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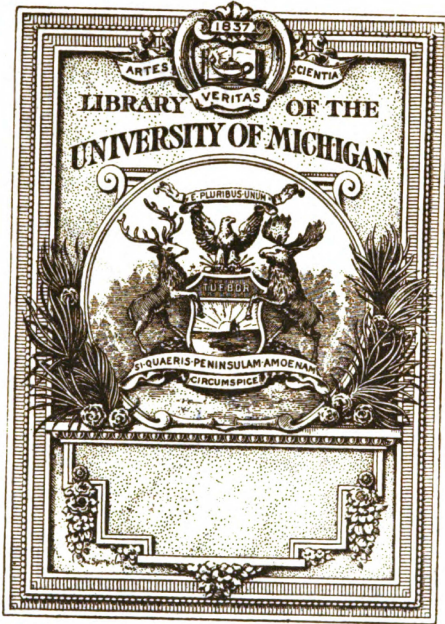
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ON

THE AMELIORATION

OF

SLAVERY.

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BY HENRY KOSTER,  
AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN BRAZIL."

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ON  
THE AMELIORATION  
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SLAVERY.

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PART I.

**W**HEN those good men through whose means the abolition of the slave trade was effected, commenced their career, their hopes and expectations were probably directed only to the accomplishment of that great object, and they did not perhaps look farther. But since the chief bar to improvement has been removed, I should imagine that every one who is hearty in the cause of attempting to decrease the evils which exist in any part of the world, must have entertained hopes regarding the ultimate extirpation of domestic slavery from all those quarters in which its existence is at present sanctioned. No man can think of emancipating the slaves of the Columbian islands by an act of the British legislature; this is not possible and not expedient; such an act would bring with it far greater immediate evils than we are warranted in bringing down upon any set of men, with the prospect of any ultimate good however great that might be; and whether or not this ultimate good would arise is extremely doubtful. No government has a right to impoverish a whole body of men, however upright its intentions may be, if the wealth of that body of men has been obtained through the laws, or by any means which that government has sanctioned. The slaves too are not in a condition to become freemen at once; the change from a most degrading state of bondage to free agency would be accompanied by every species of disorder and confusion;—probably by the destruction of the white population of the islands and anarchy among the negroes.

But in the end the emancipation of the slaves must take place; the state of the world will require it, the improving state of mankind will call for it; and at the present moment the tide of public opinion is fast flowing into that channel, nor is it likely to swerve from thence, although it may be checked,—several truths are now established as political maxims which were not formerly acknowledged,—which were in other times considered as the speculative opinions of wise men whose notions of the world were erroneous. It was supposed that the slave trade and slavery were good things;—that the poor ought to be kept in ignorance;—that intolerance and persecution would make men change their opinions;—that the world was becoming worse instead of better; and other subjects of importance might be mentioned. In fact, the world was, by its own opinions, in part causing the accomplishment as natural consequences of those things which were only the effects of the notions which were entertained. Man was perhaps degenerating or was becoming more wicked and more ignorant, because man himself would not attempt to ameliorate his own condition. Whether he would have succeeded in accomplishing his own degradation is another question; whether that good power which created us and which rules over us would have permitted this debasement of the creature which it formed in its own image; whether we should have become the worst of the beings in the creation instead of continuing in the rank which is our due, cannot now be judged. The work of improvement is at present progressively advancing; it can however only proceed gradually and systematically;—great changes should be effected by slow degrees. But the matter is to convince those whose part it is to bring about these changes, that they are necessary; when once this is done, a plan must be fixed upon for the purpose of effecting them, and that plan must be followed without swerving and without pausing; it must be followed fearlessly, without attending to slight collateral circumstances which have no bearing upon the great question. Where an evil system has been formed, evil from thence must be expected to proceed; nor can it be got rid of without some mischief. The matter is to compass the desired purpose with as much care as possible,—with attention to the interests of all those persons who are concerned, but undeviatingly with a bearing to the great object of ameliorating the state of man,—of extirpating slavery,—of abolishing a wicked system, perhaps the most wicked, considering its extent, that ever was formed by human beings:—the transportation of the natives of one quarter of the globe, to labor in another, for the purpose of supplying luxuries for the inhabitants of a third.

The late insurrection of the negroes in Barbadoes has done much injury to the cause of abolition and amelioration. How



much better would it be (if the negroes could possibly know the mischief that they were causing to themselves and to their brethren by these risings) that they should bear the heavy yoke patiently, until the time was come for their condition to be bettered. This insurrection has aided the favourers of the wicked system, and has much contributed to the loss of the Registry Bill. It ought not to have had this effect, for it should be imagined that some evils must arise from any plan which may be proposed for alteration in the internal state of the Columbian islands; and if none greater than such a slight rising as this should be the consequence of a great step gained, the matter might be considered as being accomplished at a cheap rate. That what is good is to be done without producing some mischief, never did occur and never can;—great changes cannot be accomplished without being felt. The object is to rise as gradually as circumstances will allow, that as few persons as possible be dissatisfied, that as little distress be experienced as the state of the case will permit. If the legislature will turn from their point, will concede upon such trifling grounds as these, then whatever is to be performed on this subject, can only be carried by public opinion; the great battle must be fought over again, and as in the case of the Abolition of the execrable trade, the whole kingdom must be roused to inform the Legislature that the people will not suffer so many of their fellow creatures to continue in a state of brutal ignorance, in a state of abject, of most degrading bondage, that some steps at least shall be taken for their improvement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In thus speaking of the insurrection at Barbadoes, I have argued as if the statements of the advocates of slavery respecting the causes of it were correct, that is, that the rising proceeded from the agitation of the question of the Registry Bill. But it is far from being proved that this question had more than a partial bearing upon the cause of the commotion. The insurrection was far from being general, and appears to have only taken place on a few estates. "What may be the result of farther evidence it would be premature to say. In the mean time the accounts already received contain nothing which renders it necessary to assume that the whole mischief did not originate in a revolt of Mr. Scott's negroes against their immediate masters or managers, excited by some local and peculiar cause; and which in its progress may possibly have been aggravated by the impressions the negroes may have received from the intemperate representations of their masters respecting the tendency of the Registry Bill." *Remarks on the insurrection in Barbadoes, &c.* p. 7.

If the planters were afraid of the slaves imbibing revolutionary ideas owing to having obtained a knowledge of what was doing in England respecting them, they took a strange method of concealing such dangerous information, for "in the Newspapers of Barbadoes, formal Resolutions of the Assembly were published only three or four months before the insurrection broke out, denouncing the Registry Bill as a plan for the emancipation of the slaves." And "in a Jamaica Gazette of March, 1816, the Registry Bill is elaborately arraigned as founded on views of a revolutionary kind and calculated to produce insurrection." *Remarks, &c.* p. 5 and 4.

I have before stated that the emancipation of the labourers of the Columbian islands is not what ought to be attempted at present; this would be unjust towards the planters and injurious to the slaves. It is the amelioration of the latter which ought to be rendered an object of deep attention; and God knows, their masters too might undergo much improvement. I say *unjust* towards the planters, because the laws of their country permitted them to acquire this species of property, and therefore having sanctioned such proceeding, this permission must not be retracted all at once to the ruin of so large a portion of the community. But the justice or injustice of which I treat has no relation to that superior feeling of equity which ought to direct the conduct of human beings towards each other;—it is merely worldly justice of which I speak,—and indeed I doubt whether in this case such a word ought to have been used; whether I had not better have said, that *convenience* would and must prevent the emancipation of the slaves, even if they were in a fit condition to be set at liberty.

Other nations have imbibed the opinion that Great Britain abolished the Slave Trade because her own colonies were fully stocked with Africans, and therefore that she was afraid of introducing a greater number of them under the apprehension of endangering her dependencies; and that now she wishes to prevent the farther transportation of the natives of Africa to the New World, that the establishments of foreigners may not rival her own;—that as her colonies are well supplied and those of other nations deficient, she is desirous of preserving her ascendancy. This opinion is founded upon a total ignorance of the principles upon which that great question was handled in Great Britain, when the majority of her people seemed to have only one heart and one soul, and that these were directed to the attainment of the desired object. Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Granville Sharp; three such men as these could only act from principles of right and wrong in every thing which they did; their lives have proved their disinterestedness, their zeal, their sincerity; they have done their share of good in this world. Happy is the man who has the heart to prompt him to such exertion, and such opportunities of shewing his activity. One of them has already gone to meet with his reward in a better state of existence, and when the last hour of the other two shall come, they may bow their heads in peace, for their ways have been ways of righteousness.

The discussion which has been occasioned by a publication respecting Sierra Leone has done much mischief and will yet do more. If the author of the first pamphlet upon the subject supposed that he was aiding the cause of freedom, he was deeply mistaken, for among the Portuguese in particular it will do much towards a confirmation of their views regarding the motives of Great Britain.

Even if the charges which were brought forward had been true, the consequences which such a detail will produce are of a pernicious nature. The answer which was made to them appears to be decisive and convincing, but it must be recollected that both these productions may not find their way into foreign countries together and opportunities may not be afforded of both sides being heard.<sup>1</sup> It is fit that Great Britain should remove the opinion of the interestedness of her views by proceeding to the adoption of some plan for relieving the wretched state of the bondmen of the Columbian islands.

The right of the British legislature to pass laws for the internal regulation of the sugar islands is called in question. This is a revival of the old affair with the North American colonies. They doubted of the right of this country to legislate for them, because they thought that they were sufficiently strong to govern themselves. The child had arrived at an age, and possessed sufficient strength of constitution to direct its own actions. With regard to the islands one question only need to be asked; can they defend themselves against a foreign invader? If they receive protection from the British Empire as forming a part of it, they must expect to be ruled by the same power which rules the other portions of this great whole. If they could afford assistance in men and money and ships to Great Britain in case she was in need; and when they were attacked only required auxiliaries from her; if they were in a state of any thing like independence, they might say that they had a right to direct their own concerns. But how differently are they situated. They are subject to be attacked and pillaged by any power with which Great Britain may chance to be at war, unless they are furnished with soldiers from Europe, and unless their coasts are protected by fleets that are sent from the same quarter.<sup>2</sup>

The internal state of the islands,—that state in which they wish to continue—that system in which they are so jealous of interference,

<sup>1</sup> The Pamphlets of Dr. Thorpe are now undergoing translation into the Portuguese language in a Portuguese Journal (the *Investigador Portuguez*) published in London. The editor has declared himself inimical to the Slave Trade, but whatever his intention may be in translating the pamphlets in question, I well know the pernicious effects which they will have in Brazil; I know how much they will tend to fortify the advocates for the continuation of the Slave Trade, who argue for it under the impression of the motives for the earnestness of Great Britain respecting the abolition, being of the worst description.

