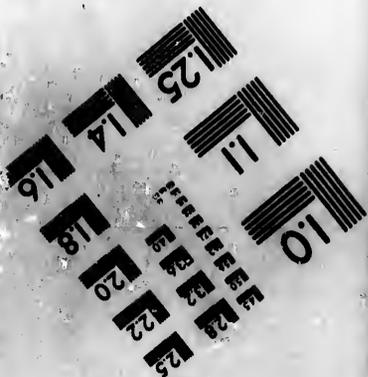
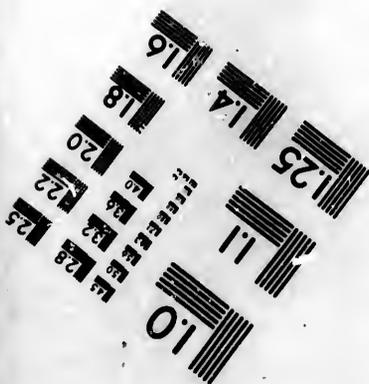
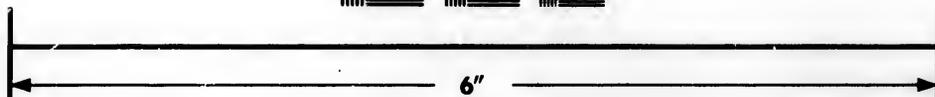
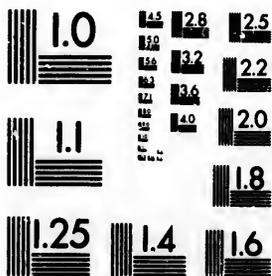


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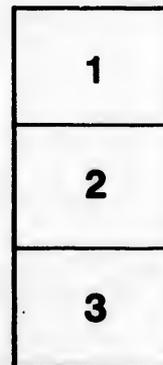
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From the Author.

FOUR ESSAYS

ON

COLONIAL SLAVERY.

BY JOHN JEREMIE, Esq.

LATE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COURT OF ST. LUCIA.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD AND SON,
187, PICCADILLY.

1831.

S. Bagster, Jun., Printer, 14, Bartholomew Close, London.

THE Writer of this Tract, holding an official situation, feels bound to state, that he has committed his sentiments to the press, as other public officers have done, who differed from him; that he has not had any communication with Government on the subject; and that, therefore, his opinions are entirely personal and unofficial.

So situated, he has felt that he ought to notice such facts only as have come under public discussion in the course of his experience.

CONTENTS.

ESSAY I.

General Features of Slave Communities. Page 1

ESSAY II.

General Theories involved in the consideration of the Question of Slavery:— Colour, Climate, Monopoly, Free Labour. . 41

ESSAY III.

Ameliorations introduced in St. Lucia, and practicable elsewhere. 64

ESSAY IV.

Results of Measures hitherto adopted, and view of the farther steps to be taken, to promote the Final Annihilation of Slavery. 92

ERRATA.

Page 51, last line, for *cleaning* read *clearing*.
66, line 20, before *the* read *and*.

FOUR ESSAYS, &c.

ESSAY I.

General Features of Slave Communities.

page 1
n
41
64
r
92

EVEN among the many important political questions to which at this moment public attention is drawn, that of West India Slavery has not diminished in interest. The large amount of property at stake, the warmth unfortunately displayed throughout the discussion, the positive manner in which parties who might be supposed equally well acquainted with the truth have contradicted each other on facts, have on the contrary contributed to increase that interest in a very high degree.

Whilst so many persons have already appeared in the field, the writer of this tract would not have come forward, had he not had some opportunity of forming a judgment, and had not his experience in some degree qualified him to express a decided opinion.

That opinion is also so clear, and his conviction so confirmed, that he deems it a duty to those with whom he differed at an earlier stage of his experience, and to the many who with him have made a sacrifice of their early prepossessions, not to withhold his present sentiments from the public.

There is also another paramount motive. He is on the point of returning to a slave community. They must be aware he has taken a deep interest in this subject; therefore, is it equally due to them and to himself, that he should make a distinct and

unreserved avowal of his opinions. This may prevent much misapprehension, and bring them at once to a right understanding.

In so doing, it is his intention to dwell on abstract questions, or to go back to the origin of slavery, as seldom as possible. It is as little his wish to enter into any lengthened detail of personal discussions, even though they might contribute much to the elucidation of the general subject. His chief purpose is to set forth his view of those points on which public anxiety seems to be chiefly raised, and these, he conceives to be, the present condition of the slaves, and the practicability of an amelioration of slavery and of a general emancipation.

In discussing these points, he will state such facts only as he knows may be supported by documentary evidence. Others of a similar nature, however he may be convinced of their truth, he will refrain from mentioning for many reasons, and particularly that as this is a topic on which angry feelings are already much excited, and whereon the fortunes of thousands, and the fate of hundreds of thousands depend, something more than assertion may be required; and he has no longer an opportunity of tendering oral testimony.

The island of St. Lucia, taken by the English in the year 1796, was ceded back to the French, after having been the scene of a servile war, at the peace of Amiens. It was retaken in 1803, by the British, and from thence, down to the period of the late peace, British merchants invested there a large amount of capital. After the peace, the island becoming definitively British, they made still further investments; but it was soon found that, unless the ancient French laws were considerably modified, they must refrain from carrying on business with the colony, as those laws did not afford a sufficient remedy to creditors. It was therefore thought advisable, by Lord Bathurst, that its institutions should be gradually brought to resemble those of our own colonies, espe-

cially in matters of trade; and to effect this purpose, the writer of this tract, who was then an advocate in the Royal Court of Guernsey, was offered, in 1823, a judicial situation in St. Lucia. This appointment he declined; but, further propositions having been made to him, he eventually accepted it in October, 1824, and arrived at St. Lucia, in February, 1825, in possession of the office of chief justice or first president of the Royal Court, which office he has continued to hold until he was recently appointed to another situation at the Mauritius.

At the time the tender of an appointment was first made to him, he was unacquainted with a single individual in the service of the colonial department, and his political opinions were rather opposed to the then government. On the question of slavery, he was thoroughly indifferent; indeed, it was so remote from his usual pursuits that he may fairly say he had never given it a thought. In the interval between the first proposal, and his accepting office, his professional avocations brought him to England, and on this occasion (probably owing to this proposal) his curiosity prompted him to attend an Anti-Slavery Meeting; he believes the second. The impression made on his mind at that meeting was rather unfavourable than otherwise to the abolitionists. He heard much declamation, much angry and eloquent declamation, but, accustomed from early life to sift evidence, it struck him that there was then a deficiency of facts and of evidence on which to ground that declamation. One gentleman only appeared who ever professed to have seen the West Indies, and this was at least some thirty years before, whilst he confined his arguments to matters in no way connected with his experience.* With this impression, the writer went to the

* On reading over these proceedings now, it is singular how altered they appear to my mind. With the experience I have since had of slavery, there is not a sentiment that I could not now adopt.

colonies. His duties were there, as is shown, likely to be but little connected with slavery; and the advice he received on the subject, from the only gentleman in office to whom he mentioned it, was to avoid those matters, especially as his actual duties were likely to prove sufficiently unpopular.

As his acquaintance with this gentleman has been more than once mentioned in the public prints, he thinks it right to state, at the outset, that, up to the time when he entered into the service of government, that acquaintance was purely professional, and formed after he had first been offered service. They had been both retained in appeals to council, especially in one important case, but one very little calculated to interest the affections: it was a question respecting the erection of a windmill in a certain parish. On his accepting office, he was of course directed to communicate with him as any other person so circumstanced, but from the time that, when in St. Lucia, he found he was likely to engage in controversy, all correspondence, all communication, direct or indirect, between them, ceased, and it was only resumed, on his retiring from his late office; for never had a single line, or a single communication, which had any reference, however slight, to discussions on slavery, passed between them. He was also, up to his recent return, entirely unacquainted with one single member of the Anti-Slavery Society. But whether fortunately or otherwise, certainly very unexpectedly, the last dispatch he received from government, before he left England, happened to be an official letter, from the under Secretary of State, transmitting the whole of the papers on this point up to that period, with directions to revise and report on the slave laws then preparing for St. Lucia; and thus he was at once involved in a discussion which he had wished to avoid, and called upon to attend with assiduity to the bearings of the question.

Hitherto nothing had been done at St. Lucia, either legally or practically. General Mainwaring had, it is true, advised the planters to make an experiment, in July 1823, immediately on

his receiving the original resolutions of the House of Commons; but this attempt, if entered on by some, was soon universally discontinued. The first draft of the slave law was completed at the close of the year 1825, when he had been nearly twelve months in the colony, and had had as he conceived, the best opportunities of forming a judgment. He had taken the most respectable colonial information, had made a tour of the island that he might ascertain, *de visú*, what was the actual condition of the slaves, and had revised carefully every enactment which appeared in the books of the colony.

The opinion thus formed by himself amounted to this, that he conceived what had been alleged, of the general cruelties of slavery, was a downright misrepresentation; and this opinion was laid upon the tables of parliament in the subsequent year.—But hitherto the slave had not enjoyed the liberty of freely communicating with his protectors; he had not enjoyed those important rights which rendered him in any degree independent of his manager.

Scarcely was this opinion transmitted, and the new slave law promulgated, than a negro came before him with a collar riveted round his neck, from which projected three prongs of about ten inches each in length, and at the end of either of those prongs were inserted three smaller ones about an inch long, and these were attached to a chain, reaching to fetters joining round his ancles. His back and limbs were wealed from neck to foot, and he declared that this collar was kept on him by day and by night; that he worked with it in the field; and on his return was immured in a solitary cell; and that this course had been practised for some months in order to prevent his running away, the crime with which he was principally charged.—This might however be a solitary instance.

A commission of three gentlemen of reputed humanity, namely, an officer holding the situation of Procureur du Roi, or official protector of slaves, together with the commandant of the quarter in which the plantation was situated, and the

commandant of the neighbouring quarter, were sent out to investigate the affair. These gentlemen returned with a written report, wherein not a word of the Negro's statement was shaken. They admitted that there were three other men, at the time, on the estate, with collars of the same description, and that those collars were in use in the country.

The Procureur du Roi added, that the collars in use were not quite so heavy; but the commissioners, apparently with a view of settling that point, had weighed the collar, and affirmed that it was not heavier than usual. The report also stated, that there was a woman covered with sores, who was found in chains, and who had been so chained for near two years; and yet the commissioners reported that the estate was well managed, and that the arrangements were good!—This was not at a remote period, but in the year 1826.

As may be supposed, the report was not so satisfactory to others, as to those gentlemen. But no sooner was it known that the law was to be rigorously adhered to, than reports of insubordination among the Negroes, and of the necessity of a militia, or some other armed protecting force to keep them in order, were universally circulated; all which not only surprised me but was at that time incomprehensible. A proclamation was however issued against these collars. What followed? Scarcely two months afterwards, other reports were spread of discontent and actual mutiny of so serious a nature having broken out on the same estate, that the principal officers of government were directed to investigate the matter anew. The result was, that in lieu of the collar, the following punishment had been used. The women were hung by the arms to a peg, raised so high above their heads that the toes alone touched the ground, the whole weight of the body resting on the wrists of the arms or the tips of the toes.—The report of a mutiny was mere invention.

This torture was also put down, one of the offenders fined, and the other imprisoned. But what was the third expedient

adopted? The field-stocks,—an invention forwarded from Trinidad, and which was actually legalized by the regulations drawn up by myself—so little aware was I of the severity of the punishment; indeed my attention was first drawn to it by a planter himself. The field-stocks are in short, or at least may be rendered, nothing less than the most cruel picketing. They are in the shape of a pillory, the hands of the slave are inserted in grooves, which may be raised to any height above the head, and the feet are inserted in other grooves at the bottom of the instrument, the toes alone being made to touch the ground: the body is thus suspended in mid-air, its whole weight resting on the wrists and toes.

In Trinidad they fix leaden weights to the wrists, which of course add considerably to the torture. It is a legalized substitute for the whip, and even pregnant women are not exempted from it.—What has humanity gained?

About the time that the negro presented himself with the collar, the writer was presiding in court, when a case came on in appeal, which had commenced some years before. It was a demand by a manager against a proprietor for wages.

The proprietor pleaded, as a set-off, the value of two slaves killed by the over-flogging of the manager. The account ran thus. After several items of very trifling amount, for soap, candles, money advanced on account, &c., were the two following, by far the largest.

“No. 19. For the value of John the cooper, flogged to death by you, and then buried in the cane piece, 400 dollars!”

“No. 21. For the price of the negress Mary Clare, who died by bruises received from you, 300 dollars!”

The manner in which the presumed murderer treated this was as follows—being extracted from the judicial proceedings.

“The observation on one of these claims will do for both. And we tell the defendant that the plaintiff might have expected objections, as this would cause a delay in the payment

(of his wages); but he was far from anticipating a payment in *this* coin. It is not the manager that is to bear the loss of negroes employed by the defendant. If the latter had rights to exercise in this respect he could long since have made use of them. This kind of speculation is new but it will not take. The two articles we therefore object to, still more decidedly than to the rest: they amount jointly to 700 dollars."

The pleadings on the other side, which were also produced in the cause, were in the same strain of disgusting levity. The proprietor reminded the manager that the coin was not so bad, for the latter seemed to have forgotten his note of hand for 300 dollars given to indemnify him for the loss of the woman. This he produced, undertaking at the same time to prove the other case; and among the papers was an affidavit from the overseer of the estate, who, in the most distinct manner, corroborated both the charges. With these papers before him, the judge of first instance discussed the proofs as mere matter of account; he admitted that in which the note had been produced, but stated that the other was not satisfactorily made out, and the 300 dollars only were deducted from the wages.

The case was re-argued and re-heard on appeal, in the same indifferent manner, and the manager and the first judge dying in the course of the proceedings, it was deemed too late to push the point further.

That two men should venture thus to traffic in murder, is in itself an awful circumstance; but even this is outdone by the calm indifference with which the pleadings, the account itself, the very judgments, prove the case to have been contemplated. Then who was this proprietor? He was the writer's predecessor in office; chief justice of the colony; who held a seat in the Royal Court, on the first trial; and in the interval had attained the Presidency; and in this office had been permitted to continue for thirteen years, during which this cause was under public discussion. Nor was he at length removed except on a subsequent application of the first President, for other offences connected

with slavery.—Such was the protection and justice meted out to slaves, by both courts, and by nearly all the higher authorities.

A few months subsequently, a planter, in consequence of a private dispute, denounced a neighbouring planter as guilty of having murdered no less than six or eight of his slaves, in as many years. The proper officers went down to investigate the matter, and brought up a report which was clearly evasive and unsatisfactory. They were sent again—again came the same unsatisfactory report. At length enough appeared to compel a regular legal investigation, and steps were taken for the purpose.—But the alarm produced was inconceivable. Every means which could be devised were resorted to, though in vain, to stop the proceedings. These means were such as to stagger and surprise me. I knew they must proceed from a powerful motive, but was still unconvinced, though the cases previously mentioned contributed much to strengthen my conjectures. At last I inquired for precedents, and understood that there was one instance of an acquittal. I sent for the papers—the date was remote, as the trial was in 1808, and the events had taken place some time before. But the papers were valuable from that very circumstance, being dated at a time when there were not those motives for concealment which now existed, and all the proceedings being in writing, the original working of the system was completely developed. It doubtless by no means followed, that because this system was replete with horrors some thirty years since, it had remained unmitigated; but having ascertained what the system had been, it will be shewn subsequently that, such as it had been, so, in all its principal features, it continued.

This case, like that then before the Court, embraced several charges of murder; but it is not this fact alone which could weigh with me: such actions might be committed any where. It was the working of *the system* that struck me most forcibly. The following is a question put to the prisoner.

“ 2. Did he not propose to one of the Negroes, named Vincent, to run the Negress, Babet, through with a bayonet, and did not this Negro refuse because she was his godmother ; and did he not, in order to escape from the threats of the accused (his master) fly to the woods ?

“ Answer (by prisoner). Every body knows him well enough to be aware that he had sufficient authority over his slaves not to be obliged to capitulate with them on such a proposition ; and he does not know that the Negro, Vincent, ran away.”

Thus did the master express his surprise, not at his being accused of having ordered a godson to murder his godmother, but at the improbability of the son's refusing to obey him. Where could this man have lived ?

Nor is this the tithe of what appears of an equally atrocious character.—But to continue with the developement of the system : this case further shews in what a position a magistrate placed himself who should attempt to discharge his duty faithfully ! The judge was himself a slaveholder, and much respected by the whole of the leading proprietors ; but he had dared to entertain a prosecution for maltreating slaves. He was therefore, as has since occurred, compelled to descend from his seat and defend himself. He did so effectually, as was also the case on a subsequent occasion ; but the charge against him, and his reply, give no small insight of the condition of these communities, as shewn by the opinions both of prisoner and judge.

One of the charges against the judge, by the prisoner, was as follows : “ Yet, since you are a judge, it would have been very easy for you to find subjects to try, for similar offences.—You might have taken any one from first to last, without distinction, and even yourself, if you will place your hand on your conscience.”

Reply. “ Every planter might have assassinated his slaves, yet, unless the public prosecutor proceeded against them, I should not, as a judge, have carried on criminal proceedings against them : fortunately there are not so many” (cases of this kind) “ as the prisoner pretends.”

The judge then proceeds to vindicate himself—such was the convenient principle established—on the ground that no magistrate could look into a case, except on a charge from the public prosecutor—nor the public prosecutor except on a charge from a private informer. And who was the private informer that dared to come forward?

The prisoner's defence, after endeavouring in vain to remove his guilt, concludes thus—"We have seen that, in the Colonies generally, magistrates, respectable persons, have felt grieved at the excessive severity of some slave proprietors, *but the colonial system has triumphed*, and the Courts have remained silent on these reports, whether well or ill-founded; the military commandants threatening, in such cases, masters who were too harsh, to send them to France."

"There exists no proof" (continues the defence) "of any offence committed by the appellant; but even if such proof did exist, it would be highly *impolitic* (we dare to maintain) to condemn him to the slightest afflictive punishment." And that this statement might not be uncorroborated, there appears, on the proceedings, the evidence of the commandant of the quarter, as follows:—

Having mentioned (as a witness) that he had stated the case to the then Governor, he adds, "the General told him he would send it to the minister; on which, deponent pointed out to him the inconvenience and danger to the Colonies in general, of his taking such a step; but yet the General persisted in sending it to the General-in-Chief. Some months after this the Governor sent deponent a proclamation, with an order to get it published; but the danger, attending the giving publicity to such a document, induced him to submit certain observations to the General, who consented that he (deponent) should only communicate it to the other planters, which he accordingly did."

So that the King's proclamation, denouncing death against murderers, was not promulgated.

Finally, the judgment in the Court of the first instance was reversed, and the prisoner acquitted !

Such was the condition of things some twenty-five or thirty years ago. Now how did they appear on the proceedings of 1827—on a trial for offences all committed subsequently to 1818, and some as recently as 1826, and for offences too some of them of as atrocious a nature as any of the preceding. The witnesses, (amounting to fifty in number) have also proved enough in some of the charges to produce a thorough personal conviction of their truth. The case is also in writing and can be referred to ; but as this evidence was principally derived from the informer, and from slaves ; and as criminal proceedings were then clogged with many formalities, introduced apparently to render an unfavourable judgment impossible, (as will be hereafter detailed) the prisoner also escaped punishment.

It appears, on the proceedings, that when one of these imputed murders was committed, the informer, publicly and officially, for he was then Lieutenant Commandant of his Quarter, made it known to the Commandant of the Quarter, to the public prosecutor, and to the criminal judge ; and they not only refrained from proceeding, but the judge, especially, endeavoured to conceal the offence, and to dissuade him from following it up, "as it might cause much mischief in England."

It further appears that the prisoner, not content with escaping punishment, actually made a charge on the public treasury, for the value of one of the slaves he had kil'ed, on the plea that he had been killed by a duly authorised detachment as a run-away ; and that this claim had been allowed. When this last fact became known, on inspecting the public accounts, several planters remonstrated with the treasurer, who replied, "It is better to keep those things quiet." Thus they, one and all, public officers included, not only allowed a murderer to escape punishment, and dissuaded from the pro-

secution of his recent murder; but actually rewarded and indemnified him for committing the crime.

Then who were the parties in these two cases? the first was an Irish gentleman, who was understood hitherto to have moved in the highest station;—as to the latter, when upon his trial, he was certainly spoken ill of—but, both before and since, he stood and stands as follows:—

This gentleman belongs to one of the first families in the colony, a proprietor, nephew of a late privy councillor and public officer, and relative of one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. He has received one of the best educations that New York could afford, for, during the war, while the colony was temporarily in the possession of the British, many of the inhabitants, uncertain whether they were to be finally English or French, educated their children in the United States. He has married into an equally high family, and so far from becoming an outcast after what has transpired, his name stands, prominently, on the list of the petitioners of his quarter against amelioration, and he was one of the *notables habitans*, or eminent planters, who, with others, his relatives and friends, led on by a gentleman previously convicted of high treason and then living under the King's pardon, presented in a body, in 1830, a petition to the governor, setting forth the alarming condition to which they were reduced, owing to the strict enforcement of the law.

But, as though this were not sufficient to exhibit the system in its full force, another circumstance transpired on that trial. When the claim was made upon the public treasury for one of these Negroes, the Papers were, of course, lodged at the Government office. I sent for them, and found on this person's petition the following endorsement in pencil, (it is there still, much erased, yet sufficiently legible,) from the officer then in charge of the Government office:—

“To be explained, that runaways not denounced to civil

“commissaries the captures shall pay three times the sum, and, if killed, not to be paid for.”

Not a word appears of the natural conclusion in such a case, that the murderer should be executed. Such a consummation never seems to have been dreamt of. So far from this, it would seem that a bare certificate from a commissary, (who is not on oath) that a human being was returned to him as absent from his plantation before he was actually shot, was sufficient, not only to exempt his murderer from punishment, but to warrant a claim for his value on the public fund; and this is confirmed by a vote of the council of Government.

Thus, then, if an owner killed his Negro, without having returned him as a deserter, he lost his value; if after, he recovered even this value. Thus, in either case, was it the value alone, and not the life, that was considered. After such proof of the light in which the slave was viewed, the mode in which he was destroyed dwindles into insignificance; nor is it a little singular, that this indorsement should appear in Papers which leave scarcely a doubt that the man was murdered.

Here, then, was a continued series of cases, in proof of the treatment which slaves were undergoing, from the time the island had got into the possession of the British Government up to that very moment! This shewed that if there was a change of conduct in any, it must have been very gradual, and perfectly spontaneous, on the part of the planters. For, taking the most remote of these cases—the judge who had reported thereon, and to whom the prisoner owed his acquittal, was still sitting at the president's left; the commandant, who had declined to promulgate the King's proclamation, had not retired six months from the Privy Council; whilst the proprietor, who had carried murders to account, was but recently sitting on the president's right;—and could all these be supposed to have changed too?

Then again, there was a governor suppressing, or clandestinely circulating the King's proclamation; a council indemnifying a proprietor for shooting his slave without the formality of a single examination on oath; and the principal executive officer entering up explanations, amounting, in effect, to a licence to kill Negroes, on observing an unimportant formality.

