

permits to man a *property* in his fellow men, and converts rational beings into *marketable chattels*," we have a vague and feeble generalization about "every system of oppression and wrong."

It helps the matter not at all, as regards the position of the Tract Society, that Mr. Gurney was induced to consent to these alterations in the hope of a wider circulation of his book. The responsibility of the change rests with those who made this a condition of publishing the book in this country.

Still another example of such alterations is found in the Society's edition of the *Memoir of Mary Lundie Duncan*. In the preface we are told that "a few pages which the Committee deemed of less interest to the general reader, or which alluded to *points of disagreement among Evangelical Christians*, have been dropped." The following is a specimen of this expurgation. In the original diary we find this entry under date of August 1st:

"Freedom has dawned this morning on the British colonies. [*No more degraded lower than the brutes—no more bowed down with suffering from which there is no redress.*] the sons of Africa have obtained the rights of fellow subjects—the rights of man, the immortal creation of God. *Now they may seek the sanctuary fearless of the lash—they may call their children their own.*) Hope will animate their hearts, and give vigor to their efforts. Oh! for more holy men to show them the way of salvation! The Lord keep them from riot and idleness! They have been so little taught that He only can avert confusion and tumult as the result of their joy."

The lines in brackets and italicized are omitted in the Society's edition. The fact that slaves are degraded, that they fear the lash, that they cannot call their children their own, are *suppressed*; the prayer that they may be kept from riot and idleness is *retained*. Such are the examples of suppression and alteration.

EFFECTS OF THIS POLICY.

This policy of omission, suppression, and evasive silence on the subject of slavery, which may be fairly said to characterize the present administration of the Tract Society, tends to degrade the moral sense of Christians at the South with reference to that system of iniquity, which *they should labor continually to abolish*. Mr. Gurney, who was widely known and beloved as a sincere, humble, intelligent and devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, declared that the habitual exercise of love to God by professing Christians, would do away with the African slave-trade, and with the "odious system which permits to man a property in his fellow-men, and converts rational beings into marketable chattels" The Publishing Committee of the Tract Society so alter this passage, as to take away the author's testimony against slaveholding and the slave-trade. The natural effect of this change upon the conscience of a Southern Christian, is an impression that his fellow Christians who support the Tract Society, did not agree with Mr. Gurney in the opinion that holding men as "marketable chattels" is contrary to the love of God.

That devoted young Christian, Mary Lundie Duncan, expressed her thanksgiving to God that the sons of Africa in the British colonies are "no more degraded lower than the brutes, that they may seek the sanctuary fearless of the lash, and may call their children their own." This thanksgiving was retained in an edition of her memoirs published by the Messrs. Carter, of New York, which was widely circulated at the South, and it was never objected to by the Southern press. But the Committee of the Tract Society, unsolicited by its Southern patrons, and against the sacred remonstrance of Mrs. Duncan—who never gave even a forced consent till long after the change was

made—canceled this thanksgiving of a heart that remembered the poor before the cross, and thus declared to the South that Mary Lundie Duncan had exaggerated views of the evils of slavery and of the benefits of emancipation; and *now* the edition of the Messrs. Carter, before unquestioned, is challenged at the South as infected with "abolitionism."

The timid policy of the Committee of the Tract Society has debased the moral sense of Southern Christians upon the subject of slavery, and thus has helped to create that vicious and arrogant public sentiment for slavery, before which this great Society of evangelical Christians now bow in humiliating silence.

THE REMEDY.

In these circumstances your Committee see but one feasible mode, in which the Christian sentiment of the supporters of the Tract Society on the subject of slavery can find a just expression. Reports, resolutions, memorials, remonstrances are of no avail. These meet only with studied silence or casuistic replies. It is in vain also to attempt to cripple the resources of an institution, which, through the benefactions of the Christian public, has obtained a position of wealth and independence equal to that of the largest publishing houses. Nothing is to be accomplished by a divisive movement, or by the organization and support of an anti-slavery Tract Society. What we need is not another anti-slavery Society, but the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, with its tried and established character for usefulness with its Catholic evangelical basis, with its rich catalogue of publications with its efficient system of colportage, with its hallowed memories, with its well husbanded resources, nor turned into a machinery of anti-slavery propagandism, nor made distinctly or prominently an anti-Slavery Society, but brought to bear with its legitimate influence, in the ordinary and natural course of its publications, upon the system of slavery as antagonistic to the Gospel of Christ and destined to be done away through the progress of that Gospel.

In order to this result, the MEMBERS of the Society must labor directly with its Executive Committee and its Secretaries. There is no reason why an officer of any benevolent society, however valuable his services, or however estimable his character, should have a life-lease of his office, or should be continued in that office for form's sake, when he is unwilling to conform to the policy of the institution to the known wishes of the great body of his constituents. Every *life-member* of the American Tract Society—made such by the payment of twenty dollars—is entitled to VOTE in the election of its directors. Every *life-director* is entitled to VOTE in the Board of Directors at the election of Secretaries and the Executive Committee. Let then the members of the Society, severally or in companies, address to each member of the Publishing Committee, and to the Secretaries the simple inquiry: *Are you in favour of bringing the influence of the American Tract Society, through its ordinary publications to bear against the system of American Slavery, as sinful and hostile to the Gospel of Christ?*

If this question shall be answered in the affirmative, the course of the Society in future will be plain. If in the negative, on the part of any or all the members of the Committee or of the Secretaries, let there be at the annual election of the Board of Directors a *vote* equivalent to a vote in the British Parliament of "*want of confidence*" in the existing ministry. Whenever the constituents of the Society shall make it apparent to its officers, that they intend to apply the principle of the responsibility of representatives to the management of that Institution, the policy of the Society upon the subject of slavery will be made to conform to an enlightened Christian sentiment.