<sup>2</sup> "A fortress then is a necessary and indispensable provision of defence for each island and British regiments are required for the garrison."

"When a British fleet is no longer stationary or cruising in the West Indies, and each small island is abandoned to self defence, it is not perhaps, in this secure and powerful country, easily conceived how much anxiety pervades every class of people and disturbs the peace of every family. *West India Common-Place Book of Sir William Young.*

tends above every thing else to render their situation precarious. The great mass of the population is formed of persons who are in a coercive condition, restrained by fear, preserved in quietude by force and constant attention; and even every precaution is oftentimes of no avail; the slaves break forth, running every risk with nearly a certainty of not succeeding, and in mere despair, in revenge, burn their owners' houses, destroy the cultivation which they have produced but of which they do not reap the advantage. Even if other means did not succeed the enemy from without has only to offer freedom to these miserable beings, and he will soon accomplish his ends. Without receiving aid from Europe, attacked by foreigners, in danger of being murdered by their own dependants, the planters would be happy to return to their former condition, to receive laws and protection from Europe in exchange for desolation, and the probability of extirpation in seeking for independence.

It is a dreadful system which of necessity takes away all confidence between the master and his servant; a system of continual fear of machinations, a suspicion of plots and conspiracies, which produces a necessity for continual watchfulness, which inclines both parties to view the actions of the other with feelings of distrust, which makes both put the worst construction upon the proceedings of the other. It is a state of society which fails not to bring forth every bad quality, to render prominent the worst of characters, to lead to the degradation of the human being in the persons of those who govern and of those who obey. It is a government of few over many, which gives absolute power to human beings and consequently tends to brutalise them. It is not against any one set of slave dealers or slave owners that I speak, nor can any blame attach to many of the individuals who hold this species of property, and none to any of them for holding it. It is against the system of slavery taken as a general question; this ought to be removed from the world as speedily as possible, all due prudence being observed in the accomplishment of the purpose. It is not because there are individual instances of cruelty, though these may be numerous, that constitute the great evil of slavery, but the bar which it presents to the advancement of the human race, is the primary evil, the foundation upon which its extirpation should be erected; the great plea for attacking it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Honorable House of Assembly of Jamaica says, in speaking of cruelty:—"One of the most palpable acts of injustice towards the colonists is laying hold of the few exceptions to the general rule,—men who exist in every country, who prefer the gratification of their passions to the performance of their duty. That some men are in the habit of being cruel is thus acknowledged. It is the removal of the possibility of the existence of tyranny, that should be attempted and for which laws are required. It is not the rarity of occurrence which holds good in argument but the possibility of occurrence.



It is said that the instances of cruelty (under the signification which the word bears in this case) are not frequent in the Columbian islands, and I hope that this will be found to be correct. However as cruelty bears several degrees of increase or decrease, and yet the same word may be used, I may perhaps be allowed to explain what is good treatment according to the meaning which these words bear in the slave language of the country to which I have been accustomed. I conceive that as there may be a difference in the public regulations of each country respecting slaves, this difference may ameliorate or render more severe their general situation; but I may perhaps be correct in saying that individual slave owners of each country will be nearly upon an average par; or if there is any thing superior in one or other, the superiority will be perceived in that country of which the institutions respecting the oppressed are the mildest.

A Brazilian slave-owner is generally accounted a good master, if he works his slaves in the following manner and allows them the following necessaries and the following indulgencies. The slave is sent out to work at sun-rise (at six o'clock) he works until eight and then half an hour is allowed for breakfast, the work is recommenced until twelve, when the dinner is eaten, and at two the labor being again continued is at an end at half-past five or six o'clock. Sometimes there is work at home for an hour or two in the early part of the night. In crop time (from four to six months in the year) the labor is conducted as on board vessels at sea, watch and watch, the change of each gang being made every six hours. To this work is to be added the chance average stripes which the slave may receive from the driver, who is at his heels in the field; besides the severer corporal punishments for faults, which certainly are faults, but which the generality of human beings fail not now and then to fall into; these trivial failings proceed from a bad memory, carelessness, liveliness of disposition, fondness for company, besides natural stupidity, ignorance, misunderstanding. Then comes the train of faults which the slave might avoid and are worthy of punishments; and to these the whip is likewise applied. Then follows that train which proceeds from slavery,—escaping from the master, habitual deceit, habitual pilfering, which may be natural, but is increased by the desire of possessing what is forbidden, and yet is hourly in sight, and has cost labor to him who is debarred the enjoyment of it, without any emolument proceeding to him therefrom. So far the master acts exactly as he pleases, no appeal is made to the magistrate for his sanction, nor, under the system as it exists, could this be done. The master shapes his punishments according to the bearing of the crime to himself and to his interests and not according to its moral tendency;—this is horrible, but it is natural, and only what might be expected.

Now in return for his work and for his occasional punishments, the slave receives two shirts and two pairs of drawers in the course of the year, and frequently two straw hats—a mat to sleep upon, and a piece of baize with which to cover himself at night,—these last are, or rather ought to be, renewed, when worn out. The slave has his hut, for the furnishing of which he must himself provide. His food is salt meat or salt fish and the flour of the mandioc. The laws allow him to have the Sundays and holidays as his own.

The above is a statement of the labour which is required to be performed by those masters who have the character of treating their slaves mildly. The word cruelty to such treatment, is not applied in creole language. A far different picture from this would be presented if I spoke of those owners who are accounted bad masters. All the world knows what diabolical deeds man can perform when placed in certain situations, when exposed to certain temptations. It is not from any want of examples that I speak thus concisely of what is reckoned cruelty; God knows that I have seen enough of such misdeeds and of their effects. But neither would the narration of such tales serve any good purpose, nor is this a proper place for them, even if they could be serviceable.

I cannot avoid thinking, and I dare say no one will deny that the British sugar-plantation slave is not in a better situation than the negro of the same description in Brazil;—and in one respect the former is decidedly not so advantageously circumstanced as the latter,—he has not so many holidays. The state of a human being who is placed upon a plantation to work for another man, and is treated even in the *favourable* manner which I have described, is extremely miserable. Habit renders almost any thing bearable, and the previous reasoning in the hands of slave-dealers upon the coast of Africa and of slave-dealers in Brazil has doubtless checked much of the sense of degradation in most of the individuals, but yet the vexations, the disappointments, the privations, the treatment of men and women as if they were children, is too much for many of these poor wretches, and is felt in some degree by almost every one of them.

The House of Assembly of Jamaica says, "It was not until the time of the Emperor Claudius that the Romans were by law forbidden to kill a slave merely for old age or sickness. To expose old, useless or sick slaves on an island in the Tiber, was a practice common in Rome. The professed maxim of the elder Cato was to sell his old slaves for any price rather than maintain them. *Ergastula* or dungeons, where slaves in chains were forced to work, were very common all over Italy. Columella advises that they be always built under ground and recommends calling over the rolls or names of the slaves every day, to discover early if any of them had deserted;—a proof of the frequency of the *ergastula*, of the great number of

slaves confined in them, and that desertions were common. A slave chained at the door as a porter was usual in Rome."<sup>1</sup>

The account then proceeds in the enumeration of other cruelties. What does all this prove? Is the enumeration of the evils of former times any reason for the continuance of them in our days? The relation of such deeds in ancient times only shews that the world is in a much better state now than it was in those days. But is this a reason for a stop being placed to farther improvement? We ought to be thankful that we live in a better age, that we run our race in days, in which slavery is declared to be an abomination which ought to be rooted out, "a cancer in the body politic."

The House of Assembly again say, that "time and the regular course of human affairs will accomplish in the British Colonies what they brought about in the Roman Empire and in modern Europe, without direct legal enactments and little assistance from any positive institutions."

When mankind was not aware of the evils which existed in society, or there was no body of men who could remove them, even if they had been aware of the pernicious consequences of regulations which were sanctioned by the customs of the world in general; at that time, I say, it could not be expected that any strenuous efforts should be made for the abolition or modification of existing institutions,—that "direct legal enactments" should be made for the benefit of the lower ranks of the community. In the present day the case is totally altered; the world is now aware of the causes of the chief evils under which mankind is labouring; and highly to blame would those who are aware of them be, if they did not strive to remove them, if they did not put all their strength to the wheel and toil incessantly in the good work. A regard must, at the same time, always be entertained for the system upon which the ruling powers have been acting; and as little inconvenience be occasioned as possible.

The House of Assembly state that the condition of the slaves is much improved during the last forty years, and doubtless this must be the case. The general feeling respecting the Africans which was roused by the discussion respecting the abolition of the Slave Trade, must have been favourable to the slaves; the planters could not fail to feel that alterations were necessary, and that Great Britain would be led henceforwards to enquire more minutely into the state of their slaves; the interest of the slave-owners would teach them to husband what they possessed, all legal hopes being cut off

<sup>1</sup> Further Proceedings of the Honourable House of Assembly of Jamaica, &c. P. 21 and 22.

of making up any deficiencies which might be created, by means of importation. I trust too that some men might be actuated by feelings of goodness, and though they might have been neglectful of their duties, the occasion might make them recollect that they ought to be performed, might rouse them to exertion, in decreasing the miseries of those over whom they were placed.

Yet notwithstanding the improvements which are stated to have been introduced by the report of the House of Assembly; the same report proves how much remains to be done even to the advancement of the slaves to the condition of serfs; how much toil and alteration is required even to raise them to the state of the Indians who were instructed by the Jesuits in South America;—to make them tolerably comfortable, to render them less liable to ill-usage (for though the frequent practice of cruelty is denied, the possibility of its occurrence is acknowledged), to make them beings who act from principles of right and wrong, to give them moral feelings, to make them Christians.

In any objection which is urged to whatever may be proposed for benefitting the moral condition of the slaves, no argument holds good which is founded upon the opinion of the slaves themselves not being desirous of such changes. If civilized man is to wait until his barbarian brethren call for him to teach them what he knows, the progress of civilization and religion will be slow indeed. If Christ had not preached because the Jews were not willing to listen to him, we should not have been blessed with his religion. If the Missionaries of the Romish Church had not risked all dangers in accomplishing their ends, a still smaller portion of the globe would be blessed with Christianity even than at present enjoys the knowledge of it. The assertion which has been made of the slaves being in so barbarous a state as to be averse to certain changes of condition, is a strong proof of the necessity of setting to work in good earnest for their amelioration, instead of being an argument for allowing them to continue in their evil ways.