Here again were Negroes presenting themselves, wearing instruments of torture, by day and by night, of the most cruel description; and this certified by gentlemen of the highest eminence, as nothing improper or unusual;—judges dissuading, fearing the effect it might produce in England, from the prosecution of a recent murderer;—and men of birth, education, and the best connections, committing acts too atrocious to mention, and yet resuming their stations in society.

Then what was the age of the offenders? The youngest perhaps about thirty, the oldest scarcely fifty; all in the prime of life. What their country? English, French, or Creole. All this too occurred among a community, comprising scarcely 150 planters, without a single example, in the course of that time, to deter from a repetition of any one of these offences; but, on the contrary, with two instances, embracing six or eight murders each, of ineffectual attempts at punishment; and producing no other effect than to bring down persecution on those who had dared to prosecute.

Could there be any longer a doubt that the fault lay in the system, a system so long tolerated, because misunderstood; and that instances of this kind could no longer be deemed solitary; but that the circumstances attending them went to inculcate the whole community of planters?

Or, with such facts, could it be doubtful that the enormous waste of life in that colony (as we shall see hereafter,) so suddenly checked;—the spirit of dogged resistance to improvement;—the apparent contentment of the labouring population since they dared not complain;—and the sad impression

in the minds of those who were aware of the secret working of the system, were accounted for;—or that misrepresentation, falsehood and concealment pervaded the whole of that system;—since even those who were shocked at the crimes committed, deemed it prudent to conceal them;—that no public officer dared to take up these cases, except at the expense of his future quiet and reputation;—and that slave murder was too common, and might be committed with impunity.

Now, with such proofs of the universal prevalence of endeavours to conceal the truth, and of the danger of exposing it, can the reports, so universal in the colonies, of the frequency of such crimes, be discredited? And although the activity and resolution manifested on the last occasion, and especially the legislative alterations in the proceedings of the tribunals to which it gave rise, appear to have deterred from the commission of such enormities; yet enough was daily occurring to shew that feelings and habits, so deeply rooted, were not easily changed or abandoned. In short, the principle, which seems to have been universal, was best expressed by a gentleman, on his sons being arrested on a charge of killing one of his Negroes. His remark was, "What a noise about a brute," (*Quel bruit pour un animal!*)—and, with this, every thing is explained. Once assume that a gang of Negroes are nothing more than a drove of cattle, and all these cases will be so many offences under Mr. Martin's act.

And here, the difference in the physical conformation of the two races, the white and the Negro, tended to confirm and strengthen the illusion; and when these principles were inculcated from early life, or adopted from strong personal inducement, however afflicting the result, their prevalence can scarcely be matter of surprise. That they pervaded the highest ranks, and were acted up to without hesitation or compunction, the following instance will prove.—

The Court Royal at Martinique is composed avowedly

of the most eminent gentlemen, in point of education, birth, and personal character, in the foreign colonies.

In the year 1815, a child, 15 years of age, and his mother were brought before them; the child (a boy) on a charge of attempting to escape from slavery, and his mother for receiving and giving him nourishment.

The following judgment stands in their registers. The island was then, or not more than three months before, in the British occupation. The boy was adjudged to be hanged for attempting to rob the owner of his own value, by endeavouring to escape from servitude; and his mother, for having received and nourished him, "under pretence of pity," was condemned to witness her son's execution, and then to be imprisoned for an indefinite term at Fort Royal. An authenticated transcript of this judgment was produced recently, in the French chamber of Deputies, by M. Salverte, the member for Paris. It was again cited and produced in evidence, in certain public proceedings in St. Lucia, where the fact might have been contradicted from Martinique in three days; and it stands unimpeached to this moment.

Thus, to tear a man in chains from his own country was deemed a lawful act; but should he attempt to regain his freedom he was to suffer death—he was stealing himself.

Such are some of the grounds on which I have arrived at the conviction, that slavery, practical slavery,—as it stood up to the moment that the attention of parliament was drawn to the subject, and as it will continue to stand so long as measures, extensive as the evil itself, are not adopted to remedy it,—is open to every objection that has been made to it. And such are the circumstances under which this conviction was acquired. Nor are these cases put forth as the only ones, or as cases the most glaring—far from it—they are specifically quoted, because none dare gainsay them! And add, to these, the working under the lash of the tremendous cart-whip, the want of rest, of nourishment, and clothing, far too com-

mon ; and can there be a doubt of the former condition of the slave ?

But what becomes of all the counter testimony ? The slaveholders anxiously call for an inquiry.

That call at present, as far as many are concerned, would be willingly met, were there not said to be insurmountable practical objections to it. A strong sense, a horror, of the enormities attendant on slavery, is now gaining ground throughout the West Indies—and, as to counter testimony, how many are the obstacles in the way of forming a correct judgment ?

Another example will set this in its proper light, whilst it will also educidate another much mooted point.

The original draft of the slave law was ordered to be amended by Earl Bathurst, and the amendments suggested by his Lordship were promulgated somewhere about the month of April, 1827. By that time, I had heard of slaves having been occasionally overworked, and an estate had been mentioned where they had been worked beyond sixteen hours a-day. I, therefore, inserted, in the second draft, a clause, that Negroes should, under any and every circumstance, be allowed eight hours' consecutive rest within the twenty-four hours. When this clause was read in Court, it was warmly objected to by the colonial members. One of them in particular observed, that their indignation was not levelled so much at the regulation itself ; but because the fact of its being introduced would lead strangers to believe, that planters could have had the cruelty to work Negroes upwards of sixteen hours, which he, as a proprietor, declared was a slanderous accusation. The reply was, that such instances were possible, and had been mentioned ; but it was not supposed that they were common. However the Court persisted in remonstrating ; and their remonstrance appears on the table of parliament, couched in the terms used by that gentleman. Whilst the solemn manner, in which the fact of overworking was denied, could not but make an impression ; and I came to the conclusion, that if any prac-

tice of the kind existed, it must be very rare, and could only have taken place on estates of inferior note; so that, even in May 1829, having been then upwards of four years in the country, I, in a report to Government, stated it as my opinion that freemen, in Europe, sometimes submitted cheerfully "to toils and privations unknown to the West Indian slave."

But, not six months afterwards, the attention of government was called to an estate, the attorney of which was a member of the Privy Council, and the manager, looked up to as one of the leading men of his class, a frequent guest in the highest society. The complaint, as usual, was of ill-treatment on one side, met by a charge of insubordination on the other; and it then was proved, and, indeed, admitted (the number of times only being in dispute) that the gang had, in the course of the preceding crop, been divided and worked as follows: they worked twenty-four hours each spell, rested six, worked twelve; rested twelve, worked twelve; rested six, then again worked twenty-four and rested six, and so on;—there being three spells or watches, two in the field, and one in the boiling-house; and the latter working twenty-four hours in succession, and resuming their labour in the field next morning.

Now, deduct, from these six hours, the time necessary to cook their victuals (for no time was allowed them for meals), to clean themselves, to take their meals, to undress and dress themselves, and families, if they had any; and what remained for rest?

When the fact was thus placed beyond question, other estates were at once mentioned where the same practice was adopted; and so little was it thought of, that, in an inquiry to which the attorney of the estate was a party, this very manager was examined, and expressed his surprise at being charged with cruelty, since, as he says on oath, this happened but seldom, and when it did occur, he had always allowed his slaves to take six hours rest in the course of two days. In other words, his management was lenient, as he never had worked his gang more than forty-two hours together!

Such is practical slavery, and such the difficulties which prevent detection, even by those most thoroughly conversant with the subject; nor are these the only difficulties, as will appear.

Thus, let any one read over the enactments of the Colonial Statute Books, and, having formed a correct idea of the dependent condition of the slave, turn to the well authenticated accounts of chapels burnt down or fired into, or of innumerable persecutions, for slavery's sake, of clergymen, of judges, and of all men who would set a better example; and then let their own good sense determine what will be the behaviour of such a community to persons in such a state of dependence.

By the laws of the British colonies, up to a very recent period, the murdering of a slave was, in some, punishable by a trifling fine; the torturing and maiming him was only declared an offence in Barbadoes, in 1824; and a slave might be worked day and night without intermission. In the foreign colonies, there were enactments against cruelty at an earlier period; but how worded? The following is still the law of Trinidad on this subject; and, be it observed, this regulation was considered a model of enlightened legislation.

“The field slaves are to have half an hour in the morning for breakfast, and two hours at noon for dinner. Mothers, having children at the breast, to leave the field, at noon and at night, half an hour before the others, and they are exempted from throwing grass.

“Field slaves are not to go to the field before five in the morning, nor to work there after six in the evening, except in bringing grass, at noon and at night, for the stock.

“But it is *not meant that this regulation should interfere with the night work, on sugar estates, in crop time, which cannot possibly be dispensed with.*”

Here then is a most humane enactment, actually sanctioning perpetual labour; and its execution, even where its provisions did interfere in favour of the slave, was put exclusively in the hands of the commandant of the district; in other words,

of the most influential planter. Nor was its purport misunderstood; for, by a vote of the Privy Council of the colony laid on the tables of Parliament in 1825, they proposed, as a measure of amelioration, that the planter be *advised* not to work his slaves beyond sixteen hours a day. Such too, are the regulations, where they do exist, throughout the colonies,—well-sounding to the ear, worse than useless in effect. They had no executory principle. Either the regulation was too vague, or there was no penalty, or it was committed to hands adverse to its enforcement; and, if these failed, next came the judicatories, hampered with every possible rule that could tend to render the ascertainment of the truth impracticable.

The slave was virtually reputed incapable of hearing, seeing, or feeling, since he could not bear testimony, against his manager, to what he heard, saw, and felt. The informer and his family, which extended to his domestics and to all who lived at the same table, laboured, though free, under the same disability throughout those colonies where the Roman legislation (much corrupted) prevailed. In other words, throughout the Crown colonies, or in colonies containing, in appearance, severe penal enactments, the judge, it has been shewn, would not proceed without the public prosecutor; nor the latter, without an informer; and the informer must incur every responsibility, though, the moment he informed, he was legally struck dumb.

Suppose all these obstacles overcome, the witness was examined in secret. No questions were to be put to him: he might state what he pleased, or say he knew nothing. The judgment was secret, and the court composed of planters.

Still there was a bare possibility that the law would reach an atrocious offender; but then, the executive at once stepped in for his protection, and by positive instructions from the French government to their governors, they were not to permit such prosecutions. The example was pernicious; cruelty was to be discouraged by public opinion, and humanity to be rewarded; and this was the barrier raised against the exercise of bruta-

lity, on persons not only so degraded in their social position, but of a different complexion, of different shape, habits, and language.

Surely, the more candid, honest and manly course of the English colonists, that of leaving them at once without any protection, even nominal, was infinitely less disgraceful to the national character, than such rank legislative hypocrisy.

Justice being thus considered a nuisance or a luxury, any thing, in short, but a necessary, the judicial establishments themselves naturally fell into disrepute. The chief duties of courts were to pass estates from hand to hand, and that in the British colonies only, which was done principally by the Governor as Chancellor. In one respect, all the colonies, British or foreign, resembled each other! There was a ponderous executive, whilst the chief justice was much on a level, in society, with the chief blacksmith. The emoluments (the principal, if not only criterion of respectability) of the latter were far superior, the consideration (where all whites were on an equal footing) much the same, in the conquered colonies. The judges, as regards emolument and rank, were soon more favourably circumstanced; but as to power, that was long withheld, and, when conceded, was viewed, as it still is, with inveterate jealousy and aversion.

Such being the opinion formed of slavery, as it existed up to the moment when measures of amelioration were introduced into that colony with which the writer was most conversant; it may be proper to enquire briefly whether this portrait will apply to other colonies. Here he can only judge from reports, however well authenticated and incontestable;—but, he fears he must come to the conclusion, that the same causes, have produced the same effects.

The documents, on record, which have been produced from these colonies, strongly corroborate this unfavourable inference. Of Mauritius there can be no doubt; but yet it may be said for this colony, that there must have existed not only

much intrepidity, but also a strong feeling, in some parts of the Community, in favour of the slave population.

As far back as 1818, it is clear that the blame can no longer attach to the Community; the offenders were regularly brought before the tribunals, and convicted, though inadequately punished.

The reproach thenceforth attaches on the public officer, or the magistrate only; if he had evidence to warrant his inflicting any punishment, as that evidence would justify a proportionate punishment; or on the government who subsequently allowed that magistrate to continue.

The recent persecution of Mr. Hart, in Barbadoes, a deserving minister of the church of England, avowedly, on account of his philanthropy, and of his zealous efforts to improve the condition of the slaves, leaves but an unfavourable impression with respect to that colony; for it cannot be too strongly borne in mind that it is rather from the spirit generally manifested, than from individual acts however revolting, that general inferences can be drawn.

In Jamaica, the facts advanced, (independently of legal decisions) by authorities in every way so worthy of credit, as the Rev. Messrs. Trew and Thorp, lead to the same conclusion, the more so, as the same general symptoms, the same constant dread of insurrection, the same utterly groundless panics, the same complaint of negroes flying in bodies to the woods; in short, all the same leading features exist there also in full force.

In Nevis the case of Mr. Whalley, hereafter mentioned, and still more particularly the manner in which that case was disposed of;—

In Demerara, the conduct towards the Missionary Smith;—

In Bahamas the notorious Moss' case;—

In Tobago, and Grenada, and St. Christopher's, the persecutions of Messrs. Pickwood, M'Bean, and Bent, gentlemen of high stations, whose chief offence appears hitherto, to have

been, that they had distinguished themselves by their benignant and liberal views;—all these, which are matter of notoriety, shew that slavery, if it has changed at all, has changed but in a small degree; and that the difference between the chartered and Crown colonies, too probably, consists in this; that in the latter, their laws and institutions have been amended, and crime is now detected and punished;—in the former, they continue practically untouched; or crime, if punishable by law, contrives to be screened under the shelter of institutions, valuable, no doubt, in a land of freedom, but utterly unsuited for slave communities.

An important distinction—Why are Houses of Assembly, why are Juries, Grand or Petty, so highly esteemed by Englishmen? Because they are strong barriers against oppression. Selected from among the community, the jurors, the representatives, are imbued with its sentiments: its interests are theirs. Thus, if West Indian communities are still to be viewed as consisting of some few white proprietors exclusively, then are these institutions well adapted to protect their privileges; but if, of some hundred thousand human beings, equal in the eyes of their Creator, equal in the eye of the law, then are such institutions (limited as they are in their constituency) only calculated more deeply to humble, more effectually to crush, the oppressed;—then are they the most powerful barrier, not against tyranny, but against liberty; not against encroachment, but amendment; exercising their power, not for detection and punishment, but for impunity and concealment.

In Canada, in Newfoundland, therefore, it is judicious to create such institutions, and when created, to foster, and occasionally to concede to them; and when united, it were impolitic and dangerous to resist them. They express the voice of the population; they are the best barometer of the public mind. In resisting them, the Government will resist the full physical force of the country, which will be but seldom directed against it without sufficient provocation. But if this be the case in

free communities, elsewhere they express but the voice of a faction—a faction clamorous for the maintenance of undue power over the country, and, so long as Government consults the general interest, impotent.

In free countries, again, having generally no other aim than to protect their just rights, their proceedings need not be viewed with suspicion; in others, they would defend what cannot bear examination;—hence conduct which unhappily justifies grave suspicion. Of this Mr. Trew mentions the following instance.

In Jamaica, the House of Assembly were engaged in an inquiry as to the propriety of admitting slave-evidence. A clergyman was asked—Have you ever known any instance where public justice was defeated through the inadmissibility of slave-evidence? He relates the following case of a white man, the owner of a small plantation, who tried to seduce, from the path of virtue, the natural child of his own father by a slave. The girl, taught by her mother, who had been instructed by the Missionaries in the great truths of religion, had learned the sinfulness of the act, and refused to listen to him. She was placed in the stocks, and he renewed his intreaties. This produced no other effect on her mind than to induce her the more strenuously to resist. At last she was unmercifully flogged. But every artifice was in vain, and the girl was eventually removed to a place of confinement, and afterwards set at liberty. The first use she made of her liberty was to apply to a magistrate, who forthwith summoned the Council of Protection. The girl's story was well authenticated, but it was the story of a slave; and, therefore, though the Council were fully persuaded of the truth of her statement, such guilt escaped unpunished. This is shocking, but yet it is not on that account that it is now quoted.—The writer continues—“This part of the evidence does not appear on the face of the printed minutes of the Jamaica Assembly; the witness inquired the reason. It appeared that a discussion arose, in the

committee, as to the propriety of expunging this part of the evidence ; and it was expunged from the minutes accordingly ;” a member at the same time observing, “are we not cutting a rod to break our own heads ?”

Now, does not this fact at once vitiate every particle of evidence from such a source?—And who are the Jamaica Assembly? They ought to be, and probably are, the most eminent, most wealthy and enlightened gentlemen connected with British Slavery. They are, in our Colonies, what the Court Royal of Martinique are in theirs; yet what further faith can be placed in their official reports, however they may stand, as individuals, in point of character?

Can they suppose that their best friends must not look, with distrust, on every act of theirs; and with still greater suspicion, and with the most complete distrust, on the general condition of society in that community of which they are the leaders?

So much for the most distinguished House of Assembly in the West Indian Colonies.—Now for another institution, which in Britain is equally prized.—At Nevis, the island generally considered the most polished and enlightened, a Council of Protection having investigated the conduct of a manager of the name of Whalley, six indictments were preferred against him, viz.:—one for murder, two for manslaughter, and three for maltreatment. They were all ignored, by the grand jury, under circumstances which drew from Lord Goderich the following remarks; and it is known how cautious is every minister of expressing an opinion on judicial proceedings:—“The rejection, by the grand jury of Nevis, of the bills of indictment preferred, in some cases of alleged cruelty against slaves, on different plantations, when viewed with reference to the previous depositions, has unavoidably produced, in my mind, the painful conviction, that the gentlemen of the colony have not correctly understood their duty as grand jurors. I cannot permit myself to believe that persons, in their station of life, would be insensible to the sacred obligation of the oath

they have taken ; and though I am not disposed to attribute to them such prejudices as would prevent the dispassionate exercise of their judgments, in questions of such serious moment, I cannot but feel that the course they have pursued in this matter is calculated to produce a very painful and unsatisfactory impression in this country."

Such, then, is the distinct censure expressed, and it would be difficult to convey a stronger one, on the conduct of the most eminent members of the community, where it is supposed that slavery appears in its mildest form. But, here again, it is not so much this which leaves a painful doubt on the mind with respect to Nevis. The precedent will also shew how all but insurmountable are the difficulties to forming a just opinion, in this country, of the nature of slavery ; and how inconceivable—and it may be added how little justifiable—are the expedients adopted to conceal the truth, and to produce a wrong impression in the public mind. This dispatch is dated Dec., 1830 ; and, scarcely six months afterwards, an address was presented, from this very island of Nevis, by gentlemen of the highest rank and station in England, connected with the West Indies, to the King himself,—to a Sovereign who is doing all that Prince can do to realize the portrait of a patriot King,—appealing to his own personal testimony of their conduct to their slaves.* And yet to what period could this great and good Monarch bear witness ? To some forty years since, when even *they* do not pretend that slavery was not attended with every evil now predicated of it. They rest their defence on the fact that it has gradually assumed a milder type. And is it to be supposed that the gentlemen who presented this address (the leaders in the West Indian committee) did not know what had recently passed at Nevis ? If they did, is it not to be regretted that they should lay themselves open to the reflections which must arise, in every man's mind, on such conduct ? If not, what becomes of their " certain information ?"

Speak to any one man from any one island, however

* See Court Journal, Morning Post, of June last.

bigotedly attached to slavery, however vehement his opinions, he will not deny that atrocities have existed, or fail to quote examples; but then they are examples of persons gone by. This succeeded for a time; but when, during some years' residence, proprietors and managers against whose reputations, when living, scarcely a whisper, nay, not a whisper, had circulated, had gone to their account; and it then appeared, and was on all sides assumed as a certainty, that they in no way differed from those that had gone before them; what became of this distinction? Nature had created them with the same arms, the same hands, the same hearts and the same passions; the law had invested them with the same power; they had exercised the same despotism, the worst of despotisms, a domestic despotism; and it had produced the same bitter fruit.

Therefore may it be, that the chief distinction between the crown and the chartered colonies lies in this, that they have now, in the former, no assembly to expunge, no grand jury to smother, the truth!

Nor have these institutions hitherto represented the feelings of that small portion of the whole society, the free class. The white inhabitants alone have, up to this time, possessed the right of being representatives, or of being members of juries, either grand or petty. It is a trite observation, "That the evils of slavery are not confined to slaves." The class in bondage being all of one complexion, and that of proprietors originally of another, the prejudice against colour sprung up naturally. "All my equals are of one hue, my dependents of another; mine is the hue of freedom, theirs of thralldom;" so that pride and habit produced as powerful a feeling, against the free negro, as did the thirst for wealth against the slave. But another and stronger passion overcame, alike, prejudice and the love of money—hence a mixed class, holding a middle station, generally free from servitude, but bearing the tinge of its origin; and into this ultimately merged all who, by fortune, favour, or their industry, obtained manumission.

This class has necessarily increased most rapidly, and it

will continue to do so. The causes are, immigration, manumission, procreation, and their being better adapted to the climate.

The first cause can no longer affect the slave. Its influence, upon every person white or coloured, depends upon the government, and on the confidence of neighbouring countries in the government.

Manumission operates exclusively in favour of this class, and as all descendants of manumitted slaves belong to it also, this cause alone would, in the course of time, produce an excess, unless checked by some violent effort.

The manner in which the third cause affects them is much more powerful than the others, though it is pretty evident that it is not sufficiently considered.

Probably one-fourth of the births spring from connections between persons of one colour, and those of another. They are the offspring of persons of colour by white, or of white by coloured and slaves, or of slaves with free persons, white or coloured; and these, necessarily in the latter case, and ultimately in the former, go to increase the free coloured class exclusively.

As concerns climate, they breathe their natural air, and therefore do they, on an average, live longer than whites, and continue, through life, in the full possession of their energies and faculties. These points are mentioned not only as they bear on the political question, but because although whenever there is a diminution in the births as compared with the deaths, in the slave population; whenever that population decreases; there is, almost to a certainty, mismanagement and harsh treatment; yet the increase of the coloured population is not, alone, a perfectly fair criterion to shew what should be the increase among slaves.

The consequences of the operation of these causes appear to have been early foreseen; and so long as slavery remained unmodified, the only way of meeting them appeared to be to maintain, forcibly, the domination of the whites, which

could scarcely be done except by a constraint, ending occasionally in terror and extermination.

Hence liabilities, heavy penalties, and galling distinctions.

