguments in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade was, that it was absolutely necessary, and that it would infallibly lead, to the amelioration of the state of Slavery in the West Indies, and to the ultimate emancipation of the Slaves. That the Abolitionists were mistaken in their reasoning upon this point, is perfectly true. Slavery has proved a much more inveterate evil than they had anticipated, and it has not yielded, as they expected it would, to the meliorating effects of an abolition of the Slave Trade. But, still, it is no less true that the extinction of *slavery* itself was, and was avowed to be, one of their grand ulterior objects in inducing Parliament to abolish the Slave Trade.

The proofs which may be exhibited in support of this view of the case are numerous and irrefragable.

In the year 1788, a Committee of the Privy Council was appointed to inquire into the nature and effects of the *Slave Trade*. The greater part of their voluminous Report, however, is taken up with a view of the *Slavery* existing in the West Indies. The two subjects of Slave Trade and Slavery were evidently considered by his Majesty's Government as parts of one great question, and their inquiries were equally directed to both. It is only necessary to turn over the leaves of the Privy Council Report to be convinced of this.

On the 21st of May 1789, the House of Commons resolved to examine evidence on the subject of the *Slave Trade*. The examination was prolonged during a great part of three

sessions of Parliament, until the 5th of April 1791; and whoever will take the trouble to look at that evidence, will find that at least one-half of it refers to the state of *Slavery* in the West Indies. At the commencement of this inquiry, namely, on the 29th of May 1789, a motion was made by Mr. Tierney to separate the African from the West-Indian part of the question; but this motion was overruled by Mr. Pitt; and, in point of fact, seventy-eight witnesses were examined on the West Indian, and only forty on the African part of the question.

In April 1791, a debate of two days' continuance took place in the House of Commons, on a motion made by Mr. Wilberforce for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. More than half of the speeches of Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Francis, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and other advocates of the abolition, turned on the state of *Slavery* in the West Indies. Even in that early debate, Mr. Pitt entered on the question of emancipating the Slaves. "A rash emancipation, indeed, he was clear, would be wrong and mischievous. In that unhappy situation to which our baneful conduct had brought both ourselves and them, it would be no justice on either side to give them liberty. They might be relieved from every thing harsh and severe, raised from their present degradation, and put under the proper protection of the law: till then, to talk of emancipation was insanity. But it was the system of fresh importations that interfered with these principles of improvement; and it was the abolition of the Slave Trade that would furnish the means of effectually regulating the situation of the Slaves in the islands."

—What can more decisively shew, that from the first the emancipation of the Slaves in the West Indies, so far from being disclaimed by the Abolitionists, was openly avowed by them as an ultimate object, although, considering the novelty of the whole subject, the idea of *immediately* emancipating large bodies of *newly imported* Africans might be fairly viewed with much serious alarm.

The whole course of the Slave Trade controversy proves incontestably the same point. In 1792, when Mr. Dumas proposed to abolish the Slave Trade and Slavery together, by means of regulations to be carried into effect in the West Indies, what was the reply on the part of the Abolitionists? It was, "No, abolish the *Slave Trade* immediately, and you

will arrive much more surely and rapidly at the ulterior ends of improvement and emancipation in the West Indies than by means of internal regulations." Such also was the language held by them on the motion of Mr. Francis, in 1795, and on that of Mr. Charles Ellis in 1797. And during every subsequent discussion, to the very moment of abolishing the Slave Trade, they never ceased to argue that that measure would certainly tend to the improvement of the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies, and to their final emancipation. Nay, this was the very line of argument pursued by Mr. Canning in his memorable speech in 1799, wherein he endeavoured to shew that to abolish the Slave Trade was the surest means of improving the state of Slavery in the West Indies. In his speech in 1807 he took the same ground.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that in 1807, when the Bill for abolishing the Slave Trade was in its progress through the House of Commons, the Duke of Northumberland, then Lord Percy, to his immortal honour, moved a resolution for giving freedom to all children born in the West Indies from the 1st of January 1810; which motion was withdrawn, at the suggestion of abolitionists, on the ground that the end they had in view would be more effectually accomplished by the benefits which would necessarily result from the abolition of the Slave Trade, than by directly interfering in colonial legislation.

We beg to refer the reader, for a farther elucidation of this subject, to the Pamphlet already referred to, "A Review of some of the Arguments," &c. pp. 20—30.

We have already freely admitted that the Abolitionists were mistaken in supposing that an Act of Parliament abolishing the Slave Trade would certainly lead to the improvement of the condition of the Slaves and to their ultimate emancipation. They expected too much from the colonists and the colonial legislatures. But their error in this respect is as far as possible from proving that either the question mooted by Mr. Buxton was a *totally new question*, or that it had never before been placed in juxtaposition with the Slave Trade but for the purpose of being contrasted with and separated from it; or that the ulterior purpose of emancipation had always been studiously disclaimed by the Abolitionists. What was the Registry Bill, but a measure which was intended to pave the

way for the final emancipation of the Slaves? This was distinctly avowed in the Report of the African Institution on the subject, which has been quoted by Mr. Ellis above, (p. 58.) To the views of that Report Mr. Ellis expresses himself favourable. Had he, and the West Indians generally, been equally favourable to them in 1815, and had an *effective* Registry on Mr. Wilberforce's plan been then established in the Colonies, fresh efforts in behalf of the Slaves might not have been needed. As matters are, they have become indispensable. How could it have been supposed for one moment, that it was either intended or promised by the Abolitionists, that, having put an end to the Slave Trade, they were thenceforth to abandon all care for its victims, placed in our own colonies, and within our own jurisdiction. To have done so, or to have even thought of doing so, would indeed have been a just subject of reproach.

5. It seems hardly necessary to observe, that there is no part of Mr. Buxton's speech which can be construed as intimating that "we must deal with this subject, not as a matter of justice and judgment, but of impulse and feeling." From another expression it might possibly be inferred that Mr. Buxton's proposition had it in view "unhesitatingly and rashly to level at a blow the whole West India system." His proposition, however, was, that slavery ought to be *gradually* abolished. Our object, he says, is "*not the rapid termination of that state, not the sudden emancipation of the Negro; but such preparatory steps, such measures of precaution, as by slow degrees, and in a course of years, shall gently conduct us to the annihilation of slavery,*" &c.

6. We readily admit that it was not the intention of our Saviour, or of his Apostles, to interfere directly with the civil institutions of the Pagan world, and, among these, with the slavery which then prevailed. It was their purpose to furnish in the Gospel, to bond as well as free, an effectual remedy for their moral disorders; and to impart to them that hope full of immortality which should console and elevate them in circumstances the most painful and degrading. But while we admit all this, we cannot by any means admit that the obligations and duties of the Government and Parliament of Great Britain are to be

deduced from such precedents as those of ancient Greece and Rome. We are told by our legal authorities, that the Christian religion is a part, nay, the very basis, of the law of the land; and we also ourselves profess to be Christians. It would seem, therefore, that if the Government and the Parliament, instead of adopting the spirit of that religion into their proceedings, and regulating their conduct by a regard to its obligations, should proceed in the neglect or contravention both of its spirit and its precepts, they would ill defend themselves by a delusive and inapplicable reference to the conduct of the heathen governments which existed in the infancy of Christianity. The governments of that period could not, of course, be influenced by the spirit and precepts of a religion which they had not embraced. But when they had embraced it, they were unquestionably as much bound to act in conformity to it, as the meanest of their subjects. In this country, at the present time, we have not only a Government and a Parliament, but a whole community (including the West-Indian planters themselves) who call themselves Christian, and profess to be governed by the injunctions of the Gospel. Are they, then, not to be reminded of their Christian duties? Are they not to be told that it is their clear and unambiguous and indispensable obligation to act in the spirit, and in obedience to the precepts, of the religion they profess, and which, it is admitted, is not only a part of the law of the land, but has expressly been given to guide the conduct of every individual, not only in private and domestic, but in social and civil life? Surely, then, we may be allowed to consider what the Christian religion requires of us in any given case, and also to remind our fellow-Christians of its requisitions, without exciting pointed allusions to ill times. Is it not a fair and legitimate appeal to any individual, to say to him, "You are a Christian: why do you oppress your servants, why do you act so unkindly towards your wife and children, why do you defraud the revenue, or encroach on your neighbour's rights?" Or may we not prefer a similar appeal to Christian governments, and say, "Why do you permit robbery and murder to be committed by your subjects, as in the case of the Slave Trade; or why do you permit them to oppress and degrade their fellows, as in the case of Slavery; to exact their labour without return, and to deprive them of protection from law?" Even the direct introduction of Christianity in such cases as these

appears to us to be perfectly consistent with sound reason and good taste, and can be justly offensive only to those who are unwilling to have their conduct tried by it, or to abandon the practices which it proscribes.—It is not, be it remembered, to those who are still, to our disgrace, the Pagan Slaves of the West Indies, that this appeal is made. *They* are not told that it is their duty or their right to emancipate themselves. On the contrary, they would be told, if they were Christians, and such as are Christians are told, that they must “be obedient to them that are their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling; in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”

But are not Christian Masters and Christian Governments to be admonished of their duties also? Are not the former to be told that they must give unto their Slaves “that which is JUST and EQUAL, knowing that they also have a Master in heaven?” And are not both to be reminded, that it is their duty in the sight of God “to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” And are not the whole population of the United Kingdom to be warned, that, if they forbear to lift up their voice against the flagrant evil of Slavery, so long as a particle of it remains to disgrace the character of our country, they are violating their clear and unquestionable obligations as Christians? The conduct which the Pagan Government of Rome and their Pagan subjects pursued, or were left to pursue, with respect to *their* Slaves, is clearly no precedent for us, and can afford no justification to the Christian Government and Parliament of Great Britain, or to their Christian subjects, should they, adhering to that ill precedent, drawn from ill times, refuse to act on those principles which as Christians they cannot deny to be binding upon them.

There are, undoubtedly, many evils which laws cannot cure. But West-Indian Slavery is not an evil of this description. It is an evil which exists only by the sanction of a Christian government, and which that Christian government has it completely in its power immediately to mitigate and finally to extinguish.

7. A similar remark applies to the position, that, property being the creation of law, and law having sanctioned this species of property, we must be cautious how we meddle with it. But it is incumbent on those who may have so abused the power of legislation as to have transferred, to the possession and disposal of another, a man's dearest and most unquestionable property,—his bodily frame, his limbs, his muscles, his bones, his sweat, his health, his liberty—it is surely incumbent on them to repeal so cruel and iniquitous a law, and to compensate, to him who may have acquired property under it, the loss he may sustain from the performance of this act of justice.

8. We have no clear idea of the ground of the objection here made to the liberation of the children of Slaves to be henceforward born. Can we possibly suppose that parents would be dissatisfied to see their children placed in more favourable circumstances than themselves? Universal experience is adverse to such a supposition. What exertions will not parents, in the very lowest walks of life in this country, make to elevate their children above their own condition? And it is a notorious fact, that in a variety of cases, even among Slaves, nay, it is believed that in a considerable majority of cases, where a parent has acquired late in life the power of purchasing his own freedom, he prefers employing it to redeem his child rather than himself.

But, besides this, the liberation of children henceforward to be born can be attended with no assignable danger either to themselves or to the community. If we neglect so to educate them that they may be in a capacity to fulfil the duties of peaceable and industrious citizens, the fault will be ours.—With respect to the adults, we will not deny it to be possible that some, or even many of them, may be found to be so debased and brutified by their bondage, that to give them unconditional liberty might be as improper, and as little for their benefit, as to release indiscriminately from their confinement all the inhabitants of Bedlam. Still, that can be no valid reason for not giving them the amplest facilities, as is done in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, of purchasing their freedom, if they will but exercise the degree of industry, frugality, and forethought, which is necessary to that end. In this way those will have an opportunity of attaining their freedom who are the most likely to

improve that possession to beneficial purposes. The prospect of obtaining it by peaceful means will take away from them the very desire to employ force for that end; indeed, will make them to dread commotion or insurrection, as putting to hazard, if not annihilating, all their hopes; and will thus render them the best guarantees of the public peace. Let the spring of hope be set in motion, and the rest will follow in order:—their industry will be quickened; they will become steady, provident, and faithful; their exertions to achieve their freedom will be the very best preparation for its use and enjoyment; and, almost insensibly, the now degraded slave will be converted into the industrious and peaceable peasant.

C.

“The Honourable Member for Bramber admitted that we had not a right to pay a debt of African humanity with West-Indian property.” (p. 46.)

DOUBTLESS the honourable Member for Bramber would be ready to admit this. What he did insist upon, however, in the speech alluded to by Mr. Ellis, was not what that honourable Gentleman has here made him to say. What he did say was, that “we had no right to pay our debt to the West Indians,” whatever might be its amount, “from African pockets;”—in other words, that we had no right to indemnify the West Indians for any claims they may have upon us, in case we oblige them to abandon the ways of crime, by prolonging the uncompensated toil and the misery of those whom we and they have in common so deeply injured. We are perfectly willing, indeed, to admit, that the parliament and people of this country have had a large share in the guilt of both the African Slave Trade and West-Indian Slavery; but we cannot allow that the West Indians are at liberty to disclaim all participation in that guilt, especially as it is they who have enjoyed for so many years, and still enjoy, the *usufruct* of the common crime; and as they have, moreover, uniformly resisted every attempt on the part of their accomplices (the British Parliament and Public) to

repair their admitted wrongs. The Parliament of Great Britain, it is true, encouraged and sanctioned both the Slave Trade and Slavery. Their guilt, therefore, is undeniable. But, still, it cannot be said to have been the Parliament or the Public of Great Britain who reduced the unhappy Negro to his present condition. It was not they who placed him under the driver's lash, taking from him every motive to exertion but that of fear; who withheld from him the Christian Sabbath, and the consolations of the Gospel; who refused him the humanizing influence of the marriage tie, and all the endearing relations of domestic life; and who, instead of regarding him as a fellow-man, endowed with an immortal soul, classed him in estimation and in treatment with the beasts that perish. It was not the Parliament or the Public of Great Britain who enacted a code of laws characterized by a spirit of contempt and hatred towards this unhappy race; who by the severity of exaction and the scantiness of sustenance brought them down by thousands to an untimely and miserable grave, converting the West Indies into a charnel-house for Africa; who dried up, by their oppression and neglect, the very sources of population in a race peculiarly prolific; who said, Let those Negroes never cease to be slaves, and let their backs be ever bowed down; and who fenced round this tremendous decree dooming them and their posterity to hopeless and interminable bondage, by regulations that obstructed enfranchisement, even when proffered to them by their masters' kindness. No one can believe that the Parliament and People of Great Britain would have permitted the establishment or continuance of such a system, had they fully known its real nature. Had the West-Indian authorities and the West-Indian planters, when examined before the Privy Council and Parliament, in the commencement of the Slave-trade controversy, admitted even as much as they now admit (after the lapse of many years of alleged improvement,) with respect to the actual condition of their bondsmen, scarcely a vestige of that cruel state would by this time have survived. It would not, it could not have been tolerated. Its existence would ere this time have become matter of history.

We freely admit the humanity and benevolence of not a few West-Indian proprietors, and gladly do homage to the feelings which have led them to make costly sacrifices for the temporal

and spiritual well-being of their slaves. But of one grand and fatal delinquency we doubt whether we can acquit any of them, —we mean, that of having shrunk from the duty of publicly denouncing the enormities of the colonial system, and of lending their cordial exertions to the discovery and application of effectual remedies. They have not only not done this, which it was their clear and imperative duty to have done, but they have been too ready to throw the shield of their talents, character, and influence over the worst parts of the system, when attacked by others. Instead of watching with becoming jealousy the proceedings of the local authorities, and exposing their specious but delusive pretences of reform; they have been forward to justify their conduct. And when atrocities have been brought to light, and held up to the public reprobation, some of them have seemed to sympathize with the perpetrators of these atrocities, rather than with their indignant accusers. With access to ample means of information, what cruelty have they ever brought to light? Which of the horrors of the system have they ever called upon Parliament to extinguish? With a thorough knowledge, for example, of the systematic desecration of the Sabbath, what single effectual step have they ever taken to reform the evil? Urged for thirty-five years to stop the fatal progress of depopulation, by instituting marriage among the slaves, and rendering that sacred tie not only legal but inviolable, what single measure have they adopted to that end? Look again at the whole moral and religious aspect of the West Indies. See, but for the labours of a few slandered missionaries, whose efforts may have served to rescue a small portion of the slaves from the grossest ignorance and vice, the whole Negro population of Jamaica, baptized and unbaptized, still sunk, after a British possession of nearly two centuries, in darkness and immorality worse than what Africa itself exhibits. What defence have they here? We do not ask what has been their success; but what have been their attempts? They have been content to do nothing themselves, and have been ready to frown on those who have endeavoured to excite attention to the subject.

Let it not be supposed that these topics are now adverted to for the purpose of venting reproaches against the West Indians, or for any invidious purpose whatsoever. They are

adverted to solely in the hope, that, called to review the past, the able and respectable individuals to whom we have alluded may now see it to be their duty to take a forward and an active part in the great work of humanity and justice which lies before them; that, no longer hostile, or at best lukewarm or indifferent to the subject, they should now throw the weight of their character, talents, and influence on the side of fair and impartial investigation, and of sound, moderate, and rational plans of amelioration; that, no longer actuated by that *esprit de corps* which leads men to feel as a personal offence any exposure of the general evils of their system, or of the misconduct of individual members of their body, they should rather be solicitous to bring both to light, and to found upon their detection the remedial provisions which circumstances may be found to require; that, no longer satisfied with vague professions of a desire to promote improvement, or with the barren generalities of such addresses as have been from time to time presented to the Crown on the subject, they should, in their individual and collective capacity, aim at, and be satisfied with nothing short of, substantial and efficient enactments for securing the comfort, domestic happiness, moral and religious progress, and ultimate emancipation of their dependants; and, finally, that their fixed purpose should now be, not by plausible but unproductive resolutions to avert the interference of Parliament, but to render that interference unnecessary, by the frank, cheerful, and zealous adoption and pursuit of well-concocted and comprehensive schemes of economical, civil, and religious reformation.

We hail with sincere delight an example of this magnanimous determination in one West-Indian proprietor—we mean Sir George Rose—who, having formed a just estimate of his obligations as a planter, at least in one most important particular, has not scrupled both to carry into effect his own convictions on the subject, and openly and earnestly to press them upon the consciences of other planters. A pamphlet which has recently made its appearance under his name, “On the Means and Importance of converting the Slaves in the West Indies to Christianity,” is eminently deserving of universal attention, but has peculiar claims on the consideration of every West-Indian proprietor.

D.

“ It is only by looking fairly at the difficulty that we can judge the right which we have to charge the Colonial Legislatures with being culpably slow in the progress which they have made.” (p. 51.)

WE freely admit that the progress has usually been slow by which a whole people have been raised from barbarism to civilization, or from a state of slavery to the enjoyment of liberty. But the great cause of this has been, that the Government, as well as the superior classes, have been, in their degree, as barbarous and uncivilized as the mass of the people. In the dark ages to which Mr. Ellis refers, all classes were sunk in one common abyss of barbarism. There are, therefore, no points of resemblance between the state of Europe at that time and the situation of the colonies of Great Britain at the present moment, on which to found any fair analogy. The governors were then altogether indisposed, and to the full as incapable as the governed, to promote the progress either of civil freedom or religious light. In the present day, at least in this country, the governors are in widely different circumstances. Living in the full blaze of light themselves, they have the means of reflecting the rays of that light on their dependants. Enjoying and appreciating themselves the blessings of freedom, they fully admit also the right which every British subject possesses to protection from injury, and to a participation in their own civil and religious advantages. What, then, has hitherto withheld them from imparting these blessings to the Negro population in our Colonies? It will be said in reply, that the Slaves were so unprepared for liberty, that to have given it to them would have tended to their injury and not to their benefit. Be it so. But, still, was it necessary that they should be chattels; that they should continue to be bought and sold; that they should have no rights of property, no marriage, no Sabbath, no moral

culture, no education ; that they should remain in the class of mere animals ; that they should, like them, be driven by the lash, and bereft of all motive for exertion but the base and servile one of bodily fear ? Slow indeed must have been their progress while such a state of things was prolonged. But has any thing been done, has any thing even been attempted, with a view to quicken it ? In truth, the very first efficient step towards improvement is yet to be made. There is, even at this moment, no marriage tie among 300,000 British subjects. Not only is not marriage required or enforced ; it is absolutely discouraged. Nay, when a sense of Christian obligation has led the Slaves, under the influence of Methodist or Moravian Missionaries, to form a permanent connection of the domestic kind, the union has no sanction from law ; it may be violated with impunity by the parties themselves, it may be dissolved at the will of the master.

Will it be argued that it was impossible to take even this first step towards civilization ; or that there was something so peculiarly and incorrigibly vicious in the Negro character, that the very attempt to institute marriage was utterly hopeless ? Something of this kind we know has been alleged. And yet, on this supposition, how will the following facts be explained ?

In every other country in the universe, however barbarous and uncivilized, the institution of marriage exists, and its obligations are understood and respected.—Marriage has always existed, and its obligations have been enforced, among the Slaves of the Spaniards and Portuguese ; and the happiest effects have resulted from it.—Even in the English colonies, where Slaves are not allowed to be *legally* united in wedlock, the Methodist and Moravian Missionaries have succeeded in inducing many of their converts to form lasting unions ; and in inducing them also, though those unions are unsanctioned by law, to fulfil the duties which belong to the married state.—The Maroons, removed from Jamaica to Sierra Leone, and who brought with them to that place the same vices of polygamy and promiscuous concubinage which then prevailed, and which still prevail in Jamaica, were at once wrought upon to submit to the laws which prohibited polygamy and promiscuous concubinage, and which rendered marriage indissoluble.—The thousands of Africans liberated from the holds of captured slave-ships

and settled at Sierra Leone, have submitted likewise without difficulty to the same salutary discipline: marriage is universal among them, and its rights and obligations are as well recognized and observed as in England itself.—Nay, even in pagan Africa, though polygamy exists, the marriage contract is held sacred, and is guarded by the most formidable sanctions.—Among the Slaves in the West Indies alone, of the whole human race, the marriage state is yet to be instituted!!

The progress of civilization and of freedom, it is alleged, must necessarily be slow in order to be safe. Certainly we are not anxious to precipitate matters so as to endanger the public safety. But what will be said, by those who look to the middle ages for the analogies which are to defend the slow progress of West-Indian improvement, to that more opposite exemplification of what may be safely and beneficially effected for the advancement of the Negro race, which is furnished by the colony of Sierra Leone? There, 15,000 individuals have been rapidly raised from the lowest conceivable state of degradation and wretchedness,—from the chains and nakedness and brutality, the filth and ordure and stench, of a slave-ship,—to the state of men, of free citizens, of voluntary agents, living by their own exertions, and as fully protected by law in their rights of person and property as the inhabitants of Great Britain itself. Are not these the very men of whom West-Indian Slaves are made?—And let it not be said that Christianity had previously prepared them for this elevation. Christianity has, indeed, done much for them. It has shewn in them a signal instance of its civilizing and humanizing and moralizing energy. But, be it remembered, they were freemen before they were Christians. The rulers of that colony did not wait the tardy and dubious progress of certain preparatory measures, before they struck off their chains and bade them be free; before they told them that they had rights, and also that they had obligations, as British subjects; that the former no man could violate with impunity, and that the latter they were bound to fulfil. It was by their own free and unfettered choice that they afterwards embraced Christianity. Many of them, indeed, have not yet embraced it. Nevertheless, not an instance can be adduced of danger having arisen from this rapid transition from slavery to freedom.

Now the Slaves in the West Indies are either more or less advanced towards civilization than the wretched beings thus drawn from the holds of slave-ships. If they are *more* advanced, then why the comparatively slow progress in civilization and freedom, which they are fated to make on the western side of the Atlantic? If *less* advanced, what does this prove, but the baleful influence of our whole system of colonial bondage? The *old* argument of the advocates of the Slave Trade was, that the middle passage was but a happy transition from a savage to a civilized state of existence; from insecurity and barbarism, and the darkest superstition in Africa, to protection and civilization and Christian light in the West Indies. But what does the fact, according to the *present* argument, turn out to be? The very reverse of the former allegation. It represents the Africans, in addition to all their other wrongs, so much more brutified than they were, before they became the subjects of a Christian government in the West Indies, as to be unfit for the same privileges which their brethren enjoy, and incapable of the same rapid improvement which they undergo, in their native land.

The progress, say the West Indians, is necessarily slow from barbarism to civilization.—If this be so, it surely is the worst plea in the world for perpetuating institutions directly tending to barbarize, or for imposing barbarism needlessly and gratuitously on any individual. Even if, for the sake of argument, we should allow it to be a valid reason for leaving the existing race of slaves, until death come to their relief, in the state of barbarism which our cruel institutions have entailed upon them, still it can be no reason for reducing more of them to the same state. It can be no reason for subjecting the yet unborn infant, when born, to the same deleterious process of first barbarizing and brutifying him by slavery, and then trying to train him and his posterity for a freedom to be given them at some undefined period, when they shall be pronounced fit for it. Surely the more rational and Christian-like plan would be, to begin to fit them to be the free subjects of a free state from their very birth. Surely it would be quite as easy to rear the Negro to be an industrious and useful citizen in Jamaica, as it is at Sierra Leone. Why, then, this preposterous reference to the middle ages, in order to supply a plausible pretext

for divesting ourselves of the solemn obligations we are under to every infant born within the British Colonies, to educate him to be a member of a free and Christian community?