The House of Assembly account for the decrease in the population in Jamaica by saying that some of the negroes which were imported immediately before the Abolition were of a bad species, and some diseases are mentioned as being destructive, particularly to the negroes:—likewise that the principal cause is the disproportion of the sexes. Then is to be found the following statement:

“The evil was considerably augmented by the native men being richer than those newly arrived, and taking a larger proportion of the women, whilst the creole females rarely cohabited with the men from Africa, until they had been a considerable time in the country and acquired some property. Seven years have by no means been sufficient to bring the sexes to a state of equality; and until that be effected, the number of deaths must be in an unnatural proportion. This evil produces—



ther; a greater degree of promiscuous intercourse, and more difficulty in correcting it by rewards and punishments. It is unnecessary to state how unfavorable this condition of society is to a natural increase. The young women are averse to any restraint on their pleasures and profits, and often have recourse to means for procuring abortions, until they become unable to carry children for the full period of gestation. The principal negroes are equally disinclined to allow their masters to interfere with their connections. From previous habitudes, it cannot with any propriety be made an object of punishment, and rewards have hitherto failed to produce any considerable effect."<sup>1</sup>

The master-horse who has the most strength, and the bull who has the courage to combat and succeeds in conquering the creatures of his own sex and species, arrogate to themselves the largest share of females, and thus the negro who has the most property has his Seraglio. And we are told that this must be, and that we must not use any means for the alteration of such a system. Shame upon ye who call yourselves civilised men! conceal your opinions, for they injure the national character. If you will think so disgracefully of human nature, ye deserve not the name of Britons.

Thus the above statement respecting the condition of the chief population of one of the principal dependencies of this kingdom, is given to the world by an assemblage of some of the individuals who hold the majority in subjection. It is brought forward in a publication which is purposely sent into the world to prove that the Supreme Legislature of the Empire need not interpose in their concerns, for that the race of beings, in whose behalf such interference would be made, do not require the improvements which are purposed. It is most surprising how any set of men can gravely

<sup>1</sup> "The negroes in the West Indies both men and women would consider it as the greatest exertion of tyranny and the most cruel of all hardships to be compelled to confine themselves to a single connection with the other sex, and I am persuaded that any attempt to restrain their present licentious and dissolute manners, by introducing the marriage ceremony among them, as is strenuously recommended by many persons in Great Britain, would be utterly impracticable to any good purpose."

"It is well known that the practice of polygamy which universally prevails in Africa is also very generally adopted among the negroes in the West Indies; and he who conceives that a remedy may be found for this, by introducing among them the laws of marriage as established in Europe, is utterly ignorant of their manners, propensities and superstitions." Edwards' History of West Indies, Vol. II. p. 82. and 147. This was the language of 1794, and I was in hopes that such ideas were obsolete, but in 1816, we find the grave House of Assembly of Jamaica using arguments of the same description. I lay great stress upon the relation of the sexes towards each other, not only, nor even principally, as a crime, but in as much as no steps which may be taken in removing man from barbarism can be efficacious until the relationship of man and wife be understood, until the children are regarded as belonging to both the parents and requiring care from both of them.

make such a statement, and present it at the time that they are wishing to prove to the people of Great Britain that they are competent to pay due attention to their own management. There is no publication upon this subject, which is so demonstrative as *The Further Proceedings, &c.* of the necessity of meliorating the condition of the slaves. Humanity requires it, religion enjoins the commencement of the task; and plain worldly policy too ought to make us aware that such a state of society cannot long hold together. Men who have not any love for those who govern them, and no moral or religious scruples to curb them, only require a sufficient degree of knowledge, to enable them to form settled plans of operations, and they will no longer bear the state of degradation in which they have existed. The barbarous and unprincipled state in which the negroes are permitted to remain will increase their ferocity when they do obtain the means of setting themselves at liberty. It is well known that creole slaves are quicker in learning, more impatient of control, and more courageous than the generality of the African negroes. The islands will in the course of some few years be peopled almost exclusively with this race,—at least the young and active will shortly be of this description. I know them full well, and am confident that it will be infinitely more difficult to preserve them in quiet acquiescence to arbitrary will than the Africans. If they have no religion, no moral principles, no love for their masters, hard usage, (hard I consider to be the general situation of slaves,) and no chance of escape from bondage, no free agency in however slight a degree, what is to be expected? Bloodshed and ruin to the higher ranks, anarchy and misery to the negroes themselves. At St. Domingo the business has been bad enough, and that it has not brought on worse consequences to the blacks themselves, is, I rather imagine, to be greatly attributed to the Christian religion having been implanted in them.<sup>1</sup>

If free agency was afforded to the slaves of the Columbian islands at once, if from the most abject slavery these people were to become the directors of their own actions, without any intermediate steps, the consequences would be of the worst description. But to imagine that a complete denial of any degree of free agency will preserve the slaves in subjection for a longer period

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish slaves are likewise Christians. The slaves of Brazil are Christians, and I have seen many men and women of exemplary moral conduct. Nor is it in that country supposed that the negroes are more licentious than other descriptions of men and women, nor is any difficulty imagined in the negro husband and wife living as happily together, as far as relates to each other, as a couple of any other race of human beings. Vile are those opinions which have their rise in the British sugar-islands, opinions which are totally unworthy of the age in which we live.

than if some slight share was given to them, will, I think, be found to be erroneous. Great convulsions in free states have been the more violent according to the depressed situation of the governed, according to the former degree of subjection in which they were kept. Discontent rises to too high a pitch to lie longer concealed, and it at last breaks forth with such violence as to be unappeasable; whereas if it had been conceded to by slow degrees, if it had been disarmed of its revengeful feelings by a desire to shew some leniency, its fury might have been averted. I do not mean that concessions should be made when they are demanded, but the rulers should cede with a good grace, as if by good will, what they cannot avoid, and thus prevent the ruled from perceiving that whatever is done for their benefit is done with reluctance. If the dependant is made, by the proceedings of his master, to understand that he is not strenuous in procuring his welfare, that others are more interested for him than the individual whom he serves, the consequences will be distrust and suspicion, hatred and a continual thought of escape from his power.

Any steps which may be taken should be made to act as forcibly as possible, but as indirectly as can be managed. The slave should be allowed to see what is done for him as little as circumstances will permit. Public opinion regarding white men must be as little loosened as is consistent with any plan which may be adopted; this is due to the safety of the white part of the population. However the amelioration of the condition of the slaves should be primarily entered into, because religion demands it; but sound policy in the masters should urge them to coincide in views which tend to raise their dependants in the scale of human beings. It is equitable so to do, and they will find in the end that it is no less their interest.

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## PART II.

The first step which is requisite, and has been mentioned by others who have written upon this question, is that of changing the situation of the labourers from that of slaves to serfs, or as near an approach to serfs as circumstances will permit. The slave should be attached to the soil, he should have an interest in his place of residence; and this desirable feeling would be produced by the consciousness of security in the little property which he might obtain. It would be his interest to prevent the devastation of his master's fields, because the destruction of his own would be included in any mischief which might be committed. Mr. Edwards in very forcible

ble language speaks in favour of the measure of attaching the negroes to the soil; he says,

“But these and all other regulations which can be devised for the protection and improvement of this unfortunate class of people will be of little avail, unless, as a preliminary measure, they shall be exempted from the cruel hardship to which they are now frequently liable, of being sold by creditors, and made subject in the course of administration by executors, to the payment of all debts both of simple contract and specialty, &c.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, in the present day the House of Assembly of Jamaica still urge the inexpediency of the measure, and say in speaking of the African Institution, that the haste of its members in pushing for changes is like that of the operator who dissects and tortures a living subject; and the Institution views with “cool indifference our agonies under these plans to deprive us of our franchises as British subjects, and for the destruction of our property and endangering our lives.” Then follows a violent paragraph against the African Institution which savours much of resentment, and appears to have been penned by some gentleman who had not allowed himself time to cool and read it over before the paper was sent to the press. I know nothing of the merits or demerits of the African Institution save what I learn from public documents, for I have no acquaintance with any of its members; but that much civilization should already be perceived in Africa it is ridiculous to suppose would be possible. That continent has been too long and too heavily burthened with evils to be pierced with ease, the instruments must be sharp, and must be set to work steadily, and for a long period, before any impression can be expected to have been made.

I am sorry that the gentlemen of Jamaica should be so much afraid of being dissected and tortured, and that the African Institution whose object is all mildness should be the dreadful operators; I am grieved that H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester, and Mr. Wilberforce, whose lives have been so far spent in doing what good they were able, should all at once wield dangerous weapons, and begin to dissect and torture by wholesale. It might be said of some countries that such deeds would defile the soil, would pollute the innocent earth, would make the good men who were interred to rise from their graves, and cry shame upon the President and Vice President of the African Institution. The word *torture* is an awkward one in the mouth of a slave-owner. God knows that the soil of Jamaica has seen too much of torturing ever to be disturbed by the renewal of any such acts; that country would only be somewhat surprised at the colour of those who were about to be dissected and tortured; and if the sight of crimes had not made her so familiar with such misdeeds as to be indifferent to them, had not made her forget all sense of justice, she would perhaps recollect, that the

<sup>1</sup> History of West Indies, Vol. II. p. 153. to which I refer the reader for the whole passage.



light-coloured beings were only paying for what their ancestors had inflicted in former days upon those of darker hue.

However the deprivation of franchises, the destruction of property, and the endangering of lives, of which the Assembly speak are to be looked for nearer their own homes; they need not upbraid any one with bringing down upon them these calamities, at such a distance from their island. Their own proceedings and their own opinions will hasten what might be altogether averted if they would listen to reason. Let them look into their own establishments, and they will find that in their construction there is such radical unsteadiness of formation, that such as they now exist they cannot long hold together. I hope the danger will be seen in time; but if the planters continue to entertain their present rancorous feelings respecting the interference of this country, and will not themselves act as their circumstances require, dreadful scenes may be expected;—they must ensue in the common course of things.

It is said that the slaves could not with justice towards British creditors, and with a due regard for the agriculture and commerce of Jamaica have been attached to the soil when the question was first canvassed; but now the time has arrived when the question might be entertained of preventing slaves being sold on writs of *venditioni exponas*. The Assembly add that the "proposition of attaching the slaves to the soil is very different and must be viewed under other aspects." Still objections are brought forward. The Assembly dwell particularly upon the inexpediency of the measure in regard to the labourers of coffee estates; but of the sugar estates very little is said. The sugar estates contain so considerable a proportion of the slave population that it is regarding them the principal stress should be laid. I have looked carefully for any direct objection to the slaves of these being fixed by law to the soil, and do not find that the Assembly have been able to fix upon any which they could bring forward; consequently to this measure it may be presumed no objection can be found which radically holds good, none which is unconnected with the prejudices and jealousy of the colonists.