In St. Lucia, persons of colour were not, by law, at liberty to wear the same dress as a white man. There was a positive enactment, strictly adhered to, by which, however wealthy, they were not to be called in any legal document "Mr." or "Madam," but were designated as "*le nommé, la nommée,*" that man and that woman." Thus every paper they were parties to bore proof of the contempt with which they were viewed; and it is scarcely conceivable how much ill blood this single unmeaning distinction—this wanton and paltry insult—engendered. The white man, who harboured a slave, paid a trifling fine; a man of colour was sold into slavery with all his family. The coloured were not at liberty, by law, to take the same names as white persons, but were expected to retain their African name, or that by which they or their ancestors had been known as slaves. The very humblest office, even a sheriff's officer's clerk, they were excluded from, nor could they be either apothecaries or druggists' shopmen, or receive testamentary benefactions from whites though their own parents. A coloured gentleman could not invite his friends to dine with him, without the permission of the public procureur; and, to shew how far these galling liabilities extended, an ordinance of 1772 went to forbid persons of colour from holding communication with the galley slaves. If a coloured man, under any provocation, resented the affront of a white man, the former, however respectable, the latter, however disreputable; the coloured man was subject to the most dreadful penalties; in some cases, it is said to have extended to the loss of limb. In other colonies a coloured man could not give evidence in a court of justice against whites. These distinctions were observed in the colonies even after death, and a church yard was set apart for persons of this description. And these liabilities and penalties extended, not

only to the liberated African, but, in the French colonies, to the remotest generation, however it might in the mean time have intermingled with whites. However fair their complexions, however legitimate their descent, however exemplary their conduct, a single drop of African blood was a pollution of the whole stock; and in the British colonies it extended to the fourth generation.

In short, as the slave appears to have been considered as working cattle, so the free negro was viewed as an "animal" of the same description, but exempted from actual labour. The purpose was evidently to render the attainment of liberty worthless to its possessor. The slave, however cruelly oppressed by his manager, was yet protected, with the most watchful jealousy, from ill treatment on the part of all others; but every white man's hand was raised, at pleasure, against the free negro, and even, though the law might sometimes protect him, yet was that law administered by his tyrant.

And as nothing is easier than to reconcile our feelings to our prejudices, sophistry soon sanctioned even this monstrous injustice. The negro was the descendant of Ham: it became an axiom, of the orthodox West Indian creed, that every individual, tainted with negro blood, was "idle, worthless, and disaffected," "a class living rather upon, than from, the community;" which, according to some anatomists, and to the lucubrations of some philosophers, was owing to their physical conformation, to their woolly hair, flat noses, lips, smell, and complexions. And then, as will happen when all the writers, all the evidence are taken from the same side, they were certified to be exactly what prejudice wished them to be.

Thus then there existed, in the colonies, nothing of what is considered, in Europe, the strength, the soundest and most wholesome portion, of every community, a respectable middle class; or, if such class did exist, unsanctioned and unacknowledged by law, it was useless for political purposes, use-

less for the regeneration and improvement of the body politic. Thus was the white man under no control from public opinion; and assemblies and juries, even among the free, no more represented the sentiments of the community, than the Corporation of Dublin those of the population of Ireland.

But this does not complete the portrait. Before any portion of a community can be thoroughly corrupt, corruption will have extended, in some degree, through the whole body, and *society* will soon become corrupted to the core.

The fiscal regulations of the West Indies are notorious. The *moralité des Antilles*, and the high excitement produced by climate, are proverbial. The number of officers, appointed rather for ornament than use, unoccupied, though not unpaid; the enormous profits derived by contractors; all these are well-known facts.—Southey, in his *Life of Nelson*, mentions instances of the scandalous practices of the contractors, prize agents, and other persons in the West Indies, connected with the naval service, as exposed by this hero:—frauds at Antigua to the amount of nearly £500,000, at St. Lucia of £300,000, at Jamaica of £1,000,000, are mentioned as proofs that the government had been infamously plundered. His biographer also shews what was the consequence of this detection to Nelson; even though he succeeded in punishing the culprits, and in producing an immense saving to government. This saving was, however, but temporary, and confined to a particular service: the practice continued unabated to a much later period. A circumstance was mentioned by a mercantile gentleman, at St. Lucia, as having come within his own knowledge during the last war.—The usual arrangement was that the contractor shared half the profit with the government officer, storekeeper, barrack-master, and commissary. One of these gentlemen, at the close of six months, was ordered to another station; and, on balancing the merchant's books, the share reverting to this officer, on the supplies furnished within that half-year to that

single department, by this single merchant, amounted to £10,000 sterling. Indeed the meaning of the words speculation, fraud, and imposition, do not seem to have been understood; even forgery itself was rather a venial than a grave offence; and with persons born and bred in that atmosphere their avowed ignorance of the criminality of such acts is no longer astonishing.

Then, again, the enormous power possessed by the proprietor over his slave rendered him callous of the very life of his equals. Six months after I was in the country, a case of infanticide was reported to me: A new-born child had been found in a ditch, choked with earth, and its mouth split from ear to ear,—it was still alive. The case was forthwith enquired into with all the spirit and zeal that a subject of the nature merited; but so far from carrying public opinion with me, this interference was deemed very unreasonable and uncalled for. The expressions I actually heard were “Why meddle with such nonsense?” “*quelles miseries,*” and as nonsense the thing seemed to be treated. I, however, persisted, and issued a warrant against the mother, a young lady of property and rank, and this was deemed pure brutality. She remained some weeks in the island, residing openly at her relative’s, a public officer; but seeing I was determined to bear the consequences, she withdrew unmolested to Martinique.

These proceedings also are in writing, as are the cases of speculation, fraud, and forgery, above alluded to.

The father, though known to the whole neighbourhood, I never could ascertain the name of, or get any clue to, beyond being informed that he was also a person of respectability.

Nor is this the full extent of the evil. In this iniquitous lottery, money passed freely from hand to hand, and but little remained in the country; the more prosperous, and these were generally the most upright, left it; and thus was severed even the weak tie of interest which bound the managing proprietor to his slave. The sole object of the ab-

sentee's substitute would be to obtain large returns,—it matters not how effected. He must propitiate his master, and that master was not long without his creditors. Then, too, speculators at home, lured by the splendid bait, made liberal advances, stipulating, in return, for an equally liberal requital: the accounts of the West Indian merchant with his colonial correspondent, if addressed to Paris or Amsterdam, would expose him to the well merited contempt of every mercantile man. And thus was established a power, at the very seat of government, deriving its very existence from these multiplied abuses, and depending for that existence on their continuance. Nor does it otherwise matter, than as it adds considerably to their influence, that some hereditary proprietors, and that most of the British merchants, are themselves personally free from immediate contamination. They do not the less contribute the whole weight of their characters to the furtherance of objects which, were they better informed, or less credulous of information, they have so strong an interest in believing, they would be the readiest to condemn.

Sixty members of the House of Commons, at least, are, it is said, connected with West Indian Slavery. Now if a peer, returning six or eight commoners, has been known to dictate to a minister;—if a few such noblemen, though probably divided in their opinions, have been nearly alone enabled to direct the march of public events for no inconsiderable period; what must be the tremendous influence of such a body,—a body carefully organized, possessing large resources, and extending its ramifications into every class of society and every department of the state. Nay, the very government and country, by the immense duties they continue to levy for their benefit from slave labour, were at first almost necessarily arrayed in hostility to amendment, in so far as they may have supposed they possessed an interest in resisting every attempt at amelioration and effectual reform.

Thus then do the government, the absentee, the merchant,

grind down the planters,—thus doth the white grind down the negro; but on whom does the burden of this accumulated load ultimately fall?—On the helpless, suffering, unprotected slave. And is it any longer surprising, that those who have hitherto dared to raise their voice in his favour, have, to a very late period, if not even now, reaped, as their never-failing reward, endless inveterate persecution? Or does not their still increasing number, under such fearful examples, prove how powerful, how overwhelming, is the motive that impels them?

At the same time that the general features of slave communities are thus pourtrayed, there is no wish to deny that many good and virtuous men will be found amongst them; but even take such men, soon—very soon, will they arrive at the conclusion, that it is sufficient they retain their own integrity under such fearful temptations; and that any thing beyond that will certainly injure them, and probably benefit no one. The consequences to them, they know, are certain, the advantages to others at best but doubtful and remote. Nor have they been generally wrong in their conjectures.

Neither is there any reason to doubt, that many honourable men—men in the most eminent stations, have borne testimony of an opposite complexion; and can this surprise? With whom do men of this high rank and station associate—with the planter or the slave, the merchant or the domestic? Whose hospitality do they share; in whose amusements partake; whose assurances can they alone receive? Are West Indians alone expected to expose their sores; to reveal, for their visitor's entertainment, the secrets of their plantations; to exhibit the dungeons, the collars, and the cart-whips? But they have enquired from the slaves themselves. Why the slave could not bear witness if he would, nor dare he if he could. Did I not once think so too? But amend the condition of the slaves, allow them to bear evidence, give them, above all, persons to protect them in whom they feel that they can confide; and then comes the sad truth. The more ex-

alted, therefore, the station of the individual, the fewer his opportunities of ascertaining the truth; and the longer the residence, without such opportunities, the more obstinate will he be rendered in error. Nor can this point be too strongly put. Very lately appeared in the public prints a glowing certificate, in favour of things as they stood thirty years ago, from one of Britain's most distinguished heroes. Now, who at this moment defends things as they then stood? Not one of their own advocates. To compare the present with the past can only proceed from wilful malignity. Thus, what does such a certificate prove, but that the system is still indefensible, or that Nelson knew nothing of it? Nelson,* with much trouble, vexation, and disappointment to himself, detected and exposed the numerous frauds of that part of the system with which his own duties had brought him into immediate contact; and yet had not this occurred, none had been probably more ready than Nelson himself to bear testimony to the immaculate honesty of those very merchants. But Nelson was not a protector of slaves; his duties did not bring him in contact with the slave labourer, and, therefore, he knew nothing of the interior of a plantation, or if he did, it was precisely the kind of information which he might have acquired, respecting speculation, at the dinner table of any of those contractors whom he exposed and punished.

This again is an answer to not a few of those lively productions with which the press has recently teemed. What opportunity had the writers attached to a garrison, or forming part of a clerical dignitary's suite, to become familiar with the condition of the slave? Take the Tract which has had the largest circulation:—the author of *Six Months in the West Indies* mentions St. Lucia, describes its scenery, the sentiments of its inhabitants, the progress of its government;—

* See a Letter from Lord Nelson to Mr. Simon Taylor, inserted in the *Morning Post* of June last.

he was there about an hour; and at dusk, saw ships in the out-bays, although these, with perhaps one exception, can have been but cocoa-nut trees. To reach the pavilion, he ascended rather better than half-way up a moderate sized hill; he fancied himself in the clouds; and to complete the illusion, saw stars in the fire-flies. Much of this arose no doubt from a wish to give point and brilliancy to the narrative, was meant good naturally, and expected to be received with every proper allowance! But he who reflects how seriously the interests of humanity may thus be compromised, cannot but regret that talents, and wit, and good intentions have been so perverted.

Nor can there be a doubt, that many instances of kindness and humanity and mutual attachment, between manager and slave, will occur. A planter in St. Lucia, formerly a field officer in the British service, died shortly before the hurricane of 1817, by which his slave cots, and every building even to the wind-mill, were swept away. The slaves volunteered to rebuild the mill, to repair the damage, to cultivate the land, and to work off the year's crop as usual. They set at work, laboured during hours and after hours, carried all through, and named their new mill "Malgré tout." This was not the act of a single individual, but of a whole gang—not the sudden impulse of a moment, but the continued effort of a whole season. Such instances prove alike in favour of master and slaves, and the latter are occasionally tended and nursed like their children, by persons of education and fortune. But these instances, I feel, are exceptions, and the more I saw of the West Indies, the more I felt they were comparatively rare exceptions; they soon become known, and are universally quoted; there is no inclination, naturally none, on any side to conceal them. With the counter examples it is otherwise, these are committed in secret, and, if ever revealed, they are so but reluctantly. Tyranny is much the same every where. The longest line of tyrants in history are the Cæsars. Imperial Rome produced its Trajans and

its Antonines, but how many more Neros, Caligulas, and Domitians.

Such then is the unfavourable estimate reluctantly formed of West Indian Communities; nor can they complain that they are anonymously maligned; that they are maligned on rumour, or hearsay, or insufficient information; or that sentiments are now expressed different from those which he was known to entertain when among them. Such as they are, he has urged them in the warmth and confidence of friendship; he has repeated them from the judgment seat in the sternness of duty, with the yet sterner proofs before him. They are now published neither vindictive nor in anger, but because having tried every other method, he has acquired the painful conviction that publicity alone can lead to a thorough reformation.

And it is not with West Indians only, that publicity has become imperative: far from it. Were they alone concerned, he believes that many, impelled by a deep sense of duty; others by a horror of crime; several by a sound view of their own interest or the fear of exposure; a few, perhaps, by contrition; a vast number by that motive whose influence all men unwillingly acknowledge, and yet few can appreciate who have not witnessed the condition of a lawless community—by the dread of consequences; had effectually reformed themselves, and joining with others, to whom no blame ever attached, had given a far different tone to their societies. But there is again that large and influential class, who knowing nothing personally of the colonies, and yet possessing a large stake in them, and relying on what they conceive the best information, have imbibed opinions which they would certainly not entertain, had they an opportunity of judging for themselves. Very little reflection must shew them that the information they rely on as the best, is, on the contrary, the very worst. Whom do they chiefly communicate with? That class who have a direct interest against amendment—with attorneys, managers, and involved proprietors, men almost necessarily discontented;—

for, however advantageous it may be to the community taken generally, and even to the proprietor himself, to amend this system, and curtail the powers of those individuals, so much is certain, that any such regulations will produce inconvenience to those who must, uncompensated, make up, by assiduity and attention, for what they lose in power. Hence it is, that the most rancorous, uncompromising opposition proceeds from them; and hence, therefore, the necessity of making them acquainted with the plain truth, however disagreeable, or even alarming. Again, there are men who have nothing to fear from punishment, and who can only be reached by public opinion, or influenced by a sense of shame or contrition.

But especially slavery is a stain on the national character. If not sanctioned by the express voice of the British legislature, it has been encouraged by their supineness, and promoted by their policy; therefore, ought this country to know what it is they have been upholding, and if they would not share in the disgrace and the moral responsibility attaching to it, prepare to make the most ample sacrifices.

Of the crowds who yearly and daily emigrate from their homes to these possessions, how many return? Of military, what hundreds of thousand have not perished there. The slight insurrection of 1796 in St. Lucia, cost Great Britain, of Regulars alone, four thousand men. More blood has been spilt in that small island in warfare, within the last half century, than in any part of the world except Belgium. With reference to the life of the slave; during the continuance of the slave trade, and now at Martinique, if a newly purchased slave lasted five years, the speculation was a good one. In thirteen years the whole labouring population was said to be renewed, whilst, in all the Duke of Wellington's continental wars, commencing with his landing in Spain and concluding with Waterloo, the killed in action, it is said, did not amount to one fifth of the number systematically consumed, since the peace, in the small Island of Martinique. Nor do they

equal half the decrease in our own colonies within the last ten years. Now reckon the number of slaves in the British colonies, the number of them in the United States, (possessions formerly British,) and the length of time this wholesale consumption of human life has been carrying on; and judge of the fearful responsibility that attaches to this nation.

And what for? to change the very face of nature. Columbus, and the earlier navigators have described these olden colonies as they stood clothed in the most brilliant verdure, they are now arid, parched, and exhausted. Cultivation elsewhere converts deserts into gardens; here, gardens into a desert. How comes it that St. Lucia, Trinidad, Demerara, are still so rich and fertile? because they are but recently inhabited. And why but recently inhabited? because these very parched and exhausted colonies originally presented greater inducements.

ESSAY II.

*General Theories involved in the Question of Slavery, viz.:—
Colour, Climate, Monopoly, and Free Labour.*

HAVING thus sketched the Colonies as they were ; what are they to become ? And here more than one important question presents itself at the outset. Is there any physical impediment, any thing in the climate, or in the Negro and African character, to prevent the application of those general principles of Government to the West Indies, which would be adopted, under similar circumstances, in Europe ? These points were gone over in 1828, in an argument presented to the Secretary of State ; they will be repeated now with such farther observations as experience has since suggested.

A change from one climate to another—from heat to cold, or cold to heat—will naturally produce a great effect on the same individual, and it matters, probably, little whether the change be from cold to heat, or the reverse. But a man inured by birth or long descent, or from habit, to a warm climate, may be quite as capable of bearing fatigue. It does not appear, in proof, that he is not equally likely to work laboriously, under a stimulus of any kind in that climate, as another person born in a cold climate would be in a cold one ; or that the latter is not equally prone to idleness and self-indulgence when in a savage state. The Indians of Illinois and Paraguay, were not more advanced in civilization, or less indolent than those of St. Domingo ; they were much more so than those of Mexico or Peru ; and if, in varied climates, uncivilized nations shew the same indifference to labour, their

indolence can no longer be attributed to the climate ! When Greece, Egypt, or Rome stood pre-eminent over other nations, a contrary theory might have been supported by specific instances equally conclusive.

It might have been said, that the genial warmth, and the extreme fertility of the soil, amply rewarding the labourer, encouraged him to persevere, while the sterility and general desolateness of northern climates, of England and of Russia, induced him to remain satisfied with a bare sufficiency, and totally discouraged him from steady and continuous labour.

Slavery, it is true, was established in Mexico and Peru, and so it was once in England, so it will be perhaps found in all half-civilized States.

The first condition of man in society appears to be commonly that of equality, or mere family dominion ; when one or more have acquired power, not knowing how to exercise it, the rest of the nation, in this secondary state, becomes enslaved ; and then gradually comes on a state of mutual protection and dependence where power is limited. In this is found an equality of rights of property and person, with an inequality of political power and political station. But this is independent of climate : it may equally happen in a warm country as a cold one, equally in Spain and Denmark, equally in Hayti or New England !

The author who first gave great vogue to this extreme theory of the influence of climate, is Montesquieu ; he illustrates it thus : " J'ai observé le tissu extérieur d'une langue de mouton dans l'endroit où elle paraît à la simple vue couverte de mamelons. J'ai vu avec un microscope, sur ces mamelons, de petits poils ou une espèce de duvet ; entre ces mamelons étaient des pyramides qui formaient par le bout comme de petits pinceaux. Il y a grande apparence que ces pyramides sont le principal organe du goût."

" J'ai fait geler la moitié de cette langue, et j'ai trouvé à la simple vue les mamelons considérablement diminués ; quel-

ques rangs même de mamelons enfoncés dans leur gaine. J'en ai examiné le tissu avec le microscope, je n'ai plus vu de pyramides. A mesure que la langue s'est dégelée les mamelons, à la simple vue, ont paru de relever; et, au microscope, les petites houpes ont commencé à reparâtre."

"Cette observation confirme ce que j'ai dit, que, dans les pays froids, les houpes nerveuses sont moins épanouies; elles s'enfoncent dans leurs gâines, ou elles sont à couvert de l'action des objets extérieurs. Les sensations sont donc moins vives."

This is evidently *defective*, it shews merely that the same tongue presents a very different appearance when heated or frozen; which goes to prove, that the same body will be differently affected by heat or cold, a fact never doubted; but it in no way proves, that when a man is by nature fitted for a warm climate, he will not do as well in that warm climate, as a person differently constituted will in a cold one. Montesquieu then proceeds to compare the different effects produced by an opera in Italy, and in England. "Ce sont les mêmes pieces et les mêmes acteurs, mais la même musique produit des effets si differens sur les deux nations; l'une est si calme, l'autre si transportée." And it was the same language which was vernacular in Italy, and unintelligible in England. Music too, had in his time made but little progress as a science in England. This excitement is said to be gaining ground. The Scotch are sometimes excited by the bagpipe; whilst the same performances and the same performers, would be probably heard with the same indifference, in the centre of Africa. The elephant and the mouse are both highly excited by music. He adds, "Il faut écorchor un moscovite pour lui donner du sentiment." The Muscovite might think otherwise. The slave-manager has the same opinion of the slave; and it is very probable that the slave will have, on as just grounds, a still worse opinion of the manager. A weak foundation all this, for a lengthened argument concluding with an endeavour to

prove that the limits of Christianity and Mahomedanism are marked out by climate. Pushed to this extent, this theory furnishes, under any circumstances however directly contradictory, little more than a convenient excuse for conduct otherwise unjustifiable.

But granting, what is probably the case, that men are in some degree differently constituted in various climates; that Italians are rather more susceptible than Englishmen; that, as physiologists have maintained, there is a difference in the physical organization of the inhabitants of southern latitudes; that their skin is less likely to suffer from the effect of heat; that their pores are more open;—all this only proves an adaptation to climate; it proves that the Italian is adapted to Italy, the Briton to England, the Negro to the tropics. That which is heat to us is genial warmth to them. The weather, to us, is agreeably mild, which would make them shiver with cold; and the lassitude which we feel in warm latitudes proceeds from the change; for with men, as with plants, every thing seems, by the same great law of nature, equally adapted to its end.

Something in this theory has also been said of density of population; but what influence can this have, except as it is another impediment to improvement? Wherever there is an intention to amend, the ordinary rule would be to commence with a few, as it is more difficult to influence a large number; and as to extreme fertility of soil, I have yet to learn that a country was ever cursed by its fertility or natural wealth, except as these served as a temptation to foreign cupidity, to Spanish mining or to British planting.

Now as to caste or colour: it is not so difficult a matter, in any case, to assume superiority over another, or to give credence to those who would persuade us that our title to superiority is founded in nature; witness the contempt of the former French nobility for a Roturier, a feeling, scarcely half a century since, as intense as that respecting colour is now in the colonies.

The degradation of forming an alliance with the family of the most wealthy merchant was held to tarnish indelibly the highest birth and brightest virtues; and where a distinction, so palpable as that of colour, is marked in every countenance; where, for centuries, a prejudice has been fostered by habit, encouraged and fomented by legal enactments and policy; great allowance should be made for its intensity. At the earliest settlement of the colonies, no aversion to forming a lawful connection between the classes appears to have existed; the ordinances of Louis the fourteenth admitted the possibility of this connection, and made provision for it. Boyer de Peyrelan, in his account of Guadaloupe, is said to have remarked that, down to the seventeenth century, marriages between the whites and negroes were not without example. Labat, in his first edition, mentions some instances of that kind which, as has been observed, and is known to be a fact, has caused the proscription of this edition at Martinique. It is only when laws were framed upon that short-sighted political principle, that "colour was doomed to servitude," that the prejudice rapidly gained ground; and even then instances have been known when families wished to form mixed marriages; for, as observed by the author of the annuals, "*Le Conseil superieur, par l'amour du bien, resta opposé aux mariages de cette nature;*" so that it was only by a strained assumption of legislative authority, by a judicial body, that in the colony where that feeling most predominates such marriages were prevented. The example of the United States of America proves, and proves only, that white men are better suited to work in a cold northern climate, and black men in a climate which more nearly approaches the tropics; but it does not prove that the blacks would not work quite as well in their climate, if there were no whites to hold the cart-whip over them. As to the existence of the prejudice against colour, in the United States, in New York, or New England, where

slavery, as a condition of society, has been abolished, the coloured class are but few, and when, to a presumption of superiority, it matters little how originating, is added a certainty of the want of sufficient strength in the assumed inferior; where privilege and strength combine; the surprise would be that prejudice should be removed, particularly in representative and still more in republican governments: witness at this moment the prejudice against the Jews in England. Besides, does not the American rule, with regard to Africans, extend to the aboriginal inhabitants of their own country?

“It is a declared law of this state, that the Indians are not citizens, but distinct tribes, living under the protection of government, and consequently, therefore, they never can be made citizens under the act of Congress.”