Is there, then, any thing necessarily slow—necessarily slower, that is to say, than the ordinary progress of education, and the growth of the individual from infancy to man or womanhood—in the process by which the whole population of the West Indies may be as effectually redeemed from barbarism and heathenism, and made partakers of civilization and Christian light, as their African brethren have been at Sierra Leone?

But it is argued, that if the Negroes were emancipated, easily as in that climate their wants could be supplied, they would revert to their former modes of savage life; they would abandon their habits of peaceful industry, and resort to plunder and violence for subsistence; and they would renounce Christianity for their former superstitions. Without stopping to detect the misapplication of terms in this argument—such as giving to labour extracted by the lash, the designation of *habits of peaceful industry*; or the attributing to the Slaves *in general* any kind or degree of Christian knowledge—we would remark, in the first place, that the argument not quite fairly assumes that the purpose of Mr. Buxton's motion was *immediate* emancipation, although he was at pains to disclaim it. It further assumes, with as little ground, that the work of emancipation would be unattended with all that train of ameliorating and civilizing and Christianizing measures which were laid down by him and by Mr. Wilberforce as the necessary and simultaneous concomitants of every step which should be taken towards emancipation. But, to give every advantage to the argument, let us suppose the emancipation to be as sudden as it has been thought right to assume that it is intended to be; what, even in this case, looking at fact and experience, may we fairly anticipate would be the consequence? The very reverse, we apprehend, of the honourable Gentleman's anticipations. We must here again revert to the case of Sierra Leone. The wants of the 15,000 savages introduced into that colony, and put suddenly in possession of their liberty, were at least as few as the wants of the Slaves in the West Indies can be supposed to be. Men drawn from the suffocating hold of a slave-ship; naked as at their birth, excepting their chains and fetters; accustomed only to a scanty portion of rice and water daily, would regard as

luxuries even the hut and food and clothing of the West-Indian Slave. Africa, too, is to the full as productive as Jamaica, and rewards with equal abundance the toil of the labourer. But has the conduct of these emancipated Slaves, though thus unfavourably situated, according to Mr. Ellis's hypothesis, given any countenance to his fears? On the contrary, they have *voluntarily* preferred to their native forests the abodes of civilized life, though they knew that they must purchase its enjoyments with the sweat of their brow. Instead of resuming their former habits, they have been daily advancing in the habits of peaceful industry and of civil subordination; they have not had recourse to plunder and violence, but to regular labour, for their subsistence; and the majority of them have renounced, and the rest are gradually renouncing, their African superstitions, for the pure and self-denying doctrines of Christianity. Why should we assume that the case would be different in the West Indies?

Again, let us consider the example of Guadaloupe. In 1793 liberty was proclaimed universally to the Slaves in that island. Their conduct, during their ten years of freedom, was in all points the very reverse of what it is apprehended that of the Slaves of Jamaica would be, under similar, or rather more favourable, circumstances; seeing that the soil of Guadaloupe is more fertile, and that the metropolitan state was then unable to controul any insurrectionary movement. And yet their governors bore testimony to their regular industry, and uninterrupted submission to the laws, down to the very period when the peace of Amiens enabled Bonaparte to reintroduce the whip among them.

St. Domingo is an example still more strongly in point. Notwithstanding the atrocities, and the years of sanguinary conflict, not only with the French but with each other, which marked the revolution in that island, and the universal desolation which these occasioned; we find, after a lapse of thirty years, that the Haytiens have not reverted to the habits of savages, but, on the contrary, that they are improving in the arts of civilized life; we find them protected by equal laws, engaged in the pursuits of peaceful industry, adhering to the profession at least of Christianity, and competently discharging every duty attaching to them as citizens and members of a well-regulated community.

But while we adduce these instances, in order to diminish the unreasonable alarms which some people have been led to indulge at the very mention of emancipation, we repeat, that the emancipation which is now in question is not a sudden or immediate, but a gradual and progressive emancipation.

Mr. Ellis supposes the case of the British Parliament legislating in favour of the Slaves, and the Colonial Assemblies resisting the benevolent intentions of Parliament. But this is a case which, as it would imply absolute insanity on the part of the latter, can hardly be admitted as of the slightest weight in the discussion. If Parliament do but act, the Colonists can have no choice but that of submission.

He also refers to the danger arising from the overpowering numbers and physical force of the Slave population in the West Indies, as compared with the White population. In Jamaica it may be about fifteen to one. But in Sierra Leone, where the proportion of the Blacks to the Whites is one hundred and fifty to one, no danger has been experienced, nor has any apprehension of danger been felt: and why? Because the Blacks are free, and are protected by equal laws; they have "an equal participation in all the civil rights which are enjoyed by British subjects under our free constitution."

E.

Improvements in the Slave Law of Jamaica.

MR. ELLIS admits that he was disappointed in the result of the Address to the Crown which he moved in 1797. He maintains, at the same time, that to reproach the West Indians with having done nothing effectual, is unfair; and he specifies certain improvements which have taken place in the legislation of Jamaica, as proof of this unfairness. Let us consider them with attention.

An Act was passed, he tells us, by the Assembly of Jamaica, in 1797, with a view of promoting the religious instruction of the Negroes.—Why this Act should not have been produced by

the local authorities, when they were called upon to produce all acts of this description, is not very obvious. On the 12th of July 1815, a motion was made in the House of Commons for all such laws as had been enacted in any of the Colonies relative to the protection and good government of Slaves since the year 1788. A return was made from Jamaica of fifteen acts, which had been passed between that period and the end of 1814. These were all printed at full length, by an order of the House of Commons dated the 5th of April 1816; but the act referred to by Mr. Ellis is not to be found among them, and we are therefore denied any opportunity of forming a judgment respecting it. The probability indeed is, that it must have been repealed, though the fact is unknown to Mr. Ellis; for had it existed in 1815, the local authorities would scarcely have passed it over in absolute silence, while they were affording us the means of judging of the general progress of improvement in the *Code Noir* of Jamaica between the years 1788 and 1815. Of the fifteen acts, produced in illustration of this improvement, there is only one which can be considered as coming under the description of a meliorating act, and that is the Consolidated Slave Law of December 1809, subsequently superseded by that of December 1816. The other acts, as far as they respect the Slaves, which some of them do not in the remotest degree, are the very reverse of meliorating: they are intended to operate as restraints, and not as relaxations. In one of them, of the date of 28th November 1807, there is the following clause: "And whereas in and by certain of the acts, and clauses of acts, herein and hereby repealed, provision was made for making slaves assets for payment of debts and legacies, and in what manner they should descend and be held as property, and be conveyed in certain cases; and it is *expedient* to continue and amend such *wholesome* regulations; Be it therefore enacted, by the authority aforesaid, That *no slave shall be free by becoming a Christian*; and, for payment of debts and legacies, all slaves shall be deemed and taken *as all other goods and chattels* are in the hands of executors and administrators; and where other goods or chattels are not sufficient to satisfy the said debts and legacies, then so many slaves as are necessary for the payment of debts and legacies shall be sold."

Mr. Ellis says, that in 1816 a Committee of the House of Assembly recommended the prohibition of the sale of slaves under writs of *venditioni exponas*, and they have credit given to them for the humanity of this report. The credit, however, in this case, as in many others, has been cheaply purchased. The recommendation has not been attended to. The act of 1807 is still unrepealed, because, doubtless, notwithstanding this recommendation, it was deemed more *expedient* to continue its *wholesome* provisions. Mr. Ellis says, that if the legal difficulties in the way of the repeal of the writ of *venditioni exponas* could be overcome, no objection to its repeal would be made on the part of the West Indians. But whatever those difficulties are, as they apply to existing contracts, and they are not very palpable, we cannot imagine what obstacles there can be in the way of reversing the act of 1807 as it respects the future, and enacting that henceforward slaves shall no longer be deemed and taken to be as other goods and chattels.

But we come to the year 1816. In that year the Curates' Act was passed. Mr. Ellis denies that this act has been inoperative; and yet, in a report of the House of Assembly during the session of 1822, it was stated to have been almost wholly inoperative. To precisely the same effect is the testimony of Mr. Cooper, as given in the pamphlet entitled "Negro Slavery." "As for this Curates' Act," he observes, "I have heard it repeatedly declared, that it was intended for England, not for Jamaica." "It must have been known before it was passed, that the planters would not allow their slaves any opportunity for attending on their new instructors; and that, consequently, such a law could have no tendency to improve their condition." "Mr. Cooper was informed by the Curate of Hanover, that he might apply to ten estates before he got leave to preach on one." "And both the Rector and Curate told him that they were of no use to the slaves as instructors; and that, under existing circumstances, it was impossible they should."—(Negro Slavery, p. 43, 46.)

Testimony equally decisive, and to which West Indians may less object, is given in a work which has just made its appearance, entitled "A View of the past and present State of the Island of Jamaica, by J. Stewart, late of Jamaica," printed for

Whitaker. The author, who quitted Jamaica only in 1821, is certainly no adherent of the Anti-Slavery party; on the contrary, he evidently leans to the side of the Colonists, although we must do him the justice to say he seems to aim at being impartial. His account of the Curates' Act is as follows.—

“Curates were appointed a few years ago by an act of the legislature. Their salary is 500*l.* currency, but they have no other emolument from their curacies. The ostensible object of their appointment was, that they should preach to and instruct the slaves in the Christian religion; *an object which, from whatever cause, has been rendered in a great measure abortive.* Either the curates are lukewarm in the cause; or the planters do not wish the time and attention of their slaves to be occupied by religious discussions; or, which is most probable, both of these causes have operated to render the intentions of the legislature nugatory. As it is, the curates have dwindled into mere assistants to the rectors, who were before their appointment fully able to perform all their clerical duties. By a law of some standing in the island, the rectors are required to set apart two hours every Sunday to the religious instruction of the slaves; but *this law is very little attended to.* The truth is, that, however willing the rectors might be to perform this duty, very few of the slaves have it in their power to attend church; they are either in attendance on their owners, or their time is occupied in a necessary attention to their own affairs; *for Sunday is not a day of rest and relaxation to the plantation slave; he must work on that day, or starve.*” p. 157.

“A writer in one of the public prints of Jamaica, in 1820, complained that ‘the curates had done nothing in the way of their calling,’—‘neglecting to do that which is expressly required of them by the legislature, viz. visiting the plantations at stated times, for the purpose of baptizing and instructing the slaves in the Christian faith; provided, however, it is with the consent of their owners.’ In reply to this charge, another writer (supposed to be a clergyman), says, ‘Has he’ (the former writer) ‘allowed the curate of his parish an opportunity of discharging the functions of his office towards his Negro servants, agreeably to the tenor of the act on which he lays so much stress? If not, he has no reason to complain of neglect. If he has, HE IS ALMOST A SOLITARY INSTANCE;

as, to my knowledge, some curates have applied to many proprietors, trustees, and managers, expressing not only their willingness, but their desire, to be called upon to discharge the duties of their office, in the instruction of the ignorant slaves, BUT IN NO SINGLE INSTANCE HAVE THEIR SERVICES BEEN ACCEPTED; and surely it cannot be expected that any man, who has a proper regard for himself, would intrude on the property of another, though for the most praiseworthy purposes, with the apprehension in view of being turned off it.'

"The allegation thus publicly brought forward by this apologist, has not been satisfactorily replied to, and we must therefore conclude that there is a general disinclination on the part of the planters to have their slaves instructed in Christianity. There are, it is true, some enlightened men, who have different ideas and feelings on this important subject; but their number is too small to be productive of any good beyond the boundary lines of their respective properties." p. 292.

The author subjoins a note, to say, that since he quitted the island, in 1821, "it appears that in a few of the parishes the work of instruction has made some progress." But this differs from the Report of the Committee of the House of Assembly of November 1822, already mentioned.

Having thus disposed of the Curates' Act and of the benefits which it has conferred on the Slave population, there remains only the last edition of the Consolidated Slave Law, namely, that of December 1816, on which to rest the boast of legislative improvement with respect to the condition of the Slaves in Jamaica. Now, we willingly admit that this law does improve in some respects on that of 1809; we shall proceed to shew in what particulars it does so.

The *second* section is entirely new. It enacts, "That all owners, managers, &c. shall, as much as in them lies, endeavour the instruction of their slaves in the Christian religion, whereby to facilitate their conversion; and shall do their utmost endeavours to fit them for baptism, and, as soon as conveniently can be, cause to be baptized all such as they can make sensible of a duty to God and the Christian faith, which ceremony the clergymen of the respective parishes are to perform when required."—There is here no allusion to

any former Act of the same kind ; no recognition of that law of 1797 mentioned by Mr. Ellis.

But is not the clause obviously intended to operate on the minds of the people of this country, and not on those of the people of Jamaica ? With respect to them, it is, and necessarily must be, wholly inoperative. So undeniably is this the case, that its provisions are not enforced by any penalty. Indeed, to *require* owners, overseers, &c. to teach the slaves their "duty to God," and "the Christian faith," has something in it, in the present moral state of society there, which is perfectly ludicrous.

To illustrate this, we need only turn to the testimony of Mr. Cooper, Dr. Williamson, &c. as given in the pamphlet entitled "Negro Slavery." Mr. Ellis, indeed, seems to admit that these different statements are not overcharged. It may not, however, be unseasonable to strengthen them by the corroborative testimony of Mr. Stewart, already referred to. "Even if slavery and its attendant abuses did not exist here," he observes, "no great improvement in the state of society could be expected, while the most gross and open licentiousness continues, as at present, to prevail among all ranks of the Whites. The males, of course, are here exclusively meant."—*"Every unmarried white man, and of every class, has his black or his brown mistress, with whom he lives openly : and of so little consequence is this thought, that his White female friends and relations think it no breach of decorum to visit his house, partake of his hospitality, fondle his children, and converse with his house-keeper."*—"But the most striking proof of the low estimate of moral and religious obligation here, is the fact that the man who lives in open adultery—that is, who keeps his brown or black mistress, in the very face of his wife and family and of the community—has generally as much outward respect shewn him, and is as much countenanced, visited, and received into company, especially if he be a man of some influence and weight in the community, as if he had been guilty of no breach of decency or dereliction of moral duty. This profligacy is, however, less common than it was formerly."—*"If a gentleman pays his addresses to a lady, it is not thought necessary, as a homage to her delicacy, to get rid, a priori of his illicit establishment, nor is the lady so unreasonable as to*

expect such a sacrifice. The brown lady remains in the house till within a few days of the marriage, and, if she is of an accommodating disposition, even assists in making preparations for the reception of the bride." p. 170.

If this statement be correct, what shall we say to the enactment which gravely commits to such characters as these "the instruction of the slaves in the Christian religion," with a view to their conversion?

The third section of the Act of 1816 is also new. The entire clause is this: "And be it enacted, that, from and after the passing of this Act, no shop shall be kept open during Divine Service."—This we presume means to apply to Sunday, though Sunday be not even named in the clause. But here again there is no penalty to enforce obedience. And does it not seem here also, as if the framers of the law contemplated its effect on uninformed minds in England, rather than its effect in Jamaica? For, while it enacts that no *shop* shall be kept open during the time of Divine Service, it leaves untouched the public Sunday markets, which take place in the open air, and during the very time of Divine Service; and which make it absolutely impossible for shopkeepers to obey the law, even if there were any penalty for disobeying it. Neither does it prohibit labour, not even compulsory labour, on the Sunday. It does not in any way recognize the sacred character of that day.

In the fourth section of the Act of 1816 there is added, to the corresponding section of the former Act of 1809 (which assigned to the slaves Sundays, and a day in every fortnight out of crop, to cultivate their provision grounds), a proviso, "that the number of days so allowed to the slaves for the cultivation of their grounds shall be at least twenty-six in the year."—This is certainly a considerable improvement: it adds ten days to the scanty time previously allowed to the slaves for this purpose. But still it does not amount to one-third of the time which is allowed to Spanish and Portuguese slaves, exclusive of Sundays, for the cultivation of their grounds. The number of days so allowed to them is eighty-two, while in Jamaica it is only twenty-six, even by this new and improved code; previous to which the number was only from fourteen to sixteen. And what is the penalty for violating this law? Twenty

pounds currency, equal to 14*l.* sterling. And this is not made payable for each day of the twenty-six which may be withheld from the slaves; so that if the whole twenty-six should be withheld, the penalty would still be only 14*l.* sterling; and that sum even two or three days' labour of the ordinary gang of an estate would abundantly repay to the owner.

It is also enacted, for the first time, by the law of 1816, section 11, that, *When there is a natural increase of slaves on any plantation during the year, 3*l.* currency is to be allowed for every slave born during that year and living at the end of it, to be divided between the mother, midwife, and nurse.*—This is, doubtless, some approximation to improvement. As, however, the decrease in the whole population of Jamaica is considerable, amounting to 5027 in the three years from 1817 to 1820, the premiums given for births cannot prove very onerous to the public. It may be worth while, however, to obtain a return of the payments made under this clause since it was passed.—[~~It~~ *While perusing the proof-sheet, we learn that this section has been repealed.*]

Into the Act of 1816 there is also introduced a new section (the 26th), which enacts, that in case any Justice of the Peace shall receive a complaint from any slave, that any slave has been *improperly punished, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this Act*, he may associate with him another magistrate, to inquire in a summary manner into the complaint; and if the complaint proves true, the magistrates are required to proceed against the offenders according to law.—Thus far all sounds well; although it must be kept in mind, that, by a preceding section, if the number of lashes inflicted on a slave (as to the degree of severity with which they may be inflicted the law is silent), do not exceed thirty-nine, nothing has been done that is *improper, or contrary to the true intent and meaning of the Act*. But at the end of the section comes a *proviso* of a most extraordinary description: “But, if it shall appear that such complaint was groundless, the said magistrates SHALL PUNISH the complainant, and the person giving information thereof, IN SUCH MANNER AS TO THEM MAY SEEM PROPER.” The magistrate *may* inquire into the complaint; but he *shall* punish the complainant, if his complaint shall prove groundless! And this is the last edition, with

amendments, of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica! What chance, we confidently ask, is there, that complaints will be preferred, by slaves, to magistrates (who are almost universally themselves slave-owners), when, in case they fail in proving their complaint to be well grounded, they are liable to be punished; and not merely liable to be punished, but the magistrates *shall* punish them, *in such manner as to them may seem proper?* This is what is called in the West Indies *protecting Slaves!*

Mr. Stewart, the author already referred to, who witnessed the operation of this Act for no less than four or five years after its enactment, makes the following observation upon it. "If oppressed and ill-treated, the slave may indeed lay his complaints before a magistrate, who, of course, is bound to listen to, and, if possible, redress them; and if he be a good man, he will actively endeavour to do so. But he cannot *legally* render justice to the slave by the punishment of the master, should the latter *decline* giving evidence against himself—a very natural proceeding, where no other admissible evidence exists. The evidence of the slave, and of his fellow-slaves, is insufficient to convict him. The magistrate then can only admonish the master; and the slave is sent home, perhaps to suffer renewed severities for his audacity in preferring a complaint against his master." p. 224.

Mr. Stewart has entirely overlooked the farther duty which the law imposes on the magistrate, of punishing the groundless complainer.

In the sections 41 to 45, are contained the regulations alluded to by Mr. Ellis, to secure the freedom of slaves manumitted by will, and those for prohibiting the purchase of slaves by middle-men. The former in no way alter the law as to manumissions, but merely obviate a difficulty of form. The latter furnish a striking instance of the general spirit of colonial legislation. By the provisions of this law, persons travelling about the country for the purpose of trafficking in slaves, are to be taken up, and carried, with the slaves, before two justices of the peace. The purchases or sales effected by them are declared null and void; and the slaves—what becomes of them? They are to be set free, without doubt. No! this would be too liberal a course, though it is the course

pursued by British Acts of Parliament in the case of all illicit trading in slaves. The law of Jamaica directs, that the two justices " shall declare the same (viz. the slaves) to be forfeited, and proceed to sell the said slave or slaves " by public sale ; half of the proceeds to be given to the informer, and the other half to the church-wardens. A question may fairly be raised, whether this regulation be not a direct contravention of the Slave-Trade Abolition Acts, which ordain that all persons *illegally* dealt with as slaves shall be forfeited to his Majesty, not for the purpose of being *sold into slavery*, but *for the purpose of being made free, and having their persons protected against all claim.*

The 50th section is also new, at least it is not to be found in the previous Act of 1809. Whether it be an improvement will be better estimated when it shall have been read : it is as follows :—“ And whereas it has been found that the practice of ignorant, superstitious, or designing slaves, of attempting to *instruct* others, has been attended with the most pernicious consequences, and even with the loss of life ; Be it enacted, That any slave or slaves found *guilty* of preaching and teaching, as Anabaptists or *otherwise*, without a permission from their owner and the quarter-sessions for the parish in which such preaching and teaching takes place, *shall be punished in such manner as any two magistrates may deem proper, by flagellation, or imprisonment in the workhouse to hard labour.*” The next section goes on to forbid, and to punish with similar severity, all “ *nightly and other private meetings.*”

It is surely not too much to say that this persecuting enactment is worthy of the Inquisition. Sir George Rose tells us of the thousands of slaves who have been converted to Christianity by means of the Methodists. If one of these, actuated by a desire to do good to his next-door neighbour, or to his children, shall endeavour to instruct them in the truths he has himself learnt to value as of supreme importance, he may, by the terms of this law, if he have not a licence from both his master and the quarter-sessions, be cart-whipped, imprisoned, and kept to hard labour in the workhouse, at the discretion of any two magistrates ;—“ *in such manner as any two magistrates may deem proper !*” Then, observe the convenient vagueness of the terms, “ *nightly and other private meetings,*”

The night in Jamaica comprehends, on the average, from ten to twelve hours of the twenty-four. Even a meeting for family worship would come under this comprehensive description.

The sections 70 and 71 have been added, according to Mr. Ellis, to provide "protection for any Negro detained in any jail or workhouse, alleging themselves to be free."—Some improvement, we freely admit it, is effected by this tardy enactment; but it still leaves in all its original iniquity that principle of colonial law which makes the colour of a man's skin *prima facie* evidence of his being a slave. An opportunity, it is true, is afforded him to prove his freedom; and this is, without doubt, a valuable concession; but if he cannot prove it to the satisfaction of a special sessions, he is left to the operation of the workhouse law, which ordains him to be sold as a slave for the public benefit. Thus, though no man claims him as a slave; though no man proves him to be a slave; though he himself affirms that he is free; though he may have been born perhaps in England, or in South America, or in Africa, or in the United States; though he may have come to Jamaica as a seaman and been left there; yet, if he has no proof of his freedom to produce (and in a thousand supposable cases he could have no such proof), this unoffending individual, against whom no crime is proved, or even alleged, is doomed to the severest of human inflictions by the workhouse law of Jamaica—he is to be sold into hopeless and interminable bondage!!

Such are the boasted *improvements* in the Jamaica Slave Code of 1816. But let us look a little more closely at the code itself. We shall omit to notice the various clauses which are merely inefficient, as imposing no adequate penalties, or as containing no executory principle; and shall confine ourselves, in addition to those already noticed, to such as seem to be objectionable in themselves.

The 20th section limits the hours of *field labour* to from five in the morning to seven at night, allowing intervals of half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner. Now, if we compute the time required for going to the field and returning from it at the moderate rate of half an hour on the average, we have here twelve solid hours of labour, in a tropical climate, exacted from the slave *by law, by a law pretending to humanity.*

Human nature was never intended to support such lengthened toil under a vertical sun. It would of itself account for the decrease of population in Jamaica.

The 24th section enacts, that "if any person shall hereafter *wantonly, willingly, or blood-mindedly* kill, or cause to be killed, any slave," he shall suffer death. It only wants the additional clause of the Barbadoes law, "*without provocation,*" to make it a complete nullity. Is, then, the nature of murder (killing of malice *prepensæ*) not sufficiently understood by the judges and jurors of Jamaica, or is there a danger that they would be too rigorous in their construction of the law, that the qualifications *wantonly, willingly, blood-mindedly,* are so studiously transferred from the indictment to the statute? "*By the instigation of the Devil*" should have been added. We shall see that there are no such qualifying terms when the law speaks of murder committed by a slave.

By the 25th section, persons mutilating, dismembering, or wantonly and cruelly whipping, maltreating, beating, bruising, wounding, or imprisoning without sufficient support, any slave, are punishable by a fine *not exceeding* 100*l.* currency, or 7*l.* sterling, or imprisonment *not exceeding* twelve months; and in *atrocious* cases the slave may be set free.

By the 27th section, the lashes inflicted at one time, for one offence, in the absence of the owner or overseer, are not to exceed ten; and when inflicted by order of the owner or overseer, are not to exceed thirty-nine lashes in the same day, or until the sufferer has recovered from his former punishment; under a penalty of from ten to twenty pounds currency. Punishments, therefore, not exceeding this measure, cannot even be questioned: the law excludes them from its cognisance.

By the sections 39 and 40, the suffering a slave to possess a horse or mule, is punishable by a fine of 30*l.* currency, and the animal is to be forfeited.