It is stated that owing to the situation of coffee estates it is necessary to remove the slaves, for the lands become unfruitful.—Under such circumstances as these, the natural consequence is that the slave can have no objection to remove, for it is his own interest to be placed upon lands which will yield him some profit in his own little concerns: we are told that in such cases as these, "the people are satisfied and never dreamed of the hardships so feelingly portrayed by the lively imagination of their European friends. How facts are shaped and turned to man's own purpose! This is doubtless true; when the soil is no longer good the slave must wish

to remove as well as his master. Not one word is said about the distress of persons who are removed from a comfortable spot to one less pleasant; of those who are removed to another island; of him who is "seized on by the sheriff's officer, forcibly separated from his wife and children, dragged to public auction, purchased by a stranger, and perhaps sent to terminate his miserable existence in the mines of Mexico, excluded for ever from the sight of heaven; and all this without any crime or demerit on his part real or pretended."<sup>1</sup>

To say that the slaves do not deem it a hardship to be removed from a spot to which they are accustomed, if that spot yields produce to compensate the labour of cultivation, would be to return to those obsolete ideas of the natural inferiority of the negroes in the scale of human beings. It is not possible that if a man is treated as he ought to be, and is allowed to have around him those comforts which semi-barbarous man has always been discovered to possess, he will be indifferent regarding the place in which he resides. The mere consciousness that if he removes he must undergo some labour in putting his new hut into order and in arranging his other trifling matters; that he must form new acquaintances and new connections by which he may obtain what he may be in need of, and dispose of what he may plant and rear, would cause a certain degree of unpleasant feeling in being removed. The Assembly say that "abstracted from declamation about the bones of ancestors and the attractions of early associations, what is it that we consider endears home? The presence of our wives, children, relations, friends." The Assembly is certainly not to be the more respected for their manner of speaking of the feelings which some men are capable of entertaining regarding the places in which they have long resided, and the respect which some individuals are capable of imbibing for the tombs of their departed relatives. But to grant that what the Assembly says is true, is the case fairly stated? Here the removal of the population of a whole district is spoken of. Are not slaves sold singly and sent to distant parts, without their wives, their children, their relations, and their friends? Let this be answered; here lies the root of the evil, the main spring of the misery of the slave; for although this misfortune may not occur, still the possibility of its existence is hanging for ever suspended to damp the exertion of the slave.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edwards's History of the West Indies, Vol. II. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Young, Governor of Tobago, says; "The greatest distress, from eventual consequences of the Act (the Abolition Act) which some slaves have suffered, and many more, and in a greater proportion will suffer (for small estates from year to year will be abandoned, and, I think, till all are abandoned and the people sold) is by the removal from their homes, and occasionally by a dispersion of their families; for the creole slave is

If under these circumstances the slave was still indifferent to leaving his home,—to part from those with whom he is connected and has resided, a strong, a most powerful argument would be presented for the necessity of amelioration; this would prove that his condition was so wretched as to have deadened all his feelings,—as to have lowered him to a situation below the beasts of the field. But it is not true that the slave under such circumstances is indifferent to removal; he feels it deeply. I have seen slaves when thus situated, and known full well that their feelings would have done credit to human beings, whose state in the world is accounted far above them. As the African in Brazil is attached to the spot upon which he has resided, a fair presumption may be drawn that his brethren of the Columbian islands who are made of the same flesh and blood, may have the same feelings. If they have not, it is the fault of the master, and this fault should be remedied. The Brazilian slave cannot be separated from his wife, for a Christian church has joined them in bonds of matrimony; but he may be taken from his children.<sup>1</sup> Every Brazilian is afforded the chance of imbibing one feeling of sorrow in removal, which, with shame be it said, the negro of the British sugar-islands cannot have, and this is an attachment to the chapel for the ornamenting of which he has contributed his mite.

The House of Assembly then proceed to speak of the depopulation of the Highlands of Scotland, as if the state of those districts was in any wise analogous to that of the sugar islands. It is said, that the dismissal of his tenants, by the Highland Laird, is unjust; but in what respect does any similarity exist between the people who are turned off to make room for others, and those who are made, with the whip at their backs, to work hard for the benefit of the owners of the land? The relationship between the chieftain and his followers was loosened with the idea of decreasing the power of the clans, and of promoting the civilization of the country in which they existed; and although some evils may have immediately arisen from the change of system, still the desired effect will be produced. But in the case of the slaves every attempt to

attached to his place of birth and home as strongly as Goldsmith's peasantry, wandering from the deserted village." *Papers relating to the West Indies, ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, 12th July, 1815, p. 185.*

This is high and weighty authority. The separation of a gang might at any rate even in these cases be prevented, supposing that the land must be abandoned.

<sup>1</sup> As the British planters allow their slaves to live like the beasts of the field, in promiscuous intercourse,—as they do not encourage, speaking generally, lasting connections between the sexes, they have the *merit* at least of rendering the feelings of those whom they may please to dispose of, less liable to grief on separation.

better, their condition is resisted, and Great Britain is attacked with the talk of charters and franchises, which, we are told, preclude the possibility of meliorating the condition of a considerable part of the population of the empire. The Assembly is dreadfully mistaken in having imbibed the idea that "the rights of property in Great Britain and Ireland, and in Jamaica, seem to be regulated by different laws, and to have no common principle." The mother-country has no intention to deprive any portion of its subjects of what its own laws have allowed them to acquire; but it has a full right to look to the well-being of all its subjects,—to provide for the comfort of one race, and for the safety of another;—to prevent misery and ruin to both.

I have witnessed the wide difference of situation between the slaves of the estates which belong to convents and to old established families, and of those which are possessed by men who are only settled upon a plantation for a stated period, or whose affairs are in a disordered condition. Upon the former no removal is at all probable for the religious communities, and the rich families never will, owing to feelings of pride, sell any of their slaves. Upon the estates of such persons the huts of the slaves are neat, and have within and about them all the comforts which such people and such climates require. The inhabitants are tolerably dressed, and there is no outward sign of misery. Pigs and poultry, banana and tobacco-gardens are to be seen in the neighbourhood of the habitations. The small cultivated spots of land are in good order and every thing has the air of stability. It is on such estates as these that some attachment is to be found towards the owner, particularly among the creole negroes who have been bred upon the estate; these are in some instances allowed to take one of the names of the master, and a slight feeling of clanship in such cases is plainly perceivable.<sup>1</sup>

Of the estates of which the residents are not with certainty stationary, the general aspect is widely different from those which have been already mentioned. The slaves in these cases plainly

<sup>1</sup> I have particularly observed that some of the slaves belonging to individuals of the extensive family of Cavalcante have added this name to their own, and a few other instances might be recorded.

The estates upon which there is an air of stability are few in number. What I have said under this head relates more especially to the convent estates, and to a *very* few of those belonging to the rich creole families; for although the consciousness that removal is not probable exists among the slaves of a great number of proprietors, still as some men follow the driving system to a great extent, and as others are *cruel* (for to drive is not to be cruel) the number of estates which demonstrate a degree of comfort in their outward appearance, is much circumscribed. Thus, in wishing to give a correct idea of the state of slavery, it is necessary to qualify any thing that is said in favour of any branch of the system;—so bad is its nature that good therein can scarcely exist.

trust to the supplies of the master; their huts are poorly furnished and dirty, the stock of poultry is small, no gardens are to be seen, and the provision grounds of the negroes are neglected. To one who attends to the subject the several descriptions of owners is plainly to be discovered in the appearance of their labourers.<sup>1</sup>

As long as men have no motive for upholding the existing state of affairs, there can be no stability in the government; any spark will kindle, for almost any change may be favourable. Man must have some interest in supporting those who are above him, or he will not remain subject to control longer than weakness obliges him so to do.

The second step which is requisite is that of permitting the slave to possess property to a certain amount. He may be allowed to accumulate a sum equal to his own value. Connected with this is the obligation under which a master should be placed of manumitting any of his slaves upon the fair value of the individual being presented.

To the regulation for permitting a slave to possess property the objection may be raised, that by allowing him to accumulate and keep in his possession a sum of money, he may be enabled to injure his master by machinations, &c. The slave, who deliberately and steadily (and it is only by slow degrees and steadiness the object can be attained) resolves to scrape together every trifle which lies in his power, entertains far different feelings from those of revenge and destruction; revenge is usually impetuous and quick of action. The man who imbibes the desire of obtaining money, must be of industrious habits, and if he labours earnestly for himself the probability is, that the same industry, or at least a portion of it will be shown in the performance of his master's tasks. If an interest is excited much that is disagreeable will be performed under the recollection, that soon a return to the more pleasing task will be permitted. Something to live for is produced, and the energies of man being drawn forth, they may be useful to the master as well as to the slave. The slave who is possessed of somewhat that he may call his own, will be the last to turn against

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Young, after saying that excesses of ill conduct to slaves on the plantations had not occurred within his knowledge, adds,—“instances of bad treatment, and cruelty, and of unjust and immoderate punishments of slaves, I think, occur exclusively within the narrow trading and household circles of unattached slaves,” &c. Papers relating to the West Indies, &c. p. 181. It should be remembered that it is easier in these cases to hear of crimes than upon large estates where neighbours are not immediately at hand to hear and to see what is going forwards. However, it is strange that instances of bad treatment should be more frequent among the small proprietors, for I have remarked in Brazil, that the slaves of these persons, who are mostly people of colour, receive much more favourable treatment than the slaves of great estates.

his master, for in so doing he runs the risk of losing his own hardly gathered earnings.

I have invariably found that the slaves who were scraping together the necessary sum to present to their owners for their manumission, were those upon whom the master placed the most reliance; they were steady, of regular habits, and attentive to their duties. It is natural that this should occur, for perseverance in daily toil bespeaks a certain degree of principle of action; and that closeness of purpose which is imbibed in one line of proceeding may, and most probably will, shortly bring the whole character into the same path—may pervade every action.

The sum which a slave will possess never can be very great unless his master *can* refuse to manumit him, for no man will remain in bondage who has wherewith to liberate himself.