“It may become a question,” says the same author, “to what extent persons of mixed breed are excluded, and perhaps there might be difficulties as to the copper coloured native of America, or the yellow, or tawny race of Asiatics; for the act of Congress confines the description of individuals capable of naturalization to free white persons.”* Whilst such enactments exist, can it be matter of astonishment, that prejudices thus fostered do not disappear?

And though those feelings prevail, more or less, where slavery has once existed, and where they have been encouraged, often has it been observed, with truth, that the large proprietor, the man distinguished by rank, and property, and character, is least influenced by them; whilst the power is too eagerly sought at all times not to be readily assumed, and only with difficulty abandoned, by those who can claim no better distinction, especially when it attaches to so cheap a consideration as the shade of the skin.

But the African and his descendants are “idle, worthless, and indolent, and disloyal.” Had this class been indolent,

* Kent's Commentaries.

idle, unprincipled, or disloyal, their being so had not been very unreasonably—nay it had been fully—accounted for by their labouring under oppression.

But are they so in fact? Instances of advancement, by dint of industry, abound in the West Indies among the coloured class. Instances of persons born in servitude, who have risen to wealth, are not wanting.

It is not my purpose to enter at large on matters discussed elsewhere, or to adduce such evidence as may be derived from other sources. The object is to state the result of my personal experience and observation. I shall, therefore, barely refer to Humboldt, who describes the Indian villages; to the testimony of Captain Basil Hall, who, in his travels in the United States, observes, that schoolmasters could see no difference in the relative capacity of their white and coloured pupils; to Mr. Ward's account of the industry of emancipated persons at Mexico; and, to the proofs adduced that, though slavery may exist in some parts of the East Indies, still much sugar is there produced by free labour. But, besides this, instances exist to my knowledge which strongly corroborate the observations of these most respectable authorities.

First, as to individuals. Isambert asserts, That some French field marshals and ministers of State (and some very eminent ones) are reported to be men of colour. When the insurrection in St. Lucia was put down by General Moore, (about thirty years since) large bodies of the insurgents capitulated, on condition that they should be allowed to withdraw from the colony. They removed to Guadaloupe, and thence to France. Some of these persons who were slaves, or the children of slaves, are generals at this moment in the French service. General Pelage, a common agricultural slave from St. Lucia, and who first got into notice from his conduct in the field among the insurgents, subsequently became governor of Guadaloupe, and held that government down to 1803. His

administration is said to have been firm, judicious, and enlightened. On delivering up the government, he continued in the French service, and was ultimately killed, in Spain, at the head of his regiment. His son, who is now residing at St. Lucia, is quite dark as was his father: he is a respectable inn-keeper, and a man of great intelligence. Generals in our service, and captains in the navy, have also been men of colour.

One morning the Registrar of my Court mentioned to me, that he had just drawn up a deed of manumission for an old free Negro, in favour of his faithful servant; it was a free gift, and the seventh or eighth that this gentleman had prepared in the course of his practice for this old African. He had first raised money to free himself; had then purchased the freedom of his wife, and in succession of each of their several children, I believe, six or seven in number; and he was then granting manumission to the faithful servant, or rather companion, who had assisted him in that work. Mr. Philip, a gentleman, who, for thirty years, was commandant of the quarter of Dennery at St. Lucia, a quarter to the windward of the island, but separated from the market town of Castries by a lofty range of mountains, knowing, as every planter does, how necessary it is that slaves should have some little property, and seeing that his had not an opportunity of attending market to sell their provisions, has, for some years, adopted the following arrangement, namely:—His slaves labour for him, as usual, during the hours prescribed by law; but they have also their own "Cane pieces," which they cultivate during their own time. The sugar is manufactured in his works without any interference from him. It is then shipped, and the produce shared between him and them; his (the master's) portion going to pay the rent of the land, and the use of his works. Here, then, is free labour in full operation with persons who might be supposed exhausted by their owner's work; yet there is scarcely an estate that makes better

returns in proportion to its strength, or where the slaves are so fast increasing. At Trinidad, it is reported, as a fact, that, on some estates, half the work, and *that* the agricultural part, is done, at this moment, by free labour; which, in some measure, may account for the heavy returns from that island as compared with the number of slaves. The practice is to engage a certain number of persons, chiefly Indians and Peons, and also some free Negroes, to clear, hole and clean the ground; in other words, to perform the agricultural part. This fact is doubly important, as Trinidad is the only British West India colony where the free class very nearly approaches in number to the slaves, and here accordingly, the trades being supplied, they turn to free labour in the culture of the soil.

The restrictions as to colour were withdrawn, as regards St. Lucia, in 1829.

A young gentleman, the son of a judge of that island, by a dark coloured woman, had received from his father a good plain education at Liverpool; he spoke English and French, and wrote both languages with ease and fluency; but being, from his descent, inadmissible to any office of respectability, his father had had the good sense to bring him up to a respectable trade, that of a watchmaker. Soon after I arrived at St. Lucia, this young man was recommended to me as a clerk. Having kept him in that capacity for six years, an opportunity offered of bringing him to the bar. He accordingly obtained a commission; and I have the satisfaction of knowing that this young gentleman is now one of the leading advocates of the court and enjoying, in a high degree, the public confidence.

In the course of the discussions which took place in St. Lucia, and which led to public enquiry (directed by government), the glaring contradictions in the statements made by myself, compared with those of others in public authority, with reference to the respectability of the free classes and their general habits, rendered it necessary to investigate the point

fully. On that occasion were examined, on oath, the leading merchants in the country; an officer in His Majesty's service of many years standing, who in his capacity of drill-major of militia had had to discipline all the militia corps; and a medical gentleman of some thirty years' colonial experience;— and I further collected all the information from the different offices which could bear on the subject. The result appears in the following abstract of the testimony, testimony which those against whom I had brought charges did not attempt to controvert.—They, the free coloured and free black class, are proved to be about five thousand in number, of whom one eighth, or somewhat more, may be manumitted slaves; and there are eighty discharged negro soldiers. Among the manumitted slaves there are many who possess landed property and slaves. Taken generally, they are certified by these gentlemen to be tranquil, humble, and most unassuming; and their conduct, since all distinctions were removed, as truly astonishing. They enjoy the esteem and consideration of the white class, nor was any disturbance ever known among them. There is not, as unanimously sworn to, a more respectable set of persons, taking their station in life, in His Majesty's dominions. As militia-men, (and they form the bulk of the militia), they are deficient neither in intelligence nor zeal, whether as compared with whites of the same corps, or with persons of their station elsewhere. So much is it otherwise, that there is a company, formed exclusively of them, for the protection of property in town, in case of fire and such other contingencies. As to property, there are two or three sugar planters, and a large number of coffee, cocoa, and provision planters, possessing each from ten to forty slaves. There are two first-rate merchants, and a large number of second-rate merchants and retail dealers, among them; and many of the latter purchase from £2000 to £3000 currency, or about £1000 sterling, of goods, in the course of the year. One third of the trade of the colony is in their hands. The

dry-good trade they possess almost exclusively; and they are remarkable for probity in their dealings, and for punctuality in their payments. The generality are retail merchants and small proprietors, nor are they by any means so embarrassed as the whites.

The coloured class are further proved, by documents collected from the public offices, to possess 2,350 slaves—about one sixth of the whole number in the colony. Of these, 1,202 are plantation and 1,148 personal slaves; and, as there are but 2,680 personal slaves in the country, they possess nearly half the personal slaves.

There was no sufficient remedy against involved proprietors of plantations, and therefore, perhaps, they may not be in possession of so large a number of old established estates.

And it is proved that in the town and port of Castries they own more than one half the rental of the town, and full half the registered shipping in number and value.—Such is the proof, such the uncontroverted evidence, adduced.

To proceed to a still more striking instance of the capacity of the negro:—It happened that several slaves took refuge from Martinique, where the slave-trade is avowedly carried on, to St. Lucia, in 1829. This caused a discussion, the effect of which was to make it generally known, that on a foreign slave's reaching a British colony, he, by Dr. Lushington's bill, becomes free; and in consequence of this discussion, several, exceeding 100 in number, came over in the year 1830.

Here were persons leaving a country of unmitigated slavery; persons precisely in the condition in which our whole slave population may be supposed to have been some thirty years ago, by those who maintain that the condition of the slave has improved;—here were persons described by their government as incendiaries, idlers, and poisoners.

When I left the colony in April last, some were employed for wages in the business they were best acquainted with; some as masons, and carpenters; some as domestics; others in clean-

ing land, or as labourers on estates; whilst about twenty-six had clubbed together and placed themselves under the direction of a free coloured man, an African—one of the persons deported from Martinique in 1824. These last had erected a pottery at a short distance from Castries: they took a piece of land, three or four cleared it, others fished up coral and burnt lime, five or six quarried and got the stones and performed the mason-work, the remainder felled the timber and worked it in; and the little money that was requisite was supplied, in advance, by the contractor for the church, on the tiles to be furnished for the building. This pottery was completed, a plain structure, but of great solidity, and surprising neatness. Thus had they actually introduced a new manufacture into the country, for which it was previously indebted to our foreign neighbours, or to the home market.

All this had been effected simply by not interfering with them, by leaving them entirely to themselves: they were mustered once a month, to shew that government had an eye on them, and then allowed full liberty. One man only was sick in the hospital, and he was supported by the contributions of his companions.

In the course of the investigation above referred to, a document was produced which also throws much light on this point.

This was a report, submitted to the government in *August* 1822, from a gentleman, one of the most thorough West Indians in the country, (his usual boast was, that he was born in St. Lucia, and had never left it,) who had held the office of commandant at Castries, entitled "Observations applied for by Government on the frequency of the practice of running away among Slaves."

He accounted for it, among other causes, by the too great intimacy between slaves and the lower class of free persons; and in proof of this he offered to submit for inspection certain small plantations, often occupied by a free coloured man and his wife alone, the former being either a fisherman, mason,

carpenter, or sportsman; and yet, observes the reporter, "*His plantation is better cultivated, and he has more land in cultivation, than proprietors of several slaves.*" "Who then," he adds, "cultivated this property? Perhaps day labourers. No, he employs none; he employs run-away slaves!" A charitable inference! But assuming this, what is the labour of run-away slaves, but free labour under every species of discouragement? The fact is, this gentlemen, like most creoles, had no conception of what free labour can effect. If a tradesman and his wife, to keep their plot of ground in good order and cultivation, the former still attending to his trade, must necessarily employ run-away slaves, there is scarcely a person of that description in Guernsey or Jersey who must not employ run-away slaves also.

The report then proceeded to state instances, into which it is unnecessary to go further than to say that they fully disprove its own assumptions.—Here, then, are specific instances, and instances of whole bodies, shewing that the capacity of the negro, his wants, his inclinations, resemble those of all other human beings; and that the contrary theory is the offspring of a convenient prejudice.

For some time it obtained vogue, owing to two reports from commissioners of inquiry, sent to Tortola to inquire as to the condition of Africans apprenticed there some years before, and to Sierra Leone to report on that establishment. These reports were regarded as authority unanswerable in 1828. On examining them it struck me that the facts, there mentioned, by no means bore out the inferences drawn from them, but that, on the contrary, they accounted fully, on the plainest principles of human conduct, for the unsatisfactory condition in which the African communities were found. The inquiries, as I then stated, seemed to me only to prove gross mismanagement on the part of those charged with superintending these experiments. They proved that a man will

engage in those pursuits which are most advantageous to him, and that he will remove to the place where he is best paid;—that he will prefer five shillings to one even though, savage as he is, he have to learn a trade when he might otherwise dig; and that on such terms he will leave the over populous island of Tortola for the flourishing colony of St. Thomas's;—that the untaught savage is not so devoid of a just sense of his own interest as to become enamoured of labour through the mere love of labour, especially if he can get better fed and better clothed, than he ever was in his own country, without working at all;—that to render him a useful member of society, he must change his habits, and that this change will be proportioned to the stimulus employed, whether that stimulus appear in the shape of coercion or encouragement; and that it may not be a bad plan, perhaps the most feasible, to make a cautious use of both;—and, lastly, that an African will not be expert in that kind of employment in which it was an absolute condition that he should not engage; and that, therefore, as the Tortola apprentices were actually forbidden from engaging in agriculture, they did not often labour at it: altho' which would have as certainly happened in the case of whites.—There was an instance, at St. Lucia, of an African who had been illegally imported into that colony, and who, when enfranchised by the Court, got indolent and diseased, and pined away and died. With an Esquimaux, the result would have been the same.

All this proceeded from previous habits, with which physical causes had nothing to do. Who has not read with delight an account of the consequences of a sudden change of habits in Miss Edgeworth's *Ennui*?

Such was the opinion I then formed of the Sierra Leone and Tortola evidence, on the statement of certain gentlemen, who claim the merit of being the authors of what was then called "the philosophy of labour."

Since that time many interesting official communications,

with reference to the colony of *Sierra Leone*, have appeared; and it is now proved, on the testimony of Generals Turner and Campbell, Colonel Denham, and Major Ricketts, successive governors, that this opinion was practically sound: these accounts have been published, it is therefore proper to do no more than to refer to them. Two or three very short extracts, however, may not be considered out of place.

One of these gentlemen reports as follows: "What the colony, or rather the liberated Africans have felt the most want of, is instruction, capital, and example; with the very little they have had of either conveyed in a manner likely to benefit them generally, it is to me daily an increasing subject of astonishment, that the liberated Africans settled here have done so much for themselves as they have." "The propensities of the people, located in the different settlements, are very generally in favour of agriculture." "I have not seen any disinclination for voluntary labour." "It appears to be a system perfectly understood and practised by the liberated Africans, and strengthens with their strength as they become more sensible of the sweets of labour, by enjoying the profits of it, and the comforts those profits enable them to purchase." "An anxious desire to obtain and enjoy the luxuries of life is apparent in every visage, from the oldest settler to the liberated African of yesterday." "Of the practicability of introducing free labour among the liberated Africans settled here, I have not the smallest doubt, nor do I believe they would work half so well in any other way, except the greatest cruelty should be exercised towards them."—And is this not consonant with common sense? You deprive a man of every incentive to exertion but the *whip*, and then express surprise that he requires the *whip* to make him work! Would the veriest Negro—assuming that Negroes are but full-grown cattle—reason thus?

So long, then, as these Negroes obtained a gratuitous maintenance, and were for years supported in idleness by the

Government, they did not work; but an advantageous change in their condition took place, as soon as another and more wholesome system was adopted; which system was nothing more nor less than giving them an interest in the soil, and then leaving them to work or starve. They were put in freehold possession each of a lot of land, and 3*d.* a day (since reduced to 2*d.*) was allowed them for the three first months. At the expiration of that time they were able to support themselves, and not only to do so; but to commence purchasing the comforts, and gradually even the luxuries of life.

Now, with respect to Tortola: Another commissioner having been sent to that Colony, the Government, in consequence of an able report from that gentleman, Mr. Gannon, abandoned all control over the African apprentices; they were left entirely to their own resources, and placed on the footing of all other free inhabitants.

From that time every thing has gone on satisfactorily; nothing has been heard of complaints—nothing of the innumerable evils which had been so positively and dogmatically predicted.

Again, orders were, some time since, sent out from Government, to liberate all the crown slaves in the colonies. It is scarcely a month since Lord Howick declared officially, "That all those persons were engaged in supporting themselves by their own industry." In short, every fact and every argument are corroborative of the only sound opinion, that good political institutions, early example, judicious premiums, moderate constraint proceeding from wholesome laws and an upright executive,—all these producing security of property and person, and giving confidence to capital—will, in any country, or under any clime, or whatever be the colour of the skin, bring, in their train, industry, wealth, happiness and civilization: whilst density of population, sterility of soil, prejudices of colour and caste, and theories of the influence of climate, will only tend to retard the moment, when the

consequences of good government will stand more clearly proved.

There are two ways of viewing the colonies; one the ancient system of strict monopoly, by which those articles only were to be produced in them, which could not come into competition with the productions and manufactures of the mother country; the other, the present system of free competition.

Colonies, under the first system, were valuable in as much as they differed in their productions from the nation to which they belonged; and as they exchanged all they produced, save the little required for their own consumption, for what is produced at home.

This system has had its day, and those who have thriven under it are naturally inclined, on recollecting its pecuniary advantages, or hearing of its profits but forgetting its loss, to overlook its evils. Under that system, every thing was forced; prices were forced, consignments in return were forced, labour forced, life forced; hence, high interest and usurious profits, rapid fortunes, rapid bankruptcies, smuggling, and perjury, producing excited passions, and rapid mortality;—thence also the iron collars and the whip; thence a decrease of population, and thence a continuance of the slave trade. To this is owing the erection of the prejudice against colour into a political maxim; and thus were produced those insurrections in which the colonies were so often involved, while, even in a pecuniary point of view, enormous occasional profits scarcely compensated for the precariouness and loss of capital.

It must be owned that the system, as it stood, was complete; it was one of unmitigated terror. Not to leave the slave the slightest prospect of obtaining redress; not to inspire him with the most distant hope of freedom; this was its perfection! To set liberty before him, however remotely; to shew him that punishment could in any case attend cruelty towards him; was so far to undermine it! The estate was the slave's world, the manager his deity: to propitiate him whether for

good or evil, and in that alone, centered the negro's duty. So thought every planter, so thought the government, so thinks many a planter still.

A gentleman, who had held the office of Procureur General of St. Lucia, retired from that island at the last peace, and published a small tract on the colonies, suggesting what would now be deemed very slight and most flimsy amendments.

"If ever," he observed, "it should become absolutely necessary, for the sake of the colonial society, to execute a white man for misconduct towards his slave; the enforcement of this judgment would be so repugnant to the colonial system, that he would recommend that the culprit be sent to the mother country, and executed there." And with this he expressed the hope that the white class would be induced to treat the other free class with greater kindness. For these remarks the book was prohibited in St. Lucia, and his successors actually forbade its being read even by whites. This was so recently as 1818.

He, therefore, that argues for a monopoly and opposes the slave trade, is inconsistent, and the nearly universal mortality, throughout the colonies, shews that he is so. Equally inconsistent is he, who opposing ultimate emancipation would argue in favour of an open trade. The choice is between the two systems, a system of domination in one class for its exclusive benefit, or one of mutual interests and of mutual dependence. In short, he who does not mean to retrograde, must advance: the alternative is between the African trade and Universal freedom.

The incubus, therefore, which now weighs down the colonies, is *slavery without the slave trade*. To render them prosperous, either extinguish slavery, or re-establish the trade. Perfect slavery requires a large consumption of human fuel; the supply is stopped, and prices are become ruinous; and doubly ruinous must this state of things be when the slave holder has to compete with free labour on one side, and with the slave trade on the other;—with India and Brazil.

As to the relative advantage of the two systems, does it admit of a doubt? How many anomalies does not this very island of St. Lucia present!

It produced every kind of wood, even to the most precious; yet chairs and tables were more cheaply obtained from England. Its pasturages were among the finest in the world, requiring little care, and at merely a nominal rent; and yet, beef salted and brought from Europe was cheaper than the fresh beef of the country.

Nor could this be said to be owing to any predisposition to indolence in the labourer, since the anomaly existed during, and was actually produced by, a system of forced labour;—or to superior machinery;—what machinery is necessary for feeding and killing cattle? A clue, in reality, is here furnished for points otherwise inexplicable. One class only was viewed as existing in the community; every thing alike favoured and yet weighed down that particular class: the laws of the country prohibited the exportation of the only commodities that could be cultivated by persons without capital. What was their object?—that the planter might have them as a drug. The same laws forbade the poor man from cultivating the articles which were exportable. Why again?—That the planter might derive the whole benefit of the market. Is it then any longer surprising that agricultural labour cannot have made progress among any but the favoured class?

This will again explain why, on the planter principally, fell the burden of taxation and of many other public duties. The roads were repaired, not by all classes in the country jointly, but by the slave-holder exclusively. The Colony paid heavy fees, but on what vessels? Not on the merchantmen from Europe, but on the small craft. The taxes were heavy, not in the aggregate, but because they weighed chiefly on the slaves and the produce. And with land sufficient to furnish the whole West Indian islands with ground provisions, a population, not amounting to one twentieth of the number the

island can support, alternately fluctuated between famine and superabundance. When provisions were scarce, the free population and the slaves planted freely, and the market was soon furnished to repletion; the remainder was then allowed to rot in the ground, until a scarcity produced a re-action. In short, one kind of interest only existed, and that was pampered and fostered to its own destruction.

Now indeed the planter is truly wretched, for his fetters only remain, and he clings to them from habit and necessity. Weighed down by his home connexions, and by the very nature of his property, he works, and feels he must work on, to his all-but-inevitable ruin. Were an opportunity to offer, or an opening to be presented, to avail himself of it were impossible; and hence the little benefit hitherto derived, by the old colonies, from Mr. Huskisson's measures.

In a free country, the minds of the million are stimulated to separate exertion: each seeks out new channels of employment. There is an elasticity in free communities which soon re-establishes a certain degree of prosperity; but, in slave countries, the million are mere machines; the minds of the hundred alone are at work,—and even *they* find the application of brute force sufficient for their purpose: so that the very manufacture which they have laboured in for centuries is still in its infancy; and this fact again accounts for the assumed natural stupidity of the Negro.

Then also, in Europe, when one kind of occupation fails to remunerate, each man turns to another, and fifty or a hundred turn to as many different employments; but this cannot be with whole gangs of slaves, consisting of a hundred or a thousand. The planter cannot discharge his workmen; his capital being invested in the purchase of the slaves, he must forfeit that or work them on.

Then again, in the most flourishing colonies, symptoms of unsoundness and of premature decay, strangely contrast with the prosperity and luxury around. And why is there no rising

class; none to renovate society; none to step in and replace those whom misfortune or misconduct hath hurled from their height? Every thing is in extremes.

But years after, indeed, when a happy mediocrity or a gradation of ranks begins to prevail, then, the rapid rise to fortune of those who topped society is remembered, while those who perished from want or disease are alone forgotten.

The condition of St. Domingo has often been put forward by pro-slavery writers. The difference in the amount of exportable produce from that colony, compared with what it furnished antecedently to her revolution, is an undisputed fact. But to what is this owing? The inhabitants of St. Domingo are now supplying the wants of their own community, making their shoes and chairs, growing their corn, and feeding their stock. Let these wants be once amply supplied, and then will the attention of Haytians be turned to the production of the commodities for which there is the readiest market. They will then cultivate produce for exportation; and then will the fact, that some kinds of produce are better adapted than others to their climate and their soil, lead them to do that for their own benefit which is now produced elsewhere by coercion.

Then will those results be assuredly attained, without any sacrifice of principle, which are now acquired by inflicting evils that far more than counterbalance the advantages obtained, and by perpetrating horrors at which humanity shudders. These remarks on St. Domingo were submitted three years ago; and they have been singularly borne out by authentic reports which have recently reached us from that colony; for *there* is found a happy, flourishing, and contented peasantry, engaged in the cultivation of their own small freeholds; and as these persons acquire capital, they form larger establishments, which are gradually rising. This proves that the general wants of the community are supplied, and, if well governed, that community must soon acquire strength, and rise to importance. On the other hand, whilst the hill-sides, to which they

fled for protection, and the neighbourhood of the towns, are occupied by the free labourer; the open and extensive plains, where were situated the larger estates, continue in many instances to bear the appearance of decay. But which is the happiest of the two conditions? They have now had an opportunity of judging of both; and if a man be happier in slavery than in freedom, none can better appreciate the difference than those who so long enjoyed the blessings of slavery, and who have now the misfortune to be living in freedom.