In the 46th section which assigns its punishment to murder when committed by slaves, there are no such qualifying descriptions of the crime, as we noticed above, in the section which punishes murder when committed by freemen on the persons of slaves. The words of the 46th section are, that "if any slave or slaves" "shall commit any murder," "such slave or slaves" "shall suffer death," &c.

By section 47, slaves assaulting, or offering *any* violence, "by striking or *otherwise, to or towards* any white people, or persons of free condition," except by their owners' command, shall be punished with *death, transportation, or* such other punishment as the court in their discretion shall think proper to inflict.—This is indeed a most tremendous enactment, and framed with a most tremendous laxity of expression.

By section 48, slaves having in their custody or possession any fire-arms, pikes, sabres, swords, cutlasses, lances, gun-powder, slugs, or ball, without the knowledge of their owner or overseer, may be punished with *death, or* such other punishment as the court may think proper.

Section 49 is to the following effect: "In order to prevent the many mischiefs that may hereafter arise from the wicked art of Negroes going under the appellation of Obeah Men or Women, and pretending to have communication with the Devil and other evil spirits, whereby the weak and superstitious are deluded into a belief of their having full power to exempt them, whilst under their protection, from many evils that might otherwise happen; Be it enacted, That any slave who shall pretend to any supernatural power in order to excite rebellion or other evil purposes, or shall use or pretend to use any such practices with intent or so as to affect or endanger the life or health of any other slave, shall suffer *death or transportation.*" Let the reader observe here the extraordinary discrepancy of the preamble with the enacting clause. Whereas there are slaves who pretend to a power to *exempt other slaves from evil*, therefore, if they shall pretend to any supernatural power—not to exempt others from evil, but—to inflict evil upon them, they shall suffer death, &c. And let it not be supposed that this barbarous law is dead and inoperative, as too many of the protecting laws are. No; it is in constant and fearful operation. We trust that a return will be required of all persons executed in Jamaica and the other islands under such enactments.

By sections 52 and 53, it is made capital to mix or prepare certain substances used in Obeah, or even to have them in possession; and among them are enumerated pounded glass, parrots' beaks, dogs' teeth, alligators' teeth, &c.

By section 58, any slave who shall fraudulently have in his custody or possession, unknown to his owner or overseer, and without being able to give a satisfactory account of it, any quantity, *under* twenty pounds weight, of any fresh beef, veal, mutton, pork, or goat, or of the flesh of horse, mule, or ass, shall be whipped not exceeding thirty-nine lashes; and if the quantity is *above* twenty pounds weight, then he shall suffer such punishment, short of death or imprisonment for life, as two justices shall think proper to inflict.—Here, be it observed, the legislature of Jamaica, not content with thus constituting a new and unheard-of offence, throws the *onus probandi* on the accused. But, independently of this, what a state of comfort and happiness and luxurious enjoyment must that be, when even the custody or possession of a single pound of fresh meat is made a crime in a slave, from which he must exculpate himself by satisfactory evidence, under the penalty of thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip!!

By sections 74, 75, 76, and 77, slaves *going off, or attempting to go off, the island* (that is, trying to regain their liberty), or *aiding others to go off, are liable to suffer death, or such other punishment as the court may direct.* Free People of Colour aiding them are to be transported, and if they return, sold; and White persons aiding them are to forfeit 300*l.* for each slave, and to be subjected to a year's imprisonment.

By section 78, any slave travelling, without a ticket from his owner, with dogs, or cutlasses, or other offensive weapons, may suffer any punishment short of death and transportation.

In the 79th section, among the other crimes for which slaves may be tried capitally, is enumerated that of "*compassing or imagining the death of any White person or persons.*"

In the same section is a clause which enacts that in all cases, including the case of all capital crimes, "the evidence of slaves *against* one another shall be received." Now when it is considered, that in all matters in which White persons or free People of any Colour are concerned, the evidence of slaves is rejected in the Jamaica courts, and rejected *on the specific ground that it is undeserving of credit*, it is indeed a most extraordinary inconsistency, and manifests a most remarkable indifference to the life of a slave, that it should be made to depend on such testimony—on testimony which is deemed

wholly unworthy of being admitted to decide the meanest question, whether civil or criminal, which affects a free person. To reject it in the latter case, while it is admitted in the former, can be reconciled with no one principle of law or justice.

By the 89th, 90th, and 91st sections, slaves sentenced to be executed or transported are to be appraised, and their value paid to their owners.

Such are some of the provisions of this last and best edition of the Jamaica code. They will speak with sufficient distinctness to the feelings of every British bosom to render comment superfluous. And yet the Jamaica code is confessedly superior to that of most of the other colonies.

To conclude this long note: Mr. Ellis denies that the West-Indian meliorating acts, as they are called, are almost entirely a dead letter. The examination of this question would necessarily lead to too great length of detail. We shall therefore only refer him, and all who entertain any doubts on this point, to a work now in the press, and shortly to appear, from the pen of Mr. Stephen, containing a delineation of the law of Slavery as it exists in the British Colonies.

F.

Baptism and Marriage.

MR. ELLIS appeals to his personal observation while in Jamaica in 1805, in favour of the liberal and humane treatment of the slaves:—he “does not doubt,” he “understands,” that considerable improvement has since taken place. That the treatment of *his own* slaves was liberal and humane we do not doubt, especially during his actual presence; but that such has been the *general* treatment in the island, his hesitating language shews that he has no adequate means of knowing or of proving. He can speak only from report.

But things, we are told, are now greatly improved; and the evidence adduced of that improvement consists partly in the increase of baptisms and marriages among the slaves. (p. 54.)

With respect to baptism, we perfectly agree with Sir George Rose, that we ought to put it entirely out of our calculation, where it has not been attended by Christian instruction, and by the amendment of the neophyte. On the largest and best of his estates in Jamaica, Sir George Rose informs us, that he found that the slave population, although they had been baptized, were "UTTERLY *without religion*, ignorant, disorderly, and dishonest." (See his pamphlet, pp. 4 and 9.) This view of the matter is completely borne out by the clerical authorities he has quoted from the Parliamentary papers of 10th June 1818, and which merit particular attention. The Rev. W. Chaderton, of Antigua, declares it to be utterly impossible for the regular clergy to attend to the spiritual wants of the slaves.—The Rev. G. F. Maynard conceives that it would be degrading his functions, and incurring the guilt of misleading the poor ignorant slaves, were he to baptize them, knowing that there was not the remotest prospect of their being better instructed in their duty.—The Rev. Joseph Hutchins, also of Barbadoes, says, that *nothing* can be done successfully for promoting religion among the slaves, without the general concurrence, approbation, authority, and co-operation of their owners.—The Rev. W. Nash, of Grenada, remarks, that the reply of the slaves to him was, that if they come to church they must starve, Sunday being their only day to cultivate their grounds; and he adds, "the plea is so reasonable that I cannot oppose it, but I heartily wish their masters would deprive them of it, by allowing them a day in each week to labour for themselves."—The Rev. B. Webster, of Grenada, observes, that besides this, Sunday is the general market-day; and the markets being held during Divine Service, of course the slaves shew no regard to religious duties.—The Rev. H. Jenkins, of St. James's, Jamaica, alludes to the fruitlessness of any efforts in the way of instruction which he can render to the slaves; and yet in this parish, in 1816, 1,123 slaves were baptized.—The Rev. T. P. Williams, of Clarendon, intimates, that, with 18,000 souls in his parish, he has little time for the instruction of slaves. He had twice, however, made known to all the proprietors in his parish, within the preceding thirteen months, his readiness to attend on their estates to instruct the slaves, but he had not been able to obtain the consent of more than two of them.

At the same time, he remarks, that he hoped he had done some good.—The Rev. John West, of St. Thomas in the East, Jamaica, inquires how he can possibly instruct 26,000 slaves, and intimates that the work is yet to be begun.—The Rev. Alexander Campbell, of St. Andrew's, in the same island, had begun to assemble and instruct the slaves, but before he had proceeded far with this plan, "he found that it was regarded by some as an innovation of questionable utility, and he thought it wiser to defer the prosecution of it." In this parish, nevertheless, about 2,000 slaves were baptized in 1815, 1816, and 1817.—The Rev. J. H. Walwys, of Nevis, represents it as an utterly hopeless attempt in the clergy to instruct the Negroes under present circumstances.

Still more in point is the testimony of the Rev. T. Cooper, as given in "Negro Slavery." In the parish of Hanover, in Jamaica, where he resided, 5,773 slaves had been baptized from 1814 to the 28th June 1817, yet in that parish there was no catechizing of the Negroes. Both the rector and curate said they were of no use to the slaves, and Mr. Cooper thought it impossible they should. "I have been present," he adds, "more than once, at the christening of two or three hundred of them, and repeatedly conversed with them. Need I say, that the whole is a solemn mockery? No effort is made to prepare them for the ceremony or to enforce its design."

But, independently of these direct and unimpeachable testimonies to the painful degradation of Christianity, and of its institutions, which is involved in the wholesale baptisms boasted of in Jamaica, is it not plain, on other grounds, that they are intended not for the spiritual benefit of the slave, but for popular effect in England? They have water sprinkled on them, in some cases, by hundreds at a time, and have Christian names given them; but do they thus become Christians? The local authorities tell us so. But does the conduct of those authorities shew that they think so? These Christians, so called, are denied the Christian Sabbath: they are denied also the marriage tie: they are permitted, nay, they are almost forced, by the policy or neglect of the very men who are eager to swell the list of baptisms, to live in a state of fornication and promiscuous concubinage. Is not this to play the farce of Christianity? What must these baptized heathens think of

the religious principles and feelings, we will not say of their masters, but even of their pastors, who gravely performed this sacred initiatory rite, requiring, in its very terms, of all adults at least, and in the case of children of their sponsors, a knowledge of Christian truth, repentance, faith in the Gospel, and obedience to the Divine commands? What, we say, must they think of these clergymen, who, while they professed to admit them into the holy church of Christ, knew that they were living at the very time, and that they would continue to live, in the regular disregard of every religious institution, and in the open profanation of the Sabbath; and that they were wallowing, and would continue to wallow, in the very mire of impurity?

But it will be said, that this is an exaggerated picture, as marriage has increased among the slaves in Jamaica. Returns have been made to the House of Commons, by which it would appear that in the last fourteen years 3,596 legal marriages had been celebrated between slaves in that island. Sir G. Rose assumes this statement to be correct. "It appears," he observes, "after all that has been justly said of that colony, it may be called a temple of Hymen, when compared with our other West-Indian settlements,"—in all of which put together not a dozen legal marriages of slaves appear to have been celebrated in the same long period.

Now, the first thing to be observed in this return of marriages is, that, small as is their number (about 250 annually in a population of 340,000), they are almost wholly confined to parishes where the *Methodists* have formed establishments. Many of the other parishes, and among them some of those where wholesale baptisms have been most numerous (Hanover, for example), have not a single marriage of slaves to exhibit. The authorities, therefore, who furnished this return, ought to have told us how many of these 3,596 marriages were performed by the regular clergy; or whether the whole were Methodist marriages, and of course not legal or binding marriages. At the same time, we are not aware that the mere circumstance of the ceremony having been performed by a clergyman, would make that a legal and binding marriage which has no sanction in law, and no protection from it.

The authorities in the other islands are much more open and explicit in their statements. In Trinidad, the marriages of

slaves are said in thirteen years to have been three; in Nevis, Tortola, St. Christopher's, Demarara, Barbice, Tobago, Antigua, Montserrat, Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, Grenada, and Dominica (with the exception of sixty marriages stated to have been celebrated in the Roman Catholic church) the return is absolutely none!! Now as in some of these islands, and especially in Tortola, St. Christopher's, St. Vincent's, Antigua, &c. the Methodists have obtained a large number of converts; and as they require of their converts to abstain from polygamy and promiscuous concubinage, and to enter into a solemn engagement to live together as man and wife; if such engagements could have been regarded as *legal* marriages, we should have had the list of such marriages, instead of being returned *nil*, boasting a much larger proportion than even Jamaica itself.

The clergymen of Grenada are very candid on this point.—“The legal solemnization of marriage between slaves in this island,” says the Rev. Mr. Nash, “is a thing unheard-of, (unheard of!); and if I might presume to offer my sentiments, would, in their present state of imperfect civilization, lead to no beneficial result.” We should be glad to know from Mr. Nash, in what part of the world, however rude and uncivilized, except in the West Indies, marriage does not prevail, and produce beneficial results. Can he point out any results which could flow from it which are half so bad as those which attend the present system of brutified concubinage? He thinks he can; for he goes on, in a strain of disgusting sentimentalism (disgusting, when so employed), to give us his reasons for so extraordinary an opinion from the pen of a Christian minister. “Their affection for each other,” he says, “if affection it can be called, is capricious and short-lived: *restraint would hasten its extinction; and unity without harmony is mutual torment!*” These absurd and ludicrous reasons would be equally valid for getting rid of the marriage-tie in England as in the West Indies.

To the other two clergymen of Grenada, Mr. Macmahon and Mr. Webster, NO APPLICATION had ever been made to marry slaves. Neither Mr. Macmahon, during his ministry of thirty-seven years in English colonies, nor Mr. Webster, during his incumbency of twelve years, had *ever heard of such a thing*. In the opinion of the latter, “the slaves appear to prefer a state

of concubinage, from which they disengage themselves at will." Doubtless, many even among ourselves would be of the same mind, if the laws would allow them to indulge their natural propensities.

The clergymen of Antigua write in a similar strain. The Rev. Mr. Coull states, that for forty-three years, during which he had been rector of St. George's, no one had ever applied to him to marry slaves but in one instance, and with that application he did not comply. He states incidentally, that there is a penalty of 50*l.* for marrying a free person to a slave. This law should be called for.—Mr. Harman, the rector of St. John and St. Paul, observes, that there is not any such occurrence as the marriage of slaves on record in either parish, such marriage "having been invariably considered as *illegal*." "Nor is it easy," he adds, "to conceive how so solemn and binding a contract can possibly be entered into by persons who are not free agents." Mr. Harman seems not to have been aware that the villeins in England married, and were protected in their conubial rights; and that the Negro slaves in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, and the slaves in Malabar—in short, in all parts of the world, with the exception of the West Indies—enjoy the same privileges.

The Rev. W. T. Austen, a minister of the Church of England officiating in Demarara, states that the marriages of slaves is a thing unheard-of in that colony; and "I humbly conceive" (he says) "this holy institution to be altogether incompatible with the state of slavery, under existing laws and regulations." If Mr. Austen be right, not a day should be lost in reforming that state, and abolishing all laws and regulations which are incompatible with marriage. Mr. Elliott, a missionary in the same colony, observes, that he has united many slaves, with a view to promote morality, economy, and domestic happiness—yet the marriages solemnized by him are *not legal*. A similar answer is returned by Mr. Davies, another missionary; and by Mr. Browne, a Presbyterian minister in Demarara.

In the Bahamas, they tell us that the marriages of slaves are solemnized by the Methodist missionaries, *after their manner of formally enjoining them to abide by one woman*; but they make no return of legal marriages between slaves.

After this general survey of the state of the other West-Indian

colonies in respect to marriage, we again return to Jamaica, and ask, whether there is not the utmost reason to believe that the account received thence, and laid on the table of the House of Commons, as “ a return of the number of marriages *legally* solemnized between slaves since the 1st of January 1808,” is made up, in great part at least, of marriages that were *not legal*, in the usual meaning of that term. We think it incumbent on Parliament to put this point beyond all doubt, by requiring from the Rectors of the different parishes in Jamaica, *certified returns from the parochial registries of all marriages LEGALLY solemnized* in that island since the year 1808; together with a copy of the law by which the 3,596 marriages, which have taken place there, have been rendered *legal* marriages, as asserted in the return already received. It cannot be that the authorities of Jamaica should have condescended to shelter themselves from obloquy under the wing of the despised and slandered and persecuted Methodists, whose very chapel at Kingston was indicted in 1790 as a nuisance; whose missionaries in 1807 were made liable to a fine of 20*l.* for every slave proved to have been in their houses, chapels, or conventicles, for the purpose of attending their instructions; and even to public floggings, hard labour in the workhouse, and imprisonment in the common gaol (which last punishment three of them actually endured), merely for attempting the instruction of the slaves. “ The persecution in Jamaica in 1807, obliged us,” says Mr. Gilgras, “ to put away 500 innocent slaves from our society; for we were liable to a fine of 20*l.* for each Negro we instructed, and they to punishment for attending. The chapels and meeting-houses were shut, while I and my wife were in the common gaol of Kingston; and when I came out, and began preaching on the restricted plan, I was obliged to appoint six door-keepers to prevent the slaves from entering the chapel and violating the law. They would, however, come in their leisure time, and stand outside. They would not, to use their own words, ‘ make Massa again to go to gaol: me no go in chapel, but me hear at door and window.’ We beheld them, and wept, but could say nothing.”

See, for much valuable and authentic information on this and kindred subjects, “ Watson’s Defence of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies,” published in 1817, for Blanshard, City Road.

G.

“ I do not believe, however confidently it may have been asserted, that the whip is used as a stimulant to labour :” it is rather “ a badge of authority than an instrument of coercion.” (p. 56.)

NOTHING in the whole course of the debate surprised us more than this statement of Mr. Ellis. It proves most incontestably the gross deception which is practised upon absent proprietors, and the consequent ignorance in which they are kept of the real nature of colonial bondage. If the whip be not the stimulant to labour in Jamaica, what is? No man, who knows any thing of human nature, will believe that the Negroes will labour day after day, and from day-break till night-fall, in a tropical climate, where, according to the report of the Jamaica Assembly of 1816, the labour of twelve or thirteen days in the year will abundantly supply all their wants, without *some* stimulant. Is it from pure love to their masters that they submit to perpetual and uncompensated toil? Or what is their motive? Men do not usually toil for others without a motive to stimulate them. In this country the stimulant is wages: what is it on Mr. Ellis's Jamaica estate? What was it when he himself was upon the spot? Does he really mean gravely to assert that the Negroes in Jamaica are not driven to their work by the whip? We, on the contrary, are perfectly ready to produce proof that the whip *is* the stimulant, almost the only stimulant, to labour in Jamaica. The cart-whip—its presence, its dread, its actual infliction—we maintain, and (we repeat it) are perfectly ready to prove, is the grand and governing motive to exertion among the slaves in that island.

Hear what Dr. Williamson, a prophet of their own, says on this point. He lived fourteen years in Jamaica. He was there at the very time that Mr. Ellis was there. Though no planter, he is as solicitous as Mr. Ellis himself can be, to paint the West-Indian system in favourable colours—yet hear what he says.

“ Opinions have been given, that it would be well to do away the possession of a large heavy whip from the driver's hands ;

and, whether we consider the frightful sound which reaches our ears every minute in passing through estates by the crack of the lash, or the power with which drivers are provided to exercise punishment, it would be desirable that such a weapon of arbitrary and unjust authority were taken from them. It is at present customary to crack the whip to turn out the gangs at stated hours to the field. When a Negro seems to be tardy at his work, the driver sounds the lash near him, or lets him feel it, as he thinks proper." From all this the "impression made upon the passenger, who is probably a stranger," (residents of course are used to it), "is horrible indeed." Vol. ii. p. 222.

Another witness cited in "Negro Slavery" (p. 67), says, that in 1822 "the slaves on the estate were constantly attended by drivers with cart or cattle whips, which they were in the habit of using as here carmen use their whips on horses."

The Rev. Mr. Cooper states, in the same work (p. 47, &c.) "The gangs always work before the whip, which is a very weighty and powerful instrument. The driver has it always in his hand, and drives the Negroes, men and women, without distinction, as he would drive horses or cattle in a team. Mr. Cooper does not say that he is always using the whip; but it is known to be always present, and ready to be applied to the back or shoulders of any who flag at their work or lag behind in the line."

Mr. Stewart, in his recent work on Jamaica, confirms this representation in an incidental, but not the less satisfactory, manner. Speaking of the severe disappointment which a young man who goes out to Jamaica, full of bright anticipations, encounters on actually entering on the field of his future labours, he observes, "a very brief experience dispels the illusion, and shews him the fallacy of his hopes. He finds himself placed in a line of life where, to his first conception, every thing wears the appearance of barbarity and slavish oppression. He sees the slaves assembled in gangs in the fields, and *kept to their work by the terror of whips borne by black drivers*, certainly not the most gentle of human kind," &c. p. 102. "Formerly, when slaves could be easily replaced, much oppression and a great waste of life was occasioned by what was called the *pushing system*, that is, extracting from the soil as much as possible *by an over-working of the slaves*;" and even

now "the chief ambition of too many is rather who shall make the largest crops, &c. than who shall govern the slaves placed under their care with the greatest moderation and humanity." They do not weigh "in their minds the impolicy and inhumanity of purchasing a few additional hogsheads of sugar at the expense and comfort of the slaves." pp. 186, 188.

Another work has just made its appearance, published by Longman, and entitled "The Jamaica Planter's Guide, by Thomas Roughley, nearly twenty years a sugar-planter in Jamaica," from which we shall extract a single passage bearing on this point. "The most important personage in the slave population of an estate is the head driver. He is seen carrying with him the emblems of his rank and dignity," viz. a staff and whip. "A bad or indifferent head driver sets almost every thing at variance, injures the Negroes, and the culture of the land. He is like a cruel blast, that pervades every thing and spares nothing. But when he is well-disposed, intelligent, clever, and active, he is the life and soul of an estate." The author proceeds to give directions for the proper choice of a driver, observing, with a ludicrous gravity, "I may err, but hope not irretrievably." He then describes him: "He should, in my judgment, be an *athletic* man," &c. p. 81.

It will be observed, that we do not here refer either to the Privy Council Report, or to the House of Commons Evidence, or to Dr. Pinckard, or to various other sources of information, which establish, in the clearest and most irrefragable manner, the existence of the driving system in former years; though, unless it can be shewn that some adequate substitute has since been found for it, these testimonies are equally conclusive as to the present practice. We have contented ourselves with adducing written evidence of a very recent date, to which we shall be ready to add much oral testimony, should it be required of us to do so. In the mean time we shall only remark, that when a West-Indian proprietor has brought himself to believe that the whip is no longer used as the stimulant to labour in the West Indies, he seems to have reached the *ne plus ultra* of delusion.

H.

Mr. ELLIS says, that “ *the West Indians will agree to abolish Sunday markets, and to give the Negroes equivalent time to work in their grounds, provided the means are afforded of employing the Sunday in religious instruction.*” (p. 55.)

It is not very obvious why the abolition of Sunday markets, and the giving to the slaves a day in which to cultivate their grounds in lieu of Sunday, should be made to depend on any contingency whatever. It is a thing right in itself, that the profane and disgraceful custom of making Sunday the market-day should be abolished. It surely is no less unquestionably right in itself, that the Sunday should be given up to the slaves, even if it were only for the purpose of repose from labour on one day in seven ; to say nothing of the higher uses of the Sabbath. Doubtless one of the causes of the non-increase of the slave population is the want of a day of rest ; and while in this way the systematic desecration of the Sabbath has tended to the injury of the masters’ interests, by wasting the strength and ruining the health and abridging the lives of the slaves, it has operated also, in the mean time, to a proportionate augmentation of the quantity of produce thrown into the market, and to a consequent depression of its price. The West Indians are thus suffering most severely from their contempt and profanation of this sacred institution. Even supposing the Sunday, or a part of it, to continue to be voluntarily employed by the slave in cultivating his own grounds, he would obviously be a great gainer by the arrangement ; for he would so much the sooner be enabled to acquire the means of purchasing his freedom, or that of his wife and children. There can exist no valid reason for delaying one hour to abolish markets and compulsory labour on the Sunday, and to give to the slaves equivalent time for the culture of their grounds on other days. The Portuguese and Spanish slaves have 134 days in the year, including Sundays, for this purpose, viz. fifty-two Sundays, thirty holidays, and a day in each week besides ; while in our

islands the time given them, exclusive of Sundays, is only from fourteen to sixteen, with the exception of Jamaica, into whose last slave code a provision has recently been introduced which requires that the time allowed them should amount to twenty-six days in the year.

The restrictive condition introduced by Mr. Ellis in this place, as that on which Sunday is to be given to the Negroes, and equivalent time to be allowed them for their provision grounds, seems to us inconsistent with the representation he has made in other parts of his speech, of the anxiety felt by the Jamaica Assembly to promote the religious instruction of the slaves, and of the degree in which the doctrines and truths of Christianity have been already inculcated upon them. Surely the twenty-one Rectors, with their twenty-one Curates, aided by the whole body of "owners, proprietors, possessors, managers, and overseers," put into requisition by the second section of the Slave Law of 1816, for the purpose of instructing the "slaves in the principles of the Christian Religion, whereby to facilitate their conversion," if there were any efficient object in all this legislation, might be considered as affording sufficient "means of employing the Sunday, when given up to the Negroes, in religious instruction," to induce the West Indians forthwith to "agree" to "the abolition of Sunday markets" and compulsory Sunday labour, and to "the affording equivalent time to the Negroes to work on their own account." The delay in doing so is inexplicable, if the second section of the law of 1816 was meant to be operative, and if Rectors or Curates are to have an opportunity of performing the functions assigned to them.