To the obliging a master to manumit upon a tender being made of the full value of the slave, I can see no reasonable objection. It will perhaps be said that a slave will attempt to obtain unlawfully the property which may enable him to liberate himself. The same answer may be made to this, which I have given to the possible objection, regarding the possession of property;—the slave who looks forward to manumission by his own exertions will be found to have, almost without exception, a good character. Besides, the law provides against theft; and indeed it is much more probable, in the common course of things, that theft should be committed for the purpose of gratifying the vices of the individual, than with the idea of hoarding it for a length of period for regular and lawful uses. Thefts cannot possibly be committed so frequently and to an adequate amount, without being discovered, to serve the purposes of purchase money for manumission.

I lay great stress upon the utility of a law for obliging the master to manumit. This is an almost unperceivable means of setting at liberty a number of slaves annually; and the possibility of escape from bondage even at a remote period would give a motive for exertion to many of the slaves, which would make their lives less irksome. The individuals too who would be thus liberated, would, almost without exception, be proper subjects for gaining their liberty; the very circumstance of having obtained their freedom by their own exertions, would prove that they had some means of supporting themselves; and the laborious and persevering habits which had been produced under less propitious circumstances would in all probability be continued when all the exertions of the individual might be directed to his own emolument;—when he had no longer a master to claim the chief portion of his strength. Slaves who might be manumitted under this regulation would make excellent subjects; they would be good and peaceable members of society; and if they had been treated properly by their

masters,—if there had not been shown any spirit of rancour,—any reluctance at the freedom of a valuable slave, the manumitted negro would probably continue in his former owner's neighbourhood, and prove to be a faithful servant. The relationship of owner and slave would be changed into that of master and servant, each would be possessed of free agency in his actions towards the other, and the willingness of services rendered freely would be exchanged for the reluctance of commands which are enforced by the degrading,—by the brutalising hand of the driver.

In all that I have said on this part of my subject, there is not one tittle of speculative,—of theoretical reasoning; I have for some years resided in a country where the manumission of slaves by their own exertions was frequent, and from the system I could not perceive that ought but what was good proceeded. Curiosity led me to make enquiries. I had at that time so high an opinion of Great Britain and *all* her dependencies that I thought in *every thing* she exceeded her neighbour; and although my opinion of the mother country remains unchanged, or rather I have received fresh incentives for venerating her views and her institutions, still I have found as I advance that some parts of the great whole fall dreadfully below the standard at which I had in imagination fixed them. When I made enquiries respecting the treatment of slaves,—when I used every means of ascertaining whether my information was correct by seeing what I had been told, I had imbibed an idea that I might propose some new modes of treatment which might be beneficial to the Brazilian slaves. I was not acquainted with the state of our sugar-islands, but I took it for granted that what was British must be well governed. Little did I think then how superior the Portuguese regulations and the Brazilian practices were to those of the British nation, and to those of the inhabitants of British trans-atlantic possessions. Far was I from imagining that I should discover how much we were behind the colonists of another nation. Far was I from supposing that I should discover the Brazilian slave in the enjoyment of some steps of superiority in religious, in moral, and in physical benefit.

The two works from which I draw this conclusion are, *The History of the West Indies* by Bryan Edwards, and the *Further Proceedings of the Honourable House of Assembly of Jamaica*, 1816.

To the law of manumission by purchase some minor regulations might be added. One is that of obliging the master to manumit an infant slave at the baptismal font on a certain sum being presented. This would enable freemen to manumit the offspring which they might have by slaves. Thus a door would be opened by which the mother might eventually gain her freedom through the exertions of her own child. If such a law existed, many men

would doubtless be ashamed to allow their offspring to remain in bondage; such a regulation might make some persons recollect what it was their duty to do. Even the father who is in bondage might thus choose to free his child. In all this there is no speculation; it is what has happened, and does now occur in Brazil.

It is stated that there is a regulation existing in Jamaica for obliging the master to excuse from labour the female slave who has reared six children;—she ought to be set at liberty, and not only excused from labour, but placed out of the reach of any demand being made for her exertions.

A register of manumissions is stated to exist in Jamaica, and to this every attention is requisite. I can conceive scarcely any misery in this world greater than that of feeling that the right of freedom existed, and to have this right withheld. The Assembly denies that such cases of unexampled hardship are frequent, and I hope that it is so, but their *existence* should be farther provided against.

Now I proceed to see what the House of Assembly says regarding the time which is allowed to the negroes for providing for their own subsistence. It appears from Bryan Edwards's work, and from the Further Proceedings, &c. that the slaves have one day in every fortnight for cultivating their provision grounds, from which they are expected to provide for their own maintenance. Both these works are written by persons who are well acquainted with the subjects of which they treat, and as sometimes occurs, a degree of previous knowledge is supposed to be possessed by the readers, and therefore some things are not made sufficiently clear. However from what I can gather, I think the custom is, for the master to supply the slave with fish or meat, and the slave is expected to supply himself with the vegetable part of his subsistence, which is to be done by working one day in every fortnight.<sup>1</sup>

The Brazilian slaves who supply themselves with food, have one day in every week for this purpose; but they are expected not to require any assistance from the master. The advantage however is on the side of the Brazilian when compared with the negro of Jamaica, for the former has fowls and pigs and can obtain fish from the rivulets without any expence,<sup>2</sup> and besides this advantage, he

<sup>1</sup> "In the low and drier regions, the mandioc and sweet potatoe of various kinds, some of them coming to perfection in six or eight weeks, contribute to the subsistence of the negroes." The Assembly has inadvertently coupled these two species of plants; the sweet potatoe requires about the time mentioned, but all the varieties of the mandioc with which I am acquainted require from six to eight months in arriving at perfection, and some of them even a longer period.

<sup>2</sup> I mean that the necessary quantity of flesh for the subsistence of the fortnight is more easily obtained by one day's labour, than the necessary quantity of vegetable food can be obtained by the labour of the same space of time.



possesses the infinitely greater one of having in the course of the year above thirty holidays besides the Sundays.

The Assembly says, that "by those who are acquainted only with the scanty returns of a day's labour to a peasant in Europe from his garden, it is alledged that one day in fourteen must be quite unequal to raise food for a family. We are prepared to shew the contrary even supposing that the negro shall not labour on the Sunday out of crop."

Then the Assembly says that they "prefer bringing other evidence than the planters of the country on the productive effects of labour in the soil and climate within the tropics."

Humboldt is referred to in support of the statement, because he has made some calculations respecting the quantity of produce which lands in tropical climates yield compared with those of Europe. And immediately without farther ceremony the Assembly says,

"It would follow therefore that one day's labour in Jamaica will produce as much food as twenty-five could raise in Europe. But this is by no means the whole difference. The labour of raising the wheat and the plantains during the first year may be nearly equal, but in Europe the labour must be annually renewed."

Was there ever such a passage? I paused long after reading it and could scarcely believe that such a one could be found in *any* work, and particularly in a publication which was sent into the world by a grave Assembly. We were formerly told dismal tales of the state of colonial agriculture; but now all at once "*one day's labour in Jamaica will produce as much food as twenty-five could raise in Europe.*" Perhaps there is an immense difference between the Saturday of the negro and all other days of the fortnight;—there may be some *Obeah* practices which may thus magically produce this wonderful degree of advantage. Indeed, unless this is accounted for by supernatural means, I know not in what manner it can be caused. I heartily wish the grave House had vouchsafed to give an explanatory note to the passage by which the ignorant people of Europe might be informed of the means, by which this most extraordinary superabundance of reproduction is brought about. This is one of the most convincing proofs of the existence of *Obeah* practices to a wide extent that I ever heard stated.

Can the Assembly believe that this is true? Can any set of men persuade themselves that what they have stated is correct? But, it must be under this persuasion that they have made the statement, for they would not print what they knew to be false. This is one of the strongest instances of the strangeness of opinion which circumstances may make men imbibe; of the complete veil which may be thrown by situation over the mind of man; of the facility with which he persuades himself of the truth of what it is his interest to believe.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The plan stated by Mr. W. Shand, of providing a good meal daily for all the children, is becoming general, and is a distribution of food of the best description, relieving those who have large families; and does not en-

Now I know that the Saturday of each week is not sufficient in Brazil for the slave to provide for the remaining six days of the week, unless he adds his gainings on Sundays and holidays, or unless his master's labor is done by task work, which may enable him to work for an hour each day upon his own grounds. I have heard some plantation slaves, who supply themselves with food and do not labor by task work, complain heavily of the Saturday not being sufficient. I have likewise understood from many owners and managers, that they did not consider it as affording competent time, unless the slave had some trade and could labor for his master and be paid, or for some other person, on his own days. I cannot imagine that the soil of Jamaica is more productive than that of Brazil; and I should imagine that fish and flesh may be obtained at a lower rate in the latter than in the former. I cannot in any wise believe that the labor of one day is sufficient to supply food for fourteen. If it is so, this is a proof of the extreme avarice of men who will work their dependants for so many hours in each day, when they might be enriched by requiring so much less exertion from them.

The next step which is requisite for easing the hard yoke of domestic slavery, is that of allowing the slave one day in each week besides the Sunday, and besides the Saturday of the fortnight, for the purpose of employing this extra time to his own advantage. If the profits of a day's labour are so great as we are told it is, or even half as considerable, the master can still afford to give the additional day; and if they are not so enormous as the planters themselves have stated, still they must be of that description that the labor of five days in one week and of four days in another, will repay the master his purchase money, and his other expenses, and yet leave a reasonable profit. If this time was given to the slave, he might be considered as obliged to provide the whole of his own

courage the idle, which all who have reflected on the subject, know to be the effect of an indiscriminate distribution of food." *Further Proceedings, &c.*

This is somewhat like the system of giving no food to cats that they may catch rats. Shame upon any set of men who talk of encouraging idleness by feeding those from whom they demand the labor of eleven days out of fourteen. When will such language be reprobated as it deserves? How long will any human beings, calling themselves Englishmen, be allowed shamelessly to speak of their fellow creatures in this manner?

Regarding the plan of feeding the children becoming general, the mention of the circumstances discovers the state in which the captive father of a family is placed; that he has one week day and the two sabbaths out of fourteen days, by which he is expected to support his children as well as himself—those children whom he is rearing for the profit of the master: and this master demands the labor of the remaining eleven days. The Brazilian master invariably supports the children of his estate, although the parents may provide for their own subsistence.

food, and even his clothing. He would be thus removed one step from the abject dependance of a slave; he would be enabled, if he was industrious and economical, to manage his own little affairs in such a manner, as to be decently fed and clothed, and yet be laying by something for his manumission. There will be some who will not labor, and who will rather live wretchedly than work, unless they are obliged so to do; in every race there are many individuals of indolent dispositions. For men of this stamp punishments might be found, and regulations could be framed. This is not a place for entering into detail; if any plan was once in train for adoption, such penalties might be ordained, and such regulations made, as might obviate the difficulty of preventing mischief from any persons who might prefer idleness and slavery, to industry and ultimate freedom.