The experiment of conferring those blessings on them anew, was once made by Britain, once by France, the two most powerful and wealthy nations of the earth. Let it be tried again by the united energies of both, and will any one doubt the event?

The contrast between those two conditions was forcibly brought to my mind by an incident which occurred some time since.—One day I visited officially a plantation in the highest order,—the cleanliness of the buildings, their perfect state of repair, the luxuriance of the crops, all that concerned the manager's interest, bore an appearance truly gratifying. But it was my duty to inspect the gang: *they* were wretched to a degree, all but naked, eaten up with sores, wealed with flogging, diminishing rapidly, the only exception being a fine healthy child about six years of age. And, on full enquiry, all this order, all this splendour, had been purchased at their expence.

Much about the same time, I was called on to visit another estate, which the proprietors had quitted for some years, and, for about three, had left even without a manager. The house and buildings were in decay, the general cultivation neglected, the appearance of the property, in all respects, the contrast of the other; but that contrast also extended to the gang.—The men were a stout, healthy, body of labourers. Men, women, and children, were well clothed and well fed;

their grounds stored with ample provisions; a mother with her nine, another with six children around her; a great-grandmother with a numerous progeny, all smiling and cheerful; their cottages well wattled, the inside separated into two or three different compartments, clean to a degree, and each containing a trunk filled with good clothing and some female ornaments. Yet was this plantation in the most remote, the other in the most convenient, part of the country.

What was this but St. Domingo in its former, and St. Domingo in its present state;—St. Domingo, breathing an air of splendour, but concealing much actual misery; and St. Domingo externally in decay, but containing much real comfort;—the splendour of the one glowing and transitory, the comfort of the other unobtrusive and permanent? And where was the most real, substantial, prosperity?—Which condition would the most mathematical statesman, the man who judges of humanity by figures, prefer? What, if both be left alone, will, twenty years hence, be the relative condition of these plantations?

ESSAY III.

Ameliorative measures hitherto adopted.

It has been now proved, by argument and example, that there is no physical impediment to the application of measures of policy, to the West Indies, which, under similar circumstances could be adopted in Europe; that the fault has not lain so much in the men as in the measures so long persevered in; and that there must be a thorough change of system.

This change has commenced: it may be said to be in rapid progress. It will now therefore be proper to state what are the steps hitherto taken, in that colony where change has been most extensively introduced, and what are its present results?

Before government could expect to reform what was wrong, with effect, it was requisite it should reform itself, in all that concerned its local officers, and the removal of the shackles and standing abuses which weighed so heavily on these communities. As respects their trade, Lord Wallace, and subsequently Mr. Huskisson and Lord Goderich, having drawn public attention to the subject, many of these defects have been remedied.

As a proof of the necessity which existed for reform in this department, I had, for a length of time, in my possession, a return of the fees and duties paid by a single small vessel, which had imported a cargo of flour into Castries, during the scarcity of 1819. These not only absorbed the whole amount of the cargo, but the master was compelled to borrow about sixty dollars more, on bottomry, to discharge them, before he could clear out!

In February 1826, an order was issued, that no fee or duty whatever should be taken or levied on shipping in any colonial office whatever except the Treasury. All the fees which pressed severely on the community were then abolished, and the remainder greatly reduced, and directed to be paid into the Treasury only. The officers, whom it was found necessary to retain, were put on adequate salaries, the remaining offices and all schedules of fees cancelled, and the fees still retained in the shape of a duty proved sufficient, in that small island, not only to cover the whole of the salaries and compensations; but to meet almost exclusively a considerable increase of expenditure caused by other contingencies, and to cover the deficiency arising from the loss of all the American duties, and of the weighty taxes on manumissions.

The trade of the island doubled in little more than one year, and it has now trebled. The small shipping from St. Lucia are to be seen in every Port of the West Indies, and the middle class have found employment. In fact, the face of the whole town and port of Castries has changed, and it has become comparatively animated by the spur thus given to industry.

In some of the colonies, at this moment, every vessel entering the Port must, it is said, clear out in six or seven offices; for what purpose except to accumulate fees? The trade between the colonies should be as free as the turnpike road from Bath to Bristol. A very small duty on the ship, sufficient to maintain the harbour and no more, ought to be taken or levied; this trade would then afford occupation for numbers; each colony would engage in those branches of industry for which it was best adapted—the old and populous colonies, probably, in plain manufactures, the new and more fertile in agriculture. They would mutually exchange the produce of their labour, and supply each other's wants. Nothing is more striking to a stranger than the very little intercourse, and the heavy expence attending that intercourse, between the colo-

nies ; nor is it possible to estimate the great extent to which improvement in this respect might be carried.

The next step on the part of government is, to send out officers strongly impressed with the necessity of amendment.

When first a great political question is mooted, a long established government will entertain doubts, and very rational doubts, of the expediency of adopting the new theory. When convinced themselves they will still respect the doubts of others, and though they no longer proceed with reluctance, yet, at the same time, they do so with extreme caution and circumspection.

The next and last step is, when their conviction is clear, not only as to the expediency of the change itself ; but that sufficient time has been allowed, and the question has been sufficiently discussed, to solve the rational doubts of others : then they will act firmly and resolutely.

During the two first stages, temporising and vacillation will have created great uneasiness and discontent. The last stage brings matters to an issue ; and where the cause is good the views are sound, firmness restores tranquillity.

Such is the progress, not of this question in particular, but of all constitutional amendments.

It is now to be hoped, and there is reason to believe, that the two first stages are passed ; the government itself being pledged, proceeded, but naturally at first with much hesitation ; and having respected long existing prejudices, till threatened with open resistance, it is desirable they should now see the propriety of adopting a decisive and resolute, though a practical and moderate course. Not only does it appear advisable not to appoint slave-holders to office ; but to follow the plan lately adopted by the military, and to encourage the retirement, with, of course, the usual compensation, of officers who have been any length of time in the colonies.

It has been shown how much, with the best intentions,

there was originally to deter them from the display of the vigour necessary for the enforcement of new views, and therefore it is not to be expected that they will throw off those habits of indifference which they assumed as a duty, and enter with spirit or zeal on a directly opposite course, at a time when their impressions have worn away, and they are become reconciled by custom to a system which, at first, must have been painful to them. Many offices may be combined. It should be a principle to have as few offices as possible; but let them be adequately provided for.

No government can expect that gentlemen, duly qualified, will expose themselves to such climates, and enter on such services, without a fair remuneration, while secondary situations might be filled up from the colony, and officers distinguishing themselves in these might be subsequently promoted.

Public officers, who undertake these duties, may be reminded that they must leave, for a time, every hope of comfort at the threshold. They must seek consolation, for the popularity denied them, in that internal satisfaction which will ever attend a conscientious discharge of duty, in the veneration of the oppressed, and in the confidence of the few, (for some are to be found in every community who will respect their motives, though they share not in their views.) In the execution of his delicate and hazardous duties, the public officer will have cautiously to deliberate on every step he takes; he must be convinced that he is not only right, but so completely right that misrepresentation cannot long make him appear wrong; never trusting to probabilities, and ever having his proofs at hand; for he may expect to be closely watched, and watched and resisted too, not only by the wicked and designing, but by a large portion of worthy, deserving, and otherwise respectable men. They consider him, however they may personally esteem and even venerate him, as nothing more nor less; it is needless to mince it, than an agent or accessory in an act of spoliation, and, therefore, will they countenance

conduct, which, under other circumstances, they would be the first to condemn; for they are roused to a pitch of passion, they avow it, approaching to desperation. But if this caution be recommended in deliberation, very differently must he proceed when he comes to action. Convinced he is right, he must, contemning clamour and defying resistance, proceed with a bold and unflinching determination. Concession or compromise thenceforth is weakness—it destroys the confidence of friends—and every act done from that time forward will only be, should he once concede, another step towards promoting confusion.

Indeed so long as government, yielding to the will of the mother country, initiate and persevere in measures so extremely unpalatable to her colonies, the officers they employ are without an alternative, and must sacrifice, in a greater or less degree, their duty to them, or their popularity in the colonies. Therefore must they expect much intrigue, complaint, and annoyance. This is a painful, a distressing position; but it is not the officer's seeking, farther than as it necessarily follows on the unpopular duties in which he has engaged.

As to the community, it appears imperatively requisite not only to avoid the infliction of any actual grievance, but the commission of any act which, at other times, would bear the semblance of a grievance. Rather should government submit to some degree of provocation. Therefore was it with regret that the friends of the slaves observed discussions respecting customs' duties now happily given up; and indeed respecting any matter which has not a direct reference to the reformation of slavery. In other respects, the proceedings towards them should be popular.

The judicial, if not political, institutions should be placed on a better footing. With respect to the judicial branch, this seems universally admitted; yet, however remodelled, they cannot be expected, for a time at least, to give general satisfaction. Mr. Fox long since laid down the maxim,

that however good, theoretically, institutions may be, they cannot succeed except they harmonise with the views of the people. Now, a new opinion must have time to form, prejudice and passion to wear away, before any new institutions, giving fair weight to the African and his descendants, will be agreeable to the White—and except the new institutions be modelled on that principle: nothing will have been done.

In all these points considerable advances are making towards a better system.

The next point is, that of removing all distinctions among the free class, so as to leave but one broad line of demarcation in society, that between free and slave. In the Crown colonies this is done, and effectual progress is making rapidly in the Chartered colonies. The benefit to be derived from this is incalculable; the local constituency and representation will be enlarged, and the whole frame of society changed.

Nor will this benefit be so remote as might be supposed. The largest proprietor in Castries is a man of colour. Men of wealth and intelligence have been slaves. Some of these may become members of their assemblies. Others, whose fathers were slaves, are now jurors. To all such it must be needless to enlarge on the comforts or delights of slavery.

In 1828, when this point was submitted to government, the writer argued as follows: “By removing all political distinctions among the free class they will mix and intermarry together. Nature will right herself. Where the difference is from white to black, antipathies and jealousies may arise. It was a sound observation of Buonaparte’s, that by opposing tall men to short, and hunchbacked to straight, a spirit of emulation and rivalry is at once exhibited, which would not else exist. But where there will be every shade of colour and complexion, white, tawny, mustee, copper, red, or black, none enjoying exclusive privileges, colour will be no more considered than size. The amalgamation in that respect is

already so complete that it often would require a knowledge of families and pedigree to distinguish white from coloured; indeed, there are very few thorough blacks left either in freedom or slavery."

"But," I added, "this will be a work of time, and shortsighted would that man appear who would endeavour to bring it round too hastily. By this being a work of time I mean, that time will be required to remove the prejudices in Society. Laws, founded on so wrong a principle, cannot be too soon changed, for the prejudice will only begin to wear away when they are utterly repealed."—They were repealed shortly after this was written, and St. Lucia has the credit of being the first colony in which this important amelioration was effected; and now, in 1831, it has been observed with pleasure, that scarcely a man in the country, however warmly impressed with colonial feelings on the slave question, ventures, even in argument, to uphold the coloured restrictions. The free man of colour whose bow it was a species of slight in a white man towards his equals to return, occupies office and proves himself worthy of it, even though born a slave. He enters into general society; not into all, it is true, but into the very highest; and he demeans himself with perfect propriety. In short, what it was supposed would take years to remove, has been done in months with scarcely a shadow of opposition.

For this great act of justice the nation is indebted to Sir George Murray; he it was who first discovered, or acted up to the discovery, to use the coloured class's own emphatic expressions, "that they were men;" and, in so doing, he has secured to himself the gratitude of millions, and the admiration of every man, who (whatever may be his other opinions) respects the rights of his fellow creatures.

Next, as to the *slave*. And here, at the outset, we have to encounter farther difficulties. If this question has been embarrassed with needless objections, founded on imaginary phy-

sical obstacles ; so, on the contrary, the original rights of man and the Christian principle have been advocated, with no little warmth, by gentlemen whose motives cannot but be deemed laudable, whilst they endanger the success of a cause which has already sufficient difficulties to contend with.

The Christian principle inculcates that, "we should do unto others as we would they should do unto us." This, as between master and slave, is a point of conscience ; but, as between the country and the planter, true Christian charity requires that where sacrifices are to be made we ourselves should commence them. An enlarged view of the Christian principle is an enlarged view of general utility.

Is not the subject, to some, already sufficiently productive of excitement ? Is it not, to others, sufficiently barren and offensive, taking it as it stands, without recurring to its origin ? And where is this to end ? Mr. O'Connell,* at one of the Anti-Slavery meetings, declared "himself a slave." If so, he was a stout, well built and well fed slave ; and being then at the head of the Catholic Association enjoyed rather more elbow room than is usually conceded to his fellow bondsmen in the West Indies.

Can such statements serve any other purpose than to excite doubts as to the actual condition of the slave ?

That the Irish suffered under grievances there is no intention to deny ; nor that the act which placed them on a level with their fellow subjects, in political rights, was an act of great national justice ; but when the field Negro enjoys one tenth of the liberty which not only Mr. O'Connell, but the humblest peasant in Ireland, did ten years ago, from that moment nine-tenths of the exigencies of the case will have ceased ; then nine-tenths of the pain, which the contemplation of actual sufferings under systematic tyranny inspires,

* I hope this remark will not be considered as derogating from the regard which every liberal mind must entertain for Mr. O'Connell individually.

will be removed. Let all then unite in attaching importance, not to the name, but to the grievance; and let us above all recollect that, as Christians and as men, we are bound to look with compassion on those whom our supineness at least, or rather our own mistaken views of aggrandizement, have induced to expose themselves to every vicissitude of climate, and to every possible moral temptation, that they might contribute something to our mere luxuries.

Leaving it to others therefore to argue, if they will, that as by blood the title was gained, and as in blood it has continued, so, even at the risk of blood, it should be at once utterly destroyed,* I conceive it more conducive to the permanent well-being of all parties, of the country and of the colonist, to consider slavery as a monstrous political error productive of unimaginable mischief, unredeemed by a single advantage; but on the contrary, as recoiling with ten fold weight on the heads of those who have supported and fostered it.

In considering the question thus practically, it is necessary to state what amendments may be introduced without any compensation, and next, what compensation may be due to the slave holder. — Compensation is an indemnity for the loss of legal property, occasioned by any measure of state. There must therefore be a loss, and the property must have been held under a legal sanction; for even assuming that the right of the master or manager in the slave goes to the extent some slave owners pretend; assuming the slave to be property in the most unlimited sense; yet property is a creature of the law, and is ever resumable by the Sovereign power or legislature, on payment of a sufficient indemnification, whenever such resumption is requisite as conducive to the welfare of the country. On such occasions the legislature are the judges of the necessity of the case. The points to be considered

* See Surrey resolutions, which amount to this.

by them are, whether the benefit conferred on the community is such as to warrant their interference, and by whom the injury done is to be repaired.

It matters not whether this benefit inures to them by ameliorating the condition of a particular class, or by the establishment of a public institution, or by the construction of some public work; for in all cases the object to be considered by the state, is, whether the advantage to be derived is equal to the sacrifice;—and, by the persons suffering the detriment, how far the indemnification provided is sufficiently ample. They have then nothing more to do with the question of expediency; they have the security of the state,—and the good faith of government is pledged to them. The objection, therefore, that the legislature cannot interfere between the manager and his slave is untenable, even viewing a slave in the light of a horse, or a log of timber, or an acre of land.

But that slaves are not that kind of property seems equally demonstrable.

The British Parliament hath, it is true, allowed some of its subjects to purchase the labour, or service, of individuals, on their providing them with sufficient food and sustenance; but the power thus granted by the legislature was not a power of extermination, but a power of production and reproduction. Their business was to fertilize, and not to devastate. The labourer, therefore, though bound, in a certain service, to his manager, is not less under the protection of the law; the property is in his services; he is still a subject; and so long as he performs his duty, as settled by law, he is as fully entitled to the protection of the civil magistrate as his manager. If, indeed, ill-judged regulations have granted exorbitant powers to the manager, the slave must submit to their exercise, so long as they continue; but the manager can claim no higher guarantee for their continuance than that of the authority which granted them; and that authority is, in itself, competent to limit and modify them, so long as sufficient

authority is vested somewhere, either in the manager or public magistrate, to enforce the performance of a fair and moderate service. Then, the rights and duties of managers and slaves are reciprocal; and the manager can no more claim the services of the slave, without giving him sufficient time for repose, sufficient sustenance, clothing, and food, than the slave can legally claim an exemption from all labour, without providing his master with a sufficient indemnification. Every right, therefore, which the slave can possess, that will not militate against the performance of his duty to others, (care being taken that this duty shall not be excessive,) he is entitled to, without compensation; and, in reference to all such rights, the question as to the actual condition of slaves may be put out of sight. It matters not, thus far, whether they are the happiest or most abject of human beings. In either case, the right of holding property, the right of seeing, and bearing evidence of what they have seen and heard, the right of being parties in a suit, the right of retaining liberty when recovered, the right of discharging their debt of service by means of a sufficient indemnification,—all these, on the very grounds taken by the planters, cannot be withheld; and the slaves are entitled to them without compensation from the state.

The planter claims his slave's labour, and he has it. He disclaims all wish to exercise unnecessary power; then let him permit the slave to enjoy all that does not prevent his labouring for him or finding a substitute.

Again, it is a mistaken, though very general maxim, that a manager's power over a slave is unlimited, except by special enactment. He has that power only by enactment; nor is an enactment warranted, nor should it be allowed to continue, which grants him a more extensive power than is necessary for enforcing that which the law may have sanctioned as his right,—the fair labour of the man, without injury to his constitution. The manager's authority is the same as that of an officer over a soldier or

seaman, or a master over an apprentice. It is only warranted by law, and justifiable, when necessary, to compel the individual under control to perform his duty. Whether the advantage accruing from the performance of such duty were immediately for the benefit of the state, as with soldiers and sailors, or remotely for *its* benefit, but proximately for that of certain individuals whose rights are guaranteed by the state, as in the case of apprentices or slaves; every measure of amendment or amelioration, which does not so trench on the proprietor's rights as to deprive him of that moderate labour compatible with the health and well being of the labourer, may therefore be introduced, without any claim whatever to compensation. For any thing beyond that, it is the duty of the legislator, who sanctioned originally the commerce in slaves, to provide. Acting on these principles, what are the measures open to the government, and which ought to be submitted to by the West Indian, as entailing no sacrifice of legal property? And here, as the island of St. Lucia has, by general admission, made most progress in amelioration, the most convenient mode will be to state what has been done there, and then to report the result.

From the preceding discussion it will appear, that the slave laws were considered as originally established on erroneous principles; and that freedom ought to be the rule, slavery the exception. Thus, every enactment required revisal, and the only proper, however inconvenient and laborious, method, was, to commence by cancelling every law which bore directly, or even remotely, on the subject of slavery:— to consider the slave, in all his relations, as a man, and as a servant, and then yielding, as far only as might be found absolutely requisite, to the general feeling of the local society, to embody every regulation concerning slaves in one general ordinance, which might be revised, amended, and, as sounder ideas prevailed, improved at pleasure. But still, the first, and

most important step was to combine the whole bearings of the subject in one general law.

The slave was very needlessly protected in some points, if he was to be trampled down at pleasure in others. The law might permit him to hold property—an important concession—but how was this to avail him, if he could be worked with impunity during the twenty-four hours? Or he might be rescued from the whip,—what then, if new instruments of torture were permitted? Or he might be allowed his garden, the slave's first hope, yet this would serve him but little, if it could be withdrawn from him on the first spur of caprice. Therefore was it requisite to annul every single regulation, from the date of the establishment of the colonies, which had reference directly, or even remotely, to slaves—even remotely! for where slaves comprise three fourths of the population, their interest is so deeply involved in the condition of the remainder, that it becomes difficult to sever them. And, therefore, it was preferable to draw this plain line, that every regulation, though bearing more immediately, perhaps, on other questions, if they concerned the slave, should be revised, with the intention (having still a due regard to the rights, and even respecting, in some degree, the present feelings of others,) of considering in how much they might all be amended to the slave's advantage.

An ordinance, drawn upon the model of Mr. Huskisson's Customs' Law Repeal Bill, was, therefore, first promulgated, cancelling every such enactment.

Then was drawn up, canvassed, modified, and finally approved and promulgated, a general consolidated slave law, embracing the whole subject.

In this law, slaves were first considered as property, then as subjects; then was considered the question of manumission, or the change from slavery to freedom, "*diminutio capitis.*"

By briefly considering the leading regulations of this code,

and pointing out the modifications it has since undergone, the question, in all its bearing, will be at once brought into view; and it is one of great importance to thousands who are without other protection than what they derive from the sympathy of their happier fellow-beings at home.

It was first necessary to provide for the due execution of any law that might be framed; for whoever has gone through these essays will have observed that a leading defect, throughout the colonies, was in not providing sufficient means of execution. The laws, however worded, and in this respect also they were tolerably defective, were still a dead letter.

The right of protection, therefore, which in the old French colonies was nominally vested in the Procureur General, was defined and extended, and slaves were declared at liberty to complain to him of any illegal or cruel act; nor were they to be punished for complaining, except by authority of the Court or person in authority, who, having heard the complaint, should declare it groundless. Next, every public officer, from the Governor downwards, was enjoined to receive the complaints of slaves, and give immediate notice to the Protector. The Governor and Chief Justice and the Commandant of the Quarter, on emergencies, were also, as formerly, authorised to proceed to the estate, and there enquire into and remedy grievances on the spot. The Procureur General, without any complaint from the slaves, might also, by virtue of his office alone, cause any manager, or other offender, to be prosecuted. Now it has been further declared, that it is not sufficient that a complaint shall not be proved, to subject the slave to punishment, he must also be found guilty of having complained maliciously; this is a judicious amendment; and the office of Protector has been separated from that of Procureur General, as was always intended. What remains to be done here is to direct the Court to set forth the grounds on which it presumes malice in a slave.

Slaves being next considered as property, the rules of

descent, and other points connected with the transfer and sale of slaves, were laid down. Among these it was declared, that the mother and children, the husband and wife, should never be separated in any case, whether sold judicially under an execution, or sold by voluntary transfer. That, also, has been retained; and made to extend to the other crown colonies.

Where the estate was under mortgage, (and nearly every West Indian estate is, in some degree, mortgaged,) the slaves were not to be removed from the plantation; and the slaves, if sold, were to be sold in one lot. This is another important point. The slave becomes attached to his plantation, to his garden, and to his cottage; but when the strip of land is taken from him, which he has cultivated with care, he becomes discontented, and often contracts habits of heedlessness and indolence which render him worthless even to his owner. It should, therefore, be a general rule, that all sales of plantation slaves should include the plantation.

Enactments were next framed for the domestic government of slaves. Prayers were to be read every evening in the plantations; the managers were not to work the slaves on Sundays and festivals, excepting in domestic occupations, and on such unforeseen and extraordinary occasions as might otherwise be productive of irreparable damage; and even in such cases a compensation, in time or money, was to be allowed them.