It is said, that to put an end to Sunday labour, &c. till means of instruction are provided, would produce tumult and disorder: just as if the plantation and colonial police were not amply sufficient to repress these; and as if Sunday markets tended to promote sobriety. Give them but the spring of hope,—the prospect of freedom by their own exertions,—and whatever part of the Sunday the weariness of nature or the opportunity of religious instruction does not engross, will be, in general, devoted to far other purposes than tumult and disorder.

I.

“Where does the responsibility attach for the bad state of morals in the West Indies?” (p. 57.)

UNQUESTIONABLY it attaches to the West-Indian proprietors. Were they not aware of the prevailing demoralization? was Mr. Ellis not aware of it? He was himself on the spot. If they were not, then what pretence can they have to demand credit for that accuracy of local knowledge to which, in every stage of this controversy, they have made such overwhelming pretensions? If they were aware of it, then it behoves them to explain why they did not attempt to apply a remedy to the disorder; or, if this proved to be beyond their power, why they did not apply to Parliament for its aid. The almost universal prevalence of a state of immorality and licentiousness unparalleled in any other part of the world, is now admitted: and what is the defence? The defence is, that this state has existed so long that it cannot now be easily or speedily eradicated! In other words, the West-Indian authorities have long been supine and inactive. Under their eyes, nay, under their very controul, the condition of social life has become so lamentably vicious and corrupt, that a long time is now required to abate the nuisance. It surely is their fault, that a cure should not have been attempted at least, not to say effected, long ago. It was, at least, always in their power to have done, what the Abolitionists have been uniformly urging them to do for the last thirty years:—it was at least in their power to have instituted marriage among the slaves, and to have legalized and protected that institution: it was in their power to have abolished Sunday markets and Sunday labour: it was in their power to have given encouragement, as Sir G. Rose, Mr. Barham, and a few others have done, to the teachers of Christianity: it was in their power to have inhibited, in their own agents, that licentiousness, and those grossnesses of conduct, which, operating with all the influence of example, have given so fatal a blow to the interests of morality in the West Indies. In this respect, generally speaking, they have done nothing. The work of

moral reform is still to be commenced ; and yet they wish to escape from the responsibility which attaches to so persevering a dereliction of their clearest and most unquestionable obligations.

Here, however, it is obvious to remark, that if such be the admitted state of demoralization in the West Indies ; if there be truth in Mr. Stewart's delineation of that state, as it will be found above at p. 152 ; if the clear reiterated testimony of Dr. Williamson on this point be not a malignant fabrication ; if the other living witnesses, adduced in the pamphlet entitled " Negro Slavery," have not exposed themselves to conviction and infamy as false accusers ; then must a state of moral feeling and moral conduct exist among the inhabitants of the West Indies unprecedented in the annals of mankind. Now, will it be wise, as has been proposed, to commit to such men, without reserve or interference, the present and eternal destinies, the temporal, moral, and spiritual interests of 350,000 of his Majesty's subjects ? What hope can we have, after such appalling delineations, that they will not abuse the most absolute and uncontrolled dominion which the world ever witnessed ; or that they may continue to be safely entrusted, not only with the delicate task of legislating for their bondsmen, but with a power of summarily inflicting punishment upon them to a fearful extent, without being liable to any legal revision or responsibility whatever ?

K.

" The remedy (for the existing state of morals) is not to be found in the emancipation of the Negroes." (p. 57.)

No one has said that the *specific* remedy, for the profligacy prevailing among the slaves in the West Indies, is to be found in their emancipation. It is certainly, however, to be found, if at all, in that direct interference with the discretion of the local authorities, which shall render it impossible to perpetuate the present wretched and profligate system. It is to be found in the

admission among the slaves of Christian light; in the abridgement and effective controul of that arbitrary power which has been so much abused; in giving the Sabbath to the slaves; in instituting marriage among them, and absolutely interdicting separations of husband and wife; in educating their children to be the free members of a Christian community; in presenting to their minds a higher motive for exertion than the dread of the lash; in opening to them a prospect, by industry and frugality and good conduct, of acquiring the means of purchasing their freedom; and in employing moral and married agents to superintend them. All these measures co-operating together would soon change the moral aspect of society; the gross vices which now disfigure it would disappear, and slavery also would in no long time disappear with it.—“Freedom, if given to the Negroes before they are fitted to receive it,” it is said, “would only confirm and aggravate” the prevailing licentiousness. But surely not, if freedom is to be the reward, in the case of adults, of patient industry, forethought, frugality, self-denial; and if the infants are all to be Christianly educated, with a view to the enjoyment of their liberty. The very pretence for delay is thus taken away.

L.

“I not only have no objection to offer, but, with such limited means as I possess, I should feel bound to lend my humble support” “to the extinction of Slavery so to be accomplished.”
(p. 59.)

THAT is to say, To the mode of extinguishing slavery recommended in the Report of the African Institution published in 1816, entitled “Reasons for establishing a Registry of Slaves in the British Colonies,” Mr. Ellis has no objection to offer; on the contrary, he feels himself bound to lend it his humble support. This declaration cannot fail to be very gratifying to the authors of that calumniated Report. It will at the same time surprise those who recollect how that Report was received, on its first appearance, by the whole West-Indian body in England

of which Mr. Ellis is so respectable and influential a member ; by all the local West-Indian authorities ; and by almost every West-Indian planter from the Bahamas to Trinidad and Guiana. The loud and vehement indignation, the unappeasable resentment, the torrents of abuse and calumny, which that work called into action against its authors, must still be fresh in every one's memory. Even the attempt to abolish the Slave Trade did not produce half the clamour and violence which followed its publication, though it is now deemed, by no mean West-Indian authority, to be worthy of his high commendation. But where was the voice of the honourable Gentleman in 1816 ? He had then a full opportunity of expressing the manly and liberal sentiments which he has now avowed ; and the expression of them would then have been of use in stemming the tide of passion and prejudice by which his friends were carried away. But such has been the fate of every measure of West-Indian reform which has hitherto been attempted. It has been opposed in its outset and progress, with a blind hostility, by the colonial body ; but when the measure, in spite of that hostility, has at length been carried, then, though its promoters may continue to be reviled as before, the measure itself is sure to be lauded as wise and salutary. Thus has it been in respect to the abolition of the Slave Trade : thus has it been in respect to the Registry Bill : and thus, without doubt, will it soon be in respect to the reforms now in agitation. After the usual round of animosity and invective, of rumours of insurrection and massacre, and of anticipations of irremediable ruin, we shall have the hostilities and alarms of West-Indians converted into expressions of unqualified satisfaction with the very measures which had provoked their resentment, and by which they have been benefited in spite of themselves.

Mr. Stewart, in unison with Mr. Ellis, observes, that " with respect to the general effects of the Slave Registry law, it is now found to be not merely harmless, but in some respects beneficial, not only to those whose advantage the proposers of it had mainly in view, but to the interests of the Whites individually and collectively." p. 240.

But, notwithstanding the praise which is now bestowed on the system of registry, by some of those who a few years ago loaded it and its authors with every expression of vituperation

which the English language could supply, let it not be supposed that that system has been brought into real living efficacy in our West-Indian islands. It exists there in little more than in name, so far as respects the main ends which were contemplated by it. Had the case been otherwise; had the principles recommended in the Report of the African Institution, and so highly eulogized by Mr. Ellis, been really acted upon by the West-Indian legislatures, there might have been less necessity than there now obviously is for the proposed interference with the state of colonial bondage. The Registry Acts passed by those legislatures fully verify the anticipation of that Report (p. 107), "that the work, *if left to them*, would not be done;" that the fruit of their labours "would be no better than ostensible and impotent laws;" and that "the system would be made perhaps a cover for those very frauds which it was designed to prevent." For the proof of this we refer to another Report of the same Institution, published in 1820, and entitled "A Review of the Colonial Registration Acts." We beg also to refer our readers, for a further elucidation of this important subject, to a speech of Mr. Stephen, delivered at the annual meeting of the African Institution on the 16th May, 1823, which, with other able and interesting speeches, will be found prefixed to the Seventeenth Report of that Society, lately published.

M.

*"Not one word from that most important of all the islands,"
Jamaica. (p. 61.)*

IN June 1821, a variety of papers, relative to the population of the West Indies, were moved for in the House of Commons. Nearly two years elapsed before any part of those papers were furnished. On the 4th of March, 1823, there were laid on the table of the House Returns from the Colonies of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, Barbadoes, Antigua, Tobago, Demarara, Berbice, St. Christopher's, Trinidad, and Mauritius. It was not till the 14th of May, the very day preceding the debate, that any returns appeared from Jamaica, Nevis, and the Bahamas. Several of these returns are extremely defective, especially those from Barbadoes and Jamaica; and there are

no returns at all from St. Lucia, Honduras, Bermuda, and the Cape of Good Hope. Several of the Jamaica returns are only from a small proportion of the twenty-one parishes into which the island is divided. The Governor, in transmitting them, observes, in a letter dated 17th March 1823, "I have been unwilling that any further delay should take place in furnishing these returns, even in their present imperfect state." A similar apology is made for a similar deficiency in the returns of the same island, in the Governor's letter of the 17th August 1816. Again, on the 28th January, 1813, the Governor acquaints the Secretary of State, that, "after having allowed abundant time for the returns, I do not feel myself authorized to delay any longer transmitting such as I have received, although in a very imperfect and defective shape,"—being returns from only ten parishes out of twenty-one. Again, in October 1804, the Secretary of State called for various returns from Jamaica, not one of which was ever sent. We mention these circumstances, among many others, to shew how uniformly difficult, if not impossible, it has proved to obtain full and satisfactory information of the state of the slave population in this island. As for the returns of population recently received thence, being only for six parishes out of twenty-one, they are obviously of no utility whatever.

N.

Observations on the Speech of Sir George Rose.

WE have already expressed the high sense we entertain of the manly and most meritorious conduct pursued by Sir George Rose. His speech on the present occasion, as well as his pamphlet "On converting the Slaves in the West Indies to Christianity," do him the highest honour, and entitle him to the gratitude of every philanthropist. We apprehend, however, that Sir George Rose has been led into some mistakes respecting the amount of the fruits of the labours of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries among the slaves in the West Indies. The intrinsic value of those labours, it would be impossible for any one to estimate more highly than we do. We feel deeply grateful to them for the self-denying exertions and sacrifices which they have made, in the face of obloquy and persecution, and even

of bonds and imprisonment, for the eternal well-being of the most contemned and injured of the human race. If they had not succeeded in gaining a single convert, we should still have ranked them with the martyrs and confessors of old; for, like them, they have been ready to risk even life, in the hope of benefiting the wretched and perishing Negro. Their success, however, has happily been considerable, and has been achieved in the face of obstacles of the most formidable and disheartening description; and we look forward to effects still more signal from their future efforts. It is important, however, that their success, whatever it be, should be estimated soberly, and according to their own official returns, on which we place implicit reliance, rather than according to any more sanguine calculations which may be drawn from less authentic sources. We shall begin, therefore, with inserting, as the basis of our observations, the return of the state of their churches in the West Indies which was made to the Methodist Conference in July 1822, the latest return to which we have any access. It is as follows.

ANTIGUA DISTRICT.

	Whites.	Coloured & Black.	Total.
Antigua	40	4205	4245
St. Kitt's.....	42	2261	2303
St. Eustatius	8	219	227
Tortola	41	1959	2000
Nevis	27	1023	1050
St. Bartholomew's	11	314	325
St. Martin's	14	103	117
Anguilla	7	213	220
Domisica	9	433	442
Montserrat	2	33	35
Total	201	10763	10964

ST. VINCENT'S DISTRICT.

St. Vincent's	21	2889	2910
Grenada	9	319	328
Trinidad	4	115	119
Barbadoes	17	29	46
Tobago	1	48	49
Demarara	10	1312	1322
	62	4712	4774

JAMAICA DISTRICT.

	Whites.	Coloured & Black.	Total.
Kingston	15	3704	3719
Spanishtown	1	234	235
Morant Bay	9	3069	3078
Grateful Hill	3	441	444
Montego Bay	5	155	160
St. Ann's	—	40	40
	<u>33</u>	<u>7643</u>	<u>7676</u>
Bahamas	552	508	1123
Bermuda	59	47	106
Hayti	—	56	56

The total number of persons in the West Indies belonging to the Methodist connexion is thus made to amount to 880 Whites, and 23,819 Black and Coloured persons. But as from these ought to be deducted their converts in St. Eustatius, St. Bartholomew's, St. Martin's, and Hayti, (amounting to 33 Whites, and 692 Black and coloured persons), the correct return for the *British* colonies is 847 Whites, and 23,127 Black and Coloured persons.

Neither the statements of Sir George Rose, nor those of the Methodist Society, afford us any means of ascertaining what proportion of the Black and Coloured members consists of slaves, and what of free persons. Our own apprehension is, that the slaves do not amount to more than half of the whole number, that is to say, about 12,000 or 13,000 souls. We are persuaded we cannot have greatly erred in this estimate. We shall be glad, however, to have it corrected by authority.

Now, the terms of admission into the Wesleyan Methodist societies being very wide and comprehensive, we cannot but fear that Sir George Rose's estimate of the numbers substantially benefited by them is excessive. Into these societies, according to the principles established by Mr. Wesley himself, no one is refused admittance who professes "a real desire to save his soul," and who, after a brief probationary interval (we believe of a few months), appears to be sincere in that profession. It is not very probable, therefore, that many of those adults who feel the beneficial influence of the labours of the

Methodist Missionaries, would continue long without the pale of their connexion, especially as there is generally no other communion into which they can enter.

Then, as to the instruction bestowed on the young, it seems to be assumed that the schools established by the Methodists are schools in which the children of *slaves* attend, and learn to read at least, if not to write. If, however, we consult Mr. Roughley's work, p. 105, we shall find that the usual state of things on *plantations* is incompatible with such an idea. It there appears to be the customary practice, that the children, "after they pass five or six years, should be taken from the nurse in the Negro houses, and put under *the tuition of the driveress*, who has the conducting of the *weeding gang*."—"It is best," Mr. Roughley tells us, thus "to send them with those of their own age to *associate together in industrious habits*." "The supple hand of the Negro child is best calculated to extract the weeds and grass" from the canes; "and the addition of a *small hoe* draws the mold to their support." "An experienced Negro woman should be selected to superintend *this gang of pupils*, armed with a *pliant, SERVICEABLE twig*, more to create *dread* than inflict chastisement." "Each child should be provided with a light hoe," "a small knife, and small basket to carry dung," &c.—These recommendations of Mr. Roughley are evidently meant to be substituted for harsher modes of proceeding, such as having a whip, instead of a twig, in the hands of the driveress; but they all imply that the children work in the field from an early age. Now, such a system as this is evidently irreconcilable with the supposition of the attendance of slave children at school, during the week: and, in point of fact, we believe that slave children do not so attend, in Jamaica, for the purpose of learning to read. Here again we are without any precise *official* information. We have, however, the clear testimony of the Rev. Mr. Cooper, (*Negro Slavery*, p. 42), that the "slaves in Jamaica are scarcely ever taught to read." And a circumstance has recently come to our knowledge, which seems to be decisive of the question, at least as it respects Jamaica: it is this—

There has lately been formed in that island "a District Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge." In the Postscript to the Jamaica Gazette of the 11th May 1822,

there is a report of the proceedings of its *second* quarterly meeting. At this (only its second) meeting, it transpired that already "erroneous impressions had gone abroad relative to the purposes of the undertaking, which, if not removed, were likely to impede its success." "This meeting, therefore, declared *explicitly*, that the object of the Jamaica District Committee is to promote and facilitate the religious and moral improvement of the FREE POPULATION of the Colony," and also to counteract the influence of infidelity promulgated by young persons returned from education in Europe. And they resolved, "That the religious instruction of the slave population, though regarded as an object of the highest importance, yet being already in the hands of the legislature, ENTERS NOT into the views of this association, except in so far as the improvement of that class may be confidently anticipated as the natural result of the increase of religious knowledge, good principles, and exemplary conduct in the casts above them."

But, if such be the avowed purpose of what may be presumed to be the best part of the White community of Jamaica; and if it be necessary for the members of a society composed, as this is, of the chief local authorities of the island, themselves slave-holders, to allay, by the open renunciation of any design to promote the education of slaves, the general alarm which their Prospectus had produced; can we believe that the suspected and distrusted Methodist Missionaries would be permitted to carry the education of the slaves beyond merely oral instruction? In point of fact, we are assured that they are not permitted to do so.

On all these points, however, it will be easy to ascertain the real facts of the case. In order to do so, returns should be obtained, specifying the number of persons in each island united in the Methodist societies, distinguishing them into Whites, Free Black and Coloured Persons, and Slaves; marking, too, the gradations of colour in the free; and with respect to the slaves, whether they are personal or plantation slaves. If the names of the owners and plantations were also given, it would add to the value of the information. Then, with respect to schools, it would be necessary to state of each, whether it was a Sunday or week-day school; by how many of each of the different classes mentioned above, it was attended; what each of these

classes was taught; whether they were merely catechized, or taught also to read; and what progress they were permitted to make in reading. It would be satisfactory to know how many *slaves*, whether children or adults, in each of the islands, have been so instructed as to be able to read intelligibly a chapter in the Bible (as for writing, it is wholly out of the question); and we shall be surprised to find that there are ten *plantation slaves*, in the whole island of Jamaica, who have acquired even this degree of education by the means of Methodist or any other tuition. It would also be well to ascertain how many of the plantation slaves, taught to read, are the children of the attorney, overseer, book-keeper, or other White servant of the estate; how many are Black, and how many Coloured: and also, in the case of their attending Sunday schools, how their provision-grounds are cultivated in the mean time. It is obvious, that, if children of five years of age can be made to work regularly under a driveress weeding canes, carrying out manure, &c. they may be made useful also by their parents in planting and weeding the yams and corn, the eddoes and cassada, which are to sustain them.

Under these circumstances, and with these impressions, Sir George Rose will no longer be surprised that we should have spoken with more reserve on this subject than his more sanguine estimate would seem to justify. We have been without information that is precise and tangible, and therefore we have expressed ourselves in general and cautious terms in speaking of the extent of good actually done among the slaves; but we shall be most happy to proclaim it aloud when we are furnished with the means of doing so.

We think it right to add, that, all things considered, the University of Cambridge do not appear to us to have erred greatly in declaring, that, among the slaves, "religious instruction was nearly precluded." They seem to be fortified in this statement by the Report of the Jamaica District Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, which we have quoted: and as for the praise-worthy exertions of the Methodists, and their gratifying success, so remarkably evinced in the case of Sir G. Rose's own estates, they only serve to render the surrounding supineness and darkness more visible and opprobrious.

We have certainly seen nothing, in any documents which we

have had an opportunity of consulting—and we have sought eagerly for authentic information on the subject from all quarters—to lead us to suppose that there are at this moment “100,000 slaves under Christian instruction” in the West Indies, or that the Methodists have access “to a third of the estates in Jamaica.” At the same time, we greatly rejoice to observe the degree in which they have succeeded in abating the deep-rooted prejudices which have been entertained against them.

O.

WE are sorry that we have not been able to procure a more accurate and detailed report of Mr. BRIGHT's speech. The reporter's sketch of it was sent to him, and returned without alteration, in the exact state in which it now appears. We were unwilling to alter it ourselves. The first part of it which requires any observation is

A Charge of Inaccuracy against Mr. Wilberforce.

The passage in Mr. Wilberforce's “Appeal” on which Mr. Bright animadvert, is the following. “Can it be conceived possible, that, even since the mitigation of Slavery was recommended from the Throne, in consequence of addresses from Parliament, several of the Colonial Legislatures have for the first time imposed, and others have greatly augmented, the fines to be paid into their treasuries on the enfranchising of slaves, so that in some colonies they amount nearly to an entire prohibition?” p. 42.

This statement, Mr. Bright says, is proved “by the returns on the table” to be “without the shadow of a foundation.” (p. 70.)

The returns, however, to which Mr. Bright refers were laid on the table and ordered to be printed only on the 4th March 1823, some time after Mr. Wilberforce's Appeal had been published, and they were not in the hands of members until the latter end of April. Of the changes, therefore, whatever they were, which were indicated by these returns, neither Mr. Wilberforce nor the author of “Negro Slavery,” whom this

charge also affects, had the means of knowing any thing, until their productions had already been widely circulated. The charge of inaccuracy therefore, as far as it depends on a knowledge of those returns, can in no degree apply to them. Let us, however, examine the facts of the case more closely, as they respect the different colonies.

1. BARBADOES.—On the 12th July 1815, the House of Commons called for all laws enacted in any of the colonies relative to “the protection or good government of slaves since the year 1788.” The returns to this motion were laid on the table and ordered to be printed on the 5th April 1816. Among them is an Act of the Barbadoes legislature, dated 12th May 1801, which, after reciting that the fine then payable on the manumission of a slave was 50*l.* currency, enacts that henceforward, instead of 50*l.*, there shall be paid for every female slave manumitted 300*l.*, and for every male 200*l.*; and the reason assigned for this augmentation is, that the annual allowance of 4*l.*, to which manumitted persons had hitherto been entitled for their maintenance, had become insufficient for that purpose; and that therefore the annuities should be increased to 18*l.* for each female, and 12*l.* for each male.

By the papers laid before the House on 4th March 1823, it appears that this law had been repealed on the 19th of August 1816, when the fine payable on manumissions was again limited to 60*l.*; notwithstanding which, Mr. Bright says that Mr. Wilberforce has unjustly charged the Barbadoes legislature with having *increased* the fines on manumission, when they had only reduced them to their former limit.

Was it not then true, as Mr. Wilberforce and the author of “Negro Slavery” maintained, that the Barbadoes legislature had greatly augmented the fines on manumissions subsequently to 1797, the period of Mr. Ellis’s Address; augmented them no less than four times in one case, and six times in the other? “Oh, but these fines were afterwards reduced!” True also; but that fact had been improperly concealed from the knowledge of Parliament, by those whose duty it was, in obedience to his Majesty’s command, to have communicated it, and from whom alone it could be known. We say *improperly concealed*; for on the 22d April 1818, Mr. Wilberforce himself moved for copies of all laws passed in any of the colonies since 1812,

respecting the Slaves and free Coloured population; and also of all laws passed in furtherance of Mr. Palmer's Address of the 19th June 1816, for promoting the improvement and happiness of the Negroes. To this order the only return made by Barbadoes is an Act dated 2d December 1817, entitled "An Act to repeal part of an Act intituled 'An Act for governing of Negroes,' and for building and regulating a new cage;"—a new cage, that is to say, for holding Negroes!

Now if Mr. Wilberforce was ignorant of what had passed in Barbadoes, whose was the fault; his, who had called for information, or the local authorities of Barbadoes, who, while they made a shew of granting it, did in fact withhold it? In all fairness, therefore, he could not be blamed for supposing the Act of 1801 to be still in full force.

But if we examine these recent returns, to the consideration of which we have been thus invited, we shall find much light thrown on the whole of this important subject. From them we learn that the number of manumissions which had taken place in Barbadoes, for about fourteen years prior to the 30th September 1821, was 1713; of whom about 1000 were manumitted previous to the reduction of the tax in August 1816, and about 700 afterwards. Of the former number, however, only 15 had paid the tax; the rest having obtained their freedom without any payment. Are we to attribute this immunity to the liberal policy or the generous forbearance of the Barbadian authorities? By no means. Mr. Husbards, the secretary of the Island, gives a more just account of the matter. During the period from 1808 to 1816, he tells us, "only fifteen persons were manumitted *according to the colonial law*:" that is to say, only fifteen manumissions paid the enormous tax which the Act of 1801 had imposed upon them. "The remaining number," he goes on to say, "have been enfranchised by persons in England, who have there granted manumissions to slaves conveyed to them for that purpose; which manumissions, being proved before some Mayor, or other proper constituted authority, are sent here, and, on being recorded, are allowed to be valid. These last manumissions are effected at a very trifling expense." The main object of the Barbadoes legislature in imposing such heavy fines was doubtless to prevent the increase of the free Black and Coloured population—a

surmise which is confirmed by the higher tax levied on females, through whom alone freedom could be propagated, than on males. But they overshot their mark. The exorbitancy of the impost naturally led to evasion; and the ingenuity of benevolence appears to have effectually triumphed over the unfeeling and sordid policy which thus aimed to restrain manumissions; so that their number was probably increased by the very means which were intended to produce a contrary result. It was doubtless, therefore, the complete failure of this measure of prohibition, which induced its repeal, and not any wish to facilitate manumissions. It was felt that the smaller tax would be more likely to be paid than the large one; as the former might not exceed the expense and trouble of procuring enfranchisement by a conveyance of the slave to a friend in England. Accordingly, while of about 1000, who were emancipated during the operation of the heavy fines, only 15 paid them; of about 700, who have been enfranchised since their repeal, 250 have paid the smaller fine. Out of 1713 cases of manumission, therefore, the Island tax has been paid only on 265: the remaining 1448 have entirely escaped it. And had not the means been found of evading the higher tax, and thus obliging the legislature to lower it, it is more than probable that not a twentieth part of the manumissions would have taken place which have actually been effected. The influence of high fines in obstructing manumissions will be conclusively shewn in the course of this note.