The Assembly states, in speaking of negro comforts, that "every negro, with the exception of a few idle and disorderly persons from which this class of mankind is not exempt, has better clothes, which are worn on holidays and festivals;" &c. If the "idle and disorderly persons" are not numerous under existing regulations, it is more likely that even the number of them should be reduced rather than increased, when incentives for exertion were afforded. "Those who are avaricious, particularly the Eboe tribe, accumulate considerable sums." If this is the case, how must these wretches labor to accomplish their purpose. I can well suppose that instances of this nature occur, for the desire of obtaining wealth will make some individuals undergo almost any species of privation. Here is another reason for permitting these men to purchase their own freedom.

Whatever the House of Assembly of Jamaica, or any other advocates for the continuance of the present system of slavery, may say regarding the comforts of which the slaves are possessed, and regarding the efficacy and sufficiency of the existing laws for the protection of the slaves,<sup>1</sup> their statements and arguments, far from removing,

<sup>1</sup> We will see what Sir W. Young, governor of Tobago, says on this subject. "I think the slaves have from *law* no *protection*. In this, and I doubt not in every other, island, there are laws for the protection of slaves, and good ones; but circumstances in the administration of whatever law render it a dead letter.

"When the intervention of the law is most required, it will have the least effect, as in cases where a vindictive and cruel master has care to commit the most atrocious cruelties, even to murder of his slave, *no free person* being present to *witness* the act.

"There appears to me a radical defect in the administration of justice throughout the West Indies, in whatever case the wrongs done to the slave are under consideration; or rather, that justice cannot in truth be administered, controuled as it is by a law of evidence, which covers the most guilty European with impunity, provided that, when having criminal intent, he is cautious not to commit the crime in the presence of a *free witness*.

tend to strengthen the basis upon which the attack upon domestic slavery stands. Their statements respecting the situation of the slaves, brought forward in support of their opinions, are quite sufficient to make an unbiassed person declare that the system has in it no radical good, and that its foundation is so weakly constructed as to be liable to sudden and dire downfalls. If the subject is considered with attention, it will be perceived that the state of the world requires alterations, that the necessity of change has deep roots, even unconnected with religion and humanity; that the order of things will bring about by violent means what might have been done gently, and unaccompanied by destruction to any class in society.

Whilst the importation of savages continued (or rather whilst it does continue) mental improvement among the slaves could not receive any advance, unless extraneous means had been resorted to for effecting it; unless pains had been taken by their superiors for their attainment of a higher degree of intellectual power; but since the importation has ceased by law, there ought to be no admittance of savages to retard the slow but progressive advance of the semi-barbarians of the islands; the creoles will increase in number; the missionaries will be reinforced; discussion is said by the planters themselves to be gaining ground concerning their own situation; schools will soon be established. The time is come for the slave-owners to begin to concede; and let them commence before it is too late; before the secret fire, which will in the end be kindled, if care is

“On small plantations there is often but one free person, the resident manager, and no slave can appear against him.

“In the back yard of the jobber of a small gang for hire, in the workshop or out-buildings of each artizan or petty tradesman, and within every house the greatest cruelties on a slave may be exercised without a possibility of conviction.” *Papers relating to the West Indies, &c.* p. 181.

The account continues, and confirms completely what has been said in this country on the dreadfully inefficient state of colonial slave laws.

President Adye from Grenada says, “I do not transmit to your Lordship a copy of this Act, which passed in December, 1797, as it may be found in the printed collection, &c. Under the Act, guardians are duly appointed every year, but few instances have occurred of their having acted farther than the taking of the oath prescribed by it; no convictions, however, have ever been had on forfeitures, or penalties recovered, or punishments imposed or adjudged, for defaults in this or any other respect, nor for any delinquency whatever contrary to the directions of this Act; and I think I may venture to say it is in most respects a dead letter; &c.” *Papers, &c.* p. 147.

The act in question is entitled an “Act for the better protection, and for promoting the natural increase and population of slaves, &c.”

General Wale, from Martinique, writes in the same strain, and, in speaking of the evidence of the slave not being admitted against his master, he says, “this leaves him (the slave) at the latter’s mercy; nor would it be easy, if at all practicable, for him to seek redress of oppression, without great personal risk.” *Papers, &c.* p. 154.

not taken, bursts forth with overwhelming violence. There is yet time for it to be tempered, and for producing its extension harmlessly, to the infinite advantage of all parties.

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### PART III.

The advocates for the continuance of the present state of things in the sugar-islands do themselves furnish their opponents with the proofs of the necessity of alterations being attempted. It is from their statements that conclusions may be drawn regarding the wretched situation of the slaves, for *they* cannot be suspected of putting forward the worst side of the picture. From the pamphlet entitled "Thoughts, &c." it appears that the church establishment in the Columbian islands, with the exception of that in the island of Barbadoes, is most wretchedly deficient, and even in that island it is by far too small. The detail of the number of clergymen resident in the islands is brought forward in the work above alluded to, in vindication of the colonial legislatures.<sup>1</sup> It is given for the purpose of proving that the planters do not prevent the attainment of religious instruction among their slaves. But even if this was true (and there seem to be many reasons for supposing that it is not) still it is a negative merit and does not in any wise prove that alterations are not necessary in this department of slave treatment.

In every thing which is to be done respecting the sugar islands, the great object is to understand what are the practices of Jamaica. There are in that island nineteen beneficed clergymen; can this be supposed to be sufficient for a population of more than 300,000 persons?<sup>2</sup> However, it is not so much the number of persons, as the space over which they are scattered, which requires an increase of instructors. Still it may be answered that the great proportion of the individuals are not Christians; this is true, but it only shows how necessary it is that some change should be effected.—If the number of clergymen is barely sufficient to attend to those persons who are Christians, and their time is entirely taken up with these duties, or they have not the requisite zeal to employ it in extending the word which they are bound to teach, how can it be expected that the converts to Christianity should be numerous. The author

<sup>1</sup> The statement is taken from the "Papers on the West Indies, ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, 12th July, 1815."

<sup>2</sup> "Jamaica; white people 28,000; people of color, 9,000; slaves 280,000. *West India Common Place Book of Sir W. Young*, p. 5.

of the "Thoughts" may, however, safely venture to vindicate the colonial legislatures, though he should have founded his defence upon far different ground from that upon which he has proceeded. The fault of the long continuance of such neglect in extending the benefits of Christianity to the slaves, does not lie with the colonial legislatures, but with the British Parliament. The colonial legislatures should not be blamed; it is not fair, in fact, to upbraid them with not improving the state of their dependants, for how is improvement to be forwarded by those who first regard their own interest, and who consider that that is connected with the ignorance of the ruled? In any thing which they have done or may yet do, it should be remembered that they must be driven into the measure by the voice of the mother country, and that the laws which they pass for the purpose, will, if at all, only be enforced as long as the attention of Great Britain is actively directed to the subject.

In a pamphlet which has evident marks of being written by a friend, or at least an apologist of the state of slavery in the sugar islands, I find that,

"With regard to those most weighty points *religious instruction and mental improvement*, it is owned, and must be deeply lamented, that a melancholy deficiency prevails throughout the colonies in both; and the chief part by far of what can be obtained in them generally, of the former, can only be had from the labors of those who do not acknowledge a connection with the established church. To the majority of residents, however, I believe I may undertake to pronounce, this is viewed as a very heavy inconvenience."<sup>1</sup>

This passage plainly points out the state of things. The same writer, as well as many others, speak of the mirth and gaiety which are to be seen in the negro fairs on Sundays, and the accounts are doubtless correct as far as they go; but this does not prove that none are at home, suffering privations and punishments from the caprice of their masters, or from crimes which have arisen from the degraded state of the human being. It is another custom with many of those persons, who treat of this subject, on both sides of the question, to mention instances of kind and of cruel usage; and though this may be necessary when entering into detail, still neither one or the other prove aught in favor of or against the system of slavery, or the general state of slavery as it exists in the Columbian islands. The attack upon slavery is too firmly fixed to require proofs of individual depravity, or to be shaken by individual instances of goodness. The instances of good treatment, indeed, rather seem to denote that the general behavior of the slave-owners is not so good as that of those individuals of whom particular men-

<sup>1</sup> "A Brief View of the actual Condition and Treatment of the Negro Slaves in the British Colonies, &c. by Capt. Henderson, late 2nd battalion 44th regiment, &c." p. 20.

tion is made ; and thus these examples, as well as the instances of cruelty, tend to demonstrate the evils of the system. If ninety-nine instances, of what is called in creole language good treatment, occur, and one of bad without this last being punished, the evil still outweighs the benefit. Where the miseries or the comforts of the state of society depend upon individual character, bad indeed would our nature be, if some instances of mildness did not occur. The natural goodness of mankind cannot always be suppressed by any institutions which have been formed by man, however wicked these may be.

It seems to be very clear, from the manner in which the subject is treated by the advocates of the slave code, that the planters are afraid of the introduction of those persons who may tend to raise the negroes in the scale of human beings. We will see what the "Brief View" says on this subject ;

"Nor must an opinion be allowed, that an aversion towards all religious instruction being conferred, exists, because a disapprobation is felt at the promulgation of some particular tenets of it. Yet there are many planters whose intimacy I hold, and with whom the possession of the foregoing objection prevails in a very high degree, that never think of restraining their slaves from an attendance on divine worship, under whatever form administered." p. 20.

"The want of education among the slaves in our colonies is commonly made a matter of accusation against their masters. I should with extreme unwillingness be betrayed into any expression that might in the most distant manner seem to convey an improper estimate of the labors of any individuals or bodies of men. But I may indulge an opinion, that the defect in question is occasionally as much regretted from its not proving subservient to the transmission of certain doctrines, as from the absence of it in a more enlarged and general sense. And with the examples the British colonies have before them, it surely is not too much to expect, that in some things a line of caution should be theirs." p. 28.

The terms of these paragraphs are too general to know exactly all that the author means, but there is enough to be gathered from them to perceive that the missionaries are objected to, the planters being afraid of them, and that this feeling is pretty general.