By the Consolidated Slave Law, passed by His Majesty in Council, in 1830, this was modified, to the prejudice of the slave. The planter was allowed to employ slaves in common emergencies, or, in other words, in the ordinary labour of the estate, if that happened to suit his convenience, on indemnifying the slave.

It is to be hoped that, in this particular, government will revert to the old enactment!

Slaves were not to be worked in the morning before daylight, or in the evening after night-fall, except when employed

at the sugar-mills, and then they should not be worked two nights consecutively. This provision was amended in April, 1827, when it was declared that in all circumstances they should be allowed eight hours' consecutive rest.

The order of Council of 1830, of course, annulled all preceding regulations; but, by a supplementary ordinance, the Local Council again provided that the slave should have six hours' consecutive rest, and two hours in addition in every twenty-four hours.

This, as may be seen in the preceding remarks, is one of the most important regulations that can be adopted. The time allowed for rest by the St. Lucia regulations appears still insufficient, though the good this regulation has done was never imagined, or dreamt of, by those who introduced it; and though, on very rare occasions, it might be tolerated, yet all these enactments should be so clear and precise, leaving no loop-hole for chicanery, that it seems best that the period for labour be distinctly specified, and no kind of infringement of the regulations permitted. Nine hours labour in the field is undoubtedly as much as can be expected from any labourer; but there is also the manufacturing, or in-door labour. This work, which mainly consists of carrying canes to, and putting them in, the mill, and watching the boilers, and supplying fuel, and making fires, is less severe than agricultural labour. Then, on the other hand, it must be continued: the hours cannot be so distinctly specified; the nature of the work requires it. The mill and the boilers cannot begin or stop together; the one must commence and close an hour at least before the other; to break off, therefore, in the middle of the day is scarcely possible. To force a man into the manufactory, after he has worked a whole day, or any part of it, in the field, without allowing him the most ample time for repose, is downright brutality; but when he has rested his twelve, or rather fifteen, hours, he is then, per-

haps, quite as equal to eleven hours work in-doors, as to nine hours hard field labour. And this I should propose as the limit: nine hours of field, or eleven hours of in-door work during crop, within the twenty-four. And this would be quite sufficient for all the labour of a well managed sugar estate.

The slave was not to be worked from noon to two o'clock; pregnant women and mothers, nursing, were only required to do light work; they were to commence later, and leave earlier than the rest of the gang; and mothers of six children were allowed further exemptions.

All these regulations were also annulled by the Order in Council in 1830, but re-enacted by the supplementary orders, which, however, as is stated with deep regret, met with much opposition in the regulations in favour of mothers of families.

Slaves were to be clothed twice in each year; and it is now provided that a week's notice shall be given to the protector of the day on which the clothing is distributed. Without an enactment of this kind, though some would clothe their slaves, others would not. The provision, as to notice, was also much objected to.

The planter was to provide his slaves with huts and a garden, the huts to be put into a complete state of repair by the planter and maintained by the slaves. The size of the garden is also set forth in the supplementary regulations.

The quantity of food to be distributed to slaves was next settled; but the manager was allowed the option of permitting the slaves to work in their own provision grounds, during one whole day in every week out of crop, and half-a-day during crop, or of issuing rations in lieu of time; being, however, always bound to provide a certain quantity of fish or meat.

This also it has been found necessary to amend, for, notwithstanding all that has been said of the distaste of the slave for agricultural labour, they are so much more attached to

the rule by which they have their day in preference to rations, that the option is withdrawn from the manager, who is now required to give them one whole day in every week after crop and one whole day in every fortnight during crop; and it has been deemed so important to afford a slave an inducement to industry, and to teach him the advantage and convenience of having some little property of his own, that the day has been distinctly fixed: it is to be Monday, and once in every month the planter is to allow each of his slaves liberty to go to market on that day.

This is the only colony in which sufficient attention has been paid to that point, and it is my conviction, that greater benefit results to the slave from this plan than from many others which have drawn greater attention. Should it be infringed on, more will be done to create discontent and cause despondency in the mind of the labourer than we can by possibility be aware of. Colonel Denham has observed, that a free Negro is extremely tenacious of his rights—that he is sensible of his privileges, and is as ready to defend them as any white man in existence. If the Negro be tenacious of his rights when free, when in slavery those rights are so few that he becomes tenacious of them to a still greater degree. The advantage of giving time or money in lieu of rations is so manifest, that the manager has been further allowed to commute the clothing and meat-rations for time, provided the protector assents to the arrangement. This again is a very beneficial enactment, both for manager and slave. It is said, that a large West Indian house has lately failed, owing to the liberal supplies sent out to their gangs. Where was the use of that? Had they allowed their gangs one or two days rest in the week they would not have cost them a shilling, and the remainder of their time, less in quantity of course, but yet four to five days regular labour of a healthy, contented, and cheerful body of workmen, in the week, had been clear gain to the proprietors. But then the commissions and other ad-

vantages on consignments had diminished. Here might be the inducement; and, as usual, an unreasonable thirst of gain, or giving too easy a credence to the slave labour philosophy, will have defeated its own purpose. The fact is, give the slaves throughout the colonies time and land sufficient, and they will never be better pleased, than when, as is the case with some in St. Lucia, the planter never lays out one shilling for supplies. They will feed and clothe themselves, and procreate and work cheerily and happily.

A gentleman having failed in trade, some thirty years ago, retired, with his family and a few slaves, to the mountains, where he cultivated a small provision estate; he has thus supported himself and family, and is now, as he has observed, (by their natural augmentation alone) at the head of a body of Negroes, who, if he were willing to bring them to sale, would render him wealthier than many of his hard-working, and (as might be added,) hard flogging neighbours.

Sick and infirm slaves were to be supported by their owners under a given penalty, and hospitals are attached to plantations, and provision made for their management.

By the 37th section, commissioners, to inspect plantations, were to be appointed annually, each consisting of a public officer and two proprietors. This wholesome regulation having been annulled by the King's Order in Council, the local council refused to renew it; and why not? If the planter manages his plantation according to law he can make no objection to it, but should, on the contrary, be pleased with an annual inspection. But unhappily the chief difficulty never lies in providing regulations, but in enforcing them; and the extreme jealousy of all improvement, in this respect, shews the great difficulty attending their enforcement, a difficulty in no way better proved than by the rejection of so unexceptionable an enactment. The reports of the commissioners comprised every point on which the condition of the plantations might be ascertained. It was at once known whose

estate was in good order, whose gangs were healthy, and to what to attribute the cause of their discontent, if any.

In short, the statistical information derived from these Reports was of great value.

Having thus made provision for the domestic government of slaves, the powers of the manager, with respect to punishment, were next defined. It was ordered that slaves should not be punished at all except such punishment was necessary, and that it should then be inflicted without cruelty or passion;—that the punishment should not exceed twenty-five lashes on male slaves, nor be inflicted until the day after the commission of the offence, nor without the presence of a person of free condition, or six slaves, or in any other place than at or near the building of the estate, nor until the delinquent had recovered from the effects of any former punishment; and no other instrument was to be used but the cat or martinet. No instrument of punishment could be carried in the field. Finally, female slaves were not to be flogged at all: the punishments for them were to be the stocks or handcuffs for six hours in each day, or solitary confinement for a week; and on every plantation the punishments so inflicted were to be recorded.

Here, then, was an important deviation from the Trinidad model. By these laws and this ordinance a slave was not to be punished unless an offence had been committed to warrant punishment, and it should then be inflicted without cruelty or passion, or in other words, the punishment should be proportionate to the offence.

This enactment was also modified by order of His Majesty's Council. If it be *necessary* to continue to arm the manager with the power of discretionary punishment, it is by all means advisable that it should remain. But why allow the manager to punish at all? The master of a merchantman, in mid-ocean, is five thousand miles distant from a magistrate: the planter has one at his own door. Why not place the slave in

this respect on the footing of the seaman? The power reserved to the captain proves sufficient to enable him to circumnavigate the globe. What is there or ought there to be in a plantation to require the exercise of a larger power? Why, then, give the manager any other discretion, except in extreme cases, than that of confinement, until he can bring the culprit before a magistrate, authorized to suppress insubordination, enforce obedience, and punish idleness.

Numberless are the advantages likely to result from this change. Practically the management would be greatly simplified to the planter's advantage; no necessity would exist for keeping Record Books, or for calling a witness to every punishment—two regulations productive of much inconvenience and little benefit. The purpose intended to be answered by the Record Books, is evaded by the manner in which the "fault" is reported. Instead of mentioning the "specific offence," some vague term is employed—insubordination, idleness, disobedience—which affords no insight of the management. One planter, indeed, was more candid; he specified the offence, and then appeared floggings for "not cleaning a saddle," and for "boiling a cockroach in the soup;" and then the worthy gentleman expressed surprise at the insubordination of his people. Next, as to the witness, who is he? Generally the overseer—a youth, whose sole dependence is on the manager. Now so long as Custom-house oaths continue proverbial, it is quite unnecessary to go to the West Indies to form a judgment of what must be the inevitable result of thus placing moral duty in opposition to an overwhelming interest.

The characters both of slave and manager will also change; the latter, as he finds that he must invariably consult, not his own passions, but the judgment of another, though he were a planter, which is unnecessary, will be more cautious and guarded, and more patient. He will learn to acquire a command over his feelings, and as the Protector will be

present, he will, from a proper sense of shame, not be anxious to appear too often in the returns laid before Parliament. Then, with the slave, the publicity of the proceedings, the solemnity of the trial, and of a public infliction of punishment, will inspire him with confidence, and teach him to respect others, as he learns that he is himself respected. It was a very logical conclusion generally among slaves, that "robbing the master was no robbery," since they were all his property. They will imbibe other principles. Punishments will be probably more severe, but then they will be infinitely more rare, and the fact, that every circumstance has been well weighed, will render example more impressive; for there is a repugnance, in every mind, to a man's determining his own case, which never can be overcome by sophistry however ingenious. Working for twenty-four hours in succession, and such other acts, will then be utterly out of the question.

Then how many are the discussions, as to whether every condition required by law for the infliction of punishment has been observed;—whether there was or was not a competent witness;—whether the twenty-four hours had elapsed;—whether the punishment was commensurate to the offence;—whether the lashes exceeded the stipulated number? All these questions, which are of daily occurrence, would fall to the ground.

It is said to be the intention to reduce the number of lashes from twenty-five to fifteen. This meting out the number of stripes by a certain and inflexible rule appears (the observation is made with every due respect,) not only below the dignity of the legislature of a free nation, but productive of great practical injustice, be the number what it may. A bad subject in good health will take any number of lashes, as the registers of every regiment in the service will prove. A sickly man, or a man of good character, will suffer more (physically or mentally) by the infliction of a single stripe. Punishment of any kind must be attended by pain, the very purpose of punishment being to produce pain; and pain, if carried to excess

will be torture. Every kind of punishment, therefore, if mis-applied, can be made a torture, or it would not be a punishment.

Fifteen lashes are probably insufficient for punishment when punishment is requisite, but quite sufficient to produce irritation at all times, and torture, if inflicted wrongfully. Whilst the magistrate would be allowed a larger discretion, suspicion would not attach to him ; the protector would attend, and all the circumstances of every case be well weighed and considered.

Some punishments inflicted in St. Lucia have been commented on as excessive. So, taken unconnectedly, they must appear ; but considered with reference to the circumstances (though none were more grieved than those who awarded them) perhaps they will not appear so. The very instances of extreme brutality prove the former debasement of the slave ; lenient judgments, therefore, must be all but thrown away on him for a time: he would attribute them to fear, to weakness, to any thing but commiseration. Again, in curtailing the manager's authority, power must be lodged somewhere, and, by whoever exercised, it must be sufficient to enforce subordination. As all managers are not brutal, neither are all slaves well-behaved,—the very example set them, the abject condition they are in, must prove this clearly ; and, therefore, it is requisite, whilst all slaves are protected from inhuman treatment, that upright managers also should be supported.

So long as a party determines his own case, let him do as he will, he will satisfy no one ; but a magistrate, acting impartially, and in presence of the protector, must be at all times allowed a full discretion ; and this especially must be the case, when innovations so important, and so likely to rouse men's passions, and to influence large bodies of persons, are in progress.

In considering, therefore, the interest of the slave, and the interest of the planter, the withdrawing the power of punishment for insubordination, negligence, and other domestic of-

fences altogether from the manager, and transferring it to the magistrate, seems the greatest step towards tranquillizing the minds of both slave and proprietor, and especially, towards reconciling the home government and the country to a continuance of the system, until means can be devised to compensate the planter for the loss of the services of his slaves.

The slave law then proceeded to set forth the penalties for the infringement of any of these regulations on the part of the manager.

It was declared that managers and other persons guilty of mutilating or maiming slaves should suffer severe penalties, and that offenders in certain cases should be declared incapable of holding or managing slaves. The offence of homicide committed on a slave, whether by a free person or another slave, whether with or without malice, was punished in the same manner as though the deceased had been free. These rules have also been considerably improved.

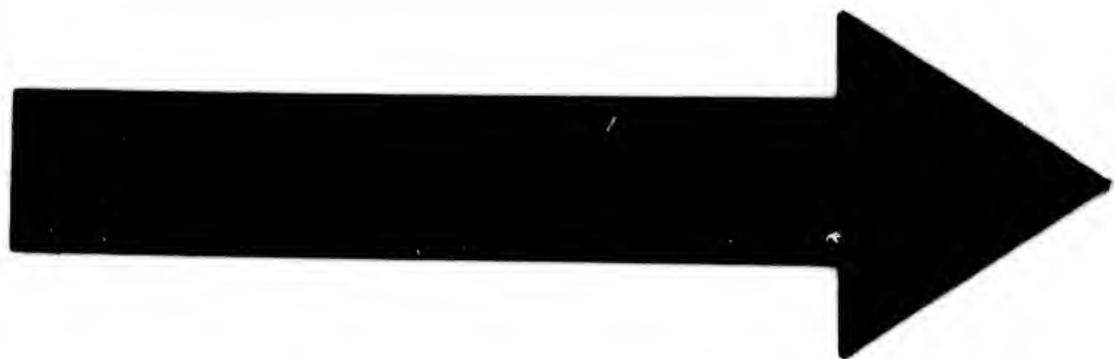
It has been since enacted that any person whatever, except a manager or a person authorized by him, committing any kind of injury on a slave, shall be subject to the same punishment as if the slave had been a free person;—that any manager inflicting new or unauthorized punishments, should be guilty of a misdemeanour;—and that he, or any one, who mutilated or maimed a slave, should be on the same footing as any other offender.

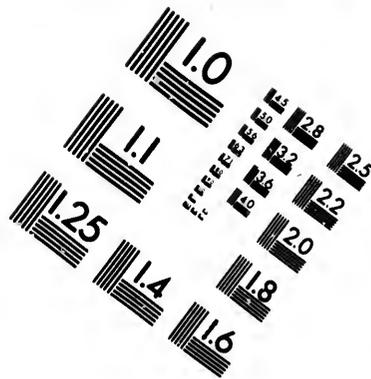
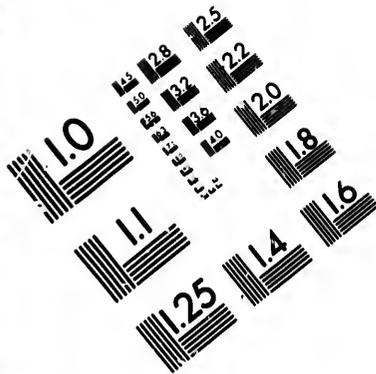
The condemned slave fund was next put under regulation. It should be abolished altogether; the evils of it are already sufficiently delineated in the account of practical slavery.

The slaves having been thus considered, in relation to their managers, they were next viewed as the King's subjects, and their social rights were first set forth.

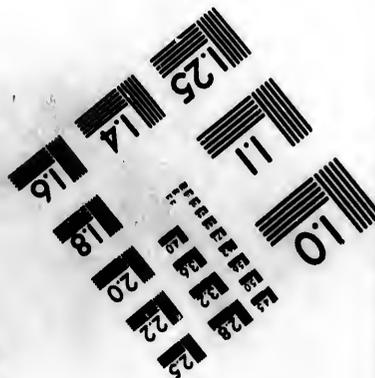
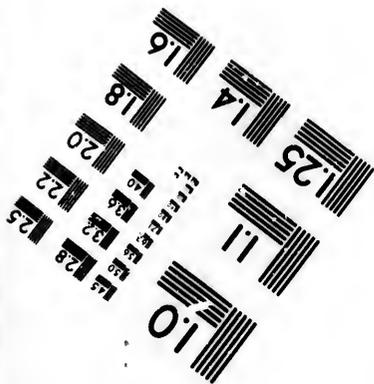
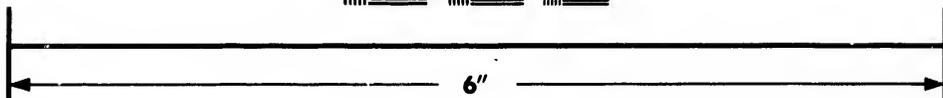
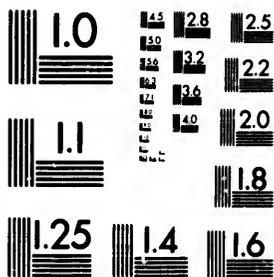
Marriages among slaves were to be subject to the same law as marriages among free persons, the same forms were to be observed in respect of both, with a few unimportant deviations in favour of the slave.

Slaves were to hold property as fully and effectually as





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persons of free condition, and they might dispose of it at their pleasure, without the knowledge or consent of their owner, who could neither administer or use it without the consent of the slave. They might sue and be sued at law for all matters relating to it; they might dispose of it by will; and in short they were to be considered free in respect to the administration and disposal of it. They might hold every kind of property, whether real or personal, excepting other slaves, which they could not hold without their owner's consent.

When these regulations were drawn up, a question much mooted in the colony, was, "whether slaves ought to be at liberty to hold land." The various objections to it seemed not only untenable, but strongly in contradiction with another assumption, on the part of the proprietor, viz.: that slaves were averse to agricultural labour. The arguments by which it was maintained, that slaves ought to hold land, are among the papers from St. Lucia already submitted to parliament; and as the point is now generally conceded, it does not seem necessary to go over that ground again. But in the course of a recent investigation in St. Lucia, when the treasurer was called upon to produce his books, in order to ascertain the number of proprietors in Castries, it appeared (though the fact was not inserted in the minutes, as it had no immediate reference to the case then pending) that, among the proprietors paying taxes for houses and land within the town, were twelve slaves; so immediate was the good effect of allowing slaves to hold property. Some have thus redeemed themselves, others are actually become proprietors.

By the King's consolidated order, this clause has been preserved with some trifling exceptions; but why any exception? Why should not the slave keep a boat? Numbers of them are fishermen. In many parts of the colonies they must have a boat to reach the market; and if the manager should refuse them the use of his, they are deprived of one of their most valuable rights.

Again, as to their possessing other slaves, why should not

the father be at liberty to redeem his child, that he may rear him, and that they may work together, until they acquire the means of being completely free; or until the child has acquired a knowledge of his father's trade?

These restrictions do in short no good, and may, like all other unnecessary restrictions, work unforeseen evil.

Slave evidence was declared admissible in all cases, except against the slave's owner. This was afterwards amended, so as to exclude him from giving evidence for, or against, the owner; yet, by the general law of the country, slave evidence was admissible in all cases where the slave was "*testis necessarius*," though the condemnation of the owner could not ensue on the evidence of his slaves only.

Slave evidence is now, under the King's order, admissible, in all cases whatever where the evidence of a free person would be admitted. And this is the most valuable enactment in that order.

Regulations as to the police of slaves next followed. These comprised the old enactments, though much softened as to fugitive slaves, slaves selling jewellery, and other colonial regulations; with this important provision, that slaves charged with crimes, not therein specified, should be subject to the same pains and penalties only as free persons.

So long as the slave owes a certain service to his master, penalties must attach to his running away. Beyond that, every one of these provisions might be done away with, and the clear and simple principle adopted,—That slaves are with reference to all persons except his manager, and on all occasions even with reference to him, except when the slave neglects his duty, or disobeys him, or absconds from him, subject to the same law as free persons.

Next were regulations for criminal proceedings in slave cases, and these with a very few exceptions were to be conducted according to the rules observed where the offender is free. The exceptions were principally as to the denouncing

fugitive slaves, or slaves suspected by the manager of having committed crimes: these therefore must continue.

The law having thus considered the slaves first as property, and then as subjects, it laid down, in a third book, the various methods of acquiring freedom, and treated especially of manumissions.

Manumissions were to produce the same effect as if the parties were born in St. Lucia. The emancipated slave was to pay respect to the owner's family, but was released from every kind of claim of service. The forms of the deeds of manumission were then set forth, and these in a great measure continue. No taxes or fees are to be levied at the expense of the slave for manumission. Twenty-one years' enjoyment of liberty was a bar to any claim of servitude: the presumption was in favour of liberty, and no authority, executive or judicial, could in future reduce a free person to slavery.

Provision was also made for the compulsory or equitable manumission of slaves. This is another much mooted point, but it is one of the very highest importance.

The discussion on the Demerara petition first conveyed a hope to the planters, that government would be induced to recede from their own measure; and much of the uncertainty that has since prevailed, may be owing to this unfortunate step.

The evidence on that occasion, though no doubt given with the best intentions, was so singular; the whole proceeding, that of bringing persons to swear to an abstract opinion, appeared so unusual; that the effect it produced is perhaps accounted for.

It were easy to combat all the arguments then advanced; but I forbear for the present, for fear of unduly encumbering the present publication, and will only remark, that if a perfect stranger were asked what amendment would be undoubtedly unobjectionable, he would immediately point out compulsory or equitable manumission.

The other regulations of this Order relate to the managers' power, or concede rights to slaves, which if they do not injure, can scarcely fail to benefit proprietors, and will work alike beneficially to the slave, the owner, and the community.

Such then, were the enactments under the law of St. Lucia, and there was no doubt but that the condition of the slave was materially benefited and improved by them.

They went much further than any that have been hitherto introduced by colonial authorities, whether councils or legislatures. In this colony alone was compulsory manumission voluntarily adopted. The slave held land; he was not to be separated from the estate; he had his own day for cultivating his garden, his time for market, his hours of rest, even during crop, and enjoyed official protection from every public officer. The estates were inspected annually, and at all times liable to be visited. The slave was only punishable on sufficient cause shewn. The penalties to which he was exclusively subject were few; proceedings against him were the same in form as against his master; and finally, he was only punishable, for complaining, by direction of the magistrate who had heard the complaint. It has never been even whispered that the laws have not, as far as lay in the power of the Courts, been vigorously enforced. Indeed the manner in which effect has been given to them, has been a subject of never-ceasing complaint. Yet what has been the result?

ESSAY IV.

Results and farther Measures.

SUCH is an outline of the St. Lucia Slave Code, and, coupled with the law abolishing distinctions of colour, it did much to change the general aspect of society in that island.

In a report on this subject, in May, 1829, I observed to this effect, that it was now something more than four years since the condition of the slave was improved by the punctual enforcement of the *old* laws; and the present Code had been nearly three years in operation. Its *tendency*, must therefore, be in some measure ascertained. If it were pernicious, now would be the time to pause. New proof could be got on some essential points. Let facts, therefore, speak for themselves. And if it should be proved that both incomes and capital, so far from having decreased, were on the increase, Government might well be expected to look without dismay to the future.