The reason alleged, however, for having imposed these exorbitant fines on manumission, is one of humanity. The fines, it is said, are turned into annuities for the maintenance of the manumitted persons. "The fines of 300*l.* and 200*l.*," Mr. Husbands tells us, "entitled the persons manumitted under them, the one to an annuity of 18*l.*, and the other to 12*l.*; and the fine of 50*l.* to an annuity of 4*l.* during their natural lives." It will be well to call for a return of the payments which have actually been made under this *title* since 1808, specifying the name, age, sex, and residence of the parties. It will be well also to ascertain, by a specific return, how many of the 1448 persons manumitted, since 1808, without the payment of any fine, and therefore, we presume, without any *title* to the annuity which the Act of 1801 intimates to be indispensable to

their maintenance, are now in want, and in the receipt, and to what amount, of public charity. And if it be true that enfranchised persons absolutely require these annuities for their support, what must be the distress and misery of their numerous progeny, *born* free, who have no such resource; the annuities lasting only during the natural lives of the enfranchised individuals? Besides, why should women require so much more for their maintenance than men? Again: it is somewhat remarkable, that it should have been all at once discovered that the increased price of the necessaries of life had been such as to require (for such is the statement in the Act of 1801) an increase of the annuity to four or five times its former amount. And had prices sunk again to their old standard in 1816? We shall probably learn this when the repealing statute shall have been produced: at present the whole subject is involved in mystery, from which nothing but clear and precise returns can free it. So much for Barbadoes.

2. ST. CHRISTOPHER'S.—By an Act of this island, dated 19th July 1802, and entitled “An Act for regulating the manumission of slaves,” and which is contained in the House of Commons papers printed 5th April 1816, it is provided, that no manumissions shall take place, in the case of slaves natives of the island, or resident in it for two years, but on the payment of a fine of 500*l.*; and in the case of slaves not natives or resident, but on the payment of 1000*l.*; unless an Act of the legislature shall have passed for that special purpose. Here again, therefore, Mr. Wilberforce’s statement is correct. And though returns of all laws respecting Negroes have since been called for, from this as well as from all the other islands, no Act of the St. Christopher’s legislature has yet been produced, which repeals or modifies the Manumission Act of 1802. In the population returns, however, printed by the House of Commons March 4, 1823, Mr. Garnet, the Registrar of Deeds, certifies, “that there has been no tax laid, or fine imposed or paid, in the island, for the time aforesaid,” (that is, from 1808 to 1821), “on the manumission of slaves; and that I am not aware of any existing law of the said island for that time requiring it.” Has, then, the law of 1802 been repealed? There certainly has been no notification to that effect. Or have the 563 manumissions, which have taken place in St. Christopher’s since

1808, been obtained through the medium of legislative acts? And what has been the expense of those acts? And if the legislature has permitted these manumissions without the payment of any tax, it would indicate at least that they did not apprehend any evil effect in the way of public burdens to arise from them. It is also important to know how many applications for manumission had been refused by the legislature of St. Christopher's.

In the other Leeward Islands—namely Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, and Tortola—and also in the Bahamas and Trinidad, no taxes at any time have been imposed on manumissions. The liberal conduct of these colonies, however, renders the contrary course in other colonies only the more indefensible, while it invalidates the plea for their imposition, arising from a prudent care to protect the public from eventual burdens.

3. GRENADA.—In December 1797, about six months after Mr. Ellis had moved that address in the House of Commons to which Mr. Wilberforce alludes in the passage censured by Mr. Bright, the Grenada legislature imposed a tax of 100*l.* for each slave manumitted; this tax being necessary, among other reasons for the measure, “to discourage the too frequent and indiscriminate manumission of slaves.” Here again Mr. Wilberforce's statement is perfectly correct. But, then, it will be said, the tax has been repealed, and he ought to have known it. It was, however, impossible for him to have known it, no return having been made of its repeal, although Parliament had called for a return of all such laws, and the fact being now known only from an incidental notice of it in the returns which were printed subsequently to the publication of his pamphlet.

These returns, however, furnish a most important fact. During seven years, in which the tax was levied (namely, from 1808 to 1814 inclusive), the manumissions amounted only to 74, or about 10 in a year. During the succeeding seven years, in which no tax has been levied, the number of manumissions has amounted to 629, or about 90 in each year on the average. Can there be a stronger proof of the mischievous effects of such a tax?

The legislation of Grenada supplies us with another striking fact on this subject. When the fine of 100*l.* was first

imposed, in 1797, it was enacted, that every person manumitted should be entitled to receive 10*l.* a year for life. In the year 1806, however, though the tax of 100*l.* was continued, the clause giving the annuity of 10*l.* was expressly repealed, and that without the assignment of a single reason. The pretext usually advanced for imposing a tax at all was thus shewn to be groundless: the tax was continued, but it was expressly directed not to be applied to the support of the manumitted individual. Both these Acts may be seen in the Parliamentary papers printed 5th April 1816, pp. 74, 75.

4. ST. VINCENT'S.—This island has always been one of the most backward in making returns to Parliament; and the history of its legislation is therefore more defective than that of most of the other islands. A fine of 100*l.* on each manumission, which had been imposed by its legislature, was repealed, it seems, in September 1820, and was only notified to the House of Commons in March 1823, after Mr. Wilberforce had published his Appeal. When the tax was first imposed does not appear, but it is believed to have been in 1798, thus agreeing with Mr. Wilberforce's statement. The effect of this repeal appears to have been an immediate increase in the number of manumissions. The whole number, in about fourteen years prior to September 1821 was 430: the number in the first nine months of 1821 was 99. Prior to that time it proceeded at the rate of only 25 or 26 annually.

5. TOBAGO.—On the 19th October 1814, a tax of 100*l.* was imposed by the Tobago legislature on each manumission, no tax having been previously payable. This is an additional proof of the correctness of Mr. Wilberforce's statement. There is no notification of its repeal, although Mr. Bright assumes that it has been repealed. It is remarkable, that previous to the imposition of this tax the average number of manumissions annually was about thirty-six, 251 having been manumitted in seven years. After the tax was imposed, that number decreased very considerably. In 1815 the number was four; in 1816, three; in 1817, eight; in 1818, one; in 1819, six; and in 1820, four. In 1821, twenty had been manumitted in the first nine months, which leads to a suspicion that the tax may have been repealed, but nothing is stated to that effect.

6. DOMINICA.—Previous to 1810 the tax on manumissions

in this island was 100*l*. The exact date of its imposition does not appear, but it is believed to have been the same with that of Grenada. In June 1810, it was reduced to 16*l*. 10*s*. on native slaves, or slaves originally imported from Africa, and 33*l*. on others. Previous to 1810, under the operation of the heavier tax, manumission appears to have proceeded at the very slow rate of about seven annually: from the time of its being reduced, the manumissions have proceeded in a tenfold ratio; at the rate, that is to say, of about 75 annually; 819 having been enfranchised in eleven years. But it is not very obvious why even the tax of 16*l*. 10*s*. and 33*l*. should still be continued. The reason given by the legislature of Dominica for reducing the tax in 1810, was, not to encourage manumissions, but because the former Act "had been found inadequate to the purposes for which it was passed, and the provisions thereof have been evaded, to the great detriment of the revenue of this island." We presume the persons in Dominica who wished to manumit their slaves, had discovered some equally effectual mode of evading this cruel tax with that which had been discovered in Barbadoes. The Dominica Act will be found in the papers of 5th April 1816.

7. BERMUDA.—In the same papers there is an Act of the Bermuda legislature, dated 9th August 1806 (also confirmatory of Mr. Wilberforce's statement), expressly to "prevent" "the rapid increase of free Negroes and free Persons of Colour;" the provisions of which are wantonly severe. No owner is permitted to enfranchise a slave of "forty years of age or under," except on condition of such slave's quitting the islands within three months; and if he should return to them, he shall be seized, and sold for the public advantage, and transported from the islands. For slaves above forty who are manumitted, a fine of 50*l*. is payable; and if this fine be not paid, a power is given to magistrates of seizing, selling, and shipping off the person so manumitted. The same cruel Act ordains, that no free Negro, or Person of Colour, shall be capable of acquiring or being seised of any real estate whatever, under penalty of the forfeiture of such estate; nor is he allowed to lease a house for a longer term than seven years. Can this Act have been allowed by the King?

8. In DEMARARA, a fine is payable on manumissions,

amounting to from 200 to 300 guilders. Its effect in restraining manumissions appears to be very considerable, as in that colony, containing about 80,000 slaves, the number of persons manumitted has not exceeded the average of thirty-five annually. Mr. Bright says that the tax has been reduced or abolished in Demarara: we know not on what authority he states this; we know of none.

9. In **BERBICE** the tax is still higher than in Demarara, being between 400 and 500 guilders, and the average of manumissions has only been about eleven annually.

10. In **JAMAICA**, it is true, there is now no tax paid on manumission; but a bond for 100*l.* is required, binding the party manumitting to the payment of that sum in case the manumitted slave should become burdensome to the public. This, though far better than a tax, is still a very inconvenient provision, and doubtless operates as a powerful restraint on manumissions. Would it not be much better to pass a general Act, which should make the property of the person who should be guilty of manumitting a slave *mala fide*, liable to indemnify the colony for any expense which might be occasioned by it.

There are no returns from St. Lucia, or the Cape of Good Hope.

From the above details, several important inferences may be drawn.—

1st. That Mr. Wilberforce was perfectly correct in saying, that since the period of Mr. Ellis's Address, in 1797, several of the colonial legislatures had for the first time imposed, or had greatly augmented, the fines on manumissions.

2d. That his failure in pointing out the variations which had subsequently taken place in the colonial laws on this subject, was entirely owing to the delinquency of the colonial authorities, in not furnishing the information which had been required of them by the Crown in consequence of addresses from Parliament. "The honourable Member for Bramber," says Mr. Bright, "seems not to have looked at the returns on the table." When the "Appeal" was published, those returns, though called for nearly two years before, had not yet been made.

3d. That fines on manumission, when enforced, are attended with most injurious effects in retarding the progress of enfranchisement.

4th. That no countervailing benefit can be shewn to arise from those fines which will compensate for so great and obvious an evil. If the contrary is asserted, let returns be obtained from all the islands; to shew not only that the persons manumitted have had the annuities, to which they are said to be entitled, regularly paid to them; but that, in the numerous instances where no fine has been exacted, and where, of course, no annuity is payable, the manumitted persons have become a burden to the public. That they have become burdensome we certainly do not believe.

P.

"I do impute a bad intention to the man who put this book together." "I put it to the House whether what is printed in this book, called 'Negro Slavery,' as a fair quotation, is so, or such as ought to be promulgated as the real sentiments of this respectable gentleman," meaning the Rev. Mr. Cooper. (p. 71.)

THIS is indeed a serious charge. Its refutation will be found in the juxta-position of the passages which are said to be at variance.

A writer in the "Monthly Repository," under the signature of "Euelpis," had expressed an opinion that the Negroes might be converted to Christianity, notwithstanding their present degraded condition. In replying to this writer, in the Monthly Repository, No. cciv. p. 752, Mr. Cooper makes the following observation.

"Euelpis has made a quotation from the 'Report of the Wesleyan Missions,' to shew that there is an estate in Antigua upon which 'the whip is not needful now,' and another where 'the sound of the whip is rarely heard.' This, sir, to a Jamaica man, is truly astonishing; and I can venture to assure 'Euelpis,' that if the Missionaries can perform such wonders, without creating in the minds of the Negroes the hope of freedom, they will, on going to Jamaica, meet with the most zealous support from the planters of that island, who, I am sure, would be glad to throw aside the whip if they saw they could do it with safety."

The pamphlet called "Negro Slavery" had been giving Mr. Cooper's oral testimony on the subject of the driving system to the following effect :

"The gangs always work before the whip, which is a very weighty and powerful instrument. The driver has it always in his hand, and drives the Negroes, men and women, without distinction, as he would drive horses or cattle in a team. Mr. Cooper does not say that he is always using the whip; but it is known to be always present, and ready to be applied to any who flag at their work or lag behind in the line."—To this sentence is appended the following note: "In one of his printed letters, in which he is replying to an objection, Mr. Cooper incidentally, but very significantly, remarks, that to a Jamaica man it would be truly astonishing to learn that the whip was not needed, or that its sound was rarely heard."

We certainly cannot perceive the slightest discrepancy between the two statements; and, as for the concluding lines of the quotation from Mr. Cooper's letter, which state that the Jamaica planters would be glad to *throw aside the whip, if they could*, and which Mr. Bright complains should have been omitted, they would only have given additional confirmation to the point which was alone at issue, *the existence of the driving system.*

There can be no more conclusive evidence of the absence of all discrepancy between Mr. Cooper's statement and that contained in "Negro Slavery," than this, that Mr. Cooper, previous to its publication, saw and approved, not only the particular passage which has given occasion to Mr. Bright's imputation of an evil intention, but every syllable which is there inserted under the sanction of his authority. This approbation he has again expressed, in the strongest and most unqualified terms, since he has heard what passed in the House of Commons. Indeed, the quotations from Mr. Cooper's letters might have been considerably enlarged, with great advantage to the author's object. For example: "To my mind," says Mr. C., "no attempt can be vainer than that to render Negro slavery compatible with human happiness." But we also forbear, and shall only refer Mr. Bright to the Monthly Repository, No. ccviii, p. 231, &c., for information which may be interesting to him, from the pen of the same individual whom he has justly denominated "this respectable gentleman."

Q.

"It is not fair that he (Dr. Williamson) should be put forward as a witness against the planters in the West Indies." (p. 71.)

It seems to us the very perfection of fairness to try the West-Indian system by the testimony, not of its avowed enemies, but of its avowed and zealous friends; which is in fact what the author of "Negro Slavery" has done in citing Dr. Williamson. "The whole result of Dr. Williamson's opinions," says Mr. Bright, "is highly favourable to the colonists, and to their management of the Negroes." Now this is precisely what the author of "Negro Slavery" has stated of Dr. Williamson's testimony. "Whenever Dr. Williamson speaks in general terms, he seems at a loss to find words strong enough in which to eulogise the humanity and tenderness of West-Indian proprietors and overseers.—But...let us come to particulars.—" &c. p. 56. The work, therefore, as Mr. Sykes observed, in his reply to Mr. Bright, "was quoted expressly as being the work of an adverse witness;" and on that account its reluctant testimony is surely the more valuable, whenever it can be adduced to establish important facts. We recommend, therefore, on this very ground, the evidence of Dr. Williamson to our readers, as furnishing a less exceptionable proof of the evils which he recognises, than the evidence of the avowed enemies of the system would be held to furnish.

B.

"In 1818, a law passed in Dominica making the evidence of Slaves admissible," and "I have every reason to believe a similar law will be introduced in every other West-India Island." (p. 74.)

THE following is an extract from an Act of the Dominica Legislature of 22d April 1818, relative to this important subject, and which, except as it indicates a slight leaning towards improvement, is a very unsatisfactory enactment indeed. We trust, however, that it marks the commencement of a new era in the history of West-Indian legislation, notwithstanding the singular restrictions which tend to frustrate its professed object.

"And whereas by the present existing law, although punishment by fine is denounced against any White person or free Person of Colour, who shall beat, wound, maim, or ill-treat the slave or slaves of any other person, or deprive such slave or slaves of his, her, or their property, yet, as the evidence of such slave or slaves is inadmissible for his, her, or their conviction, by which such enactment has proved of little effect, as such offences may occur when no White or free Person of Colour is present, and the offender or offenders from hence, may escape with impunity; Be it, and it is hereby, further enacted and ordained, by the authority aforesaid, That, from and after the publication of this Act, any White person or free Person of Colour, who shall beat, maim, wound, or ill treat any slave or slaves, the property of another person or persons, or deprive such slave or slaves of his, her, or their property, on complaint being made thereof by the owner or owners of such slave or slaves, or his, her, or their representative, to any justice of the peace, and the slave or slaves being produced, and the marks of the blows or wounds being exhibited before any of his Majesty's justices of the peace, such justice shall, and he is hereby empowered, authorized, and required, should he deem the complaint suffi-

ciently founded, to summon *the party so accused before him, and to examine him on oath*; and on his refusal to be examined, such contumacy shall be construed an admission of the fact; and thereupon to bind over such White or free Person of Colour, charged with such offence, to appear at the next ensuing court of grand sessions of the peace, then and there to answer the charge alleged against such White or free Person of Colour, the said justice having previously examined upon oath such slave or slaves (should he, she, or they have been baptized), and duly explained and enforced to them the nature and solemnity of an oath; which examination the justice shall return with the recognisance to the clerk of the crown, prior to the sitting of such court; and on the parties appearing before the court, the testimony of any slaves who may have been present (he, she, or they having been baptized) shall be received, as far as it shall appear clear and consistent in the opinion of the Court: Provided also, nevertheless, that no White person or free Person of Colour shall be convicted of any of the offences aforesaid, on the testimony of any slaves, unless two of the said slaves, at least, do clearly and consistently agree with each other, and depose to the same fact, act, or circumstance; and also, unless the said slaves are examined apart, and out of the hearing of each other: and provided also, that no person shall be convicted on the testimony of any slaves, for any of the offences aforesaid, unless the same shall be prosecuted within twelve months after the commission thereof. And on the conviction of the person or persons charged with such offence, such offender or offenders shall be subject to a fine not exceeding the sum of one hundred pounds, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, at the discretion of the court; and the proprietor shall or may, moreover, have his action of damages in the court of Common Pleas against any White or free Person of Colour so offending, for any loss of time and labour sustained of such slave or slaves, by him, her, or them so beaten, maimed, wounded, or ill-treated."

We leave it to lawyers to decide, whether, as the above clause is worded, if a slave is only robbed of his property without being beaten, and so has no marks, blows, or wounds to exhibit, the magistrate can proceed at all against the offender

on the testimony of the slave. Besides, what value can be affixed to the expurgatory oath of a man who can have acted towards a poor slave in the way that is described?

But whether the law of Dominica be well adapted to its object or not, we can have no doubt as to its being the clear and imperative duty of the Government and Parliament of this country to secure, with as little delay as possible, the general admissibility of the evidence of slaves. At present, their evidence is universally rejected by West-Indian courts (with the single almost nugatory exception of Dominica), in all cases, whether civil or criminal, affecting persons of free condition, on the express ground of their being unworthy of credit. And yet, as we have already shewn, the Jamaica slave code, and indeed every other West-Indian slave code, makes them competent witnesses against their fellow-slaves in all cases, even in capital cases; and this without the sanction of any form of adjuration which they consider as binding. What a strange anomaly is this! Either the pretext that the slaves are unworthy of credit is void of foundation; or every slave who is tried and executed on the testimony of a fellow-slave is cruelly murdered. But we shall be told, perhaps, "We guard against false evidence, by enacting (see slave law of Jamaica of 1816, section 64) 'that, in case any slave shall, with evil intent, give false evidence in any trial had under this Act, such slave or slaves, being thereof convicted, shall suffer the same punishment as the person or persons on whose trial such false evidence was given, would, if convicted, have been liable to suffer.'" And why should not the same guard be equally effectual in cases affecting persons of free condition? We admit, indeed, that slaves ought not to be made to give evidence either for or against their owners (any more than a wife is allowed to give evidence for or against her husband), unless they shall first have been enfranchised. But if even the Pariahs and the meanest slaves in India are allowed to give evidence, each in his peculiar way, in all the local British courts; if the West-Indian slave would be admitted as a competent witness in Westminster Hall, subject only to the same kind of objection to which an Englishman would be subject; what possible reason can there be for continuing to exclude the testimony of slaves from our courts of judicature in the West Indies? There can be no great risk that White juries and

judges will not be sufficiently slow in giving weight to such testimony, even if admitted; and, without a question, unless it be admitted, the result of the best-framed laws of amelioration and protection will be, what the Dominica legislature candidly states to have been the result of such laws hitherto, namely, that, "the evidence of slaves being inadmissible, the enactments have proved of little effect."

S.

"Nothing can be more satisfactory than these reports (of Governors, &c.) to show the gradual and continued improvement in the condition of the slaves." (p. 80.)

To judge of the real value, however, of these reports, it ought to be known, that in 1790 and 1791 the following Admirals and Governors of Colonies were examined at the bar of the House of Commons, respecting the condition of the slaves, during the space of thirty or forty years prior to that period; namely, Admirals Rodney, Shuldham, Hotham, Barrington, Arbuthnot, Edwards, Parker, Lambert, and Gardner; and Governors Lord Macartney, Dalling, Payne, Campbell, Orde, and Parry. All these witnesses (some of whom also eulogized even the Middle Passage), concurred in affirming, that the masters were humane and attentive; that the slaves were well clothed and fed, better than the labouring people in this country; that their treatment, particularly that of the field Negroes, was mild and humane; that they had never known any cruel treatment; that the lives of the slaves were as happy as those of the peasants in this country—nay, said some of them, infinitely more comfortable than that of the labouring poor in England, or any other part of the world they knew;—that no more labour was required of them than they could well bear; and that they were well satisfied with their condition, and always cheerful. Two of these witnesses remarked, that they even envied the condition of the slaves, and wished

to be in their situation : they wished themselves to be Negroes ! This testimony, concurrently given by so many respectable men in 1790, is much stronger in favour of the happiness of the slaves of that period, than any thing adduced by Mr. Marryat with respect to their condition in 1817 and 1818, even after twenty-seven years of alleged progressive improvement. The evidence he has adduced is feebleness itself, when compared with the strength and universality of the eulogy of these older witnesses ; although it is the object of Mr. Marryat's speech to shew that great improvements have taken place since their time. If, however, great improvements have since taken place ; and if it nevertheless be true that the Negroes (men, women, and children) are still mere chattels,—the absolute property of their master, who may at pleasure sell or transfer them, or even expatriate them for ever ; that they may be seized or sold for his debts ; that they are driven by the whip to labour for which they receive no wages ; that they have no Sabbath, and no legal marriage ; that their flesh may be lacerated with impunity, to the extent of thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip, at the bidding of an individual, their master or his delegate, for any offence, or for no offence ;—if all this be true (and if it be denied, we are ready to prove its truth), then what must have been their state thirty or forty years ago, before the vaunted modern improvements had even been thought of ? And yet, before they had been thought of, we have testimony upon testimony, even to satiety, and that of the most imposing description, which places the happiness of the West-Indian slave so high as to make him an object of just envy to the British peasant. How is this phenomenon to be explained ? It admits of an easy explanation, if it were necessary. It is sufficient, however, for our present purpose, to have shewn that such testimony was actually given in 1790.—That, at the same time, the testimony was incorrect (the witnesses themselves, however respectable, having some how or other been deceived as to the real state of things), cannot,—after all that was affirmed in this very debate on the subject of recent improvement, and all that was nevertheless admitted respecting the actual condition of the slave,—cannot, we say, be any longer doubted.

We have shewn that the testimony brought forward by Mr. Marryat is not so strong and decisive in favour of the

humanity of the West-Indian system as that of 1790. But, besides this, *his* witnesses are not all what he alleges them to be. He affirms them to be, not " West-India proprietors, but Governors, who, as far as their opinions go, must speak disinterestedly, and are least of all liable to be influenced by colonial prejudices." Of the seven witnesses he has produced, however, two—namely, the President of Tobago, and the Assembly of Jamaica—are interested parties, *planters*, not disinterested Governors. General Douglas, instead of being a favourable, is an adverse witness. There are, according to him, *many* instances of the reverse of just and kind treatment, and some of very great cruelty. Governor Probyn's testimony is rendered of less importance, not only by his very brief residence in the West Indies, but by his having treated so lightly the flagrant cruelties of the Rev. Mr. Rawlins. (See Papers from St. Kitts, printed by the House of Commons in 1818.) The remaining witnesses require a more detailed notice.

Sir Ralph Woodford's evidence confutes itself. He tells us, that the slaves " can, if they choose, *with very little trouble*, amass MUCH *beyond the wants of the* UTMOST *ambition or profligacy.*" (p. 80.) Surely this statement is *much* beyond the sober *truth*, and indicates a style of the *utmost* exaggeration. Is it not perfectly plain, that if the slaves, by their labour on *their* one day of the week, can amass wealth, the master, who has the absolute command and usufruct of five of their days at the least, must possess the means of exorbitant accumulation. If the slave's *one* day can be turned to such good account, why are not the master's *five* made equally profitable? The profits of the slaves, be it remembered, do not arise from the payment of wages by the master, which might subtract from his gains, but from the culture of the soil, and the sale of its produce; from means, that is to say, which are equally accessible to the master as to the slave. The same hands which on *one* day are capable of producing such immense returns from the soil as to be even *much beyond the wants of ambition or profligacy*—(the limits Sir R. Woodford assigns to these are not obvious)—are employed, under the stimulating impulse of the lash, on the other *five* days, on the same soil, for the sole benefit of the master; and yet we do not hear that the planters of Trinidad are enriched even to that point.

which is necessary for the satisfaction of their creditors. In short, the statement proves itself, on the least reflection, to be hasty, and ill-founded, taken up perhaps from mere loose conversation with slave-holders, and certainly without having been subjected to that scrutiny which must at once have detected its fallacy. If it were true, it would only serve to confirm, what is already indeed sufficiently established, that free labour is more profitable, nay, *infinitely* more profitable, than slave labour.