The business of converting the negroes and instructing them in the rudiments of knowledge ought to be performed by ministers of the Church of England, otherwise the negroes will have in the end, one more feeling of dislike towards their masters ; and God knows that those which they already have are quite sufficient. It has been stated in the "Brief View," that religious instruction is imparted by means of the sectaries ; and this was generally known to be the case long before, but confirmation is always useful. However, if the planters will not supply the necessary number of persons for performing one of the chief duties of Christians, complaints from them against the zealous dissenters, who brave odium and the climate, and devote their lives to the instruction of their

fellow creatures, come with a bad grace indeed.<sup>1</sup> Nor should any minor plea of the inconveniences attending the imparting of instruction by their means, be allowed to hold good, unless the colonists were to prove that exertions were made by themselves in the advancement of the good work in the regular and most proper manner.

“It is now incumbent on me to declare,” says Capt. Henderson, “that in *none* of our colonies have I discovered that provision of any sort has been made for the education of the slaves.” This was well known to be the case, but the admission of it here is useful.

To every one who reflects upon the subject it must be evident, that the owner of human beings who are in a state of domestic slavery, never will, of his own accord, adopt means of advancing their mental powers. The nearer their approach is to that of the brute creation, the more easily will they be held in subjection. Perhaps, if the advance of the world in knowledge, and consequently in civilization, was not so rapid as it is at present, this wish to preserve their dependants in ignorance might be accounted politically right, though it would still be morally wrong.<sup>2</sup> However, in viewing the bent of public opinion on the question, it will be perceived that its abomination of slavery is daily becoming stronger, and therefore policy as well as the sense of what is right, should lead the colonists to change their dangerous opinions.

It is on the score of religion that the colonies of Protestant, and those of Roman Catholic countries, have differed so widely in their government. The bigotry of the latter led them to do what the former must in the end imitate from policy, if no better motive urges them; or they must run the risk of losing their possessions. Labat tells us that the English in his days would not baptize their

<sup>1</sup> Governor Harcourt, from St. Croix, says, “the exemplary conduct of the Moravian missionaries, coupled with their indefatigable industry and most zealous exercise of all religious duties, has for many years obtained for them the especial protection and encouragement of the government of Santa Cruz; both their precepts and their unassuming manners are admirably calculated to benefit that unfortunate class of persons of which their congregations are principally composed; and such is the power they possess over the minds of the negroes, that when on serious occasions they exclude them for a time from their congregations, the negro considers it by far a more severe punishment than any other that can be inflicted.” p. 34.

Governor Maclean, from St. Thomas, says, “Two Moravian establishments are administered by Erdmain Hobe and six assistant missionaries with their families, aided by a number of catechists (being coloured people); they calculate the number of individuals resorting to them at 4000 persons of all classes; the missionaries are tradesmen, and, from their general good conduct and great utility in the colony, they enjoy, since the year 1771, great privileges in the Danish dominions; &c.” *Papers relating to the West Indies*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing, however, can be politically right which is morally wrong.



negroes because they did not consider that it was right to hold Christians in slavery,<sup>1</sup> and yet he adds, they made no scruple of keeping our (French) slaves in captivity when they fell into their hands, although they knew them to be their brothers in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The slaves of Brazil are Christians, as I have before mentioned. The Angola negroes are baptized on the coast of Africa by lots, and learn the doctrines of the Catholic Church upon their arrival in Brazil; but the negroes of other nations are shipped from Africa without this ceremony being performed, and they cannot be baptized until they have learned to repeat certain prayers. It may be objected to this manner of making Christians, that the individuals who thus become members of the Catholic church do not understand the doctrines which they have undertaken to believe. The matter is, to do as much as possible; it is not practicable to make an African savage as good a Christian or as strict a moralist as an educated man; as one who has had every advantage to aid his natural good qualities, instead of every disadvantage to assist in suppressing any latent virtuous feeling that might by nature have been implanted in the human being. The African who is brought into Christian communion in the manner which is usually practised in Brazil, would doubtless have much to learn, and much must be altered before he would become equal to the usual standard of religious or moral character in Europe; but if the disadvantages which he has to overcome are taken into consideration, he does in fact rise fully to the scale of common rectitude. Man must be judged according to the state of the country in which he is placed,

<sup>1</sup> Old Ligon says, "I promised to do my best endeavour; and when I came home, spoke to the master of the plantation, and told him that poor *Sambo* desired much to be a Christian. But his answer was, that the people of that island were governed by the laws of England, and by those laws we could not make a Christian a slave. I told him, my request was far different from that, for I desired him to make a slave a Christian. His answer was, that it was true, there was a great difference in that; but being once a Christian he could no more account him a slave, and so lose the hold they had of them as slaves by making them Christians; and by that means should open such a gap, as all the planters in the island would curse him. So I was struck mute, and poor *Sambo* kept out of the church; as ingenious, as honest, and as good natured a poor soul as ever wore black or eat green." *A true and exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 1657.

In those days, it appears that there were men who spoke the truth and thought properly. Something has, thank God, been gained in public opinion, since the above was written; and this recollection should add to our hopes of more being yet accomplished.

<sup>2</sup> *Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amérique*, tom. 7. p. 43.

Du Testre says, "Les nègres sont certainement touchés de Dieu puis qu'ils conservent jusqu'à la mort la religion qu'ils ont embrassée, qu'ils en pratiquent les vertus et en exercent les œuvres; et je puis dire avec vérité qu'ils y vivent bien plus Chrétiennement dans leurs conditions que beaucoup de François." *Histoire des Antilles*, tom. 2. p. 502.

according to the general complexion of the society into which he has been thrown. Whatever inferiority the African Christian in Brazil may be found to suffer when compared with peasants in Europe, still, if we look to the state of the negroes of the British sugar islands, we shall see how far advanced the Brazilian slave is in the general scale.

The Brazilian African has the knowledge of a future state. He is aware that certain actions are considered as crimes, and not merely because his master may make him feel that they are so, but, he knows, that such deeds are declared to be wrong by a higher power than that which immediately rules him. He is taught that his wife is not merely his property; but that there should be a better feeling regarding her; that she cannot be exchanged like any other moveable, and that she can by law call in question his support of any other woman. He is instructed that his children are not merely the fruit of the indulgence of his passions, and animals which he is contributing to rear for his master's purposes, but that they have immortal parts, and that it is his duty to bring them up with the prospect of a future and a better life, and for the attainment of equality with the master. He is taught that there is some utility in good behaviour, and although he might be led to suppose (if he should be subject to a tyrannical and capricious master) that to do wrong or to do right met with equal hard treatment, still his mind is preserved from despondency in some cases, by a recollection that, at a future period, his patience and his wish to do right will be rewarded. To those men who have imbibed prejudices against the communication of instruction, and to those who have few religious feelings or none at all, the above statement of the benefits produced by Christianity, even under Roman Catholic cloaks, and in the imperfect manner in which it is imparted in Brazil, will appear to be rather the dreams of one who wishes that such things might be, than the relation of the things which are to be witnessed. But in what I have said, I have done no more than state what I conceive to be the general effect, and indeed I could bring very many instances to bear upon any one point, if this could be of any service; but the important point is to be made acquainted with the general effect.

The Brazilian slave has the amusement of festivals, and his mind is removed from unpleasant thoughts to those which lead him to be anxious for the decoration of his chapel, for paying a due respect to the virgin or saint to whom it is dedicated. The priesthood imbibe an inclination to moderate the violence of the master; the clergy usually lean towards the weaker side, and the slave who is in fear of punishment and takes refuge with a priest, is invariably sent back to his master with a written request for pardon, which is

as invariably complied with.<sup>1</sup> It is a general saying in Brazil, that the negroes of priests are the laziest, and the most unfit for work of any in the country, if they are removed into the hands of laymen; and this is not only said of the slaves of the monks and friars, but likewise of the secular clergy. The secular clergy of those parts of Brazil which I have seen, are a most useful and respectable body of men; and such is the radical goodness of the religion of which they are members, that notwithstanding the errors and abuses of the branch of it which they teach, they cannot avoid imbibing some particles of the heavenly qualities of its founder, some portion of the superior style of morality which HE distributed among his followers.

Each estate in Brazil has its chapel, and mass is said in it every Sunday and holiday, if a priest can be found for the purpose; and there is seldom any difficulty in obtaining one. The officiating clergyman is paid by the owner of the estate. The priest frequently resides upon the lands of the plantation, and if he has any slaves of his own, he cultivates a portion of ground. The possibility of finding employment causes the priesthood to be numerous, but the extent of the country, and the separation of the several settlements require that it should be so.<sup>2</sup>

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## PART IV.

I had imagined until lately, that the question regarding the expediency of encouraging the increase of the free population of colour in all slave countries was at rest, and that no doubts were any longer entertained upon this score. I imagined that the only difference of opinion, which now existed upon the subject, was respecting the proper means of affording this encouragement. I knew, indeed, that practically this opinion was not perceived in our sugar islands, but I thought that even the planters were aware

<sup>1</sup> This occurs likewise with laymen, but the request of a priest is more conscientiously attended to than that of a layman. Laymen sometimes refuse to beg forgiveness for a runaway slave, but a priest never does.

<sup>2</sup> The much more powerful manner in which this subject is treated in the Quarterly Review, would preclude the necessity of mention being made here, at any rate, of this branch of my subject. All I wish to do is to state what I have seen in a slave country, and thus to afford a practical refutation upon some of the points at least, which have given room for argument, against the practicability of alleviating slavery without danger, and the possibility of making the slaves good moral and religious beings.

that the increase of the free people of colour would remove some part of the danger which always exists from the slaves. I judged that the old laws respecting the inabilities of free coloured people only remained upon the Statute Books from inattention. What then was my surprise to see that the fitness of increasing them by all possible means of legislation was denied, and that the people of mixed blood were accounted dangerous. Nothing proves more strongly the radical rottenness of the state of society in the Columbian islands, than this dread. Nothing can be more convincing than the statement of the fear which is entertained of these people. If they were treated properly, they would naturally lean towards the whites instead of the blacks, to the more prosperous rather than the degraded source of their existence.