“Incomes or Revenue must have decreased, by a decrease of the products of the soil—by a decrease of crops. Capital may have decreased, by a decrease in the amount or in the value of stock; and the amount of stock may have decreased by a falling off in the births, or by an increase of deaths or of manumissions.”

“As to incomes, it will be sufficient for me to state generally from the Returns, that for the three years, 1821, 1822, and 1823, the amount of sugars exported, averaged not more than from 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 pounds weight; and for the years 1825, 1826, 1827, and 1828, it has averaged from

9,000,000 to 10,000,000. Now it would be clearly wrong to impute more than a trifling, if any part, of that change to the fact, that the condition of slaves was, in that year, first materially improved by the enforcement of the old laws. There were, as it is known, great frauds committed in the preceding years, which were then, in a great measure, put a stop to. But it is sufficient, and more than sufficient, for my argument, and places it in the strongest light, that by a series of measures, of which the Slave Regulations were not the least important, the certified Returns have increased by more than 2,000,000, and that there has been since an addition on this high number; the subsequent increase being small, and therefore more probably owing to a principle gradual but certain in its operation."

"It has been said that this increase may be owing to the island's not having, in 1824, entirely recovered from the effects of the hurricane of 1817, and the heavy rains of 1819. This cannot be, as the years 1821, 1822, 1823, and 1824 are nearly on an average; and 1822 exceeds 1823, the difference being easily accounted for by fluctuations in the seasons, as in the case between 1826 and 1827. Again, I have heard it said elsewhere, that the increase may have proceeded from importations of sugar from Foreign Colonies. This might have been done in war time, when produce was a drug in Foreign Colonies, but now, the price there is considerably higher than it is here, which at once settles the objection. Indeed, the probability is, that some part of our crops may have found their way to that market, and this portion would not be included in the Returns.

"Now as to the value of stock, the price of plantation slaves cannot be ascertained apart from plantations; nor are sales of either plantations or slaves registered at present.* The only public office, therefore, where any thing like a return of prices can be obtained, is the Huissier's or Marshalman's office.

* The law is arrived by which they are to be in future registered.

Formerly these Officers were at liberty to seize plantation slaves, provided they were not actually at work on the plantation, but this was prevented by the ordinance of February 1825; and since that time, none but domestics, and town servants, generally females, have been seized, except in one single instance, where a judgment obtained under the old law was subsequently executed. Now the slaves sold in the years 1823, 1824, and 1825, being compared with those in the years 1826, 1827, and 1828, it will appear that in the years 1823 and 1824 the average price of the slaves sold was £60 sterling; that in 1825, owing to the slaves being of an inferior description, and perhaps to the dread of the projected slave laws, the price fell to £30 17s. sterling; that in 1826, (the plantation slaves sold by virtue of the judgment above mentioned being included,) the price was £61 sterling, being higher than in 1823; and that in 1827, the description of slaves which, in 1825, fetched £30, sold for £34 17s., and in 1828 they sold at £38 9s; the years 1827 and 1828, showing a regular increase in the inferior slaves, and the year 1826 some addition to the superior ones. Four or five plantations have also been sold by decree. These, of course, comprised the buildings, lands, &c., though here, except in the most immediate neighbourhood of the town, it has been usual to compute the value of an estate by the number of slaves attached to it, buildings and lands being supposed to be, in themselves, of little value. Proceeding by this rule, there would be an increase in the value of properties of nearly a fifth; but this is, at best, very uncertain. Still that, if the prices are not so easily ascertained, confidence has increased; and that an increased number of purchasers of estates have been found among the most wealthy and respectable men in the country, is susceptible of proof, direct and positive.

“By a list of the members of the Royal Court, and their purchases, and they are all gentlemen of experience, of property, and respectability, they or their near connexions possess

more than a third of the *large* estates, administered by *resident* proprietors: they apply the law, and must be tolerably good judges of its effect. Now, though I do not say they will not occasionally complain of their authority over their slaves being rather circumscribed, yet it does not the less appear that seven out of nine have, since the promulgation of the Slave Law, purchased plantation slaves and plantations; and this proves unanswerably that their fears are tolerably calmed as to future consequences. Formerly, these purchases might have been accounted for on other and very painful grounds—by the diminution of their actual stock; but since, as will shortly appear, this stock is daily increasing. It is perfectly clear that such gentlemen would scarcely enlarge their cultivation for the purpose of hastening their ruin.

“Incomes, and the value of stock, being thus on the increase, the next point is as to the amount of stock. Has there been any diminution in the number of slaves? Or, rather, the question ought to be, whether the diminution is greater than it was previously? This, as observed, might proceed from an increase of deaths and manumissions, or a decrease in the births.

“The reverse is precisely the case: births have increased, deaths have decreased, and, which will surprise, so have manumissions. This is clearly proved.

“It appears that the manumissions which were returned as amounting to 28 in 1822, immediately increased to 120 and 140 in the subsequent years; but that since the law has passed they have fallen to an average of 80; though slaves were then, for the first time, allowed to purchase freedom *volente domino*.

“The increase in 1822 is accounted for by the tax on manumission being withdrawn; but the decrease in 1826, when it was expected that slaves would crowd in to free themselves, shews how completely groundless were the alarms which then resounded through the island. The truth is, that

the clause whereby the slaves of persons in debt can only be manumitted by appraisement, or sold with the estate, has prevented more slaves from obtaining freedom than the equitable manumission clause has obtained freedom for; the difference being, that, in the first case, freedom often was obtained at two-thirds, a half, a quarter, or a sixteenth, of the real price, or from other considerations not pecuniary (debtors knowing that what they got was so much gained, as creditors might otherwise step in); and, in the latter, it has been obtained by honest, active, industrious slaves, who, by their own labour, had acquired their full value."

To proceed next to births and deaths, and then to a subject closely connected with it,—punishments; it is proved that the births are increasing, and the deaths diminishing, both progressively. The returns then transmitted only included estates to which six Negroes or upwards are attached; the others, and domestics, always were on the increase, and usually supplied the larger estates.

In 1826 the increase was *one*, the deaths being 246, and births 247. In 1827 the difference was 32, the deaths being 282, and births 314; and in 1828 the first were 205, and the latter 339, the difference being 134; shewing a total decrease in the deaths of 41, and an increase in the births of 92 in thirty months, and therefore an increase of property in *both ways*. But might it not have been so before? That it was not so is proved by comparing the former returns with the present returns of the same estates, namely Roseaux, Marquis and Cap, (the largest in St. Lucia) shewing that, before the promulgation of this law, there was an invariable decrease,* where there is now a marked increase. The difference in the deaths compared with the births from 1810 to 1825, show a difference against these estates of 69, whilst from June 1826 to January 1829,

* Except as to Cap, where there was an increase of four. The management of this estate does not seem to have changed, and why? It always kept up its numbers.

the decrease was reduced to 2, and if the last year be taken singly there is an increase of 5.

In 1817 happened the hurricane; in 1819 the heavy rains; this may affect the returns for these periods, but not the subsequent ones. But the most agreeable fact is, the regular progression of the slave population, since the promulgation of the new law, which has at last reached that point that, the increase by births is alone sufficient to cover the decrease by deaths and manumissions, and in short, every contingency.

Here, then, is an increase of revenue, an increase in the value of stock, and an increase in the amount of stock; in short, an increase in every way in which there can, by possibility, be an increase.

It remains finally to examine the punishments. Now it will appear that as births are increasing, and deaths diminishing, so punishments have diminished by one-half; and on comparing the six estates, where the largest number of punishments have been inflicted, with the six where there has been the smallest number, it appears that, in the first six, 820 punishments have been called for in two years and a half on 831 slaves, whilst, in the last six, 253 punishments have sufficed for 1332 slaves; that among the former masters, there are five managers and a proprietor, and among the latter five proprietors and a manager; that among the former estates, four are among the worst, and two (Canelle and Noumacé) are well managed, but that of the latter, five are among the best, and one is doubtfully managed; that both among the best and the worst are Englishmen, Frenchmen, English Creoles, and French Creoles; that where there have been the largest number of punishments, the deaths are as to the births in the proportion of 90 to 43, and where there have been the fewest, the births are to the deaths as 106 to 92, being, in the first instance, two to one against, and in the latter as 53 to 46 in favour of the owner; and that among the former, 5 in 6 are on the decrease, and in the latter, 5 in 6 on the increase. Proceeding

from general inferences to particulars, it appears that there has been a marked change in the Union of Praslin: the punishments which were only 12 for the first six months amounted to 128 the next year, and have again fallen to 11 and 7 by the two last returns; and it further appears, on inquiry, that an old and able manager went to another estate in 1826, and an unfit man entered and mismanaged it, and now, as he has been removed and the punishments have diminished, so does the estate begin again to prosper. I find too that among the managers of these estates four have been discharged, and two have suffered under the slave law; and that the solitary owner of that list is a gentleman, who has, within the last few months, twice petitioned against the law, as not being severe enough, (he, as now appears, having only been able to inflict punishments on 128 slaves within thirty months); and that he has both times withdrawn his petition when an inquiry was proposed.

Indeed, the manner in which the births and deaths exactly coincide with the proofs of general treatment is wonderful, though it may be satisfactorily explained. To say nothing of acts of wanton and atrocious barbarity, it is surprising how the want of nourishment, excessive labour, repeated corporal punishment, the want of sufficient clothing, damp and unhealthy cottages, and the leaving slaves to lie on the ground,—how all these causes affect population. But further instances of barbarity are now proved to have been, though I trust they are not still, too common. Now the slaves are not the isolated beings that seamen and soldiers, to whom they are so incorrectly compared, generally are. With the slave, an act of cruelty committed on one extends too often to a whole family. Of this there was an instance on one of those trials mentioned in the first Essay. The prisoner was said to have punished a boy, named Bastien, so severely, as to have placed his life in danger, and then ordered that boy's mother to take care of him on her *own* day. She replied, that if so, she and

her remaining children must starve. She, though quick with child, was flogged also. The result was, she was delivered of twins—both dead;—she died and Bastien died. Here then were four human beings a sacrifice to one act of brutality. In short, the character of the manager could, almost to a certainty, be ascertained by the births and deaths in his gang. Sometimes, on a change of management, had the destroying angel passed over the gang, the desolation had scarcely been more sudden: there was an immediate dead stop to procreation. And does not the twenty-four and forty hours continued labour account for it?

Next, as to punishments inflicted by virtue of judgments of the Courts: it appears that in the year 1826, five out of seven complaints of slaves against their masters were not substantiated; that, in the next, (which includes the whole of the year,) eleven complained, and seven did not substantiate; and, in the last, two only complained, and they both substantiated: so that in two years and six months, twelve masters only have been brought before the Courts, without sufficient proofs by the slaves; and in the last year of that period, there was not one. Masters, on the contrary, have substantiated ninety-four* complaints against their slaves, including in either case domestics; and there was only one complaint from a master when the latter was in fault; and the Protector has brought forward eleven charges against masters, on which four masters were acquitted, four convicted, and in the three others, both masters and slaves were culpable. Lastly, it appears that at no time have complaints of masters against slaves exceeded one a week, or of slaves against their masters one a month. Now, can there be a stronger proof, that the Courts and Protector have acted fairly and impartially, than that, by this steady course of

* This may seem high, and so it is, but it should not be forgotten, that slaves are to masters as fifty to one.

proceeding, these prosecutions, like the punishments, are fast diminishing, and that the law being understood by both, they freely and readily come into Court when they are right, but take care to be right before they go there.

The whole may be summed up by the following comparison:—

Not thirty miles from St. Lucia is a colony of about the same size, and formerly under the same government with this. That colony, by the peace of Paris, became French; this English. When they separated, Martinique contained about 70,000 slaves, St. Lucia about 16,000; the former was an old settlement, this a new one; the former returned to its old connexions, this found new men, a new language, new habits, new prejudices. For the preceding half century Martinique had enjoyed an almost uninterrupted tranquillity; we had suffered under every possible visitation. That colony has since monopolized the wealth, credit, capital, and market, of an extensive and powerful country; this has merely had its share, and a poor and scanty share, of a market, more than sufficiently supplied to satisfy the wants of the British nation. We have suffered under hurricanes and deluges, while the planters of Martinique have been, by natural calamities, comparatively untouched. Swarms of new slaves, equal at the lowest calculation, to the whole of their original number, (were I to state what at Nantes, Havre, here, and in that Island itself, I have heard these importations reckoned at, it would shake the faith of the most credulous) have been introduced there. We have stood on our own resources; they rose at once, to a sudden, apparently unattainable height of prosperity. We were supposed sinking to ruin. A few large fortunes were made, many of them to be lost again. We had gone on silently and slowly. *But at the end of fifteen short years* all their importations have been swept away; and their slave population stands now much as it then did. They have had executions by the thousands, insurrections and proscriptions; and now the

planters are generally still deeper in debt, their trade nearly bankrupt, and the largest slave purchasers make no scruple in avowing, that the last fifteen years have been so much lost to them. But, here, though we suffered deeply under the change, our population, slave and free, has ever been tranquil, and is at length steadily increasing; our agriculture is improving; our trade, compared with what it was lately, is as three to one; and the last symptoms of decay are gradually disappearing. They have enjoyed a monopoly. Ours is a system of free competition.

So results stood at the close of the year 1828, as proved by the returns delivered in up to January 1829. About this time, unfortunately, it became evident that West Indians were impressed with the idea that there was a feeling in favour of the planter. Sir George Murray's personal integrity, and strict honour, were ever far above even remote suspicion, nor is there any reason to believe that he ever countenanced any such opinion; but whatever was the original cause, that it did exist is notorious, since it was commented on in the public prints, and in St. Lucia especially it had gained ground extensively, and was sanctioned by persons of great weight in the colonial society. Accordingly steps were taken to furnish an opportunity of throwing off these new measures; and when these were defeated, the circumstances were still so represented, as to render it subsequently necessary to bring charges of wilful and corrupt misrepresentation against two privy councillors and the government secretary. It is not in the West Indies only, that men are as tenacious of power as of their lives. Nor is it there only, that, in the warmth of political discussion, falsehood will be promulgated by faction. But, with every allowance of the kind, this may be, and was carried too far; and it became an imperative duty to check and expose it, not only as concerned the parties, but the general interests involved in the discussion.

The enquiry on those charges was held in open court; it is not necessary to mention personal matters. As regards this subject, it was proved that, owing to certain steps taken in the early part of 1829, with all possible caution, to undeceive the planters, such proceedings were entered on as could have been justifiable only had the island been in a state of servile insurrection, although this was a period of perfect tranquillity. The attempt indeed was defeated, and yet was so misrepresented as to lead to the inference that an insurrectionary movement had really existed. The whole case, in short, (briefly stated,) will furnish a tolerable insight of what is meant by a West Indian insurrection. Nor is this the only occasion when occurrences of the kind have been reported, as regards St. Lucia; but this having gained rather more notoriety, and the facts being proved beyond question, it is a tolerable example of the whole.

Rumours the most unfounded were at once set afloat, estates were specified where the gangs were in utter disorder, nine or ten especially, and one of them, where owing to the slave law having avowedly been neglected, the manager had been cautioned. This estate was said to have been abandoned by the negroes; some to have fled—the whole to have so neglected their duty, that the produce had diminished from sixteen to three hogsheads per week. The slaves, it was said, had fled to the woods, mountains, and ravines;—negroes had been taken up with large bundles of newspapers of the precise year when the slave law was promulgated, (1826,) and it was added, that gangs from the most distant and unconnected quarters had struck, and had also sought refuge in the woods after destroying their master's property, as manufacturers destroy machinery at home

Accordingly, militia detachments were sent out, headed by field officers, in addition to two permanent detachments, in various directions, in search of the insurgents: five were sent out from one quarter,—three from a second,—three from a third,—

three from a fourth ; and hundreds—aye, thousands, of ball cartridges were distributed throughout the country. The white troops were to be quartered on the refractory estates ; and the planters in one of the quarters and its neighbourhood were desired to turn out with their best negroes ; this description of force alone amounting to several hundred men.

Next, the Governor himself went into the mountains, with a numerous staff, to point out the exact plan of operations by which that insurrectionary movement was to be put down. Then a militia order was to be issued, and read at the head of the detachments, comparing these various convulsions, ("though it had not quite reached that height,") to the melancholy period of 1796, when it cost Great Britain 4,000 men, headed by Abercrombie, to restore order in St. Lucia alone.

Now, what was the fact ? In the whole of that part of the island, where the Governor had taken on himself the direction of the troops ; where these detachments, under their colonels, had scoured the woods, mountains, and ravines ; it appeared there were exactly eight negroes in the bush, including females. The bundles of newspapers were a piece of wrapping paper, about the size of a man's hand, on which an ignorant slave had made a few crosses, and produced as his pass. The story of the destruction of property, was a pure fiction. The specific complaints proved to be worse than frivolous, and the only gang, where there had been the least movement, was one with respect to which the proprietor, on a subsequent enquiry, has been proved never, since the promulgation of the slave law, to have clothed his negroes, and where they had been made to get up to labour in the field by moonlight. On that occasion, fifteen had left their owner in the evening, and had presented themselves in the morning to the next planter, to intercede for them. He had done so, and they had returned quietly to work before any of these extraordinary measures were taken.

In short, it was proved, that throughout the island only the usual average, 5 in 1,000, (taking the whole slave population) which is probably less than in the best disciplined regiments in the service, were away from their estates; and this too was at the very commencement of crop, when the number of runaways is always largest.

Again, in October, another panic was attempted to be created but was put down. Indeed, throughout the year, endeavours in every shape were made to prove the impracticability of continuing these new regulations.

But how did the matter end? By placing, beyond question, the advantages resulting from them.

Having recently heard so much of the discontent of master and slave, and of the ruinous consequences of these measures, I, as soon as opportunity offered, wished once more to satisfy myself of the truth or falsehood of the statements, and accordingly took the annual inspection of the district most thickly inhabited. In 59 plantations there were only five complaints of managers against their slaves. Two were from persons recently fined. Two from gentlemen (brothers, of strong political feelings) whose estates were, notwithstanding, in a state of excellent cultivation, and who, on 300 slaves, had inflicted only four punishments in the course of the preceding year. The fifth was from a very respectable gentleman, so exceedingly aged and infirm, that he was avowedly incapable alone of managing a plantation. But not having gone to that district since the promulgation of the slave laws, it was with astonishment that I observed the improvement in the appearance of the slaves, and in the cultivation of the estate.

Agitation having been, nevertheless, prolonged by the ultra-colonial party in the Colony, it became requisite at length to meet them by a counter appeal to public opinion, and to ascertain what was really the feeling of the generality, after some years experience of the effect of the measures. A vast majority in numbers—a majority in wealth, talent, and

property, at once forsook those who deemed themselves the natural leaders of the community, and who were expressing what they stated to be the universal colonial feeling, and signed the following Address, which was duly transmitted to the Government:—

“ To His Excellency Major-General Farquharson, Governor.

(ADDRESS.)

“Though aware of the prejudice which naturally exists in free countries, against property in slaves, yet the undersigned viewed experiments on so delicate a subject with much apprehension; these measures have now been some years in progress, and they owe it to His Majesty’s Government, to acknowledge that the slave has been greatly benefited, and their fears are removed.

“They are equally happy to bear testimony to the good effect produced, among the free class, by the removal of distinctions whose only tendency was to produce enmity and foster prejudice.

“The ameliorations in the administration of justice have also proved satisfactory; and they express the hope that they will be so followed up as fully to re-establish the credit of the Colony, and to remove the chief impediment to its still more rapid improvement—the want of capital.”

Nor does the proof of the beneficial effect of these measures rest here. The adversaries of amelioration—the warmest ultra-colonists have been examined to endeavour to shake this case.

The parties prosecuted, to screen themselves from the consequences attending the proof of falsehood, summoned a large number of witnesses, to shew not only that there had been excitement, but that the measures in question had been generally pernicious.

Of all the witnesses called, they only examined five—four

of them the most thorough West Indians the colony could produce—gentlemen implicated in the very acts under examination; yet was the failure so complete that they would hear no more of their witnesses.

The first witness (as concerned the reported insurrection) was compelled to admit that none of his gang had run away, nor of those of any of his neighbours;—that though he believed other slaves did not work as usual in February and March, 1829, still his own crop that year had increased in comparison with that of the preceding year;—that his crops in 1826 and 1827, when, according to his own avowal, the slave law was vigorously enforced, were abundant;—that in the very year 1828, when, according to his admission, these measures, owing to the absence of the person whom he considers the author of them, and certainly the cause of their being so zealously observed, his crop had diminished by one half, (owing as subsequently appears, to considerable works he had made on his estate, by removing a mill turned by cattle, which answered well, and replacing it by a water mill, which evidently did not answer at all);—and that since that gentleman's return it was again increasing. To shew the bias on this witness's mind, he declared, "that each lash from the cat-o'-nine tails now in use was equal, in severity, to nine from the former whip;"—which whip he described as follows:—"The extremity of the lash was small, like one of the extremities of the cat-o'-nine tails, the middle about half an inch in diameter; the upper part as large as the stick attached to it; its length five feet; the body of common rope, and the extremity made of a plant called the wild aloe," which plant is a common substitute for steels or razor strops in sharpening knives and other such instruments.

He admitted that the whips might leave wheals as large as a man's thumb; and he might have added, that a dexterous driver, with such an instrument, could, at a stroke, cut out pieces of flesh from the sides or back of the slave an inch

long. This gentleman was the nephew of one of the accused parties.

The next witness admitted that there was a despondency in the mind of the slave about the period, but, from his evidence, transpired the fact, that whilst these proceedings were going on, whilst these repeated commotions were falsely reported, the planters, in all parts of the country, were engaged in preparing a petition, which they subsequently presented, praying for the total abolition of the slave laws by the governor's sole fiat. And thence the despondency of the slaves! It transpired too, that this gentleman had headed two of the detachments, and that all the depredations, he knew of, had been committed by three sheep stealers, *several months before*, and who were long subsequently arrested.

From the third witness, it appeared that, so far from his crops having diminished, he would not give an account of his crops, and report says that they had considerably increased. He was compelled to admit that his own gang was tranquil, as well as those of all his neighbours;—that he viewed the whole as a “trifling matter;”—and that he manages his estate without any extra interposition, notwithstanding the slave laws.

The next witness was more important; he at once declared that the ferment or insubordination commenced among the slaves *before* the year 1829, and so far back as when the question of amelioration was first mooted, and when the then government wrote to the planters, explaining the views and intentions of the legislature. He then described the condition of the country as caused by that letter.

“Two privy councillors, possessing the largest estates in the colony, expected to see them burnt down. Witness, at the head of a detachment of coloured men, captured fifteen, and drove back sixty, Maroon slaves to their plantations within three weeks.” The witness happening to be a punctual man, he produced his authority, and it was dated *in October, 1822, before* a single individual in the country, whether slave or

free, ever dreamt of amelioration. On further enquiry, all the documents connected with the event were brought to light; and it was ascertained, and acknowledged by the witness himself, that he had confounded two very distinct periods, the year 1822 and the subsequent year 1823, in the month of July of which latter year, the governor had written that letter, referring to parliamentary proceedings, to which he had in the first instance attributed the disturbance of 1822; and that this really alarming account was nothing more nor less than a faint sketch of the occasional condition of the colony, as described by a planter, and proved by official documents, in the golden age of slavery.