No man doubts, that "with a *humane* owner" a Negro may be "most happy;" but is not the converse of this proposition equally true, that with an inhumane owner he *may*, nay *must*, be unhappy? Now, what is charged against the West-Indian system is precisely this,—not that there are not many humane masters; not that every master is harsh and cruel, and makes his slaves miserable, but—that every master may be harsh and cruel, and may make his slaves miserable *with impunity*. But then comes the effectual check which Sir R. Woodford apprehends that self-interest imposes on the abuse of the master's power. But do men never mistake or neglect their interests? Are they always sober, always dispassionate? Look at the cases of Rawlins, Huggins, Hodge, Carty, and Bowen, and of multitudes besides.—Moreover, is it always clear that a master's pecuniary interest is on the side of humanity to his slaves? Is not the case of a jobbing-gang, for example, in the West Indies, a case precisely parallel to that of post-horses in England? A jobbing-master, we will suppose, receives five pounds an acre for digging land into cane holes. Is it not a matter of mere calculation in this case, as in the case of post-horses, whether, at the end of ten years, by extracting a greater portion of labour from his slaves than is consistent with their comfort and increase, although at the end of that time they may be diminished in value, he may not be richer than he would be, if he should work them moderately, feed them well, and preserve their strength and value unimpaired? But this sordid and cruel calculation is not necessarily confined to jobbing-gangs. Suppose a planter to purchase land in Trinidad, and to remove thither from some neighbouring island a gang of Negroes for its cultivation. Is it no object with him to save a whole year's crop, by pressing forward the clearing and plant-

ing of his land? The delay of a month or two may be ruin to him, should the proper season be lost for planting. Has he then no pecuniary temptation to over-drive his slaves? Similar cases, cases too of daily occurrence, might be multiplied.

The soundness of this reasoning is curiously illustrated in a report of the Jamaica Assembly of the 23d November 1804, from which it appears that it is often deemed by planters their interest to extend their sugar cultivation far beyond their means, in the hope of extricating themselves by a great effort from their pecuniary difficulties; as a large crop may procure them further advances of capital, in the way of loan. Even at the present moment, the planters of all the islands are telling Parliament, in their petitions, that unless they can get a better price for their sugars their slaves must starve; in other words, that it has ceased to be their interest to feed their slaves and to prevent their starving. And yet all this is said in the face of Sir R. Woodford's statement (and similar statements have been made by many of the Colonial Assemblies), that the slaves can, if they choose, with very little trouble, amass much beyond the wants of the utmost ambition or profligacy. Nay, the Assembly of Jamaica, who now tell us their slaves must starve if the price of sugar is not enhanced, in their report of 1816 gravely assured us "that one day's labour in Jamaica will produce as much food as twenty-five could raise in Europe." Now, as the population of Europe do contrive, in the 313 working days of the year, to raise food enough to prevent their starving, it follows, that, by applying a twenty-fifth part of that time, or twelve days and a half in the year, to the growth of provisions, the slaves in Jamaica would at least escape being starved: and that by giving them the Sundays, and a few days beside, they would be placed in the same enviable condition which Sir R. Woodford describes as being that of the slaves of Trinidad. And yet, while the slave, with his scanty fragment of time, has thus the means of wealth completely in his power, the master, who has the absolute controul and disposal of the remainder of his time, can scarcely contrive to exist on its produce!!! Such are the tales by which the Parliament and people of England have been, and continue to be, beguiled, with respect to West-Indian slavery. Is it not perfectly obvious that one of two things must be the case,—either that the statement of the Jamaica Assembly

of 1816 is untrue, or that there is no truth in the statements which affirm that the slaves must starve if the price of sugar is not enhanced? We cannot think so ill of the West-Indian planters as to believe that they would permit their slaves to starve, when, according to their own showing, the application of a few days' labour in the year would effectually obviate the possibility of such an evil, and even load the slaves with abundance.

Sir R. Woodford tells us further, that "the comforts of the slaves depend upon themselves and their own industry, and their health upon their own imprudences"—but then comes a fatal OR—"or the quantum of work they are required to perform." What, then, shall secure them and their comforts and their health against this fatal alternative? Against this there is no security, even in Trinidad, although its institutions are more favourable to Negro happiness than those of any other of our colonies. But that island is cursed (and a curse it is, where its produce is to be extracted by means of whip-driven slaves) with a richer soil, which, making Negro labour there comparatively more profitable than in the other islands, leads to a severer exaction of it. To this cause mainly, we believe, is to be attributed the dreadful waste of African life which has taken place in Trinidad since it became a British colony; a waste perhaps equalling, if not surpassing, any thing yet known even in the annals of West-Indian plantership.

But the most extraordinary statement on the part of Sir R. Woodford remains to be noticed. "I have frequently," he says, "known cases of Negroes preferring to continue slaves, rather than, with ample means, to purchase their freedom, or even to accept it." We must frankly say that we do not believe this statement, though, without doubt, Sir R. Woodford is persuaded of its truth. We trust that, in the next session of Parliament, the Governor of Trinidad will be required to produce the names of the Negroes whom he has frequently known to prefer continuing slaves, "rather than, with ample means, to purchase their freedom, or even to accept it;" and that he will add to their names their age, sex, place of residence, and peculiar circumstances (for such instances of rare felicity ought not to be concealed); specifying also, whether their preferring to continue slaves themselves did not arise from their rather

wishing to employ their "ample means" in redeeming their children from slavery. It is notorious, that at the Bay of Honduras, for instance, a large majority of those slaves who attain, late in life, the means of purchasing their freedom, choose to employ those means in purchasing the freedom of their children rather than their own.

This statement of Sir R. Woodford is the more extraordinary, because it is well known that at Trinidad there is no general indisposition in the slaves to procure or to accept manumission. The proportion in that island of free Blacks and Coloured Persons to the slave population, is three times as great as in any other colony, and ten times as great as in some.

On the whole, it must be admitted that the evidence of Sir R. Woodford (whom Mr. Marryat mistakenly represents as a correspondent of the African Institution) does not very conclusively or satisfactorily establish the points which it has been adduced to substantiate.

With respect to Mr. Marryat's remaining witnesses, Colonel Maxwell and Colonel Arthur, they are rather unfortunately chosen. The delusion under which their first letters, quoted by Mr. Marryat, were written, was soon dispelled. Colonel Maxwell shortly after found it necessary to interfere in behalf of the oppressed slaves; but many of his efforts were frustrated by the perverse opposition of the colonists. His conduct in bringing cruelty to light, and endeavouring also to bring it to punishment, was presented by the grand jury of Dominica as a nuisance; nor was it less obnoxious to the House of Assembly of that island. In short, he was almost uniformly opposed in his efforts to abate and punish oppression.

As for the more matured views of Colonel Arthur respecting the real state of colonial bondage, it is only necessary to refer to Mr. Buxton's reply (p. 109), and to the fresh correspondence with Lord Bathurst, which was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 16th of June 1823. A part of that correspondence has already been inserted in Appendix B.; but as it is of some importance to appreciate accurately the value of the statements so triumphantly made respecting West-Indian improvement, we shall not hesitate to take from it some farther extracts.

Extract of a letter from Lieut.-Col. Arthur to the Right Hon. Earl Bathurst; dated October 7th, 1820.

“In the dispatches which I had the honour to address to your Lordship *shortly after my arrival in this settlement*, it afforded me the greatest pleasure to bear testimony to the humanity which I observed generally exercised by the woodcutters, towards their slaves.

“On the necessity I was under, however, in my dispatch of the 21st October 1816, of detailing to your Lordship the cruelty which had been exercised by a settler named Michael Garty, I was called upon to make some observations upon the extreme inhumanity of many of the lower class of settlers residing in the town of Belize towards their slaves; and as it appeared to be an evil greatly increasing, I submitted at the same time the total inadequacy of the courts of this settlement to check this vicious disposition.

“In my report to your Lordship of the 16th May last, No. 27, upon the insurrection which had taken place in the interior of the colony, I represented that it had originated from the harshness with which some of the slaves had been treated, and that I was not without hope the consequences on that occasion would have had the beneficial tendency of exciting a greater degree of humanity towards these unfortunate people:—I am much distressed, my Lord, that *my expectations have not been answered; and such is the increasing severity and cruelty which is now practised WITH IMPUNITY*, that although I am very conscious of the difficulty which has hitherto presented itself to his Majesty's government upon the general question of the administration of justice in Honduras, I am most reluctantly constrained to bring the subject again under your Lordship's consideration. The result of a trial, which was instituted on the 6th instant against an inhabitant for excessive cruelty towards a poor slave, *absolutely excludes every hope, under the present system of jurisprudence, of bringing offenders to punishment when guilty of the most flagrant acts of inhumanity and oppression*. The trial to which I allude was instituted against a free woman of colour, named Duncannette Campbell, under a bench warrant, ‘for punishing her slave named Kitty in an illegal, cruel, and severe manner, by chaining her and repeatedly whipping her, and for confining

her for a considerable time in the said chains in the loft of her house.'

"As the sufferings of this poor slave deeply excited my commiseration, I made it a point to attend the court: the female slave appeared covered with wounds and stripes. The medical gentleman, who had examined her by order of the magistrates as soon as she was taken into custody, deposed: 'I examined the slave Kitty, and observed the scores of several wounds, which appeared to have been recently inflicted with a whip or cow-skin; they were chiefly upon the shoulders, but there was also a considerable number on the left arm, the neck and face: those on the face had produced considerable swelling and other symptoms of inflammation; one of the stripes had divided the ala of the left ear, another had wounded the left eye-ball; both eyes were much swelled and inflamed, and her whole countenance was so much disfigured that it was some time before I could recognise her.'

"The police officer deposed, 'On proceeding to the dwelling of Miss Duncannette Campbell, I found the slave Kitty at the foot of a bed, with a pair of handcuffs on, and chained round the legs with a double padlock; the chain was bound round so close that she could not stand or move. I saw a cut upon the left ear, and many stripes upon the back; her face also bore visible marks of whipping, and there was a bruise under her eye. I tried to lift her up, but she could not stand; she informed me that she had been in this situation for six weeks.' In fact every charge stated in the warrant was most fully proved.

"To deny the punishment which had been so cruelly inflicted was of course impossible; and therefore the only defence which the prisoner attempted to set up was, that the gentleman with whom she had cohabited and lived for many years had instigated the slave to neglect her business, disobey her orders, and to behave with the greatest insubordination; *that the slave was her own property, and that therefore she had a right to punish her as she thought proper. The prisoner admitted, indeed voluntarily bore testimony to, the uniform excellent conduct of the poor slave for many years, and stated that the circumstance for which she had now chastised her was the only misconduct of which she had ever been guilty.*

"The Bench, which was composed of four magistrates, in

charging the jury, in no way whatever adverted to the dreadful instrument with which the punishment had been inflicted; to the poor slave's ear having been cut through; to the frightful blows on her face, or to the confinement in chains (every part of which is illegal by the consolidated slave-act of Jamaica, which is by the law professed to be acknowledged in the courts of this settlement, *although the act is not in the country*), but briefly observed, that *by law every owner was justified in punishing to the extent of thirty-nine lashes*; and therefore the only point for the consideration of the jury was, Whether a greater number of lashes had been inflicted in the present case? **WITHOUT FIVE MINUTES HESITATION THE PRISONER WAS ACQUITTED!!**"

Again, on the 28th September 1821, Colonel Arthur writes:

"On the 11th instant, I received the enclosed report, No. 1, from the officer of police, stating the illegal punishment he had been required, by Mr. Bowen, a magistrate, to inflict on one of his slaves; and also detailing a most severe punishment which he had in part carried into effect at the instance of the Bench, but with the further execution of which he hesitated to proceed, as it appeared to him contrary to law. Immediately on receiving this information I addressed the magistrates, informing them, I was sorry to find, on a bare commitment, without any trial or evidence whatever, a very severe punishment had been ordered on four slaves, and intimating, it was unknown to me that any power was vested in the Bench to cause punishment to be so summarily inflicted. I requested some explanation on the subject.

"In their reply the Bench endeavoured to gloss over the matter as well as they could, setting forth, that the trial of slaves by jury was a heavy expense to the country; that they had acted with no intention of infringing the laws of the settlement, or the rights of the slaves; that under a heavy penalty, whether competent or not, they were obliged to act as magistrates, and consequently, their fellow-settlers always viewed their conduct, when not strictly regular, with every indulgence,

"Although their proceeding was in direct violation of the law, I animadverted upon it in milder terms than I should otherwise have been disposed to have done, from the impres-

sion that two of the magistrates (it being their first year in office), might have acted without consideration, under the influence of Mr. Bowen, who, as an older magistrate, was well acquainted with the laws and customs of the court; and to whom, from his well-known character, I could have no hesitation in referring the whole matter, although it was difficult in such a case officially to attach the blame where I felt it ought to have rested; I did so, however, as far as I could with propriety, and also directed all the poor slaves to be instantly liberated and delivered up to their respective owners.

“ In the course of investigating this flagrant attempt upon the rights of the slaves, I was led to the knowledge of Mr. Bowen having confined the poor slave in chains in his own premises, whom the police officer had refused to place in that situation in the jail; and an affidavit made before one of the magistrates of his general cruelty and inhumanity was at the same time laid before me. Having fully ascertained the unexceptionable character of the complainant, and made every investigation which prudence could suggest, I determined to issue a search-warrant, and your Lordship will perceive by the return of the officer of police on the back of the warrant that the slaves were found chained in the manner described in the affidavit.

“ The warrant having been examined on the following morning by the Bench, Mr. Bowen was ordered for trial on the 25th instant; but I must here observe, that although the evidence on the examination was most clear and distinct, the majority of the three magistrates deemed it so very doubtful whether the offence could be considered a breach of any law, or whether there had been any further punishment inflicted by Mr. Bowen than an owner was justified in giving his slave, that they were much disposed to question the propriety of any prosecution; this, of course, convinced me of the feeling and disposition of the Bench.

“ In order that I might be under no error from misrepresentation, I attended the trial, and the following circumstances were most clearly and distinctly proved, indeed not denied; that on the bare suspicion of having made away with some handkerchiefs committed to her care to dispose of, a poor female slave was tied up by order of her owner and severely

flogged, and then handcuffed and shackled, placed in an old store, infested with vermin and the noisome flies of this country. After being in this situation for five days and nights, Serjeant Rush, a military pensioner, interceded with Mr. Bowen for her release, and having pledged himself, if the handkerchiefs were not found, to pay the exorbitant sum demanded, the poor creature was liberated on Sunday about mid-day. On the following morning she left her owner's house to make her complaint and seek redress : for this, and on no other ground whatever, she was again seized upon, tied down on her belly to the ground, her arms and legs being stretched out, and secured to four stakes with sharp cords, and in this shocking attitude, in the heat of the sun, exposed before the men in a perfect state of nature, she was again severely flogged, in presence of her inhuman master and his brother, upon her back and posteriors, and then sent back to her place of torment, and there again confined in handcuffs and chains, and subsisted on the wretched pittance of twenty plantains and two mackarel per week for above fourteen days. Occasionally, indeed, it appeared, the miserable being was led out by day, and chained to a tree in the yard, and there compelled to wash. This, my Lord, was an offence for which the magistrates could find no law on which to charge the jury, nor the jury any under which to find the prisoner guilty ! Most truly, indeed, was it observed by the advocate, in open court, that if they rejected the consolidated slave-law of Jamaica, which by custom and usage had been considered for years as the law of the settlement, he shuddered to remind them that there was the Act of 21st Geo. 3d, chap. 67, which protected even brutes from inhumanity.

“ The case of the male slaves actually apprehended by the officer of police, handcuffed, shackled, and loaded with an enormous cattle-chain, in the very dwelling of this magistrate, I need not in this dispatch enlarge upon. If the enormity against the poor female was no violation of the law, this of course could not be deemed illegal.

“ The slaves in this country have, for some time past, appeared to require no incentive to agitate their already irritated minds ; and therefore to quiet in some degree the alarm which will no doubt quickly spread amongst them, of their being thus deprived of all protection, I have, after assembling the

members of the supreme court as a council, this day issued a proclamation in his Majesty's name, declaring the consolidated slave-law of Jamaica to be in force until others are enacted, copy of which, with my letter to the magistrates, I beg to submit, and of which I trust your Lordship will approve. The measure will no doubt be offensive enough to Mr. Bowen and his partisans, and to many others who have always manifested the most violent opposition to any interference with the dealings of owners with their slaves; but I regard them with indifference in comparison to the manifest injustice and cruelty of abandoning all the slaves to the mercy of their proprietors, *although I still hope there are many who treat them with all the kindness and humanity consistent with their state of bondage.*"

"Enclosure No. 1, in Colonel Arthur's, of 28th Sept., 1821.

"Sir,

"Belize, Honduras, 11th September 1821.

"I beg leave to acquaint you, that on the 4th instant it was reported to me that M. W. Bowen, Esq. a magistrate, had sent a slave of his, by the name of Guy, to the common gaol, with orders to the constable that he, Guy, should be worked on the public works with the convicts in chains. Conceiving that the order was irregular, coming from only one magistrate, and he being the proprietor of the slave, I gave directions to the constable not to pay any attention to the order until I saw the gentleman myself, it being my intention to state my reason for not complying with his order; but being unfortunately unwell, I did not see him until the 10th instant, when a meeting of the magistrates took place at the Court-house, where, in the presence of two other magistrates, M. W. Bowen, Esq. told me, that he had taken his slave out of gaol in consequence of directions given by me for his not being worked in chains on the public works. Upon my replying to him, that without the sanction of the bench I did not think myself authorized to punish a slave in that manner at the instance of his master, he said that he conceived that an order from any magistrate was sufficient authority for me. To this the other two magistrates made no kind of observation, and consequently I am left in the very delicate situation of questioning the orders of a magistrate, or violating what I conceive to be the laws of the settlement.

“ I beg also to state, that four runaway slaves were delivered into the charge of the constable on the 3d instant, two of which, named Hero and Marriott, belong to the estate of the late S. Burnaham, John to George and James Hyde, and Glasgow to Mr. John Young. The three former were brought from the northward by some Spaniards; the latter was delivered by Mr. Harrison, a clerk to Messrs. Young and Wright, requesting that he might be kept in gaol until Mr. Wright came down the river. On the 5th instant they were brought by an order of the magistrates before the bench, and without any trial whatever, they (the four) were ordered to be imprisoned and worked in chains on the public works for two months, and to receive a corporal punishment of 128 lashes each, at four separate times, a part of which sentence has been carried into execution; but I feel so uncomfortable in proceeding with the further punishment of these people, under the impression that they have not been regularly tried, that I must beg with great submission to bring this representation under your consideration.

“ To Colonel Arthur,” &c. “ Wm. S. Eve, Officer of Police.”

Besides these and other instances of unpunished cruelty, Colonel Arthur enters at large into the case of a number of poor Indians, who had been most unjustly and cruelly reduced to bondage:—“ these poor Indians had been hunted down and absolutely smoked out of the holes and caves in which they had taken refuge.” (*Honduras Papers*, p. 36.) An inquiry was instituted, and the right of these people to their freedom clearly proved, and yet it was the determination of the Honduras colonists not to give them up but by compulsion. The case now awaits the decision of his Majesty’s government, and as to the course they will pursue no doubt can possibly exist.

We conceive we have said enough to shew how utterly the evidence adduced by Mr. Marryat fails in proving the point which he wished to establish, namely, “ the gradual and continued improvement in the condition of the slaves.”

It is perhaps unimportant to remark, that even the assertion that Governor Maxwell was appointed to the government of Dominica through the interest of Mr. Wilberforce, is altogether incorrect.

T.

“ Do not these official reports refute the calumnies thrown out by some honourable Members,” “ and particularly Mr. Wilberforce’s assertion, ‘ that the system of Slavery in the West Indies is a system of the most unprecedented degradation and unrelenting cruelty?’ ” (p. 81.)

WE answer, with the most perfect confidence, that they do no such thing. The statements in the note immediately preceding, to go no farther, and to say nothing at present of the various inherent attributes of Negro slavery as it now exists in the West Indies, sufficiently establish, in its full extent, even the strong language which Mr. Wilberforce has employed.

 U.
Mr. Bernal’s Speech.

WE took an early opportunity of transmitting our report of his speech to Mr. BERNAL for his correction. A severe family affliction, which we deeply deplore, prevented his returning it to us immediately; and we were under the necessity of substituting the very meagre report of it which appeared in the public prints of the day. Mr. BERNAL, however, having since had the kindness to send back our more full report, with his corrections, we feel it due to him and to ourselves to insert it entire in this place. It is as follows:—

“ I had thought, Sir, at the commencement of this debate, that to all appearance we were advancing towards the point of conciliation, and that every subject of irritation would this night have been avoided. But I would ask, whether the topics

my honourable and learned Friend below me (Mr. Brougham) has advanced, are calculated to lead to the results which I believed he had sincerely at heart? The honourable Member for Bristol (Mr. Bright) I think acted not with that discretion which he usually displays, in bringing forward, and creating a discussion with respect to, the contents of certain pamphlets which he read in part to the House; but I must say, that the honourable Member for Winchelsea should not, on such account, have opened the attack which he has just made, and that he should have abstained from indulging in such declamation. I would appeal to the House, whether the honourable Member for Winchelsea (although he has truly pointed out the manifest distinction which exists between the situations of the owner of an estate in the West Indies, and the landed proprietor in England) has not insidiously made an attack upon the West-India proprietors in general; and particularly when he instituted that comparison between the masters of slaves and the owners of post-horses? I would ask my honourable and learned Friend, if he can, upon reflection, consider that this was a sally of declamation he ought to have indulged in, if he sincerely wished to prevent irritation?

“ My honourable and learned Friend has asked, What has been done in the way of amelioration or improvement since the abolition of the Slave Trade? I am unwilling, at this late hour of the night, to trouble the House by going through a long detail of facts, running over a period of so many years; but I would tell him, that I know much, very much, has been done since the abolition, and particularly in the island of Jamaica. I would ask him, whether he does not remember that the Consolidated Slave Code, containing upwards of an hundred clauses, underwent, in 1817, a complete revision in the Legislature of Jamaica? If my honourable and learned Friend should answer, ‘ I know of no laws having been enacted,’ I can only reply by directly asserting what I have been informed and believe to be the fact, though that assertion may, of course, again be met by replication. If the honourable and learned Gentleman should say, that the West-India colonies have not made any new laws, such a statement, I am assured by those who are well informed on the subject, may be met by a complete denial. My honourable and learned

Friend, not perhaps in the most fair or candid manner, has referred to some advertisements relating to run-away Negroes in the Jamaica Gazettes, and which he has read as it were to excite the attention of the House. Was it, I ask, worthy of the serious cause he advocates? was it worthy of his reputation and talents, upon a question of this vital importance, to aim at directing the attention of the House to these points; and to call down the ridicule, the contempt, the disgust of honourable Members, by stating, from these public newspapers, that a young Negro girl was branded upon the top of her right shoulder, and other circumstances of the like nature; and from thence to maintain, that Negroes were sold in the market like so many horned cattle? My honourable and learned Friend has been pleased to comment upon the controul to which the Negro population is subjected. But is it our fault as West-India proprietors? Are we to blame because we are placed in this situation? Have not the successive Governments of the mother country sanctioned it? I would ask my honourable and learned Friend, whether he thinks it just or candid to call in the aid of ridicule, by introducing topics which can have no other effect than to cast an unmerited share of odium upon the unfortunate West-India planters, and to excite strong feelings of irritation? Amongst a Black and Coloured slave population, consisting of nearly 340,000 beings (as I believe may now be the case in Jamaica), there always must be found a number of run-away slaves. The fact cannot be for a moment disputed.

“Without detaining the House at any length, I would beg to call its attention, and also that of my honourable and learned Friend, to a well-digested Report made in 1816, and drawn up with great labour and talent, by a Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica. By consulting that excellent Report, it will be found that very few impediments (if any) are thrown in the way of the Negro's obtaining justice, who asserts his right or title to freedom, should the same be contested; and it will appear, by a few minutes' inspection of this Report, that the laws do not leave the Negro so destitute of protection as may be commonly supposed. A Negro asserting his right to freedom, in the island of Jamaica, may bring an action in a court of justice to try and enforce such right; and should he fail therein, he may institute other proceedings for such purpose.

Appeals are also allowed to the Negroes, under the laws of Jamaica; and until the appeal be heard and determined the Negro has a right to enjoy his liberty. In this able Report will be found the evidence of the Attorney-General of Jamaica, who deposed to the fact that many actions of trespass have been entertained on the part of Negroes or Coloured persons, for the purpose of asserting their right of freedom, and who by these means recovered, against those opposing such claims, damages to the amount of 250*l.* in some cases. In almost every case where an action of trespass has been brought, or a writ *de homine replegiando* has been sued out, the plaintiffs claiming their rights have obtained redress.

