

were practised to procure the slaves, and the miseries that were inflicted on them when obtained.

On the 12th of May, 1789, Mr. Wilberforce again brought the question before the House, introducing it by one of those powerful and impressive speeches which have justly classed him among the most eloquent men of his day. He offered a series of resolutions for their consideration and future adoption; and on the 25th the debate was resumed. The usual evasion of calling for further evidence was successfully resolved to by his opponents, and the farther consideration of the matter was adjourned to the following session. In 1790, Mr. Wilberforce revived the subject; but, though more evidence was taken, nothing effectual was done, and the question was again postponed.

In the following year another committee was appointed to prosecute the examination of witnesses, and on the 8th of April, Mr. Wilberforce again opened the debate with a copious and energetic argument. The leading members on both sides of the House came forward to support him; but in vain. The slave-traders prevailed, and the motion was lost.

But neither the hope nor the energy of Mr. Wilberforce was exhausted. It was the noble trait of his long and useful life, that he uniformly adhered to principle: neither calumny, nor difficulty, nor defeat, could make him swerve, even for a moment, from his determined purpose. On the 3d of April, 1792, he again moved the abolition, and was again opposed by all the virulence and sophistry of the Colonial interest. A motion for *gradual* abolition was, however, carried, fixing the time to the 1st of January, 1800. The 1st of January, 1793 was proposed, which was altered by compromise to 1796; but the bill was lost in the House of Lords. In 1794, Mr. Wilberforce limited his motion to prohibit the

supply of slaves to foreign Colonies: it passed the Lower House, but was thrown out by the Lords. On the 26th of February, he again brought forward his motion, and was again defeated. This happened also in 1796, 1798, and 1799, although on this last occasion he was strenuously supported by Mr. Canning.

After all these discouraging results he deemed it prudent to remit his exertions for a time; and it was not till 1804 that he renewed his attempts to awaken the parliament to their duty. On the 30th of May in that year, he moved that the House should resolve itself into a Committee on the slave question; and he prefaced his motion by one of the most impassioned speeches ever heard within its walls: it was his grandest effort in the cause. This was the last time that Mr. Wilberforce took the lead in the House on this great question. The bill passed the Commons, but too late in the session to be discussed in the Lords. On the 10th of June, 1806, Mr. Fox, being then in office, brought forward the question at Mr. Wilberforce's special request, and pronounced a high eulogium upon the veteran philanthropist; but before the completion of the measure, that eminent statesman died, earnestly wishing for two things—peace with Europe, and the abolition of the slave trade, especially the latter.

In the session of 1807, Lord Grenville adopted a new measure, by bringing the question *first* into the House of Lords, where the bill was carried, as it was afterwards in the Commons by a great majority. Lord Howick and Mr. Wilberforce carried it amended to the Lords; where it was finally passed on the 24th, and the day following, March 25th, it received the Royal assent, just before the ministry delivered up their seals of office. Their last act was sufficient to shed a glory over their whole administration;—but the highest