And this was confirmed by another deposition of one of the largest proprietors in the country, who admitted that larger militia detachments were more frequent and necessary, before these measures were adopted than since.

To such a height had disturbances arisen in 1822, that permanent commissions were forthwith appointed, and the militia organized.

This is a very essential point, as it had been reported over and over again officially, and asserted even in the course of that enquiry, that the militia was organized in 1823, and extraordinary measures of precaution then taken, owing to the question of amelioration being then first mooted; and that, from that time forward, the colony had been in some degree disturbed. It was then proved, on the contrary, that these measures, by rendering the slave's lot comparatively comfortable, and exciting, in the mind of the Negro, the hope of ultimate freedom, grounded on his industry, had been the harbingers of peace and order, and generally tranquillity.

This gentleman further declared that his slaves were never tranquil. It turned out, on examination, that he had inflicted more punishments, on his 120 slaves, than the three largest planters on all their gangs, comprising one thousand slaves, put together; and that he was the person who had flogged

his negroes for "dropping a cockroach in the soup," "not cleaning his saddle," and such other crimes.

The last witness was also an extensive planter: and he too was compelled to make the same admissions, as to the excellent order and tranquillity of his own estate, and of every other with which he was acquainted. But this gentleman happened further to be one of the leading characters who had got up and circulated the petition, against the slave-law, which had caused a despondency among the negroes; and, in which, among other assertions, were the following:—that "insubordination was natural to the negro;"—"that since the promulgation of the slave ordinances, they had refused to supply their proprietors even with the most common necessaries of life;"—"that planters had to apprehend the most fatal effects from their malevolence,"—"that duplicity and falsehood were natural to the negroes," "whose susceptibility, however, was such that they committed suicide rather than submit to public punishment, except hatred, vengeance, and despair, suggested other means no less odious." Yet, on calling for the returns of the punishments inflicted on the slaves, belonging to the estate which this gentleman himself managed and which belonged to him, the fact was reluctantly drawn out that the poor persons, thus vilified, were, during the whole of that very year, 1829, so cheerfully and zealously labouring for his benefit, that he was not called upon to punish one single slave. And here is all the evidence that men, who had honour, character, office, all at stake, could venture to produce in order to make good their statements. The inferences are not doubtful.

Such was the result of the fullest inquiry that could be held, not at a distance from the spot, or with persons insufficiently defended, but in the island itself, in the midst of their friends and partizans,—partizans unbending in their prejudices, firm in their purpose, not over scrupulous as to means, yet when they came to facts utterly impotent; though pro-

vided with what they considered the best legal advice that could be obtained in the West Indies;—and this, too, in the very island where measures of reform had made the greatest progress, and where, avowedly, the authorities were firmly bent on seeing them executed to the letter.

Here, then, is the testimony of the authors of the measure, of its reluctant friends, and of its most determined opponents, backed by official returns. Never could measure be more completely sifted.

The important fact that what has been actually done has, so far from proving pernicious, proved beneficial, excludes, as far as concerns their introduction elsewhere, a!! idea of compensation. If the slave can be made to contribute his fair share of labour, there is no loss; and if there were, it would only be a loss of that which was never sanctioned by law.

The next question then, is, how these measures are to be introduced? By the local assemblies or by parent legislation? Here my opinion has materially changed. So long as there could be a doubt, so long as I stood (among persons connected with the colonies) almost alone; a diffidence, I trust not an improper one, of my own opinions, however satisfactory to myself, would have induced me to pause, before I could venture to urge, in any quarter, the compulsory adoption of those views. Nor were there then sufficient symptoms of that decided spirit of resistance, of that downright contumacy, in the conduct of the West India Assemblies, that has since appeared. Now there seem to be many reasons to show that if the time has not arrived, it is fast approaching, for Parliament to take up the subject decisively, and, by a general and permanent act, to settle those many questions which have, for so long a period, shaken to its centre the frame of West Indian Society.

The determination, exhibited by the Assemblies, to allow of

no curtailment of the manager's powers; the consequences which may arise from dashing the cup of expectation so repeatedly from the lips of large bodies of men, though no symptoms of irritation appear among the slaves at present;—both these are strong grounds for acting decisively.

Then, the uncertainty attending constant changes is productive of much practical inconvenience. The discussions of 1823 naturally produced some degree of uneasiness in 1824. Those of 1826, of 1827, of 1829, had the same effect, in each of these and the successive years; whilst the projected ordinance of 1831, will cause further discussion in 1832. It is time the planter should know where this is to stop, and this he never can know, except the sovereign power in the state announces its will.

The extraordinary success attending every free labour experiment, a success which has utterly dispelled the vague theories that embarrassed this question, at once leaves it open for discussion and decision at home; since it may be as well determined by the statesman here as by the slave holder in the colonies. This again is a decisive reason for the interposition of Parliament.

A gentleman, of some colonial experience, in a very short but well judged letter addressed to Lord Chandos, Mr. Barrow, has lately pointed out the necessity of passing one general act for the whole West Indies. He observes with great truth, that until all the colonies are put on the same footing, any act of cruelty committed by the most vicious individual, in the most remote island, will continue to reflect discredit on every West Indian proprietor. The most humane manager in Jamaica may suffer, in reputation at least, from misconduct at Mauritius; and from what authority can this general law proceed, but from that of the United Parliament?

Then, however despondingly they may express themselves, there is, among the colonists, a very natural reliance on their own strength. They conceive, that no measure seriously affect-

ing them can be carried through Parliament ; that they are strong enough, if not directly to throw it out, yet to neutralize, and seriously to impede any government that would resist them ; and this opinion will not be shaken by some recent discussions on West Indian subjects.*

Again, they assert that they have the guarantee of Parliament for their property ; so they have to a just extent. And it is essential that Parliament should itself explain what it actually meant to guarantee to them ; whether an exorbitant power amounting to systematic murder, or that moderate share of authority which would enable them to draw a fair emolument from the labour of His Majesty's subjects, whose services, and not their lives, they had purchased.

But, what of the question of supremacy ? There is the example of the American war. Sceldom was example more misapplied. What was the purpose of the then government, and what the motive of resistance ? The government of Great Britain then sought to levy certain sums of money on the colonies, not for their but for its own use, without consulting their representatives. They of course complained of and resisted the extortion. What has that in common with the present case ? If the British Sovereignty is to be any thing more than a name, has it not a right to protect its own subjects from oppression, not only in its colonies, but throughout the known world ; by force of arms from equal to equal, by legislation where its dominion is paramount ? The colonies have their charters ; but what is there in their charters to prevent Parliament from explaining its own meaning ; what, to sever the tie between Sovereign and subject ; what, to prevent the legislature's pronouncing that wherever waves the British flag, man shall not murder his fellow ? If a capital offence were committed in France by a Briton, on another Briton, it would be cognizable by the Courts of Westminster ; but if in a

* The sugar refinery bill.

British dependency, then, forsooth, it must escape punishment; Parliament shall not stop it! And because the United States would not, and properly not, submit to exaction from us; so, where our power is to be wielded, not for exaction, but for protection, the oppressor is not to be controlled by us: seldom were cases more dissimilar. The Parliament is now in the exact position that the provinces were in then, protecting the weak from a grinding oppression. The Colonial charters were granted to whole communities; their powers have been usurped by a mere fraction; and yet the power that conferred the benefit on the whole, shall not be at liberty to stem this usurpation!

But then there are practical difficulties: the subject is one of great intricacy. This again is little better than mystification. Intricate enough it can be made unquestionably; and so may any other subject; but in itself, it is no more involved in intricacy than any other subject that is daily mooted.

Palliatives will, in such matters invariably fail. The concessions to Catholics, at the close of the last century, strengthened but did not satisfy them. A few of the distinctions as to colour were removed; this signified nothing with the coloured any more than with the Catholics; but all distinctions were withdrawn at a blow, and then all difficulty and discontent ceased.

So with this very question of slavery. The original Trinidad order contained various conditions as to the admissibility of slave evidence; but it gave great dissatisfaction to the proprietors, and conferred no benefit on the slaves. All these were withdrawn; slaves were placed in this respect on the footing of free persons; henceforward, no further difficulty; so with property, and so with manumissions. So again will it be with punishments. Allow the manager to inflict punishments, then, the more numerous are the conditions this right is clogged with, the more numerous will be the points raised. The adjudged cases, on these daily occurring objections, would

almost form a body of jurisprudence. Transfer that right to the magistrate ; these difficulties will vanish.

Proceeding on these principles, there would be no insuperable difficulty in framing an Act of Parliament, clear, tolerably brief, and yet explaining, with sufficient precision, the relative rights and obligations of masters or managers, and of slaves.

The preamble might set forth, that as in times past persons had been removed from Africa, for the purpose of cultivating His Majesty's Settlements, and as some of these persons, and many of their descendants were still liable to this service, it therefore had become expedient to define and explain the relative duties and rights of the persons so employed, and of their proprietors and managers.

The first clause would then declare that all laws, ordinances, and regulations whatever, having reference to slaves, throughout His Majesty's colonies, were repealed and for ever cancelled.

The second would lay down the broad principle, that, in all matters whatever not in the act excepted, the slaves should be on the same footing, in every respect, as persons of free condition ; that, therefore, they might hold and dispose of property, and sue at law and be sued ; and that they should be liable to the same penalties, enjoy the same personal immunity, possess the same remedies civil and criminal, be tried after the same forms, give evidence on the same terms, as all His Majesty's remaining subjects.

Next would be defined, in three or four sections at the utmost, the obligations of labourers. First, That they are to work for their managers during the time specified in the act, say nine hours in the field, or eleven hours at the mill, but never partly in the field and partly at the mill, in every twenty-four hours. Second, That the right in them may be transferred, provided that, as concerns predial slaves, they be sold only with the estate, and domestics in families.

Next would be limited and determined the obligations of the master or manager, namely ; to furnish clothing—and what amount of clothing ; food—and what quantity of food ; the Sunday—the festivals—and certain other working days, and what other working days, for cultivation, or for market, or for repose ; to have an hospital ; to provide huts and gardens, and medical attendance ; to grant greater immunities, and what immunities, to mothers nursing, and mothers of families, to the young and to the aged. Most of these points will be found regulated in every slave law, and can be easily selected ; for food, take the Bahamas, and for some others St. Lucia ; for farther regulations, where requisite, perhaps improve *ad libitum*, but cautiously.

Having defined and limited the relative rights and obligations of managers and labourers, next would be explained the penalties for an infringement of either. The labourer to be punished by imprisonment and hard labour, by being mulcted of some of his time, or perhaps, in some cases, by corporal punishment ; the manager by fine, imprisonment, and being declared incapable of managing slaves ;—all these points to be determined by magistrates, appointed and remunerated by the Crown, and in the presence of the protectors.

Finally would come the regulations as to manumission, voluntary and equitable, and as to other methods of acquiring and retaining freedom, and extinguishing slavery.

Surely there is nothing in such a law that a practical man, with sufficient data, would not get through in twenty-four hours. I would insert a draft of it here at length was it not beyond the purpose of an Essay.

The Act being passed—now as to its execution.

It would, of course, encounter the usual degree of clamour and menace ; of resistance and pretended insurrection ;—though probably less of all these when the measure was once decisive. From the slave, insurrection need not be feared : he has been disappointed, but still he feels that his condition is

improving. He knows he has friends, and cordial friends. Formerly, indeed, when goaded and driven on to despair, I can easily credit the accounts of bitter revenge, which they are reported to have occasionally taken; and if their feelings and expectations be unmeaningly trifled with, it is not impossible that they, like all other men, will claim as a right what is refused as a favour. *They*, at least, can lose nothing by insurrection. The planters should bear in mind, that it must make but little difference to them whether they are consumed at home by the hundred, or killed in action by the dozen. With regard to the planters themselves, since they have thought proper to hold out threats in no measured terms, it is but fair to observe, that they are not greatly to be dreaded. It has been elsewhere shown how few they are, compared with all the other classes. In one of the islands, after having been repeatedly menaced with a servile insurrection, the government was favoured with rumours of resistance from the white Colonists! They mustered their forces, old and young, fathers and sons, town and country, proprietors, managers, overseers, merchants, sugar-boilers, and clerks, and they amounted exactly to *sixty-seven*:—and this was the force which was to intimidate a united government, backed (to say nothing of the garrison) by five thousand able bodied freemen. In such a case, a united government is every thing.—A government, heading a faction, may throw a country into convulsions. A faction, opposed to a government that possesses the confidence of the people, is utterly impotent. Where the head and trunk are sound, a few decayed branches may be allowed to wear away, both in the West Indies and in Europe.

The points connected with amelioration, and with the gradual annihilation of slavery, being thus disposed of, there remain to be considered the means most likely to expedite the progress of annihilation; for if the measures already recommended be duly enforced, there can be no doubt that in a

short, comparatively very short, space of time, slavery will die away and disappear, without loss, expence, or inconvenience to the mother country; the compensation, where required, being supplied by the persons benefited, or by others who would assist them. The advantage of substituting a system of moderate coercion and much encouragement, for excessive coercion without any encouragement, would soon be so generally felt, that the change, however slow at first, would, as it proceeded, advance more and more rapidly.

But if any thing more be required, then compensation must be afforded, and immediate, not eventual compensation.

In this respect, differing from many gentlemen whose opinions he highly values; and from the principles advanced by a Society, which, as his experience has since taught him, has conferred essential services on humanity; the author feels bound to state distinctly the grounds on which he conceives the planters have a claim to *immediate* compensation to a certain extent.

He perfectly agrees that it is contrary to the usual practice, and to general principles, to grant compensation *beforehand*, or to hold out any promise of compensation, for *contingent losses* arising from any general measures of political regulation, or national policy; and that, therefore, the government were well founded in refusing to award immediate compensation for any eventual loss occurring from the suppression of the slave trade. Nay, he goes farther, and conceives that claims of this kind are, in every case, rather claims on the *liberality* than on the *justice* of the legislature. A change from war to peace, the shifting of a duty from one commodity to another, the constructing of a street or rail road,—all those acts of policy entail loss on some individuals, but benefits on others. The community is indemnified on one side, or is expected to be so, for what it loses on another. And never yet could it be expected that a legislature will adjust the balance, and indemnify the losers, any more than it would claim to share in the

profits of the gainers ; though it may, in extreme cases, where very serious damage is fully proved, come forward with assistance, in the same way that it would endeavour to repair the devastations of a hurricane. It is, therefore, unfortunately, by making extravagant claims of this kind,—claims founded on conjecture, and mistaken conjecture,—claims swollen to an enormous amount, tending to create alarm—that West Indians have weakened their cause, and that they have taught their adversaries to refuse that to which they appear fairly entitled.

But in every civilized state, property actually converted to the purposes of the state has been actually paid for, at its fair value, and paid for, in the words of the French law, a law scarcely so tender of the rights of individuals as the law of England, “*moyennant une préalable indemnité,*” by means of a previous indemnification. The coach-masters, the waggoners, the canal proprietors, who suffer from the construction of a rail-road, may incur a contingent loss from such act of policy, and they are not *previously*, if ever indemnified; but the person, on whose land the rail-road is constructed, was paid for it before he allowed the road to pass there. So with a canal, a fortress, or a street. So even with the Slave Trade:—the owners of ships, legally employed in that trade, might have suffered a contingent loss from its suppression; or, rather, they could *gain* nothing more, which may be equally ruinous to them; but this was a contingency, and they were not *previously* indemnified. But had government gone further, and, for the more effectual and immediate suppression of that trade, taken instant possession of every ship hitherto legally engaged in it; then, whether they converted these ships to the use of the state, or set them on fire, they must equally, as they took them, have paid their value. So with the planters of that day: they had asserted that their gangs would dwindle away, and they sought compensation *beforehand*. Such a claim was not to be hearkened to; but, had government de-

terminated to take their gangs from them, the value must have been paid to them;—and this seems, to me, to be the present case.

The question of compensation, therefore, lies in a nutshell. It may be more advantageous to pay wages than to purchase a permanent service. It may be more convenient to hire a house than to buy one; but it is scarcely more convenient or advantageous first to buy the house, and then have to pay rent for it, than it is first to buy the gang, and then to have to give wages to the labourers who compose it;—for, whether the property be in the person or in the service, money—a capital, has been invested in the purchase; and this capital, or its present value, must be replaced to the proprietor, before he parts with it.

As to claims for buildings and lands, and all other investments, this is really the Slave Trade question over again: the demand of a compensation beforehand is untenable; though, if their anticipations are realized, which they are not likely to be, they *may* have claims, subsequently, on the liberality of Parliament,—when they shall have proved their loss.

Compensation, therefore, appears to be due, and only due, for the slaves, when actually freed, and to become due as they are freed.

Nor is it any thing in the argument that the Colonies may improve under a free system, and that land will rise in value as agriculture extends and population increases. Of that I entertain no doubt; but the planter has no right to remuneration for his land and houses, should the experiment fail. But neither has the State a right to take away his property, for nothing, on the chance of its success. What the planter retains he risks—he risks the improvement or deterioration of his estate, as though a road or a street were cut through it; but for what is actually taken from him he has a right to be paid and paid for as it is taken.

Now, as to the mode of effecting the change, and the pro-

bable amount of the indemnity;—the postulate here is so to graduate the change, from coercion to free labour, from the *whip to wages*, that little if any capital shall be thrown out of employ in its progress. One plan would be to purchase a given number of slaves every year, beginning with the older slaves, and thus buy off the whole in the course of six, eight, or ten years. So, on the first of January next, let all male slaves, above 45, be emancipated with their wives and children under 12; on the 1st of January, 1834, all above 40, and so on to 20 years of age, when all that remained might be emancipated at once.

By this means, justice would be first done to those who have suffered longest; the conversion would be gradual; and the planter could find no difficulty in hiring first a few labourers, and then a few more, or he would have the choice of circumscribing his operations. Before the second period of emancipation arrived, the preceding batch of free labourers would be absorbed. In any case, children, as they obtained freedom, would find a home with their parents, which is the great difficulty (besides the injustice, as regards the older slaves,) of merely emancipating children born after a given day;—a plan tardy in its effects, and which sets the manager's interest directly in opposition to procreation.

Should this mode be considered too expensive, another plan, equally possible and certain, though less expeditious, is that of Mr. Macaulay, which, in 1824, was sanctioned by the approbation of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning, namely, to purchase the females. This, too, might be graduated like the other; it might be done in one year, or ten. Or a third, and perhaps the best, plan would be, to combine both, to purchase first the females, and then the males.

On either plan, the effect would be certain. Not only would slavery be extinguished by its direct operation, but it would give a great impulse to equitable manumission. A period being fixed, the slave would only have to buy the remainder

of his servitude; and his wife, father, or mother being free, they would work for him, and soon enable him to realize this sum. Slavery, too, would be much modified, and its harsher features softened. The males, on returning at night, would find their meals prepared for them; and the females, instead of working in cane pieces, or labouring by night at the mill, would mind their houses, till their gardens, and attend market. A small rent might be allowed the proprietor for his land; population would increase rapidly; and children would be nursed and reared by their mothers.

The probable expense of purchasing the women only, according to the calculations of Mr. Barham, himself a West Indian, is something under £500,000 per annum, in perpetuity.

The scale should be fixed by law. In St. Lucia, and other new and fertile colonies, it might be as follows:—

Females under 15	-	-	-	£15 to £20
“ from 15 to 25	-	-	-	40
“ “ 25 to 40	-	-	-	50
“ “ 40 to 50	-	-	-	30

And in the exhausted Colonies, such as Tortola, Barbadoes, and Antigua, half that amount would suffice.

Throughout the experiment, the monopoly ought to continue, to enable the planters to give a fair trial to the system of free labour. At the close of it, the monopoly should be gradually reduced, and might be finally done away with. Half the duties should be repealed for the benefit of the planter, the other half should be continued to meet the expence of emancipating the slaves.

England has paid long enough to support a system pregnant with evil; it can, therefore, afford to make a sacrifice, for some time longer, to forward purposes of charity and humanity. In justice, it owes a vast reparation, much larger than is required of it.

There is also another object which should be warmly promoted by all parties, which is due to our West Indian propri-

ctors, and for the furtherance of which the present time offers the best opportunity. It is quite a mistake that the slave trade is carried on to any thing like the extent it had reached when British capital was involved in it, or, even to one fifth; still it is carried on, and very largely, and, to their discredit be it said, chiefly by the French. It has, however, as concerns them, received its death blow from a quarter where it was least expected. The French possessions are surrounded by ours. Dr. Lushington's Bill secures freedom to refugee slaves, and they are now flocking to our islands by hundreds.

Of this, as the case now stands, the French cannot complain on any principle of international law or of equity. At law, the French Courts, the French Government, have, for ages, sanctioned the principle that foreign slaves, seeking refuge in France, were free. In equity, they cannot expect that, after their repeated pledges to abolish the trade, those who have received those pledges will sanction their violation, or respect property possessed only in consequence of such violation.

Still this is not a position in which friendly nations should stand with reference to each other.

The remedy is for both nations to declare the slave trade piracy, and thus exchange the right of mutual search for that of mutual protection.

Another plan, indeed, is reported to have been contemplated, and drafts of an Act of Parliament appeared, about two years ago in the colonies, by which refugee slaves, instead of being restored as formerly, were to be sold for the benefit of the foreign proprietors.

This would be in effect doing nothing more or less than re-establishing the slave trade. The distance from Martinique to St. Lucia, taking the nearest head-lands, is about six leagues. Open canoes can cross over by day and night, in every kind of weather. But stop the slave trade, let the French concede the right of search, and then, either plan might be adopted.

Such are the measures of amelioration and annihilation which have suggested themselves to me as perfectly feasible. The sooner the first shall be adopted, the better will it be in every sense; and the act embodying them should be passed concurrently with a second Act repealing half the duties. As concerns the latter, they may be also adopted, but at such periods as the convenience of the colonies and of the country, may permit. The first will remove the weightier objections to slavery, and ultimately effect its extinction.

The charge, however, attending even such measures of amelioration, as appointing stipendiary magistrates, should be defrayed at the expense, as they are introduced on the call, of Great Britain. And this is a burthen, which if the country are sincere, and I doubt not their sincerity, they ought to submit to with alacrity.

If so introduced and so supported, it is not clear that these measures would meet with that strenuous resistance, even in the West Indies, which has been held out as certain. There is already a powerful party throughout the colonies favourable to reform; the press, which cannot maintain itself unless backed by numbers, has for some time commenced, in many places, freely to advocate a sounder system. In Jamaica, Antigua, Grenada and St. Lucia, there are papers conducted on principles avowedly liberal. In every colony, men of consideration more freely advocate right views. Many slave proprietors not only deprecate slavery, but are prepared to make greater sacrifices than England, (except she should cover herself with opprobrium) could require at their hands for its extinguishment. Yet will there be sufficient opposition to call for the united energies of the friends of the Negro in both hemispheres. Let them then, setting aside minor differences, unite in this great and good work; and then their triumph is secure. Thus will universal prosperity, contentment and freedom replace unexampled misery, and vice, and crime.

S. Dagster, Jun., Printer, 14, Bartholomew Close, London.