“ My honourable and learned Friend has also asked, Why will not the House of Assembly of Jamaica pass a law to attach the Negro to the soil? At this advanced time of the night, it would be unwise for me to enter into a detail of the whole of the reasons which I have understood have actuated that Assembly in not proceeding to frame such an enactment. But my honourable and learned Friend, I must say, has made the most unfair comparison between the system of culture pursued with respect to the soil of a northern climate like England, and that followed upon the plantations in a tropical country like the West Indies. The vegetable provisions of the Negro, which have been alluded to, are raised upon a soil far different from that on which the sugar-cane is grown. They are cultivated upon two distinct soils; and I would remind my honourable and learned Friend (if he has looked at the Report to which I have before alluded), that it is particularly mentioned therein, that a fair proportion of estates in Jamaica are coffee plantations. The honourable and learned Gentleman does not seem to be aware, in considering the question of attaching the Negro to the soil, that the frequent hurricanes which occur in the West Indies, in time, often wash or force away the soil, and particularly upon coffee properties, and that in such cases the plantations are oftentimes afterwards not worth keeping up. The unfortunate beings then left on the estates, if legally and absolutely attached to the soil, would be compelled to remain, at the risk of starvation. When, therefore, my honourable and learned Friend asks why this is not done, why the Negro is not absolutely attached to the soil; I reply, that

if I had time, and it were not for the danger of exhausting the patience of the House, I could give him most full and satisfactory reasons to prove that the Assembly of Jamaica have been justified in pausing before they adopted such a plan.

“ I am very willing to allow to my honourable and learned Friend, that there are certainly evils of serious magnitude inherent in the state of slavery in the West Indies; but I would firmly contend (and I think every reasonable man who has thought on the subject must be willing to allow) that as the West-India colonists have not been placed in the situation in which they now stand without the direct and solemn authority of the Legislature of the mother country, and the most express encouragement on the part of the British Government, it is only their due, it would only be an act of mere and positive justice towards them, if the Legislature should now think proper to take their property into its own hands, and to submit it to a system of management essentially different from that which it has hitherto received, that the Legislature of Great Britain should, at the same time, grant to the West-India planters the most liberal, the most full, and the most satisfactory compensation. Whatever weight the argument of the honourable Member for Weymouth may have had with the House, I still contend that the slave is the property of his master; and I say again, that the Legislature of this country is bound to give to the planter the fullest and most adequate remuneration for any deprivation of, or change in, his right of property, and the most complete indemnity against any dangers which may result from its interference therewith.”

We shall subjoin but a very few brief remarks on the above speech of Mr. Bernal, having in the preceding notes anticipated some of the topics to which it adverts.

The alleged improvements in the condition of the slaves, and the humanity of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica, have already been fully treated of. (See p. 199 and p. 148.)

With respect to the references made by Mr. Brougham to the Jamaica newspapers, and to the proofs he thence deduced of the unprecedented degradation of the Negro slave, it did not require the talents and wit of that gentleman to use them so as to produce a strong impression. A simple inspection of

any one number of the Royal Gazette of Jamaica is quite sufficient, without the aid of eloquence or exaggeration, deeply to affect every feeling mind.

It has been already freely admitted, that a considerable improvement has taken place, within the last six or seven years, in respect to the opportunity allowed to free persons of establishing their right to freedom. Still, the *onus probandi* lies on *them*, at the tremendous risk of hopeless and interminable bondage. Still, not only a black skin, but a tinge of African blood, constitutes presumptive evidence of slavery; whereas the presumption ought surely ever to be in favour of freedom. Besides which, the non-admissibility of the evidence of slaves; or of presumed slaves, must often be fatal even to the most just claims of liberty. This boasted improvement, moreover, be it remembered, is not any protection whatever to the slaves, but only to the enfranchised. It may, to a certain degree, prevent persons from being unjustly deprived of their freedom when once acquired; but it leaves numberless cases of the most grievous oppression wholly unredressed. An example of this kind has just presented itself to our eyes, on opening the Royal Gazette of Jamaica for the 26th April 1823. It will be found to comport but ill with the views of Mr. Bernal, or the statements in the Jamaica Report of 1816.

“ St. Elizabeth’s Workhouse, March 4, 1823.

“ Notice is hereby given, that unless the undermentioned slaves are taken out of this Workhouse prior to Tuesday the 29th day of April next, they will, on that day, between the hours of ten and twelve o’clock in the forenoon, be put up to public sale, to the highest and best bidder, at the Post-office here, agreeably to the Workhouse Law now in force, for the payment of their fees.”

The first in the list of these unhappy persons is the following:—“ **SHERIER**, a Bermudian, five feet five inches, no marks; says he is free, but has no document; bold looking, full faced, full whiskers, apparently about forty years of age; says he sailed some time ago with a Captain Johnson, on board a brig called the Clump, but whither she was bound he does not say, only that the brig was lost at sea: he is very plausible, and speaks good English.”

In three days after the publication of this advertisement,

and only about a fortnight before the date of Mr. Bernal's speech, this poor fellow, thrown on the inhospitable shores of Jamaica by accident, *speaking good English, saying he is free*, and as a proof of it, though he has no document (and how could a shipwrecked mariner have any document?), yet *having no marks* (no marks even of the whip, we presume), was doomed to be sold to the highest bidder, agreeably to the humane Workhouse Law of Jamaica, for payment of his fees! Can such a state of things be long endured by the Parliament and people of England?

The main error, however, into which Mr. Bernal has been misled, is the statement on which he grounds his objections to the *adscriptio glebæ*, namely, that the soil adapted for provisions is different from that on which sugar-cane is grown: "they are cultivated," he says, "on two distinct soils." Never have respectable men been induced, on grounds more utterly unreal and fallacious, to resist a great and admitted improvement. We take upon us to assert broadly, that the very same lands which are best suited to the growth of the sugar-cane, are also well suited to the growth of provisions, and of many other articles; and we are willing to join issue with the West-Indian planters on that fact. Hear what Mr. Roughley, a practical Jamaica planter, says on this subject. He represents a "dark brown friable, unctuous soil, upon a clay," as the best to produce canes; but adds, that even this soil, "from the exhausting nature of the sugar-cane," requires manure. p. 218. Will any planter say that such land would not be well adapted for provisions? Indeed, Mr. Roughley expressly says, "*So much corn is usually grown through the cane pieces, that seldom a separate corn piece is grown on an estate to afford a supply.*" p. 399. And if cane land will bear at one time both cane and corn, will any man believe that it will not grow corn alone?—Again: Mr. Stewart, another practical planter, says, "The soils adapted to the sugar-cane are the various rich loams and molds, and clay with a superstratum of mold." p. 103. "The soil best adapted for the coffee-tree is a deep brown loam." p. 114. And yet we are to believe that land capable of producing the sugar-cane is not capable of producing provisions or coffee! It is true, that land may grow provisions well which, from its hilly or rocky nature, may be ill adapted

for the cane, or from its exuberant richness may yield sugar of an indifferent quality; but it is no less true, that there is no land, on which the cane will thrive, on which a great variety of other articles, both for food and for commerce, will not also thrive, and which may not, moreover, be converted into luxuriant pastures.

On the subject of compensation, we have only to say, that we shall willingly pay our fair share of whatever sum the West Indians shall prove, to the satisfaction of Parliament, to be fairly due to them for any changes which they may be compelled to adopt, with a view to the early termination of the present opprobrious system.

V.

MR. BARING, “*if called upon to say what part of the globe most particularly excited his sympathy and commiseration, does not believe that he should fix upon the Negroes in the West Indies, as far as regards their food and clothing, and the whole of their treatment.*” (p. 97.)

MR. BARING is of opinion that the sufferings of the Negro have been overstated. Has he no suspicion that his comforts may have been overstated? He intimates none. He reserves his incredulity for those who feel for the Negro, and places his confidence in those who hold him in bondage, and profit by his toil. But the mode by which he has brought himself to this state of mind is worthy of notice. He has seen Negro slavery in Georgia and Carolina, and he infers, from what he saw there, that the picture given of Negro slavery in the West Indies is overcharged. We certainly have no idea that a gentleman bearing the name of Baring, in passing through any portion of the United States, where that name is so known and honoured, could have a fair opportunity of examining, with the necessary minuteness, the state of the plantation slave. Wherever he went he would be attended and fêted. Whatever he saw he would see in presence of kind and anxious hosts.

Offensive sights would be removed. And it could not be expected that the planters of Georgia and Carolina would fail to extol the humanity of the system which they themselves ministered. We must know more of Mr. Baring's means of information, and that his opinion of American slavery has not been formed, as his opinion of West-Indian slavery appears to have been formed, on the testimony of the holders of slaves or their dependants, before we can place implicit reliance upon it. But, even if we waive all these grounds of hesitation, and admit that he has fairly estimated the slavery of Carolina and Georgia, we should still deny that any inference could thence be drawn in favour of the condition of the West-Indian slave. To prove this, to the satisfaction of any sound political economist like Mr. Baring, it is only necessary to compare the progress of population in the two cases, as it is exhibited in authentic statistical records. The slave population of the United States has been increasing, since 1790, at a rate which doubles its number in twenty-two or twenty-three years; while the slave population of Jamaica (and the case in most of the other colonies is equally, if not more, unfavourable), has been *decreasing* during the same period at an enormous rate. The calculation will be found accurately made in Mr. Cropper's "Letter on the injurious Effects of High Prices and the beneficial Effects of Low Prices on the Condition of Slavery," p. 15. The result of it is, that had the Jamaica system not been more rigorous than the American system, the population of that island in 1820, instead of being 340,000, ought to have been about 750,000; thus indicating a waste of human life, in that single colony, in the space of thirty years, of about 410,000 human beings. Nay, the case is still more aggravated when we consider the superior facility with which human life may be sustained in Jamaica, than in Carolina, Virginia, &c.: for though we refuse credit to the exaggerated statement of the Jamaica Assembly in 1816, that about twelve or thirteen days' labour in the year is amply sufficient to supply a slave and his family with food, we nevertheless admit, that the raising of provisions is a much less operose process there than in the slave states of America. We call upon Mr. Baring to account for this vast difference in the progress of population, between the slaves of the United States and those of the West Indies, on any hypo-

thesis, consistent with fact, which does not involve the severe and even oppressive treatment of the latter. He will not say that even the slaves of Georgia and Carolina are too well off; and yet their state, judging by the general results, must be paradise as compared with that of the Jamaica slave. Does the acute and penetrating mind of Mr. Baring see no ground, in this extraordinary comparative decrease, for distrusting both his conclusions and the premises on which they are founded? The present, however, is a case in which general principles are apt to be strangely overlooked. Mr. Baring would revolt from the bare idea of despotic authority being committed to any man, or set of men, even in this moral land. The correct principles and elevated tone of feeling of the individuals entrusted with it, would form no apology in his eyes for delegating to them a power so sure to be abused. While man is what he is, the possession of uncontrolled dominion must lead to wrong and oppression. But all these sound anticipations are reversed in the case of the West Indies. There, men who (Mr. Baring himself tells us) are so deficient in good morals that he deems it an impossibility the slaves should derive any religious or moral improvement from them, are nevertheless invested with an extent of uncontrolled power over the persons and happiness of their dependants, beyond what even the highest magistrates in this country possess; and with this further difference, that the latter are responsible, while the former are not. And yet Mr. Baring does not intimate a doubt that there all is as it ought to be; but seems even disposed to quarrel with those who, being a little more sceptical, have looked into the matter in detail, and have satisfied themselves that the state of the slaves, as to food, clothing, and general treatment, is the reverse of what Mr. Baring assumes it to be.

We feel it to be unnecessary to recur to the statements contained in "Negro Slavery," in proof of the justice of this opinion. The witnesses who have there spoken are alive. They have stated the things which they have seen. They have testified, not to individual instances of cruelty merely, but to the general every-day practice, as actually beheld with their own eyes, on estates where the treatment was better than the average treatment. But Mr. Baring does not believe them. Let him, then, specify the precise points in their statements.

to which he objects, and let him afford them the opportunity of verifying them. In the mean time, we beg to refer him, in addition to the details contained in the preceding pages, to another witness, Mr. Stewart. His testimony is to the following effect.

“It may truly be said, that the treatment of the slave depends in a great measure upon the character and temper of his master or manager. How ineffectual to the slaves are humane and judicious laws, if a barbarous master or overseer has it in his power to evade them in various ways! There can be no hesitation in saying, that the slave who lives under the immediate superintendance of a humane and considerate master enjoys a life of as much comfort and contentment as *the condition of a slave is capable of*. This, perhaps, is the utmost that can be said: for, though the wants of the slave may be supplied by the beneficent provisions of such a master, and he may consequently be said to be, so far, more desirably situated than many of the poorer peasantry of Great Britain, yet to argue generally that he is happier than they, an assertion which one frequently hears, is certainly saying too much.” “But very differently situated is the poor slave who is doomed to toil for a master of a character directly opposite to the foregoing.” “Undoubtedly this is a state of grievous hardship. It may be said that there are few masters of the character here described. It were to be wished it were so; but men’s hearts are not likely to be softened by habits of too uncontrolled dominion over their fellow-men. With respect to interest prevailing over a disposition to oppress; while we allow all due weight to this motive, in the prudent and judicious owner, it will not always counteract the petty injustice to which the slave is subject from ignorant masters and unfeeling overseers. A slave may complain, and justly complain, that he is made to labour at unseasonable hours, and on days which the law allots to him; and that he is neither fed nor clothed as the law directs; but who is to prove these transgressions? The slave cannot, for the law does not recognise the validity of his testimony against a White man. If the master were put upon his oath, equally nugatory would be this expedient; for the man who wants rectitude and feeling to be just to his slaves, will hardly scruple to serve his ends by perjury. Again: if a slave is

punished or beat with improper and illegal severity, or even cut and maimed—not to mention the numerous acts of petty tyranny to which he is subject under a cruel master—and there is no legal evidence to prove those enormities, the offender cannot be convicted of them. He may, then, go on with impunity in this system of oppression, as long as he can contrive to keep without the reach of the laws. Extreme cases of this nature, it may be said, seldom occur; but such a supposition is no argument that the law should not provide effectually against them. Even murder may escape condign punishment while this defect in the slave laws is suffered to exist. There is only one way of removing this obstacle to the more effectual amelioration of the condition of the slave; and that is, by rendering his evidence, under certain modifications, legally admissible against Whites. Such an innovation would indeed probably raise an outcry among a certain class of persons, who see danger in every boon of kindness extended to the slaves; but a day will arrive, when it will be a subject of wonder, even in the West Indies, that human beings should have been precluded the means of procuring legal redress against injury and oppression; that *the shadow and mockery of justice* should have been held out to them, while an insuperable bar was placed between them and the reality.”

So much for the *general* state of the slaves. Now take an individual case, as given by an eye-witness, Mr. Gilgras, a Methodist Missionary.

“A master of slaves who lived near us in Kingston, Jamaica, exercised his barbarities on a Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the chapel; and the cries of the female sufferers have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. This man wanted money, and, one of the female slaves having two fine children, he sold one of them, and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings she made a hideous howling, and for that crime was flogged. Soon after he sold her other child. This ‘turned her heart within her,’ and impelled her into a kind of madness. She howled night and day in the yard; tore her hair; ran up and down the streets and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was, ‘Da

wicked massa Jew, he sell my children. Will no Buckra massa pity Negar? What me do? Me no have one child!' As she stood before the window, she said, lifting up her hands towards heaven, 'My massa, do, my massa minister, pity me! My heart do so' (shaking herself violently), 'my heart do so, because me have no child. Me go to massa house, in massa yard, and in my hut, and me no see 'em.' And then her cry went up to God." (*Watson's Defence of the Methodists*, p. 26.)

Mr. Stewart gives us another case, which could only have occurred in a slave colony.

"An overseer, well known as a man of violent and tyrannical temper, was employed, by a great attorney, on an estate for which he was receiver. His treatment of the slaves was so cruel and oppressive, that, after reiterated and fruitless complaints, numbers of them absconded from the property, and would not return to it, doubtless from a dread of the punishment that awaited them. At length, a party of these fugitive slaves formed the desperate and atrocious design of murdering this man; which purpose they effected, and subsequently suffered death for the crime. This man had been suffered to hold his situation for many years prior to this catastrophe, notwithstanding that his cruelties were notorious to the whole neighbourhood. The assassins neither robbed the house, nor molested the wife and child of their victim, though both were in their power." p. 220. Mr. Stewart adds, that "this case was an unusual one." We have no doubt it was: and yet, what must be the state of law and feeling in a community where such a monster was permitted "for many years" to exercise his "notorious" cruelties and oppressions, without the slightest interruption either from employer or magistrate?

But we are unwilling to prolong this discussion. Take, however, one fact, as to food. The law of the Leeward Islands of 21st April 1798, still in force—(see House of Commons papers of 5th April 1816, p. 56)—prescribes, as the weekly allowance of adult labouring slaves, either nine pints of unground corn or beans or oatmeal, or eight pints of pease or wheat flour or corn meal, or seven pints of rice, or eight pounds of biscuit, or twenty pounds of potatoes or yams; and it authorizes the master, in the time of crop, to diminish even this scanty allowance by one-fifth. That this allowance is miserably scanty,

barely sufficient to keep a man alive, will be evident to every one who knows any thing of the matter, or who will make the experiment on a labourer in this country. But it is demonstrated to be so by this fact, that the prison allowance to slaves in Jamaica, and the stated allowance to labouring slaves in the Bahamas, is more than double the allowance to labouring slaves in the Leeward Islands, being twenty-one pints of corn or wheat flour, fifty-six pounds of yams or potatoes, &c.

Mr. Baring thinks, with the West Indians, that the slaves are as happy as the peasantry in England. "But let us suppose a state of things in this country, in which every bailiff of an estate should be armed with a power of driving the labourers, both men and women, to their work, by means of the lash; and should also be at liberty to use his entire discretion as to the infliction of punishment, by confinement to *any* extent, and by the cart-whip to the extent of *thirty-nine lashes on the bare body*, for any conduct which he might construe into an offence: what, in this case, would be the condition of the English peasantry? And can we regard the overseers of the West Indies as safer depositories of power than English bailiffs would be? Or are the overseers of the West Indies angels, and not men, that there is no risk of their abusing the authority thus reposed in them?"—(*Review*, &c. p. 17.)

For a reply to what Mr. Baring says respecting the opinions of Governors, &c. we beg to refer to Appendix S, p. 190.

W.

"*Moral degradation*," &c. (p. 98.)

MR. BARING admits the sad moral degradation of the Negroes. But is it not obvious that that admission involves so much culpable negligence (to say no more) on the part of the masters, as of itself furnishes a strong presumption that all cannot be as right in other respects as Mr. Baring would flatter himself it is?

X.

"The danger is extreme," &c. (p. 99.)

MR. BARING quotes the authority of Sir James Leith, the Governor of Barbadoes, in support of the assertion that the Barbadoes commotion in 1816 was owing to reports of what was doing at home. Where is that authority to be found? We do not believe that any such has ever been produced. On the contrary, the Government of the day declined to produce Sir James Leith's dispatches, and the West Indians prudently forbore to call for them. It is competent to Mr. Baring, however, now to call for them; and we trust he will do so, feeling perfectly persuaded that they will throw a new and instructive light on the whole subject. They will tend, we have no doubt whatever, to dissipate the alarms which are sedulously creating at the present moment, to serve an obvious purpose, by rumours of apprehended insurrection; and which new plots may even be got up to magnify—plots issuing, like former plots, in the destruction, not of any White life, but of abundance of Black lives. These rumours of plots, and these paragraphs of alarm, are quite familiar to all who lived during the Slave-Trade controversy. There was a regular importation of them every year; and so there will be again.

We will admit that a discussion about an Agrarian law might, under certain supposable circumstances, produce agitation in the minds of the lower classes in this country. We do not believe, however, that it would, unless they were suffering severely from the pressure of some great and touching evil, which they supposed the Government and Parliament could obviate. But there is no analogy between the two cases. Here, almost every man we meet can read, and understand, and discuss: in Barbadoes, we question whether any one slave can read a newspaper, if he could have access to it. And who is to communicate intelligence to him on the subject? The Whites and People of Colour are interested, as they conceive, in withholding such intelligence from him.—But should we,

either in our own case or in that of Ireland, admit it as a valid reason for forbearing to discuss great and acknowledged evils, under which the mass of the population might labour, with a view to their effectual relief, that the minds of the sufferers might be agitated by the discussion? If so, what evil could ever be remedied? But surely the danger is infinitely less in discussing, at 5000 or 6000 miles' distance, the evils under which the ignorant, non-reading slaves of Jamaica, Demarara, or Barbadoes labour, especially as almost every one of them speaks only a jargon which would be unintelligible in this country, and to almost every one of them the language of our newspapers would be still more unintelligible. Of this, whatever may be said on the subject in Parliamentary speeches, and in Memorials and Reports from the islands, resident West Indians are as fully persuaded as we are. Even this very year, when the use made of such insertions by their opponents should have taught them a little controversial prudence, what do we find in the Royal Gazette of Jamaica? In the *Supplement* to that Gazette, from May 31 to June 7, 1823, is inserted a letter on the subject of the projected emancipation of the slaves, signed "Quercus," and dated "St. Ann's, May 14, 1823," which had originally appeared in the Jamaica Journal. It is too long to be transcribed, but it may be seen, by any gentleman who wishes to satisfy himself respecting it, either at Lloyd's, or at the Jamaica Coffee-house. The only attempt at disguise, is the flimsy one of printing Mr. Wilberforce's name thus, "W————e;" and the word emancipation (though this is not done uniformly) thus "e————n." Considering the whole drift and texture of this paper, such expedients can serve no better purpose of concealment, than the attempt of the foolish bird to conceal itself by hiding its head under its wing. No Negro, who could understand the discussions in our newspapers, if he had access to those papers, but must see from this Jamaica Gazette, published in Kingston, and transmitted to almost every plantation in the island, that there is at this moment a violent conflict between the planters of our Colonies, and a large party in England who espouse the cause of the slaves; and that their freedom is the subject of debate. This is manifest from every line of the long and inflammatory letter of "Quercus." But will

any one believe, that, if there were any truth in the statements of apprehended danger from Parliamentary or public discussion on this point; if there were any truth in the statements that the Negroes would be inflamed to insurrection by these discussions, or even that they had any means of hearing of them, or understanding them; a letter of this description would have been suffered to appear first in the Jamaica Journal, and then, for the manifest purpose of more extensive circulation, be inserted in the Royal Gazette of the Island? It is absolutely impossible.

The paper begins with a violent attack on the "African Society," although that Society has taken no part in the present movement. They are stated to "have never ceased, by their emissaries and reports, to aim at the anticipation of their ultimate schemes in the excitation of rebellion." Those emissaries (we need not say, the mere figment of the writer's brain), "*many of whom are now in this island,*" were sent out, "like Saul, breathing fury and slaughter," but were converted from their horrid purposes by the mere sight of slavery: "They have perceived, instead of the horrible and disgusting illusions attached to the name of *slavery*, the complete happiness of *the Negroes*; they have perceived *that slavery exists only in the name*, which in this country, compared with the boasted liberty of some of their own countrymen, is *a service of perfect freedom.*"—This is surely sufficiently intelligible.—The substance of the violent debate which took place on the Registry Bill, on the 19th June 1816, is then given, and the writer proceeds to revile the Abolitionists: "Language possesses not terms sufficient to convey the horror and detestation in which" their conduct "ought to be held." Their deceit "would be disgraceful to the inmates of Pandemonium itself. Blood and massacre their objects; privileged in the practice of the most malignant passions;" &c. Again, "Even Mr. W——e himself, on that day declared that it was too much for a patient man to hear without emotion, that he and his friends should be charged with endeavouring to *excite insurrection*, when for twenty-seven years they had been continually vindicating themselves from the charge of *wishing to make the slaves free.*"—We do not quote the words of "Quercus" as being correct in point of statement, but as shewing, that, in

the very heart of this slave colony, they are not half so fearful as some of our senators are, lest "one rash word, one too ardent expression, should raise a flame not to be extinguished." Even Mr. Canning is quoted as having declared that the House of Commons never entertained the notion of including "*emancipation*" [at full length, thus giving the key to the cipher in other parts] "with the measure of abolition."

After this, who will may believe the allegations of danger of insurrection among the slaves from the public discussion of their condition in this country.

Y.

"Are any of these cases to be compared with the West Indies,"
&c., "the Slaves outnumbering the Whites by at least ten to
one?" (p. 100.)

AND yet, what would gentlemen have? We cannot make cases. We must take the best analogies we can find; and certainly those produced by Mr. Buxton, notwithstanding the statements of Mr. Baring, are abundantly strong. But there are still stronger to be produced. That of Hayti, and that also of Sierra Leone, are, in their different ways, very decisive confirmatory presumptions in favour of the safety, and also of the beneficial effects, of emancipation voluntarily conceded. Both these cases will be found fully stated in Mr. Clarkson's "*Thoughts on the Necessity of improving the Condition of the Slaves, and on the Practicability, Safety, and Advantages of Emancipation;*" a work which we particularly recommend to the perusal of Mr. Baring. Mr. Clarkson has omitted to notice the case of Guadeloupe, which is still more in point than any he has mentioned. We have already briefly adverted to it; and we hope hereafter to give a more detailed statement of the history and effects of this striking experiment in Negro emancipation. As to the disproportion of ten Blacks to one White in our colonies, that disproportion was at least as great in Guadeloupe, and it is ten times as great in Sierra Leone.

Z.

“ If these children are born free, who is to take care of them?”
“ You do away the interest of the proprietor in them.” *“ it*
will not be worth his while to bring them up.” *“ He has not*
the same reason for taking care of the mother or the offspring.”
 (p. 101.)