Mr. Marryat says; "The Spanish colonies so unfortunately referred to in support of them (the opinions of the African Institution on this subject) are at this moment a prey to internal convulsions; and the great actors in them, are, and ever have been, from the first revolutionary attempt of Miranda (himself a man of colour<sup>1</sup>) to this very moment, persons of that description."<sup>2</sup>

Now in the first place, the contest which is at present raging in Spanish America is generally understood, and is well known to be between the Creole whites and the European Spaniards, and not between the people of colour and the whites. There are whites and free people of colour fighting on both sides, for some of the Creoles have taken part with the Europeans, therefore it is a mistake to state that the war is a war of castes. In the second place, it is not to be wondered at, if the war should at any future period become a war of castes, for of all nations who possess colonies, Spain has established the most numerous and the most galling distinctions regarding the people of colour. That country has not only formed laws for keeping in a state of degradation persons of mixed blood in general, but she has gone farther than the English, the French and the Dutch, and has established several degrees of degradation in the individuals who approach towards the black race. Consequently, I repeat, it will not be matter of surprise if these people should strive for power when they have obtained a sufficient degree of knowledge to be aware that they have a right to participate in the government of their country; and this strife will probably be more or less violent according to the previous state of degradation, or of respectability of those by whom the right to share in power is asserted.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Miranda was a Creole, but I believe he was not a man of colour.

<sup>2</sup> Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and civilization of Africa, &c.

<sup>3</sup> "Endowed with an energetic and ardent character, these people of colour live in a constant state of irritation against the whites."

*Humboldt's Political Essay on New Spain, Vol. I. p. 194.*

This passage is quoted by Mr. Marryat to prove that the increase of the

It is impossible that general discontent should exist among a great body of men, without some cause of irritation. Difference of religious opinion will, indeed, produce a rancorous spirit, perhaps more violently than political grievances; but where there is a union of worship, there must be some primary cause, and this of great importance, which can spread feelings of hatred through a whole order of men. It is absurd to suppose that the mere difference of colour would present any objection to the amalgamation of society, if this was all that makes a difference of origin.

The author of the "Thoughts," tells us that "next to the Spanish colonies their number was greater in proportion at St. Domingo than in any other island. There they instigated the slaves to massacre the whites, and were in their turn massacred by the slaves."

The history of the revolution in St. Domingo is so well known, and so disgraceful to Europeans, and their descendants of unmixed blood, that it is dangerous for any advocate of the system of slavery to mention it, in speaking against the negroes or people of colour. The cruelties which were committed in that island were all-sufficient to bring down vengeance upon the perpetrators of the crimes; but it is well known that the imprudence of the French Government aided the just state of irritation of the sufferers. The violence of the struggle, and the rancour of the injured, is to be attributed to the injustice of their previous treatment; and is a strong argument in support of the necessity of removing those disabilities which allow of the possibility of convulsions of that furious nature.

The author of the THOUGHTS has in none of his arguments so completely forgot what is due to the usual share of sense which his readers may be supposed to possess, as in that respecting the tax upon manumissions.

He says, "an inquiry into the history of West India emancipations will shew that the subjects of by far the greater proportion of them, are either the objects or fruits of illicit connections between white men and negro women." P. 136.

It is quite shameful to speak in this manner, for every man must or ought to be aware that the Legislatures which passed such laws never entertained any reasons of this nature for their proceedings. In the first place, illicit connections would not be prevented by any such regulations; and in the second place, the planters do not shew themselves to be so strict in other matters of infinitely more importance, from their greater extent; I mean the state of the intercourse among the blacks. To talk of the regard of the

people of colour should not be encouraged; and I now quote it again to shew that the fact only demonstrates the badness of the system under which such irritation can possibly exist. If they were well treated, this could not occur.

planters to moral rectitude is quite ridiculous, after the statements which have been made in the Further Proceedings of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, respecting the negroes of that island.

“The white inhabitants of the West India colonies are represented as the small minority who have white complexions. Numerically speaking they are a small minority; but be it remembered, that this small minority comprehends a vast majority of the property, intellect, and civilization of the whole community, that it is this small minority which alone is capable of transacting all the public business of the state.” *Thoughts, &c.*

Every one knows full well, that to a certain extent, this must be the case in every country; but it is not the actual possession of power which is argued for in the case of the people of mixed blood; it is the removal of those disabilities to attain a respectable rank, which it is urged should be effected. It is the rise in point of general character and public opinion which would be created by this removal. It is the consciousness of dignity in the general body of people of this description, which would produce a wish to act properly, a spirit of emulation. It is this removal which would render the free man of colour indifferent as to whom he was to obey, whether white or of colour. But now he feels at every moment how much his situation would be bettered by a change of those who rule him. Make him easy, raise him in the scale of nature, treat him as a being of equal powers, and the “state of irritation” will subside. Feelings of pride will make the man of colour lean to his white brethren, instead of hatred making him incline to the degraded Africans. Let the law consider him as a white man, and he will soon feel that it is his interest to make a common cause with the whites on all occasions.

The author of another work in support of the present system of slavery, is decidedly against the encouragement of the increase of the mixed race. He says,

“The first objection that offered itself to the eye of political prudence in the colonies, was the creation of an inferior class of persons, who necessarily mixing with, might vitiate the black population by their habits of indolence, and by the vices that flow therefrom, of receivers, and retailers of what was received.”<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, the “political prudence,” or political wickedness of the colonists prevents the mixed race from becoming respectable members of society; they do every thing in their power to render them despised, they do not afford them any means of education; and then they tax them with crimes; crimes which are committed from the wickedness of the laws which the accusing party have themselves established; laws which naturally lead the individuals who are subject to them into the errors for

<sup>1</sup> An Examination of the Principles of the Slave Registry Bill, &c. p. 105.

which they are now upbraided. The consequences of the laws are now brought forward as reasons for their continuance. The effects of wicked regulations are stated to be natural features in the character of a race of human beings.

“The second objection that occurred was, that the existence of such a class, if honestly employed, occupied the places and employments of artificers and handicraft workmen, to the exclusion and injury of the inferior classes of white men, who would thus be left destitute of the means of supporting life.”

In this reason, however, there is no pretence, there is honesty at least in the declaration, whatever its injustice and selfishness may be. Now, this conclusion may be drawn from the two reasons which the author of the “EXAMINATION” has given; that if the man of colour is deprived, the errors of his life are attributed to his complexion, and if he is honest and willing to labour he is regarded as an intruder; so that in either way he is a mischievous being. Yet after such statements as these, we are told by the gentlemen who advocate the present system, that the people of colour are not in a degraded condition, and are not prevented from attaining respectability in point of public opinion. But to have an adequate idea of the wretched state of these people, the works which I have consulted must be read, for with all the reasoning of the supporters of existing wickedness, the veil which they attempt to throw over the real state of things, is too thin to blind any person, excepting he should be predisposed to assent to whatever is placed before him.

Mr. Jordan says, that “none of these coloured freemen ever became agriculturists or labourers, a circumstance worthy of observation.”

*Examination, &c.*

Mr. Marryat says, that “the free coloured people in the West Indies have not hitherto been induced to undertake the regular labour, necessary for the cultivation of sugar.”

*Thoughts, &c.*

Supposing that the statements made in these two pamphlets are correct in the strictest sense of the terms, still the fact may easily be accounted for. They are free, and therefore will not labour conjointly with slaves. They are not numerous, and therefore find employment in departments of less difficulty than agriculture. They are despised and discouraged, and are therefore dissatisfied with life; they have no object which may lead them to exertion; marriages seldom occur among them. The subject may be taken in another point of view. Would the planters hire them as labourers in the field? If they did, and the men resided upon the estates, would they not, in some instances, run the risk of being punished without appeal to the magistrate? Where there is such evident dislike towards a body of inferiors, as is apparent in the planters towards the people of colour; is it fair to expect that

these inferiors are to place themselves under the controul of those who hate them? Is it just to expect that they will, speaking generally, become their immediate dependants? Is it surprising that being very little raised above the slaves they should be proud of what trifling superiority they possess, and should refuse to labour in the manner of slaves, in the fear of being mistaken for such?

I have now to state what I have seen in the extensive slave country in which I have resided. The bare facts which I can give, are a practical refutation of what I have been attempting to combat theoretically; that is, the danger of increasing the free people of colour, and their idleness.

In Brazil the law ordains that a mulatto man shall not be a magistrate, and shall not be a member of the priesthood; and that a white man can only be hanged at Bahia, or Rio de Janeiro; and here end the positive regulations, according to the best information which I could collect, often repeated by persons of competent authority. Now, in point of fact, men of colour are magistrates, and become members of the priesthood. I have seen them oftentimes holding such situations; and their complexion could not possibly lead to any mistake upon the subject.<sup>1</sup> Several of the Students in the Seminary of Olinda are evidently men of mixed blood. Some of the first planters and merchants are men of mixed blood, and hold commissions in the *ordenança*, or yeomanry troops, and have served, and perhaps are serving now as magistrates.

There are mulatto regiments of militia embodied and ready for service, commanded exclusively by mulatto officers from the corporal to the colonel. I have seen the several Guards of the archways of Recife (the chief town of Pernambuco) at the Prison, at the Barracks, and at the Governor's Palace, composed entirely and exclusively of mulatto soldiers, commanded by mulatto officers. I have heard the term *Senhoria*, used to a mulatto field officer, this being the term which is usually, by courtesy, given to an equal rank in white regiments. I have seen mulatto officers treated with the same respect as white officers. I have seen letters written to

<sup>1</sup> The chaplain of the Governor of Pernambuco is a dark coloured mulatto man, who is received into all companies. He sits at the same table with the Governor, and is treated by every one as an equal.

The son of the late colonel of the mulatto regiment of Recife is a priest.

The chaplain of the Governor of Maranham, when I was at that place, was a dark mulatto man. I could give a long list of priests.

I could likewise give a list of *Capitães-mores*, captains, and *Alferes* of the *Ordenança* troops, (a kind of yeomanry) who are of mixed blood.

*Juizes ordinarios*, or mayors of towns, might be named; and men in every department, who are reputed white, because no pains are taken to prove the contrary, but whose origin is well known.



them by white men, in the same terms of respect which would have been used if the letter had been addressed to a white man.

There are likewise black regiments, composed entirely and exclusively of black creole soldiers, commanded by black creole officers from the corporals to the colonel. I have seen the several Guard-Houses of the town occupied by these troops.

Far from any apprehension being entertained on this score, it is well known that the quietude of the country, and the feeling of safety which every one possesses, although surrounded by slaves, proceeds from the contentedness of the free people.

With respect to agriculture I have only to say in direct terms that the principal stock of flour and beans, and maize, with which the towns are supplied, is cultivated by free coloured persons, established all over the country, wherever chance or inclination has fixed them. They reside in huts built of mud, which are of a better or worse appearance, according to the industry or capability of the owners of them, and to each of these places is attached a sufficient plot of ground, for the labour of one or two men. The lands belong chiefly to great proprietors, and are rented to the lower classes of people at a low rate. The great plantations attend to sugar and cotton, and scarcely ever cultivate more mandioc (the bread of that country) or beans than are necessary for the consumption of the slaves.