WE really do not think so badly of the West Indians as Mr. Baring seems to do. We do not believe they will kill the children because they are to have no permanent interest in them. But, in fact, they have a permanent interest in the future tenantry and labourers of their estates. What is it that gives to land, any where, its value, but population? And what an astonishing rise has taken place in the value of land, wherever a free population has increased? Waving, however, this view of the subject, we would ask Mr. Baring, Who takes care of them now? In Jamaica, and many of the other colonies, they are now fed, from infancy till they can provide for themselves, by their parents, and, with slight exceptions, by their parents alone. This they have done hitherto by means of their Sundays and a day in a fortnight out of crop. But if a day in the week be added, as it ought, and as we trust is intended, to the Sundays, they will then possess more adequate means of providing for them. If the time now granted them has hitherto been deemed sufficient by West-Indians (we certainly do not think it so) for the maintenance of the slaves and their families, then they must admit, that, with an additional day in the week, there can be no doubt as to the sufficiency of their means. We may, in that case, safely leave the question of food, which is a most important question, to parental affection. As for clothing, the Negro children now go in general stark naked. Its cost, however, in any case, would be a mere trifle, and, considering all we have heard of the facility with which Negroes raise provisions, poultry, pigs, &c., and the prices they obtain for them in the market, would be easily procurable. Then, when the children arrived at the age of five or six, they would be capable of doing much to aid their parents and maintain themselves. We have seen, that at that age they are now formed into gangs, (p. 181), under a driveress; and that they are made extremely

useful in weeding canes, distributing manure, &c. Indeed, in weeding canes, a most important work, they do nearly as much as adults. If the labour of an adult, in twelve or thirteen days in the year, can produce such results as the Jamaica Assembly and Sir R. Woodford tell us it will, then the labour even of children of this age, continued for every day in the year, must be attended with very considerable effects, increasing daily as they advance in life. A large portion of their time would, however, we trust, be given to other objects, and particularly to that of education. And this point Mr. Baring has wholly overlooked. The plan of emancipating the children is inseparably combined with a system of instruction conducted under the superintendence of Government, and of proper persons appointed by them. Even if the proprietor's interest in the children could be regarded as lessened by this arrangement, a substitute would be found for it in the care of the teachers who would be required to conduct their Christian education. A system of strict regulation and controul, proceeding on general rules, and not on private caprice, would undoubtedly be indispensable; and the public police might, if needful, be invigorated as the private police was relaxed. But into these points of detail it is not necessary now to enter. All we meant to do, in adverting to the subject, was to shew that Mr. Baring's objection to the plan was not so well founded as he seems to have apprehended; and that, as far as there is any weight in it, it divests West-Indian proprietors of all those kindly feelings which induce the English gentleman to labour for the temporal comfort and moral improvement of his poorer neighbours.

AA.

"If we arrive at a free Black population, the islands will be gone from this country." "Such a population will not consent to devote their labours to proprietors resident in England." "Establish such a state of society, and the colonies would be of no farther value to Great Britain." (p. 102.)

SUCH is the argument of Mr. Baring.—Undoubtedly it would be most absurd, to suppose that a free Black population would

continue to devote their labours to proprietors resident either in the West Indies or in England. It would be the very height of extravagance to entertain such an idea. It would be the same absurdity which is now involved in maintaining that the slaves labour for their masters without the stimulus of the whip. But would the proprietors of the soil be worse off, or would the public interests suffer, if labourers in the West Indies worked, as labourers in England work, from a view not to the benefit of their employers, but of themselves? A free Black population would unquestionably act upon the same principles, and with the same ends in view, as a free White population: They would be stimulated by a regard to their own interests, not to that of their employers; but under the operation of this principle the interests of employers, as well as the general interests of the state, would, in the West Indies, as in every other portion of the globe, be more effectually served than they can possibly be by compulsory labour under the lash. We refer Mr. Baring to Mr. Cropper's and Mr. Adam Hodgson's pamphlets for proof of this proposition. It is a proposition, indeed, about which we scarcely can believe that his own enlightened mind can entertain a doubt. We may have less sugar from the West Indies, but we shall have it from some other quarter. We shall, however, have a far more extended consumption of our manufactures there; and far more of individual comfort and enjoyment.—Supposing that Bonaparte had not madly attempted to restore the cart-whip in St. Domingo, would that island have been lost to France? Touissant had preserved it for France. He had driven the English from it. He had established tranquillity throughout the island. He had revived agriculture. The testimony of the French functionaries residing in St. Domingo at the time, General Vincent, General La Croix, and Colonel Malenfant, is express and unequivocal as to the astonishing state of prosperity to which the island had been restored, and the order which reigned in every department of its administration. Would St. Domingo, under these circumstances, have been of no value to France, had France been wise enough to cherish the freedom of the Negroes, instead of vainly attempting to crush it? She would at this moment have possessed a far more formidable West-Indian power, and a more extensive West-Indian commerce, than we

possess. Even after all the devastations which that island has undergone, and under all the serious disadvantages which it still experiences, besides maintaining a large and growing population in the overflowing abundance of all the necessaries of life, and defraying all the expense of civil and military establishments and of education also, it carries on a very considerable foreign commerce. In the year ending September 1821, 50,000 tons of shipping, belonging to the United States alone, were employed in the trade of Hayti. Again: is the trade of India, or Java, or Ceylon, less valuable, because the inhabitants are free, and labour for their own benefit, and not for the benefit of masters, either present or absent?

We will present Mr. Baring with a striking fact illustrative of our views of this subject; and although the details will occupy more space than we could have wished, yet they are too important, and too well authenticated, to be omitted.

In the year 1776, Samuel Nottingham, a Quaker, who became possessed of a small estate in Tortola, to which were attached twenty-five Negroes—viz. six men, ten women, four boys, and five girls—determined on manumitting them. He accordingly did manumit them by the following deed.

“Be it remembered, that whereas I, Samuel Nottingham, of Long Island in the province of New York, gentleman, am owner, or reputed owner, of a number of Negroes, on the island of Tortola, in the English West Indies; and considering that liberty is their right and property, which in equity, justice, and good conscience ought to be restored to them; and having a testimony in my heart against the iniquitous practice of enslaving our fellow-men; therefore, as far as in me lies, I conclude it necessary for me to grant unto the said Negroes their natural right of freedom, and, accordingly, I have granted, and by these presents, in consideration of Five Pounds sterling to me by the said Negroes paid at and before the sealing of this instrument, and for divers others good causes and considerations me thereto moving, do grant, bargain, sell, release, assure, and confirm, unto all and every of the said Negroes, their liberty and freedom, as fully and amply as though herein particularly and respectively stated. And moreover, I, the said Samuel Nottingham, do covenant and grant, for myself, my heirs, executors, and administra-

tors, to and with the said Negroes respectively, that they, and each of them, shall and may enjoy their freedom, and any estate real or personal which they, or any of them, may acquire, without the let, suit, hindrance, or molestation of me or my heirs, or any person or persons claiming, or to claim, by, from, or under me or them ; hereby quitting all claim and demand to them and their posterity. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 30th day of the 6th Month, 1776.

(Signed) "Samuel Nottingham."

"Sealed and delivered in the presence of us,

"Nicholas Wain,

"Sarah Wain."

About six years afterwards, Samuel Nottingham addressed to one of these slaves the following letter.—

"Dear George,

"Bristol, 30th of 9th Month, 1782.

"Thy letter of the 8th of last 6th Month we received, and it was well pleasing to us to hear of the present good disposition of thyself and the rest of our late servants, whose welfare and happiness both here and hereafter we have much at heart ; but we are sorry to hear of the removal of poor John Venture, and Harry, though not without hopes of their partaking of that mercy which is extended to all, without respect of persons, whether white or black. So, George, remember, what we write to thee we write to all of you who once called us Master and Mistress ; but now you are all free, as far as it is in our power to make you so, because none are free indeed, except they are free in Christ ; therefore, we admonish you, not as your master and mistress, but as your friends and benefactors, beseeching you to be cautious of your conduct and circumspect in your behaviour to all, that none may accuse you of abusing that freedom which we, in the course of Divine Providence, have been permitted to give you. Remember also, that, as free men and women, ye stand accountable for every part of your conduct, and must answer for the same in your own persons, if you do amiss ; in which case the laws where you are have provided a punishment, according to the nature of the offence ; but do well, and ye shall have praise of the same. And that you may be enabled to live honestly among men, we have given you our East-End plantation,

in Fathog Bay, with every thing thereunto belonging, which we will endeavour to have secured to you by all lawful ways and means, that none may deprive you nor your offspring of it, but that you may freely cultivate and improve it to your own benefit and advantage, and thereby be provided with a sufficient subsistence to live comfortably together, in all friendliness and cordiality; assisting each other, that those more advanced in years may advise the younger, and these submitting to the counsel of the elder; so that good order and harmony may be preserved among you, which will assuredly draw down the blessing of the Most High. But if you have not wherewithal to cultivate and improve the plantation yourselves, we advise you to hire yourselves for a season to whom you please, as also the plantation, if you think it necessary, till you acquire a sufficiency to go on yourselves; but in every step you take of this kind, always remember the good of the whole. And as soon as you can make a beginning on the plantation yourselves, with cotton and provisions, we would by all means have you to do it, that you may not be scattered and too much divided; but endeavour to dwell together, and be content with food and raiment; and a blessing will certainly attend you under the influence of such a disposition. Tell Dorcas Vanterpool we are much obliged to her for her friendly care and attendance of poor John Venture and Harry, during their sickness. We shall be pleased to hear how you go on by any opportunity, and that you cautiously maintain a good report among the neighbours. Live in love among yourselves, and the peace of Him who passeth all understanding will assuredly be with you and yours; which we earnestly desire and pray for, being your sincere friends and well-wishers,

(Signed) "Samuel Nottingham.

(Signed) "Mary Nottingham.

"To George Nottingham, one of the Negroes belonging to the East-End Plantation, late the property of Samuel Nottingham, at Fathog Bay, in Tortola."

In the year 1822 this little colony of free persons was visited several times by two highly respectable gentlemen; on whose authority we are enabled to state the following particulars. "Of the original persons liberated, nine are still alive; besides

whom there are twenty-five of their children, and nine grandchildren; making in all forty-three persons. The whole of them reside on the same plantation, which they have ever since cultivated. Half of it is chiefly in provisions, and the rest is used as pasturage for their stock, which consists of twenty-eight cows, thirteen goats, and thirteen hogs. Formerly they cultivated cotton, but, the price falling very low, they did not continue to plant it. Jeffery Nottingham, one of those originally emancipated, exclusive of his share in the plantation and stock, possesses five acres of land and a house in Spanishtown, and a vessel of twenty-three feet keel. Diana and Eve (born since 1776) have each a boat of seventeen and fourteen feet keel. For some years the seasons were so bad that they found it difficult to get water for their stock, and got little return for their labour: but still they had been able to support themselves, and to acquire the property mentioned above, while they increased in number from twenty-five to forty-three. Not one of them is now in debt; and their property is free from all incumbrance. Twelve of the grown-up persons are members of the Methodist Society, and, with their children, attend regularly the Methodist chapel at East-End, except in case of sickness. During the whole period since their emancipation none of them have been sued in court, or brought before a magistrate to answer to any complaint. Only one of them once obtained a warrant against a person who had assaulted him, who begged his pardon and was forgiven. The same person, on coming from sea, was arrested the day he landed for a capitation tax on free persons, of which he had not been apprized, and put into prison. The next day he paid the money, about eighteen dollars, and was released. Several of them can read and write. Jeffery's wife, Grace, acts as schoolmistress: she reads well. They have lately built three houses in their village, of wood, and shingled. The whole of their houses had been destroyed by the hurricane of 1819, and have since been rebuilt. They are a fine healthy race, all black, having intermarried with each other; and seem to dwell very happily together."

Now, we would put the question to Mr. Baring, Whether it would have been more advantageous for the interests either of the individuals or of the state, that Mr. Nottingham's twenty-five

slaves had continued slaves (liable to all the risks of inhuman owners and overseers, and all the other evils of that condition, and particularly to that progressive diminution of their numbers which has been the common fate of the slaves in almost all our colonies, and among the rest in Tortola); or that they should have been living free and in comfort for nearly fifty years, during which they have accumulated some property, and have increased from twenty-five to forty-three? And, as far as advantage to this country goes, we will venture to say that the forty-three Nottinghams consume more of British produce and manufactures in a year, and promote the traffic of Tortola itself more, than three times the number of slaves would do. But Mr. Baring will say, this is a single instance. True; but why is it so? Not because there are not many slaves who would have equally rewarded the benevolence of their master, but because there has been but ONE NOTTINGHAM.

BB.

"I know no question upon which petitions have been procured with more trick and management than on the present. They have, in fact, been got up by a few persons in the Metropolis."
(p. 103.)

MR. BARING could have had no means himself of knowing the truth of this statement. He has therefore ventured, on the misinformation of others, to lend the weight and respectability of his name to a representation the very reverse of true. Let not Mr. Baring flatter himself that the feeling which has been manifested on this subject is a short and evanescent burst, excited by trick and management. He may rely upon it, it is far more solidly founded. It is founded on a deep-rooted persuasion that slavery is inherently and intrinsically evil; and that our system of colonial slavery, in particular, "is at war with every principle of religion and morality, and outrages every benevolent feeling." In the volume now before him, Mr. Baring may see the whole trick and management of the Committee. They consist in the circulation of the occasional papers prefixed to this volume, and of books openly published

to the world." If in these papers, or these books, there be positions which he can controvert, let him do so; but it is altogether unfair to assume, that to trick and management, and not to the fair influence of discussion, is to be ascribed the interest which this question has excited in the public mind.

Mr. Baring can hardly be serious in attributing all the zeal shewn in this country for benevolent objects, not to a well-founded sense of duty, but to a kind of popish compromise with conscience, by which sin may be atoned for. If he is, it only shews how ignorant very acute and intelligent men may be of what is passing immediately around them.

We do not undertake to defend the "humbug" practised at Vienna and Verona, on the subject of the Slave Trade, from the sarcastic observations of Mr. Baring.

CC.

"It tells, in language that cannot be mistaken, the degree of protection which the laws afford to the Negro." (p. 113.)

IT is a proper sequel to the account which Mr. Buxton has given of Carty's cruelty to his slave Quasheba, to insert an extract of a letter from Lord Bathurst to Colonel Arthur on the subject, dated 12th March 1817:—

"The cruel conduct of this inhuman wretch could not fail to excite all those feelings of pity and commiseration which you so justly describe; and I immediately submitted your letter, with its several enclosures, to the consideration of the law officers of the Crown, to know how far I was authorized to direct you to manumit the unfortunate woman. But they report, that Carty is indictable only for the cruelty committed; *that, as she is his property, there is no power to take her away*, consequently none for her manumission, unless, indeed, there be any law in Honduras which confers the power to manumit slaves under such circumstances. I can therefore only express my concern that such a wretch should remain unpunished; but if you can suggest any mode in which he can be brought to punishment, I shall be most happy to attend to it."

Who, after reading this letter (the declaration of his Ma-

jesty's Government of their absolute impotency to redress such grievous wrongs), can question the indispensable obligation of the parliament and people of Great Britain to interfere to amend this detestable system?

Before we conclude, we are anxious to point out and rectify a mistake (the only one we have detected in that work) which occurs in the pamphlet called "Negro Slavery." The clause in the 4th section of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica of 1816, which, as we have stated above (p. 153), provides, for the first time, that the number of days in the year allowed to the slaves for the cultivation of their grounds, exclusive of Sundays, shall be at least twenty-six, was overlooked, and the number of days allowed was assumed to be the same as in the Act of 1809, namely, sixteen. This error will, of course, be corrected in any future edition of that publication.

And this reminds us of the necessity of remarking, that it would be absolutely impossible to follow the ever-shifting provisions of colonial legislation, so as to be always correct as to the actual state of the law at the precise moment of writing. We have just learnt, for example, that, in deference to public opinion in this country, the legislature of Barbadoes have recently altered their law on the subject of the murder of a slave, so as no longer to render it necessary to the conviction of the murderer that he should have perpetrated the crime "*without provocation.*" And this alteration we shall doubtless hear adduced, both as a proof of our unfairness, and of the growing liberality of the colonists.

It may be proper also to observe, that, notwithstanding the alarms of commotion and conspiracy, sanctioned by proclamations of Governors, and by imposing details of correspondents, which have filled the public ear of late; we have not been able, after the most diligent inquiry, to discover a single fact to justify them; and the conclusion to which we have been forced to come is, that such rumours are deemed to be, on this as on many former occasions, very convenient weapons of controversial warfare.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the above sheets were written, two pamphlets have appeared, which may be thought to require some notice.

One of these is from the pen of J. F. Barham, Esq., a West-Indian proprietor, who, at an early period of the Slave-Trade controversy, most honourably distinguished himself by joining the ranks of the abolitionists. He begins his work with assuming that the emancipation of our colonial bondsmen is a measure which is now unavoidable; the nation expecting, and government being pledged "*that the most energetic measures shall be forthwith employed to bring them into that state in which freedom may be granted to them with benefit and safety.*" The object of Mr. Barham's pamphlet, therefore, is not to discuss the question of emancipation, but the means of carrying it into effect with safety, and even with advantage; and with a due attention to the claims of West-Indian proprietors to indemnity. It is not our intention at present to investigate the plan proposed by Mr. Barham. Whatever falls from him, however, is worthy of deep attention; and we trust that all who are interested in the question will be ready to give to his suggestions the consideration to which they are justly entitled.

It will be right, however, to remark, that we differ very widely from Mr. Barham in many of his facts and opinions. Some of these will be found to have been met, in the preceding pages, with such observations as will serve to shew what are the grounds of that difference. His cardinal error appears to us to be this, that he conceives the Negro character not to be susceptible of the same motives to exertion which are known to influence every other class

of men that inhabit the earth. Upon this point we are completely at issue with him, on the score both of general principle, and of fact and experience: and we should not hesitate even to take the free Black and Coloured people of Jamaica, under all their obvious disadvantages, and notwithstanding the oppression and degradation to which the state of the law and of the feeling of the Whites subjects them, as our example, to establish undeniably that the African race is equally susceptible with ourselves to all those motives which stimulate to exertion; and that those equivocal appearances which lead superficial observers to the conclusion that they are innately indolent and vicious, and incapable of high advances in improvement, are the effect entirely of the wretched institution under which they are placed, and which tether them, as we were, to the very earth. While they see in their superiors the very worst moral examples; while multitudes of them are deprived of the means of education and Christian instruction; while they are every where stopped in their aspiring for distinction by barriers which are insurmountable; we cannot wonder that their progress in improvement should not have been greater: the wonder is, that it should have been so great.

Mr. Barham produces, in proof of his views of this subject, a fact drawn from the history of Guadaloupe, during the period of Negro freedom in that island. "Punishment by the whip had been then totally abolished; but, instead of it, a military *tribunal* had been established, consisting of *five Whites and Blacks*, who made a tour of the island once a month; in order to try and punish such Negroes as had neglected their work. They were condemned to be chained by the middle and ankle for five to fifteen years. The more refractory were shot, which very frequently happened."—Now, what does this statement (though invidiously specifying only the severest punishments) prove, but that in Guadaloupe public justice was substituted for the caprice of individual tyranny? Circuit courts, composed of *Black* as well as *White* judges were instituted,

re ad *non constat* that they did not administer the laws
 ena partially, and even leniently. The refractory were shot
 ld Guadeloupe: in Jamaica they are hanged: the differ-
 eon ce is not very essential. The main inference, however,
 a om the whole is this: From fifty to sixty thousand slaves
 whi ere liberated in a day from the power of the driver's cart-
 hiu hip, and from arbitrary punishment by the master, and
 th ere made the immediate subjects of equal laws, and of a
 es olice affecting all classes and administered by all classes
 th common; and yet no commotion followed, cultivation
 oled roceeded regularly, and Whites and Blacks united in the
 'ov discharge even of the highest offices of the state.

We refrain from pursuing Mr. Barham's reasonings on
 io his subject further. They are all dependent on the grand
 as rror of his system,—a radical misconception of the capa-
 io ities and tendencies of the African character, formed on
 a knowledge of them only in their servile and degraded
 ur ondition. It is impossible, at the same time, not to honour
 ne the candour and ingenuousness of Mr. Barham's admis-
 w sions. Though he thinks that the slave, in most physical
 ur circumstances, is better off than the labouring class of other
 at countries, yet he admits that "in civil and moral respects
 b his condition is not materially changed;" that "his civil
 25 rights are yet hardly definable, and his moral improvement
 b is almost yet to be begun;" that the most "specious
 laws" might not, "from existing circumstances," "have
 any practical effect;" that "nothing could be easier than
 to introduce Christianity *in name*, as for the most insigni-
 ficant reward the slaves would universally accept bap-
 tism;" but that "it were better they should remain as they
 are, than that a people whose religion, if indeed it can
 be called such at all, continuing in fact as it is, should be
 regarded as Christians;" that "nothing could be easier
 than to abolish *the use of the whip*;" but that those who
 call for this abolition always end by proposing some other
 means of coercion, some other instrument of punishment;
 less decried perhaps, but which is to be equally effec-
 tual. What, again," he asks, "will the slave gain by this?"

It were better that his chains should appear in their full deformity, than that they should be gilded over."

Very different from that of Mr. Barham is the other pamphlet to which we have alluded. It is entitled "A Voice from Jamaica, in Reply to W. Wilberforce, Esq.; by the Rev. G. W. Bridges, of Trinity College, Oxford, and Rector of Manchester in Jamaica." We are sorry that the author of it should be a Clergyman of the Church of England. It is a feeble intermixture of intemperate animadversions, incorrect statements, vague apprehensions, and most inconclusive reasonings. We cannot enlarge the present work by exposing these in detail. We shall take, however, a single instance, and it shall be the very strength of his case, in order to shew how little real aid his pamphlet is likely to afford to the cause which he so stoutly espouses. Addressing Mr. Wilberforce, he says—

"In p. 17 of your 'Appeal,' you confidently make an assertion, which it happily falls peculiarly within my province to reply to, upon the authority of that character beneath which I claim credit for my affirmations. You state that 'no attempts have been made to introduce among them (the Negro slaves) the Christian institution of marriage.' Now, Sir, this I positively contradict, by stating that I have myself married one hundred and eighty-seven couples of Negro slaves, in my own parish, within the last two years, all of whom were encouraged by their owners to marry; and that the anxious wish at present expressed by them to bind themselves by this sacred institution, we hail as one of the first fruits of the dispensation of Christian principles. In another parish, St. Thomas in the East, I have reason to know that there have been three times that number married during the incumbency of the present rector, Mr. Trew; and, though not speaking from numerical information, I can safely affirm, that the labours of the clergy in the remaining nineteen parishes have been equally active, and doubtless crowned with the same success." p. 22.

On looking, however, to the returns, recently laid on the table of the House of Commons, from Jamaica, of "marriages legally solemnized between Slaves since the 1st of January 1808," down to 1822 inclusive, we find (p. 130) that in the parish of Manchester not a single such marriage was celebrated prior to 1820. In 1820 *five* marriages took place; in 1821, *three*; and in 1822, *none*. Mr. Bridges must have written his "Voice" in April or May 1823. The expression, "within the last two years," could therefore have extended no farther back than the beginning of 1821. But the *official* return of marriages from the beginning of 1821 to the 17th March 1823, is only *three*. No less than 184, therefore, of the 187 marriages solemnized by Mr. Bridges between slaves, in his own parish, "within the last two years," must have been subsequent to that date. We may well ask, therefore, with a writer in THE TIMES of the 26th August 1823, who adverts to this very statement in the pamphlet of Mr. Bridges, "What can have given birth to this new and ardent zeal in the extension of marriages? Was it owing to the suggestions of Mr. Wilberforce's pamphlet, which had just then made its appearance in Jamaica? Or were these 184 marriages thus suddenly got up in order to furnish a convenient practical refutation of his statements?"

In the Appendix F. (p. 164—167) will be found some remarks on the subject of these returns of marriages, to which we refer the reader. What may have been the "active labours of the clergy" in the other parishes, we have no means of knowing; but we do know that in most instances their labours have been "crowned" with much "the same success" as attended those of Mr. Bridges prior to the appearance of Mr. Wilberforce's Appeal. He was himself rector of St. Dorothy's before he removed to Manchester; but during his incumbency not a single marriage appears to have taken place. Before 1820 no marriage of Slaves had occurred in that parish, and from 1820 only *three*. In many of the other parishes the rectors have been equally unsuccessful. From two

parishes there are no returns—viz. St. Catherine's and Westmoreland—the returns in FOURTEEN YEARS from some of the others are as follow :

St. John's Parish	One marriage.
St. Thomas in the Vale	None.
Vere	One.
Clarendon	Two.
St. Ann's	None.
St. Elizabeth's	None.
St. James's	Two.
Hanover	None.
Falmouth	One.
Port Royal	Two.
Portland	Twenty-seven.
St. Mary's	Thirty-six.
St. George's	Forty-seven.

For remarks on the returns from the remaining parishes, we must refer again to Appendix F. It ought to be kept in view, that the average slave population of each of these parishes is upwards of 16,000 souls.

After this exposition of the correctness of the statements of the Rev. Author, on a point respecting which he must have had access to better means of information than on any other which has occupied his pen, it will not be deemed necessary that we should detain our readers any longer with his pamphlet.

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